



Unlocking Public and Private
Finance for the Poor

A large, abstract graphic on the left side of the page consists of multiple concentric, slightly irregular white lines forming a circular shape. Small white circles are scattered along these lines, resembling data points or nodes in a network.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Development and expansion of digital agricultural value-chain business models and solutions to alleviate financial and other constraints for agri-businesses and smallholder farmers in selected countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Nepal)

UN Capital Development Fund REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA) FOR

Agricultural value chain digitization:

Development and expansion of digital agricultural value chain business models and solutions to alleviate financial and other constraints for agribusinesses and smallholder farmers in selected countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Nepal)

SUMMARY

The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) makes public and private finance work for the poor in the world's 46 least developed countries (LDCs). With its capital mandate and instruments, UNCDF offers "last mile" finance models that unlock public and private resources, especially at the domestic level, to reduce poverty and support local economic development.

UNCDF, through this RFA, seeks to develop inclusive digital economies in the countries of strategic interest in the Asia region. It is imperative to focus on agricultural value chains digitization given their contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) and employed population to achieve this goal. The agricultural value chain digitization RFA seeks to support the development and growth of digital agribusiness models and solutions to alleviate financial and other constraints for agribusinesses and smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, in the region following the disruptions caused by COVID-19 in agricultural value chains.

Focus intervention areas under this RFA will include:

- access to finance
- digitization solutions for agricultural value chains
- market linkages
- and innovative digital technology solutions and products, with a clear focus on women and youth

The proposed interventions – irrespective of the affiliated country – should be deployed in the agribusiness sector in Bangladesh, Cambodia or Nepal focusing on women and youth.

Candidates can apply independently or in a consortium. Please verify the eligibility conditions in Section 3.1 of this RFA.

Selected applicants will be signing a Performance-Based Agreement¹ (PBA) with UNCDF.

The foreseen budget assigned by UNCDF will be up to US\$300,000 for the three countries. The UNCDF contributions for individual proposals can range from US\$50,000 to US\$70,000, and UNCDF will award funds to multiple organizations based on the quality of the proposals. Grant amounts could be larger for innovations ready to be scaled up. Applicants are expected to fund at least 30 per cent of the total project cost in cash (for costs such as technical resources, staff

¹ A performance-based grant agreement implies that no advance payments will be made. Grant amounts are contingent on the successful achievement of pre-determined milestones. The achievement of a milestone will therefore trigger a grant payment. The grant payments will be reimbursements for funds spent by the Grantees, according to the project implementation plan and pre-agreed milestones. The Grantee will be responsible for providing a comprehensive and compliant financial report reporting all the financial transactions relating to the Grant. The Grantee will need to keep supporting documents related to these transactions to justify all actual costs incurred.

and operational expenses).

The proposed solution must be implemented during 12 months after the PBA has been signed.

All applications must be submitted by 23:59 (EST, the New York time zone) on 19 November 2021 via APPLY.

In case of questions, please write at rfa.ide.asia@uncdf.org Please include in your subject line: “Agricultural value chain digitization RFA”.

1. INTRODUCTION

UNCDF makes public and private finance work for the poor in the world’s 46 LDCs.

UNCDF has a vision to promote inclusive digital economies that leave no one behind in the digital era. The goal is to equip millions of people to use innovative digital services in their daily lives that will empower them and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNCDF offers “last mile” finance models that unlock public and private resources, especially at the domestic level, to reduce poverty and support local economic development.

UNCDF pursues innovative financing solutions through: (1) financial inclusion, which expands the opportunities for individuals, households, and small and medium-sized enterprises to participate in the local economy, while also providing differentiated products for women and men so they can climb out of poverty and manage their financial lives; (2) local development finance, which shows how fiscal decentralization, innovative municipal finance, and structured project finance can drive public and private funding that underpins local economic expansion, women’s economic empowerment, climate adaptation, and sustainable development; and (3) a least developed countries investment platform that deploys a tailored set of financial instruments to a growing pipeline of impactful projects in the “missing middle”.

UNCDF and its Inclusive Digital Economies (IDE) practice area provide investment capital and technical support to both the public and the private sector. It provides capital financing - in the forms of grants, soft loans and credit enhancement – and the technical expertise to unleash sustainable financing at the local level.

Of the world’s 500 million smallholder farmers, around 400 million are in Asia². The region is home to some of the world’s most climate-exposed territories and has been disproportionately hit by the effects of climate change, and farmers and related enterprises are suffering from crop failures that can threaten their economic livelihood. Supporting farmers and micro-entrepreneurs gain better access to finance and manage financial losses arising from frequent and severe weather events is imperative to implement leveraging the benefits of digital platforms and solutions.

In ASEAN, women comprise over 50 per cent of agriculture labour force. Nearly 75 per cent of women in Cambodia are engaged in agriculture, 69 per cent of women are agricultural workers in Myanmar, followed by 48 per cent in Viet Nam, and 40 per cent in Indonesia. Despite growing industrialization, agriculture and its product subsectors like livestock and forestry largely employ

² Source: [World Bank Group's Agri Insuretech Challenge Awards Nine Entrepreneurs for Innovative Agriculture Solutions \(prnewswire.com\)](https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/world-bank-group-agri-insuretech-challenge-awards-nine-entrepreneurs-for-innovative-agriculture-solutions-301484881.html)

women. An estimated 83 per cent of women work in agriculture for a sustained livelihood in Nepal and women constitute over 50 per cent of the farm labour force in Bangladesh.

For UNCDF to develop inclusive digital economies, it is imperative to focus on agriculture to achieve this goal, given its contribution to the GDP and the percentage of populations agriculture employs, specifically women. The contribution of agriculture to GDP stands at 12.6 per cent for Bangladesh, 23 per cent for Nepal, and 23 per cent for Cambodia.³ The sector employs about 38.3 per cent, 64.4 per cent, and 34.5 per cent of the total population of Bangladesh, Nepal, and Cambodia respectively.⁴ The agri-food sector is critical for livelihoods and employment. As technology has progressed, so has its uses in agriculture, bringing change in the sector. The developing world is starting to see the adoption of technology and the digital in agricultural value chain solutions, positively impacting multiple stakeholders, such as smallholder farmers including women and youth.

In Bangladesh, agriculture has been the most significant sector of the economy. In 2019, this sector employed 38.58 per cent of the population against the global average of 26.86 per cent. According to the demographic dividend, almost one third of the total population of Bangladesh is youth and almost half is women with a sex ratio of 100.2 in 2017.⁵ While women constitute over 50 per cent of the farm labour force in Bangladesh, the agriculture sector is not able to engage youth resulting in youth unemployment of 11.87 per cent in 2019.⁶ Over the last ten years, the total employment in the agriculture sector has been decreasing, while the unemployment rate of youth is increasing. Digitizing agricultural value chains can attract youth to the agriculture sector positively impacting the productivity of the sector.

Nepal is an agricultural country with 66 per cent of its people directly engaged in farming. More than half - 57 per cent - of the population of working age is reported to be economically active and, among them, 81 per cent are engaged in agricultural activities.⁷ Women's employment in agriculture as a percentage of women's employment stood at 74.08 per cent in 2019⁸ highlighting the impact that digitization in the agricultural value chain can have on women's livelihoods. Nepal is a young country with 63.7 per cent of the total population below the age of 30 where the unemployment rate for youth aged 15-29 is 19.2 per cent. Youth brings an innovative, tech-savvy perspective to solve some of the most difficult problems in agriculture, clubbed with their technology skills to create change in their communities. There is an immense potential for youth involvement in agricultural value chain digitization.

In Cambodia, agriculture accounts for 23 per cent of the GDP and it employs about 34.5 per cent of the total population. Women's employment in agriculture as a percentage of women's employment stood at 36.5 per cent in 2019. Agriculture has the potential to be an engine for economic growth and food security in Cambodia, but the country must improve its production and post-harvest infrastructure, streamline the business environment, and increase capacity for financial services to reach rural entrepreneurs. The digitization of agricultural value chains holds substantial promise for the country and for the livelihoods of women and youth.

³ Source: [Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added \(% of GDP\) - Bangladesh | Data \(worldbank.org\)](https://data.worldbank.org/AG/AG.VA.GDVS?locations=BD)

⁴ Source: [Employment in agriculture \(% of total employment\) \(modeled ILO estimate\) - Cambodia, Bangladesh, Nepal | Data \(worldbank.org\)](https://data.worldbank.org/SL/SL.EA.AGVS?locations=BD)

⁵ Source: [Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2018.pdf \(portal.gov.bd\)](https://portal.gov.bd/publications/gender-statistics-bangladesh-2018)

⁶ Source: [Youth engagement in agriculture in Bangladesh \(thefinancialexpress.com.bd\)](https://www.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/youth-engagement-in-agriculture-in-bangladesh)

⁷ Source: [Nepal at a glance | FAO in Nepal | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](https://www.fao.org/nr/nap/nepal-at-a-glance)

⁸ Source: [Employment in agriculture, female \(% of female employment\) \(modeled ILO estimate\) - Nepal | Data \(worldbank.org\)](https://data.worldbank.org/SL/SL.EA.AGVS?locations=BD)

2. SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 Areas of intervention

For this RFA, UNCDF invites applications from registered entities that can offer innovative and scalable solutions addressing one or more of the following challenges through the following areas of intervention.

The RFA intends to ensure that the awarded projects are inclusive from the initial stages, with special focus on women and youth. Given the reliance of women on the agricultural sector, agricultural value chain digitization solutions have the potential to empower women. The impact on women can be further enhanced if this aspect is included from the early stages of project planning. The UNCDF Gender team can support successful applicants with technical assistance to ensure that the gender dimension is addressed and the projects are gender-inclusive. The involvement of gender experts can help conduct a gender-smart market analysis and collect sex-disaggregated data.

Areas of intervention		Challenges and objectives for a solution
1	Access to finance	<p><i>Challenges:</i> In almost all developing countries, agriculture is the main occupation for most people. Yet farmers and agricultural value chain companies in these countries lack access to timely and cost-effective finance. Given the percentage of women and youth employed by the agriculture sector in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Cambodia, this further directly impacts them.</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> The selected entities should provide smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, and agricultural value chain organizations with adequate access to alternative digital financing solutions permissible under the land law.</p>
2	Digitization solutions for agricultural value chain	<p><i>Challenges:</i> Agricultural value chains in developing markets are often inefficient, impacting productivity, increasing waste, and reducing the income of farmers.</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> Digitizing agribusinesses can address many business challenges and increase farmer loyalty, operational efficiency and real-time visibility in the last mile. The digitization of value chains also benefits farmers, especially women and youth, by promoting financial inclusion, enabling transparent transactions and reducing travel times and transaction costs associated with deploying near-to-home cash-out points.</p>
3	Market linkages	<p><i>Challenges:</i> The organization and governance of an agricultural value chain across multiple developing countries is challenging. Some of the common obstacles are the existence of several intermediaries, the absence of information about other links in the chain, the inability to invest in improving the performance and inefficiencies and lower incomes, especially at the lower end of the chain.</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i> The innovation and expansion solutions of an agricultural</p>

		value chain for market linkages can connect farmers and producers, including women and youth, directly with upstream markets. It can also focus on connecting the end consumer back to the source of production and supporting innovations for digitizing the supply chain. Connecting smallholder farmers to e-commerce platforms can help deliver their farm products directly to the market.
4	Innovative digital technology solutions and products	<p>Challenges: There is an ever-increasing need to invest in agriculture due to a drastic rise in global population and changing dietary preferences of the growing middle class in emerging markets towards higher-value agricultural products. In addition, climate risks increase the need for investments to make agriculture more resilient to such risks.¹¹ These risks need effective innovative products and solutions to mitigate them.</p> <p>Objectives: Innovative digital technology solutions and products such as livestock registration and weather-based digital crop insurance have the potential to effectively mitigate the risks and challenges that the agriculture sector faces, directly impacting women and youth.</p>
5	Improvement of public service delivery in agriculture	<p>Challenge: Agriculture is the backbone of most Asian economies, given its contribution to employed population and GDP in these markets. Therefore, this sector is a priority for many governments in the region and receives multiple incentives. Effective, timely and targeted, focusing on women and youth, distribution of these incentives is a challenge that needs to be addressed.</p> <p>Objectives: Supporting innovation in public agencies at the national, provincial and local levels using digital technologies for agricultural value chain ecosystem development can help manage the database of farmers, government subsidies, agricultural extension and other support services. This could ensure efficiency in public service delivery guaranteeing more vulnerable segments, especially women and youth, are included.</p>

The examples of solutions in the identified areas of intervention are not exhaustive. The team at UNCDF is excited to hear what potential applicants have in mind outside these examples as long as your scale, commercial viability and impact objectives are aligned.

Additional fine tuning of the solution could also take place in discussion with team at UNCDF before finalization of the grant funding.

2.2 How UNCDF works with partners

UNCDF takes a tailored approach to engagement with partners, working with each to identify business and customer needs and helping to design, pilot and scale up the solution along the way. Some examples of the ways in which UNCDF works with partners include:

- **Product research:** Sharing market research and knowledge to deepen the understanding of customers' behaviours, needs, constraints and aspirations by partners. This also includes providing transaction data analysis and training to the business teams.

¹¹ Source: [Agriculture Finance & Agriculture Insurance \(worldbank.org\)](https://www.worldbank.org/)

- **Product design:** Providing human-centred design expertise to better understand the customer journey – physical and financial – for better product design and use-case development tailored to the needs of low-income customers and their families. The efforts may also involve analysing the transaction data through a customer lens.
- **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.
- **Partnerships:** Facilitating strategic partnerships with stakeholders – including cross-border payment hubs, mobile network operators, financial institutions, and non-bank financial institutions – to enable partners to reach last-mile customers, and to grow sustainably. UNCDF is uniquely positioned to be a neutral broker of partnerships and has a record of building strong relationships with private and public organizations.
- **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.

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

2.3 Expected results

All applications must include targets on the indicators 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. During the negotiation process of the PBA, selected applicants and UNCDF shall develop a monitoring framework. This may include additional indicators and targets, tailored to the scope of the proposed solution, activities and expected results.

Indicators	Disaggregation
# of clients (farmers and/or agribusinesses) registered for the digital solution	Total: Women (%): Youth between 18 and 24 years old (%): Youth between 25 and 35 years old (%):
# of clients (farmers and/or agribusinesses) actively using the digital solution	Total: Women (%): Youth between 18 and 24 years old (%): Youth between 25 and 35 years old (%):

# of clients (farmers and/or agribusinesses) received training on the digital solution	Total: Women (%): Youth between 18 and 24 years old (%): Youth between 25 and 35 years old (%):
# of partners (such as banks, insurance companies, farmer producer organizations) onboarded to the digital solution	Total: Women (%): Youth between 18 and 24 years old (%): Youth between 25 and 35 years old (%):

Please note that during the negotiations process of the PBA, applicants shall be required to integrate the monitoring framework with additional key performance indicators (KPIs).

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICATION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Only applications that meet the eligibility requirements and minimum criteria for the submission will be scored.

3.1 Eligibility requirements

Entity registration

- The applicant or lead applicant must be a registered entity.

Country of operation

- The applicant can be based anywhere globally, but the project implementation and solution must focus on agricultural value chain digitization in one or more of the target countries - Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal.
- If the applicant does not have regulatory approval to pilot the proposed solution in the target country or countries, the applicant must partner with a regulated institution in the country or countries to deliver the solution.

Consortium

- Joint applications between market players in the target country or countries are encouraged if the proposed solution will expand agricultural value chain digitization with a particular focus to benefit women and youth.
- Applicants may apply only once under this RFA, whether independently or in a consortium.
- Applications from consortiums of organizations must show that the partnership was established prior to this call for applications or due to this call for application with a letter

of intent.

- The lead applicant and their consortium partner must be registered entities with at least one year of operations and must have statutory accounts and audited financial statements for at least one operating year.

Solutions to be supported

- Applicants must have an existing solution having tested a proof of concept that is ready to undergo pilot testing for a duration of 12 months.
- The proposed solution must be implemented within a project duration of 12 months after the signature of the PBA.

Project funding

- Applicants must contribute at least 30 per cent of the project's cash costs (costs may include technical infrastructure, resources, and operations).

Exclusionary criteria

- 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.
- Applicants and any of their staff or member of their board of directors shall not be included in the United Nations financial sanctions lists, particularly in the fight against the financing of terrorism and against attacks on international peace and security.¹²
- Applicants must not be involved in any of the following activities:¹³ 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; 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 labour; use or toleration of child labour.
- 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.
- Applicants must accept the language of the UNCDF PBA.

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

3.2 Evaluation criteria

¹² See: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/information>

¹³ See UNDP Policy on Due Diligence and Partnerships with the Private Sector (2013): https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/BERA_Partnerships_UNDP%20private%20sector%20due%20diligence%20policy%202013_FINAL.pdf&action=default

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

Only applications that score at least 70 out of 100 will be considered successful and move to the due-diligence stage.

	Criteria	Max Score
1	<u>Organization's profile and experience</u> <i>Score the applicant's profile, track record, reputation, experience in similar projects and in the country/region, as well as if the applicant has successfully implemented other projects with UNCDF.</i>	15
2	<u>Team</u> <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, in-the-field footprint, monitoring and result management 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, if the project strategy covers risk management, quality control, reporting and other project management good practices.</i>	15
4	<u>Additionality</u> <i>Score if the UNCDF funding for the applicant will create:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial additionality: If the applicant cannot obtain funding from local or international private capital markets with similar terms or quantities without official support. • Non-financial value: Value that the private sector is not currently offering and which will lead to better outcomes, for example by providing or catalyzing knowledge and expertise, promoting social or environmental standards or fostering good corporate governance. • Impact: Faster, larger or better development impacts than the applicant would have been able to achieve working alone. 	20
5	<u>Gender perspective</u> <i>Score if the applicant has foreseen a gender focus in the proposed intervention to have women both external (users) and internal (staff) benefiting equally with men.</i>	10
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>	15
7	<u>Result Measurement</u> <i>Score if the applicant has provided coherent measurement plan and data management plans.</i>	10
TOTAL		100

UNCDF will also assess the value for money of the submissions using the following formula:

Amount of grant requested (A)

Number of total beneficiaries (B)

Value for money A / B

3.3 Eligible costs

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

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

- Eligible costs must be incurred by the applicant during the project after the signature of the PBA 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 PBA.
- Costs must be identifiable and verifiable, in particular 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 for financial education, digital education and the development of soft skills for the final beneficiaries of the project are eligible. If applicable, this will include all related expenditures, such as the cost of the venue and the travel of the participants. 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 eligible.

3.4 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

4. AGREEMENT PARAMETERS

Applicants shall provide evidence that their solutions are aligned with the following parameters.

4.1 Applicants

Eligible candidates can apply alone or as a lead applicant in a consortium of firms, as long as they comply with the eligibility requirements set forth in section 3.1. 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 of:

- 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 PBA with UNCDF
- Fulfilling all obligations set out in the PBA
- Ensuring the allocation and the fulfilment of funds among the partners in the consortium in compliance with the PBA
- Ensuring the allocation and the fulfilment of tasks among the partners in the consortium in compliance with the PBA

4.2 Target segments of population

The requirement of the RFA is to support such efforts by having more of use cases that most clearly serve the poor and the low income first, in particular the most marginalized such as small holder farmers, agricultural value chain MSMEs, women and youth.

4.3 Geographical scope

Country-wide in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Nepal.

4.4 Project duration

Projects are expected to last 12 months. Activities are expected to be terminated no later than December 2022.

4.5 Language

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

4.6 Budget

UNCDF will provide the grant to the selected applicants that are technically compliant in accordance with the evaluation criteria as set forth in section 3.2. The applications can range between US\$50,000 and US\$70,000.

Specific projects will be financed based on business needs. Depending on the maturity of the solutions and the success of the pilot, UNCDF could continue its support for the mobilization of investment capital such as loan and guarantee and further technical assistance.

Applications will need to describe how applicants will deploy the grant and if any technical assistance or mentorship services will be sought.

5. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS

5.1 Structure of the application

The applicant must submit a complete application form available at this link: https://apply.uncdf.org/prog/interoperable_domestic_remittance_system_digital_infrastructure_for_merchants_women_and_youth_in_bangladesh/

The online application form must include the following documents:

- Certificate of incorporation
- Latest audited financial statements
- Latest management accounts
- Official documents confirming the tax and social security payments
- Technical submission form (using the UNCDF template)
- Budget and workplan (using the UNCDF template)
- CV form (using the UNCDF template)

All submissions must be completed in English.

UNCDF may request additional documentation to accept the reception of submissions.

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

5.2 Application deadline

All applications must be submitted by 23:59 hours (EST, the New York time zone) on 19 November 2021.

5.3 Selection process:

- Step 1: Eligibility screening – eligibility will be assessed by the screening team members according to the eligibility requirements as set forth in section 3.1.
- Step 2: Evaluation of eligible applications by the Evaluation Committee – the Evaluation Committee will evaluate the applications based on the evaluation criteria set out in section 3.2.
- Step 3: Due diligence – due diligence of the applications and their applicants will be conducted by the team members for 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-grant negotiation and PBA – the selected applicants will finalize the scope of the grant and finalize budgets, indicators and targets, workplan and disbursements of the grant that will be released on the achievement of each milestone.
- Step 6: Approval of the selected applications by the Investment Committee – applications selected by the Evaluation Committee will be reviewed, discussed and approved by the Investment Committee. 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 the Investment Committee.

5.4 Timeline

29 October 2021	Application window opens
19 November 2021	Questions will be answered until the applications closing date
19 November 2021	Deadline for submission

5.5 Real-time assistance from UNCDF

For requests and queries, send an email to rfa.ide.asia@uncdf.org. Please include in your subject line: “Agricultural value chain digitization RFA”.