

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Nature Positive Business Models
for Sustainable and Resilient
Transformation in Central Africa

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	2
2. Introduction.....	3
3. Purpose & Scope of Work	4
3.1 Scope of Work	4
3.2 Project Typologies & Target Pipeline.....	5
3.3 Expected Results.....	5
3.4 Geographic Focus	7
3.5 Target Beneficiaries.....	7
3.6 Collaboration with UNCDF	7
4. Eligibility for Application and Evaluation Criteria	8
4.1 Eligibility Requirements.....	8
4.2 Exclusionary Criteria.....	9
4.3 Evaluation Criteria	10
4.4 Eligible Costs.....	11
4.5 Ineligible Costs	11
5. Agreement Parameters	12
5.1 Applicants.....	12
5.2 Contract Duration.....	12
5.3 Budget.....	12
6. Application Requirements and Process.....	13
6.1 Structure of the Application	13
6.2 Application Deadline.....	13
6.3 Selection Process	13
6.4 Timeline	14

United Nations Capital Development Fund

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION FOR

Nature Positive Business Models for Sustainable & Resilient Transformation in Central Africa

1. Executive Summary

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is the United Nations' flagship catalytic financing entity for the world's 46 Least Developed Countries (LDCs). With its unique capital mandate and focus on the LDCs, UNCDF works to invest and catalyse capital to support these countries in achieving the sustainable growth and inclusiveness envisioned by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Doha Programme of Action for the least developed countries, 2022–2031.

UNCDF builds partnerships with other UN organizations, as well as private and public sector actors, to achieve greater impact in development; specifically, by unlocking additional resources and strengthening financing mechanisms and systems contributing to transformation pathways, focusing on such development themes as green economy, digitalization, urbanization, inclusive economies, gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

To deliver the actions necessary to fulfil the targets outlined in the Global Biodiversity Framework, UNCDF has established a nature-based financing service line – the Nature Asset Team (NAT). In collaboration with UN agencies, national and international governments, private sector institutions and other key partners, NAT works to strengthen institutional capacities, catalyze resource flows, and improve access to technical expertise, thereby creating the context for sustained investment in nature assets and long-term distribution of co-benefits.

Within the scope of UNCDF NAT's portfolio of Africa-based programmes, this RfA seeks to identify and pool pipelines of viable nature-positive investment opportunities. By leveraging grant funding to provide seed capital for a select number of MSMEs and SMEs, UNCDF NAT will aim to scale-up solutions with the potential for transformative impact in emerging and developing markets in Africa. **Specifically, UNCDF will engage and invest in companies contributing and/or aiming to contribute to long-term conservation of land-based natural assets and resilient food systems in high-priority jurisdictions across Central Africa.**

Financing will support selected companies to shift the pressure of human activity from areas where there is significant ongoing degradation to high productivity zones with greater potential for local job-creation. Business models around critical ecosystems that are nature-positive and achieve adaptation outcomes by improving food production in a manner that reduces emissions (mitigation) and build climate resilience for both communities and natural ecosystems (adaptation) will be prioritized.

Scope: Eligible companies will be headquartered in or otherwise have substantive operations in the following countries:

- **Central Africa:** Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Rwanda

Period: 2023-2026

Budget: From USD 250,000 up to 10,000,000 for each selected company.

Selected companies will be expected to fund a significant portion of the total set up costs of the investment through existing or new commitments.

Eligible candidates: UNCDF is seeking eligible companies that are currently implementing and/or aiming to implement nature-positive business models in the following result areas: renewable energy, sustainable food production, sustainably financed protected areas, ecotourism, climate-smart agri solutions, landscape restoration and reforestation. Applicants may apply independently or in a consortium, provided that the consortium has a pre-established partnership prior to when this request for applications was issued.

Applicants are allowed to apply for a combination of technical assistance, grants, reimbursable grants/concessional loans.

Selected applicants will sign a Performance-Based Agreement (PBA), reimbursable grant agreement, or loan agreement with UNCDF as negotiated during the selection process.

All applications must be submitted via UNCDF's e-investment platform [https://apply.uncdf.org/prog/230614_nata -
_nature positive business models for sustainable resilient transformation in central africa](https://apply.uncdf.org/prog/230614_nata_-_nature_positive_business_models_for_sustainable_resilient_transformation_in_central_africa) no later than **28 July, 2023 by 23:59 Eastern Standard Time**. However, please visit UNCDF's Apply platform to check if the deadline has not been extended.

Inquiries to this request for applications may be submitted by email to uncdf.rfa@uncdf.org cc. john.sankara@uncdf.org.

2. Introduction

If the current and projected tendency of extreme and erratic weather events caused by climate change – heat waves, intense rains, prolonged dry seasons, droughts, and floods – persists across Central Africa, the regions will see increased soil erosion, less productive agricultural land, destruction of critical infrastructure, and increased levels of malnutrition. Further, the deepened reliance on few primary commodities, inadequate access to capital and lack of strong market systems will continue to hinder the potential for bridging the climate funding gap for adaptation and mitigation, estimated at US\$30–50 billion/year for Sub-Saharan Africa¹.

Furthermore, food supplies and prices across the regions are highly susceptible to climate change, with an average decline between 5-20% in food security following each flood or drought. Already more than 35 million people in West and Central Africa are experiencing severe food insecurity and this number is expected to rise to a record high of 48 million by June-August 2023². Without a paradigm shift changing how land is managed and food is produced, the growing demand for agri-business and commercial agriculture will only serve to further accelerate deforestation and forest degradation in Central African countries. This economic growth will be driven predominantly by private local, regional and international institutions aiming to expand and create new commodity supply chains without recourse to sustainable practices. At the same time, local and regional market players across Africa who lack the necessary support to adopt nature-positive models will continue to fall below the radar of investors and be denied access to the deforestation-free regulated markets of the EU, US and UK. **In order to match the scale and pace of these overlapping crises, public and private sector stakeholders must support the growth of a dynamic, innovative, and nature-positive private sector that can compete in international markets and support domestic job creation and sustained economic growth.**

¹IMF. Adapting to Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa. 2020.

² WFP, 2023

Globally significant natural capital stocks spanning Central Africa present a strategic opportunity to catalyse investment in transformative solutions that enable longer-term stability, resilience, food security and economic growth. By supporting dynamic entrepreneurs and micro, small, and medium enterprises achieving nature-positive outcomes, UNCDF NAT aims to create new markets, strengthen supply chains, capture spillover from FDI, increase the creation of startups, and force the exit of exploitative practices. **With this mission at the forefront – UNCDF NAT is launching a competitive Request for Applications (RFA) to identify projects and companies contributing to long-term conservation of land-based natural assets and resilient food systems in high-priority jurisdictions across Central Africa.**

Through this RFA, **UNCDF is seeking companies that are currently implementing and/or aiming to implement nature-positive business models in the following result areas: renewable energy, sustainable food production, sustainably financed protected areas, ecotourism, climate-smart agri solutions, landscape restoration and reforestation.**

Companies at various stages of growth will be considered, including start-ups, newly formed companies with high potential for growth, and mature enterprises with established track records. Thematic alignment of the companies’ solutions will be a key qualifying metric.

This Request for Application is organized as part of the implementation of the following UNCDF portfolio of projects:

- The Peace and Conservation Sanctuaries in Burundi and DRC.
- The Central Africa Forest Performance Bond Series pipeline preparation.

3. Purpose & Scope of Work

3.1 Scope of Work

UNCDF is seeking to engage and invest in companies or projects with potential to scale-up and replicate nature-positive solutions that enable resilience and adaptation to climate change. Targeted companies will promote innovative sustainable intensification and higher productivity models to meet the growing demand for food and energy whilst reducing drivers of ecosystems degradation.

The selected companies will need to demonstrate how their proposed solutions contribute to the achievement of one or more of the following outcomes:

	Outcome	Desired Change
1	Resilient economic transformation	Transformation towards climate resilient, low emission and zero-deforestation agriculture, scaling up investment in businesses that enhance climate resilience of local communities and enable food systems adaptation.
2	Sustainable livelihoods	Generation of livelihood opportunities for local people, promotion of collaborative and inclusive decision-making with nature-dependent stakeholders, and training and capacity building.
3	Scaled up use of clean, renewable sources of energy	Scaling up of renewable sources of energy and reduction of emissions, improving access to renewable energy and thereby reducing emissions and forest loss associated with unsustainable energy production.

4	Valuation of critical natural assets	Improvements in the management of critical natural assets and scaling up of the resilience and adaptive capacities of local farmers, producers, and communities at large. Promotion of inclusive growth via direct transfer of cash resources to impoverished groups as needed
5	Reduced or reversed deforestation, degradation, and loss	Tackling drivers of deforestation, land degradation, and biodiversity loss. Significant GHG reductions and removals per dollar invested.

Solutions demonstrating the potential to achieve several outcomes will be prioritized. The achievement of those outcomes will be assessed through the result indicators in section 3.3.

3.2 Project Typologies & Target Pipeline

The types of nature positive businesses that can contribute to the achievement of the outcomes and are eligible to this RFA are outlined as follows:

Project typology	Potential Improved Revenue Streams
1. Renewable energy PPP	Run of river Hydropower, solar farm, or biomass for clean cooking. Small to Medium energy production capacity 5-15MW to power priority landscape and special economic zone. Structured as Public Private Partnership (PPP) on grid or off grid.
2. High value, climate-smart, diversified Agriculture production and transformation	Sustainable diversified and integrated farming production: poultry and aquaculture, bee farming, sorghum, high protein grain legumes, palm, fruits, essential oils (like Patchouli), medicinal trees (artemisia), nuts (macadamia), vanilla, cosmetic and pharmacopeia (polyphenol tea extract and specialized forest product), green and animal fertilizer production.
	Agroindustry for both local consumption and export, product premium with zero deforestation certification, organic fertilizer, fairtrade. Improved transport, processing, storage infrastructure and commercialization of agri-products (oil extraction, juicing, canning, drying, etc.).
3. Conservation of Forest Assets and sustainable exploitation models	Bamboo and lumber production, transformation for local and regional market, FSC or RSPO certification premium, carbon and biodiversity credits through nature assets companies.
4. Ecotourism, Park co-management	Eco-tourism facility integrated in ecosystem-based payments and improved management (co-management of national parks with revenues from tourism activities reinvested in conservation)
5. Digital infrastructure and climate-smart equipment	Can include satellite monitoring, weather prediction, drones, in-situ crop sensors, and traceability technologies that enable monitoring and ensure compliance with regulatory standards. Smart irrigation, intensification technology and equipment, improved access to more resilient seeds.

These examples are not exhaustive. UNCDF NAT is open to hear what potential applicants have in mind outside these examples as long as the scale, viability and impact objectives are aligned.

3.3 Expected Results

All applications must include targets on the indicators listed in the table below. The targets must be disaggregated for the selected target groups. Applicants who are not able to report on one or multiple indicators or provide disaggregated data should include a note with the reason.

The targets will be considered in the evaluation of the applications. Before signing the Financial Agreement, selected applicants will work with UNCDF to develop a monitoring framework. This may include additional indicators and targets, tailored to the scope of the proposed solution, activities, and expected results.

Indicators	Related Outcomes	Disaggregation	Source of Indicator
# of enterprises using products, services, and infrastructures stemming from interventions	1,3	Total: Women-led enterprises:	Institutional (UNCDF)
# of new or improved products, services and infrastructures scaled up or crowded in	1,3		Institutional (UNCDF)
# of people engaging with products, services and infrastructures	1,3	Total: Women:	Institutional (UNCDF)
# of people with increased resilience (i.e., number of people where a benefit or service is provided or made possible to improve resilience of livelihoods)	1,2	Total: Women:	Project specific
# of people benefitting (i.e., number of producers reached, community services provided to individuals, individuals benefiting from secured land tenure agreements; and jobs supported)	1	Total: Women:	Project specific
USD of capital mobilized (i.e., ability to attract and mobilize capital)	1	Total:	Project specific
Percentage change in the number of full-time equivalent jobs	1,2	Total:	Institutional (UNCDF)
#ha of forest protected (i.e., area of identifiable forest conserved plus forest restored, plus peatland conserved or rehabilitated)	5	Total:	Project specific
#tCO2e of climate benefits	3,4,5	Total:	Project specific
#ha of ecosystems with improved resilience (i.e., area of land rehabilitated, restored or protected,	1,4,5	Total:	Project specific

plus area of non-forest ecosystems restored or improved; plus areas of degraded land restored through regenerative agriculture,			
---	--	--	--

3.4 Geographic Focus

Eligible companies will be headquartered in or otherwise have substantive operations in the following countries:

- **Central Africa:** Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Rwanda.

Given the focus on sustainable food production, smart-agriculture, and targeting of marginalized populations experiencing poverty, UNCDF expects eligible companies to serve remote rural areas and high value ecosystems.

3.5 Target Beneficiaries

The target beneficiaries of the investments are low-income households, farmers, farming communities, women, and marginalized populations including indigenous communities that live and work in and around areas experiencing the adverse effects of climate change and biodiversity loss.

UNCDF will ensure that selected applicants apply a gender lens and gender-sensitive methodologies in their interventions. A baseline assessment of environmental and social safeguards will be required as a pre-condition for engagement with selected applicants. Applicants will be further encouraged to analyze and propose ways to resolve the differentiated experiences of women and men using their interventions. Every effort will be made to ensure that women and men can benefit equally from solutions proposed by applicants.

Inclusion of minority, marginalized, and indigenous communities will be a core requirement. Applicants will have to highlight concrete policies (both existing and planned) to promote inclusion within their organization and in their interventions.

3.6 Collaboration with UNCDF

The selected companies will be expected to prioritize and actively engage with the focal points from UNCDF and relevant partners. The applicants should maintain clear lines of communication and engage regularly to discuss progress, share insights, and address any challenges or concerns. In accordance with the programmatic frameworks, the grantee will be required to provide semi-annual narrative and financial reports summarizing financial standing, development results, key milestones and updates.

UNCDF takes a tailored approach to engagement with partners, working with each throughout to identify stakeholder needs, and helping to design, pilot and scale up solutions along the way. Some examples of the ways in which UNCDF could work with grantees in this project include:

- **Provisioning:** Providing technical assistance to help design, pilot, deploy, and scale up solutions for impact. Technical assistance is provided by digital finance experts who are experienced in product design, business model development and go-to-market strategies in some of the most challenging markets in Africa.

- **Partnerships:** Identifying co-financing opportunities and facilitating strategic partnerships with stakeholders to support resource mobilizations efforts. UNCDF is uniquely positioned to be a neutral broker of partnerships and has a record of building strong relationships with private and public organizations across Africa. This can also include supporting broader stakeholder participation to build consensus and ensure the expected dividends.
- **Policy and Advocacy:** Convening efforts to support an enabling environment and build policy and advocacy capacity for human-centred products and services to be piloted and potentially scaled.
- **Data collection, monitoring and evaluation:** Ensure results indicators are designed and implemented in alignment with applicable global and regional frameworks, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework, national biodiversity strategies, etc.

In the RFA, applicants may identify and suggest areas where the technical support from UNCDF and its network of expertise is sought.

4. Eligibility for Application and Evaluation Criteria

4.1 Eligibility Requirements

Only applicants that meet the eligibility requirements and minimum criteria for the submission will be scored:

- **Entity registration:** The applicant or lead applicant must be a registered business (for profit or non-profit)
- **Consortia:** Applicants may apply independently or as part of a consortium, provided the consortium partnership was established prior to issuance of this request for applications
 - Joint applications between market players in the target country or countries are encouraged if the solution proposed expands delivery networks and promotes rural and/or other last-mile access to nature positive business models.
 - Applications from consortiums of organizations must show that the partnership was established prior to this RFA.
 - The lead applicant and their institution must be a registered entity as per applicable laws and must have statutory accounts and audited financial statements for at least two operating years.
- **Country of operation:** Eligible organizations will be duly registered, headquartered in or otherwise have substantive operations in the countries listed in section 3.3
- **Relevant operation licenses:** The lead applicant must be legally authorized to provide services required to perform the RFA activities.
- **Revenue generation:** Applicants must have a clear business model with clearly identified revenue streams and demonstrable SDG-positive impact

Grant Applicants	
Funding requested	USD 250,000 minimum – USD 1,500,000 maximum
Evidence of co-financing from other sources	Applicant must demonstrate evidence of: Raising minimum 50% of funding requested in previous 24 months
	OR: Funding match of minimum 50% of funding requested
Capital commitments (self-generated)	Applicants must show the organisation’s own commitment of retained earnings towards the project

Other criteria	At least 3 years of financial reports. (preferably 1 year audited financials). Grant applicants will be subject to a UN standard micro-assessment
Reimbursable Grant / Concessional Loan Applicants	
Creditworthiness	Demonstrate ability to service all debt obligation (including repayment of UNCDF loan) using projections of cash generated by the business
Funding requested	Start-ups/Greenfield: USD 250,000 - 500,000
	Later stage/Brownfield: Minimum USD 500,000 – Maximum USD 10,000,000
Other criteria	Equity commitments > USD 100,000 20% equity commitment from promoter Formal three statements financial projections
	Later stage/Brownfield: Recurring revenue streams Stable or improving profitability trends Positive net equity Equity/Total assets >15% At least 1 year of audited financials

Applicants are allowed to apply for a combination of technical assistance, grants, reimbursable grants/concessional loans.

Applicants can apply **only once** under this RFA, whether independently or in a consortium.

4.2 Exclusionary Criteria

Only applicants that meet the eligibility requirements and minimum criteria for the submission will be scored:

- Applicants shall not have been the subject of bankruptcy, liquidation, judicial settlement, safeguarding, cessation of activity or any other similar situation resulting from a similar procedure.
- No applicant – including individual employees and members of its board of directors – shall be included on any United Nations financial sanctions lists, particularly in the fight against the financing of terrorism and against attacks on international peace and security³.
- Applicants must not be involved in any of the following activities:
 - Manufacture, sale or distribution of controversial weapons or their components, including cluster bombs, anti-personnel mines, biological or chemical weapons or nuclear weapons
 - Manufacture, sale or distribution of armaments and/or weapons or their components, including military supplies and equipment
 - Replica weapons marketed to children
 - Manufacture, sale or distribution of tobacco or tobacco products
 - Involvement in the manufacture, sale and distribution of pornography
 - Manufacture, sale or distribution of substances subject to international bans or phase-outs, and wildlife or products regulated under the CITES

³ See <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/information>

- Gambling including casinos, betting etc. (excluding lotteries with charitable objectives)
- Violation of human rights or complicity in human rights violations
- Use or toleration of forced or compulsory labor
- Use or toleration of child labor
- Applicants shall have fulfilled all the obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or obligations relating to the payment of taxes in accordance with legal provisions in force in the country of incorporation

UNCDF will conduct technical scoring on selected applicants. Applicants must have documents ready for confirmation that they meet the eligibility criteria including financial statements, certificate of compliance with the tax authorities and any other documentary evidence that might be requested by UNCDF besides the application form.

The criteria for eligible expenditure determine whether a cost qualifies for funding under UNCDF rules and procedures.

4.3 Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Committee will score the applications according to the below evaluation criteria.

	Criteria	Max Score
1	<u>Model relevance to achieve targeted Outcomes</u> <i>Score the applicant's nature positive solution in regards to the Areas and targeted impacts defined in the proposal, relevance, feasibility, innovation, sustainability.</i>	30
2	<u>Organization profile and Team experience</u> <i>Score the applicant's profile, track record, reputation, experience in similar projects and in the country/region.</i> <i>Score if the applicant's proposed team structure and experience is suited for the purpose of the RFA (skills for management, technical know-how, on the field footprint, monitoring and RM capacities...)</i>	15
3	<u>Methodology</u> <i>Score the applicant's proposed methodology and approach: if it is suited for the purpose of the RFA, if the workplan is realistic, that the project strategy covers risk management, quality control, reporting and other project management good practices.</i>	15
4	<u>Additionality</u> <i>Score if UNCDF funding to the applicant will create:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial additionality: <i>If the applicant cannot obtain funding from local or international private capital markets with similar terms or quantities without official support.</i> - Non-financial value: <i>Value that the private sector is not currently offering, and which will lead to better outcomes e.g. by providing or catalyzing knowledge and expertise, promoting social or environmental standards or fostering good corporate governance...</i> - Impact: <i>Faster, larger or better development impacts than the applicant would be able to achieve working alone.</i> 	10
5	<u>Gender perspective</u>	10

	<i>Score if the applicant has foreseen a gender focus in the proposed intervention, to have women both external (users) and internal (staff) benefited equally than men.</i>	
6	<u>Sustainability and business plan</u> <i>Score if the applicant's proposal has a sustainable financial perspective and business plan that could generate an investment pipeline for UNCDF.</i>	10
7	<u>Result Measurement</u> <i>Score if the applicant has provided coherent measurement plan and data management plans.</i>	10
TOTAL		100

Only applications that score at least **70 out of 100** will be considered successful. The successful applications to Reimbursable Grants/ Concessional loans will move to the due-diligence stage by the UNCDF Investment Platform (LDC-IP).

4.4 Eligible Costs

The general criteria for eligibility of costs under UNCDF funding include the following.

- Eligible costs must be incurred by the applicant during the project (after the signature of the Performance-based Agreement and up to the end of the Grant period).
- Eligible costs should be indicated in the estimated overall budget of the action attached to the Performance-based Agreement.
- Costs must be identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the applicant and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the lead applicant is established.
- Costs must comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.
- Costs must be reasonable, justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.
- Consultancy costs – under studies, technical assistance and other advisory services under the programme carried out by international and national consultants – are eligible as follows. Professional and consultancy services are services rendered by people with a special skill, and who are not officers or employees of the organization applying for the grant. Consulting services must be justified, with information provided on their expertise, primary organizational affiliation, normal daily fee, and number of days of expected service. Consultants' travel costs, including for subsistence, are to be shown as travel expenditure. The applicant may be required to justify the daily fee.
- Workshop costs are eligible, for the workshop venue, food and beverages, and publication material.
- Training expenditure (financial education, digital education, soft skills) for the project's final beneficiaries is eligible. If applicable, this will include all related expenditure, such as the cost of the venue, participant travel, and so on. Training for the employees of the institution applying for the grant is also eligible as long as it has been demonstrated that it will link directly to the project output.
- Investment costs directly attributable to the project, relating to research and innovation, are allowable.

4.5 Ineligible Costs

The following costs are ineligible and not accepted:

- Returns on capital and dividends paid by a beneficiary;

- Debt and debt service charges;
- Provisions for losses or debts;
- Interest owed;
- Costs declared by the applicant in the framework of another action receiving a grant financed from another donor;
- Indirect costs, also called overheads.

5. Agreement Parameters

5.1 Applicants

Eligible candidates can apply alone or as lead applicant in a consortium, as long as they comply with the eligibility requirements set forth in section 4.1. In case of a consortium of entities applying to the RfA, the lead applicant shall comply with the eligibility requirements. The lead applicant will be responsible for:

- Submitting the application form on behalf of the consortium;
- Ensuring that each partner is fully aware of the composition of the partnership and of the contents of the Application Form;
- Signing the Performance-based Agreement with UNCDF;
- Fulfilling all obligations set out in the Performance-based Agreement;
- Ensuring the allocation and the fulfilment of the funds amongst the partners in the consortium in compliance with the Performance-based Agreement;
- Ensuring the allocation and the fulfilment of the tasks amongst the partners in the consortium in compliance with the Performance-based Agreement.

5.2 Contract Duration

The contract is expected to have a 36-month duration. Activities under this Financing Grant agreement are expected to be terminated no later than 31st December 2026.

5.3 Budget

UNCDF's contributions will be in the range of USD 250,000 to 10,000,000 for each successful applicant.

The final amount and terms will depend on the scope of intervention and UNCDF's assessment of the applicants' ability to drive impact.

UNCDF may provide financial support to up to 10 technically compliant applicants in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria as set forth in section 4.3.

Successful applicants may qualify for technical assistance, grants, reimbursable grants / concessional loans or a combination thereof depending on the financing package that is ultimately agreed upon.

Applicants are allowed to apply for a combination of technical assistance, grants, reimbursable grants/concessional loans.

Applicants may apply independently or in a consortium, provided that the consortium has a pre-established partnership prior to when this request for applications was issued.

6. Application Requirements and Process

6.1 Structure of the Application

The applicant must submit a complete application form online.

Please be sure to have prepared the following documents:

- Certificate of incorporation
- Latest audited financial statements
- Latest management accounts
- Technical submission form (using UNCDF's template)
- Budget and workplan (using UNCDF's template)
- CV form (using UNCDF's template)

All submissions must be completed in **English**.

Only applications that follow the submission formats and include all the necessary documentation will be considered.

Applicants are requested to thoroughly review the documents provided at the following link [https://apply.uncdf.org/prog/230614_nata -
_nature positive business models for sustainable resilient transformation in central africa](https://apply.uncdf.org/prog/230614_nata_-_nature_positive_business_models_for_sustainable_resilient_transformation_in_central_africa) during the formulation of the application. It is crucial to ensure a comprehensive understanding of these contents in order to prepare the submission accordingly.

6.2 Application Deadline

All applications for this application window must be submitted by 23:59 EDT TIME of July 28 2023 at this link on Apply: [https://apply.uncdf.org/prog/230614_nata -
_nature positive business models for sustainable resilient transformation in central africa](https://apply.uncdf.org/prog/230614_nata_-_nature_positive_business_models_for_sustainable_resilient_transformation_in_central_africa).

Subsequent application windows will be communicated at a later date.

6.3 Selection Process

- **Step 1:** Eligibility screening – eligibility will be assessed according to the eligibility requirements as set forth in section 4.1.
- **Step 2:** Evaluation of eligible applications based on the evaluation criteria set out in section 4.3.
- **Step 3:** Due diligence – due diligence on the applications and their applicants will be conducted on applications that receive the minimum qualifying score (70/100).
- **Step 4:** Notification of applications – all applicants will be notified of the status of their

applications.

- **Step 5:** Pre-investment negotiation and Legal Agreement – the selected applicants will finalise the scope of the investment and finalise budgets, indicators and targets, workplan and disbursements of the investment that will be released on achievement of each milestone.
- **Step 6:** Approval of the selected applications by the UNCDF Corporate Investment Committee will be reviewed, discussed and approved. Any further due diligence requirements, risk analysis or milestone recommendations from the Investment Committee will be followed in later steps.
- **Step 7:** Notification of applications - all applicants will be notified of the status of their applications after final approval from UNCDF Executive Secretary.

6.4 Timeline

The RFA will be open for four weeks from the date of publishing. UNCDF will organize webinars to field questions and share information with prospective applicants as outlined below. **The indicative timeline provided below is subject to change. Kindly monitor the [UNCDF website](#) and our [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) for up-to-date information on webinars organized by UNCDF, deadline extensions etc.**

Targeted date (subject to change):	Action:
17 June 2023	Application window opens
20 June 2023	Documents uploaded on website
26 June 2023	Webinar (please register here)
29 June 2023	Deadline for questions in writing
12 July 2023	Deadline for submission

Real-time assistance from UNCDF: For requests and queries, email john.sankara@uncdf.org cc. uncdf.rfa@uncdf.org

The deliverables and any correspondence between the applicant organization and UNCDF must be in **English**.