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USAID Climate Finance for Development Accelerator (CFDA)
Request for Applications (RFA No. 2025-0024-RFA)
Greening Value Chains in Africa
Answers to Questions

Q1:	The RFA uses the term "sleeve of a fund" ("An investment fund (or sleeve of fund)" and "(or new sleeves within existing vehicles)")– as this is not standard investment fund structure terminology, can you please clarify what is meant by "sleeve", is this a reference to credit portfolio sleeve concept in portfolio accounting or do you intend to evoke sub-funds?
A1:	**We used the term "sleeve" in the RFA to indicate CFDA's flexibility to work with investment funds or vehicles that have a thesis/portfolio that goes beyond the objectives of GVCA (e.g., geographies outside Africa). For example, we would consider a structure within an existing fund that ringfences USAID grant funding and IMCA catalytic financing to ensure our financing is strongly aligned with GVCA objectives and our internal requirements. The actual structure and terminology related to this ringfencing can be discussed during the co-creation process. CFDA cannot support a fund that co-mingles funding in areas (geographies outside Africa, non-climate investments, etc.) that are unrelated to GVCA's objectives or otherwise not permissible under this RFA.** **As a reminder, GVCA aims to direct funding towards existing or new investment vehicles that have a significant focus on enhancing Africa's energy transition value chains. Eligible investment vehicles under the RFA must clearly and deliberately invest capital in Africa with a preference for Sub-Saharan Africa.**
Q2:	The RFA examples of investment vehicles focus do not evoke primary agriculture or agribusiness, but do evoke transport, in respect to energy transition. Is the program open to concepts in energy transition tied to food loss avoidance post-harvest in the logistics / logistical infra sector?
A2:	**No, an application or investment vehicle that focuses on concepts related to agriculture or agribusiness will not be competitive. While we recognize the importance of these sectors, GVCA aims to direct funding towards energy transition value chains, which include the processing of energy transition minerals to energy consumption, the production and delivery of clean energy, and the end-of-life management of materials (e.g., battery recycling). For our definition on energy transition value chains, please refer to footnote one on page one of the RFA.**
Q3:	Could you elaborate on the term "Infrastructure" listed as an Ineligible Expense in Part 2E of the CFDA 2025-0024-RFA? How does this differ from "other green infrastructure" mentioned in Part 1C under Examples of Eligible Investment Vehicles?
A3:	**Awardees cannot use grant funds for any construction or infrastructure activities managed directly by the grantee. However, investors are allowed to finance companies or projects that are involved in green infrastructure projects or other relevant infrastructure/construction activities.**
Q4:	Specifically, would a fund investing in a business that provides solar energy solutions to off-grid and on-grid communities qualify as an eligible investment under the program?
A4:	**To support the objectives of GVCA, investments in solar energy solutions for off-grid and on-grid communities must include a clear connection to energy transition value chains. This means that applicants must demonstrate a strong link between the**

	renewable energy solutions and an energy transition value chain company/project. For example, a solar energy grid connectivity project linked to a critical minerals mining company that is the primary client of the solar energy solution would align with the objectives of this RFA.
Q5:	Would clean cooking solutions be considered part of the "green energy transition value chains" as outlined in the RFA?
A5:	**An application or investment vehicle that focuses exclusively on clean cooking solutions will not be competitive because the sector is not central to the primary objective of the RFA. See the response to question 2.**
Q6:	Would a fund that provides microloans to MSMEs and users of clean cooking solutions specifically enable them to switch to clean cooking technologies, but not to the producers of these solutions—qualify under the RFA's criteria for investment vehicles supporting the energy transition value chains?
A6:	**See the responses to questions 2 and 5.**
Q7:	Would it be permissible to allocate part of the grant or fund resources to set up the necessary systems or processes to participate in IMCA's blended finance instruments, such as credit guarantees?
A7:	**Yes, using CFDA grant funds to set up systems, processes, policies, etc. needed to access IMCA's blended finance instruments is permissible.**
Q8:	Can the grant be used solely for operational expenses and setup costs of the fund, as well as for funds to lend or invest?
A8:	**CFDA recommends that applicants request grant funding be used where it will be most catalytic and impactful. Operational expenses and setup costs are permissible. Technical assistance (TA) facilities are another common use of CFDA grant funding with our investment partners. CFDA prefers that its grant capital is used to fund operating expenses (salaries, consultants, travel, legal services, procurement, etc.) and that any other catalytic capital be provided by the applicant or other partners through leverage contributions.**
Q9:	Is there a recommended or required ratio between operational expenses and funds allocated for lending or investing?
A9:	**There is no recommended or required ratio between operational expenses and lending or investment funds.**
Q10:	Regarding the 1:1 leverage requirement, does this apply to the total awarded amount, or just to the portion of the fund used for lending or investment activities?
A10:	**The 1:1 leverage applies to the total grant award and must be secured within the period of the grant agreement. Please refer to the RFA's definition of leverage on page 7 to understand how to meet the minimum leverage requirement.**
Q11:	What is the expected average ticket size for non-U.S. entities under this grant opportunity? Is there a typical range or guideline we should consider when proposing our funding request?
A11:	**We do not have an expected average ticket size for U.S. or non-U.S. entities. The maximum grant request is US $3 million. Final amounts will be determined through the co-creation process. However, U.S. companies and organizations are limited to grants of up to US $500,000. Please see section 1F, Award Information, on page 5 of the RFA.**
Q12:	The RFA highlights the energy transition in combination with essential minerals. Could you clarify what this entails in practice? For example: Does it mean providing access to green energy for workers in mining operations? Should the mining activities themselves transition

	to using green energy? Or does it focus on supporting companies selling green energy innovations that rely on essential minerals?
A12:	**Please refer to the RFA definition of energy transition value chains: "For purposes of GVCA, energy transition value chains (ETVCs) are defined as the suite of economic activities involved in the production and delivery of clean energy, from the processing of energy transition minerals to energy consumption and, eventually, end-of-life management (e.g., battery recycling)." Applicants should clearly demonstrate the connection between their proposed investments and the economic activities outlined above. Concepts that focus exclusively on financing green energy access to communities (benefiting workers of mining operations) will not be competitive.**
Q13:	As a multilateral DFI, we have internal systems and capacity to host funds and administer grants internally. We would like to understand how grant funds are administered over the life of the grant? Do the grant funds sit with the grantee?
A13:	**Grantees are expected to receive and administer their funds directly.**
Q14:	We understand that Public International Organisations are excluded from the GVCA. We do not find our organisation in USAID's list of PIOs; but we thought it prudent to verify from the USAID or Chemonics if we are eligible to go ahead and apply?
A14:	**USAID's ADS 308.3.1.1 describes the process for designating an organization as a PIO, including a list of criteria that may indicate warranted eligibility for PIO status. As USAID's List of PIOs reflects only organizations who have gone through the designation process, it is not all-inclusive and may not include all organizations which could be considered PIOs. CFDA will not pursue designation decisions for organizations deemed likely to achieve PIO status, given timeline and resource constraints. In such a case where an organization is not on the List but may be considered a PIO, CFDA will use the criteria listed under ADS 308.3.1.1 to make an eligibility determination. Please review these criteria to make an informed decision on whether to apply.**
Q15:	Is the USAID climate finance for development accelerator available for an entity providing energy solution to public schools in South Africa?
A15:	**An entity that focuses primarily or exclusively on providing energy solutions to public schools will not be competitive under the GVCA RFA. As a reminder, GVCA aims to direct funding towards energy transition value chains, which include the processing of energy transition minerals to energy consumption, the production and delivery of clean energy, and the end-of-life management of materials (e.g., battery recycling). For renewable energy solutions, the applicants must demonstrate a strong link with energy transition critical minerals activities.**
Q16:	Can grant funding be used for post-launch activities such as portfolio monitoring, impact assessment, or additional technical assistance?
A16:	**Yes, grant funding can be used for post-launch activities. However, the duration of the grant under this RFA is expected to be no more than two years. Also, note that the concept of additionality is an important factor in the evaluation and merit review criteria. Evaluators will assess the extent to which USAID grant funding has an impact on the trajectory of the investment vehicle either by mobilizing additional private capital or by enabling the fund manager to create greater impact. For more details on additionality, please see section 1.H, Application Merit Review Criteria.**
Q17:	Is there flexibility to propose certain activities such as: resourcing and in-house capacity development for the investment manager; transitioning investee companies to clean energy; engaging third party survey and consulting partners for impact monitoring and

	verification and ESG pre-investment due diligence; capacity development for investee companies (e.g. ESG trainings, impact baseline assessment, validation and verification); an/or investment readiness for cleantech deals?
A17:	**Yes, there is flexibility on the activities applicants can propose.**
Q18:	What is the maximum number of grants that can be received by a fund, intervals between each issuance?
A18:	**A grantee cannot receive multiple grants from CFDA for the same fund or investment vehicle. However, it is possible to be awarded concurrent grants from CFDA if the applicant is applying the grant proceeds to different investment funds.**
Q19:	What kind of documentation or evidence is required to demonstrate that the leveraged resources were unlocked due to the USG commitment?
A19:	**As part of the grant co-creation and negotiation process, selected grantees must provide documentation of the value and type of leverage commitment(s) by the grantee or other partners at the time of grant award (e.g., a budget detailing non-USG contributions to the activity). Selected grantees must also provide a brief narrative description of how the partnership with USAID/CFDA contributed to mobilizing those commitments or provided other additionality for the proposed activity. While USG support does not need to be the only factor in securing the leverage commitment(s), partners should be able to articulate how USG support contributed to making the proposed activity larger in scale, higher in quality, faster to materialize, or happen at all.**
Q20:	What are the monitoring, evaluation, and reporting obligations during the grant period?
A20:	**Successful applicant(s) will be required to report on activity indicators (see section 1D on page 12) relevant to the desired impact or outcomes of their proposed activities. CFDA may monitor and evaluate a grantee's progress and indicator data both during the award period and until the end of CFDA's period of performance, which concludes on September 21, 2027. Additionally, the successful applicant(s) will be required to provide milestone deliverables agreed upon during the co-creation phase, along with progress reports, a grant completion report, and any necessary updates after the award period.** **Please note that any IMCA catalytic financing, if secured, would have its own reporting requirements governed by a separate contractual agreement between the selected GVCA investment partner and the relevant IMCA agencies.**
Q21:	Donor Partners and DFI Introductions. Are there specific platforms or mechanisms through which [investor] introductions are facilitated? Would we have the opportunity to engage 1:1 with all partners and investors? Would all applicants be introduced? If not, what is the process for determining the funds to be introduced to each partner?
A21:	**CFDA, USAID, and IMCA partners will help introduce successful applicants to potential investors, development finance institutions, and otherwise. However, the applicant must demonstrate the ability to meet the 1:1 leverage requirement, regardless of any matchmaking support IMCA/USAID may be able to provide. As a reminder, the leverage requirement can be met using investment capital, provided that the fund is launched during the grant's period of performance. For more information on the leverage requirement, please refer to page 7 of the RFA.**

Q22:	Can an application be made for the IMCA credit guarantee by a fund, on behalf of its portfolio companies (PCs)? Given that the guarantee will eventually be utilized by the PC, if successful, can the PCs be brought into the conversation for direct funding?
A22:	**CFDA expects any IMCA credit guarantee to be issued at the fund or portfolio level, partially covering credit losses incurred by companies/projects within the respective fund or portfolio. As such, we do not envision a scenario in which IMCA guarantee providers are negotiating and issuing guarantees with individual portfolio companies.**
Q23:	What criteria do portfolio companies need to meet to qualify for IMCA credit guarantees, and what is the maximum guarantee that can be accessed by each entity?
A23:	**Please see response to question 22, as well as Annexes E and F of the RFA (click here to download Supplemental Documents: RFA Annexes). As noted in question 22, guarantees are issued at the fund or portfolio level. However, portfolio companies cannot fall on the exclusion list (Annex F) and are required to meet eligibility criteria. The portfolio eligibility criteria are determined based on the function of the investment fund or vehicle, but also need to meet the following:** • **Domicile: guarantees cannot be channeled through or directed to international intermediaries that are domiciled in countries listed on the Common EU list of third country jurisdictions or countries rated as Non-Compliant or Partially Compliant in the OECD Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for tax purposes.** • **Financial Sanctions List: Neither Guaranteed Party nor any of its borrowers can be on the lists of persons, groups, or entities included in the United Nations or European Union financial sanctions.**
Q24:	Are there specific timelines or processes for matching successful applicants with IMCA members offering credit guarantees?
A24:	**IMCA partners are expected to participate in the GVCA evaluation and co-creation processes. Finalist applicants will be notified if they are strong candidates for IMCA guarantees or other catalytic financing. Timelines for IMCA support depend heavily on the maturity of the concept and cannot be given at this time.**
Q25:	Are investments in adjacent cleantech areas, such as fintech solutions for energy access or carbon credit markets, considered eligible under the "energy transition value chains" criteria?
A25:	**While these investment approaches are not strictly ineligible, they are not the primary focus of this RFA. If the applicant proposes a fund or investment vehicle that focuses exclusively on fintech for energy access or carbon credit projects, the application is unlikely to be competitive.**
Q26:	What is the expected timeline for CFDA/IMCA decisions on credit guarantees or co-investor mobilization post-grant award? What sort of application development support will be available to applicants?
A26:	**See responses to questions 7, 24, and 57.**
Q27:	When applying for a grant (which will be matched 1:1 by our own funds) to cover establishment costs, pipeline building and [operating expenses] related to the launch of a new debt platform with the target of mobilizing [for example USD 50M] in external capital, will it be a requirement to deploy the entire funds [of USD 50M] within the lifetime of the grant (up to two years)?
A27:	**The capital must be secured within the period of performance of the grant agreement, but it does not need to be deployed during that period. If the applicant meets the 1:1**

	leverage requirement with their funds, this will satisfy the requirement. However, if the applicant is relying on investment capital to meet the leverage requirement, they must successfully raise that investment capital, which is demonstrated by reaching the first close.
Q28:	Can the applicant be a General Partner (GP) for a fund or does the applicant have to be the overarching legal entity that sits over the GP? Our holding company is an LLC domiciled out of Delaware; however, the GP for our upcoming fund will be domiciled out of Mauritius.
A28:	**The applicant should be the entity that will be most directly conducting the activities under the proposed grant. This may be either the overarching legal entity or the General Partner for the fund. Note that if the entity is domiciled in the United States, the $500,000 funding limit will apply.**
Q29:	Do you have preferences for the use of grant funding (ex: operating expenses, technical assistance facility, programmatic expenses)?
A29:	**There are no specific preferences or limitations on the use of grant funds, as long as applicants do not use the funds for ineligible expenses outlined on page 10 of the RFA.**
Q30:	Section 1D of the RFA states "Percentage of investment mobilized that is inclusive of marginalized and underrepresented groups (disaggregated by group and mode of inclusion)." Kindly clarify. Is it expected that part of the additional capital mobilized be specifically earmarked for funding directed to these groups?
A30:	**CFDA does not expect applicants to earmark funding specifically for marginalized and underrepresented groups. However, applicants will be evaluated based on how well the proposed activity incorporates gender, inclusion, and localization components, per evaluation criterion E.**
Q31:	Is any leverage considered acceptable? Are there funding sources that are excluded?
A31:	**Funds previously secured and expended for the investment vehicle or fund, as well as other U.S. government funding, are not eligible.**
Q32:	Are non-material changes to the project admissible post submission (i.e. change in name, adjustment in geography although still in OECD DAC countries, changes in fund size…)?
A32:	**Yes, non-material changes to the project are admissible. However, there are limits regarding geographic shifts due to the RFA's focus on Africa and its preference for Sub-Saharan Africa.**
Q33:	Is a private company based in West Africa raising capital for an energy project to build a solar power plant eligible to submit a grant application to cover the project budget gap?
A33:	**An objective of this RFA is to support investment funds or vehicles that invest in multiple projects. We will not finance individual projects, factories, or power plants seeking funding.**
Q34:	Is solar irrigation systems financing for smallholders farmers in [East Africa] eligible under this [RFA] as one way of greening the agriculture value chain?
A34:	**No, the project described does not fall into the RFA definition of energy transition value chain. While we recognize the importance of the agricultural sector, it is not a priority for this RFA.**
Q35:	Can funding from other funders, like the World Bank, that our organization has secured be part of our co-funding under this [RFA]?
A35:	**Co-funding from other sources may be considered as co-funding for a grant under this RFA, provided the applicant demonstrates that the grant commitment enabled the co-funding. See question 31.**
Q36:	Can a new climate investment fund be funded under this call of financing?

A36:	**Yes, a new climate investment fund is eligible for funding under this RFA.**
Q37:	Do you accept new green financing digital innovation platforms that accelerate the transition to renewable energy and that promote energy and financial inclusion to unbanked population?
A37:	**Yes, as long as these platforms are aligned with the investment objectives of the GVCA RFA.**
Q38:	Is the disbursement of project funds based on milestones or lump sum disbursement then account?
A38:	**Disbursements of project funds are based on milestones demonstrating progress towards successful implementation of the concept.**
Q39:	What are the key criteria for evaluating proposals, and how will they be weighted?
A39:	**Please refer to section 1H, Application Merit Review Criteria, of the RFA.**
Q40:	Can you clarify the funding ceiling for individual projects under this solicitation?
A40:	**The maximum grant request for this RFA is US $3 million. However, final amounts will be determined through the co-creation process. Also, please note that our primary focus is supporting investment funds or vehicles, and we do not intend to support individual projects.**
Q41:	Are there any restrictions on how funds can be allocated (e.g., research, technology acquisition, training)?
A41:	**Please see section 2E, Ineligible Expenses, on page 10 of the RFA.**
Q42:	Can you specify the level of detail expected in the technical and financial proposals?
A42:	**The application should consist of a maximum of 12 slides, providing a comprehensive overview of the applicant's technical and management approach, past performance, and summary budget. The information provided should be detailed enough for reviewers to evaluate the application based on the merit review criteria outlined in the RFA (see page 8). We strongly recommend that all applicants fully comply with instructions in section 2F, Application and Submission Information, and align their applications to the evaluation criteria listed under section IH, Application Merit Review Criteria.**
Q43:	Are there templates or guidelines for submitting proposals to ensure compliance?
A43:	**RFA Annexes, including a grant application template, a budget template, and other forms are linked at the end of the webpage for the RFA, under Attachments – Supplemental Documents: RFA Annexes.**
Q44:	What exactly is the meaning of "timeline for grant activities" in section 1D, Page 11?
A44:	**The timeline should detail the applicant's proposed activities during the grant agreement's period of performance and indicate when those activities would occur.**
Q45:	Where can we find annexes B, C, F?
A45:	**All Annexes are linked at the end of the webpage for the RFA, under Attachments – Supplemental Documents: RFA Annexes**
Q46:	How should we go about Annex E? Is the provision to be formally acknowledged by writing? Are we referring to certifications pertaining to the operationalizing of the fund in question or are there other certifications required by USAID CFDA?
A46:	**Annex E contains USAID Standard Provisions that will be included in the grant agreement. We recommend that applicants familiarize themselves with these provisions in case they are successful in receiving an award. During the application stage, there is no need to formally acknowledge the provisions in writing.**

Q47:	Does the grant budget/use of funds suffice for making the financial case of the fund for this application?'
A47:	**Yes, the budget should be sufficient, but it must align with the technical and management approach presented as part of the application.**
Q48:	Is there a minimum or maximum amount of funding that can be requested?
A48:	**There is no minimum. The maximum grant request is US $3 million. Final amounts will be determined through the co-creation process.**
Q49:	Are there any specific cost categories or expenses that are ineligible?
A49:	**Please refer to section 2E, Ineligible Expenses, of the RFA.**
Q50:	How will funds be disbursed (e.g. milestone based, quarterly, lump-sum)?
A50:	**Funds will be disbursed based on milestones. Also see question 38.**
Q51:	What are the financial reporting requirements associated with the disbursement?
A51:	**Typically, there are no financial reporting requirements because disbursements are linked to milestones that document a grantees technical progress. However, if we determine that a financial report could help demonstrate the grantee's progress toward achieving the technical goals of the grant, we may incorporate a financial report as a component for completing a milestone.**
Q52:	Can multiple submissions be made if improvements are necessary before the deadline?
A52:	**We strongly advise applicants to submit only one application that reflects the most complete and comprehensive version. If for any reason multiple applications are submitted by the same organization, we will evaluate the final submission received.**
Q53:	Will CFIN/USAID provide feedback on draft proposals before the final submission?
A53:	**No, we do not review or provide feedback on draft proposals.**
Q54:	Can we submit two bids for two separate use cases?
A54:	**No, each lead applicant is limited to one application. Only one application will be evaluated.**
Q55:	If successful in phase one, how long will the candidate have to prepare the oral presentation?
A55:	**Applicants may have four to five business days to prepare for oral presentations.**
Q56:	What is the expected timeframe for project implementation?
A56:	**The expected period of performance for the grant agreement is up to two years. Related applicant activities may continue beyond this time frame.**
Q57:	Will the successful candidate have a point person/ team at IMCA that they are able to liaise with on a regular basis throughout the project life cycle?
A57:	**Yes, if the successful applicant(s) are deemed strong candidates for IMCA support, those applicants will have points of contact at relevant IMCA counterparts to guide them through the co-creation process.**
Q58:	Does the RFA require documentation of past performance on similar projects and if so what level of detail is required?
A58:	**Please refer to section 2F, Application and Submission Information of the RFA. The past performance section should be a maximum of two slides.**