



## **AFAWA - WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP ENABLERS PROGRAM**

### **CALL FOR PROPOSALS: ENHANCING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP ENABLERS FOR STRONGER WOMEN SMEs IN AFRICA**

The African continent has the highest entrepreneurship rate in the world, mainly driven by women entrepreneurs. African women are twice as likely to start a business than women elsewhere in world, however, their contributions to economic growth have so far been limited.

African women entrepreneurs still find it more difficult than men to convert their intentions into fast-growing, profitable, and sustainable businesses. They tend to be overrepresented in small businesses and in sectors characterized by low productivity and profitability and face multiple challenges. They are, therefore, disproportionately shunned from effectively participating in the market economy, limiting countries from realizing their full growth and employment creation potentials. Low access to finance has been a major constraint for women entrepreneurs in Africa who face a total financing gap estimated at USD 42 billion for formal women SMEs.

To address this challenge, the African Development Bank Group, established the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA), a flagship initiative that specifically focuses on increasing inclusive finance for women entrepreneurs on the continent. AFAWA's primary objective is to bridge the finance gap for women entrepreneurs and to unlock their entrepreneurial capacity and full potential. AFAWA is unique in that it offers a multi-dimensional approach to removing the constraints that women entrepreneurs face through three pillars of intervention: 1) strengthening access to finance for women-owned/led businesses by leveraging the Bank's financial traditional instruments (lines of credit, trade finance, and equity funds) and through the AFAWA Guarantee for Growth (G4G), an innovative mechanism de-risking women entrepreneurs and enhancing Financial Institutions' (FIs) appetite in lending to WSMEs.; 2) building the capacity of women entrepreneurs and financial institutions; 3) strengthening the enabling environment to increase WSMEs ability to access financing.

**In order to achieve its objectives, AFAWA partners with women entrepreneurship enablers to reinforce the capacity of women SMEs to access finance and scale up their businesses.**

Women business enablers, such as women's business associations, incubators, accelerators, formal women cooperatives, eligible civil society organizations. etc. play an important role in promoting the development of women-owned enterprises and strengthening them to achieve growth. They are critical to creating a viable enabling environment in which women entrepreneurs can grow and create businesses that generate jobs for the continent, by providing advisory and training services to women's enterprises on various business management skills, allowing them to not only move from the informal to the formal sector but also become commercially viable and most of all to access finance.

Within the framework of the **Women Entrepreneurship Enablers Program**, the Bank is looking to support projects which aim to enhance the viability and sustainability of formal women SMEs and allow them to access financing opportunities to grow their businesses.

The Bank encourages women's business associations, incubators, accelerators, women formal cooperatives, eligible civil society organizations and other legal entities to share proposals aligned with the objectives and themes set out below.

### **Expectations**

Submitted proposals will:

- i.** Demonstrate innovative approaches to build a supportive ecosystem for women's entrepreneurship aimed at improving access to finance for WSMEs and accelerate business growth;
- ii.** Develop innovative ways to disseminate advisory services and technical assistance addressing capacity constraints, and skills enhancement for WSMEs to support access to funding;
- iii.** Develop a comprehensive and sustainable capacity-building program to enable access to finance in partnership with financial institutions;
- iv.** Enhance visibility and digital presence for WSMEs;
- v.** Enhance access to mentorship and role models for WSMEs.

Funding requests may be for a specific project or for an indicative program of several projects, or over several countries. **The minimum threshold for requesting funding from this call for proposal is \$100,000 and the maximum threshold is \$250,000.** This is a one-time grant.

### **Geographical Scope**

Applications are welcome from all 54 Africa countries, transitional/fragile<sup>1</sup>, Sahel and North African countries are strongly encouraged to submit proposals.

### **Funding Principles and Criteria**

- i.** The projects should be implemented in more than 2 countries;
- ii.** The project duration should not exceed 2 (two) years;
- iii.** Recipients and project sponsors should be Africa-based or provide evidence of partnership with African entities and show that the proposed activities, operations, and projects will be implemented in Africa;
- iv.** Applicants must be legally constituted institutions that have been in existence for at least three years with strong financial and procurement procedures;
- v.** Collaboration between two or several applicant enablers is encouraged;

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<sup>1</sup> Central (Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Cameroon); East (Eritrea, Djibouti, South Sudan, Sudan, Burundi, Comoros, Somalia); South (Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Madagascar, Malawi); West (Burkina, Mali, Niger, Togo, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Nigeria).

- vi.** Partnerships are strongly encouraged particularly with one or multiple financial organizations and with both public and private sectors;
- vii.** Previous experience in managing external funding and executing projects from donors is required;

**Assessment:** Proposals received will be assessed based on the following considerations:

Clarity and Viability		Track Record and Leverage			Project Impact			Monitoring, Evaluation, Scaling		Total (100)
Has the applicants demonstrated a clear understanding of the main issues (WSMEs' access to significant fundings scalability of their businesses)? (8)	Is the timing, sequencing, and resourcing of the effort reasonable and effective? (7)	Has the applicant demonstrated a track record (strong results and impacts) in supporting women SMEs in accessing significant fundings and developing their businesses?  Has the organization demonstrated its ability to achieve the milestones laid out in the concept note (consider team size, partnerships, and track record)? (7)	Has the proposal demonstrated an innovative approach to build a supportive ecosystem for women SMEs to access to finance and scale up their businesses?  Does the proposal include a partnership with one or multiple financial organizations, with both public and private sectors, with other entrepreneurship enablers? (8)	Are the funds provided being leveraged (through partnerships, matching funds, skin in the game etc.) to ensure maximum impact? (20)	Has the proposal demonstrated strong development impact (number of beneficiaries, the funding mobilized by women SMEs)? (10)	Is there a well-defined roadmap for how the proposed intervention would draw more women SMEs to access finance and scale up their business? (10)	Has the proposal demonstrated alignment with national or regional priorities on access to financial services/financial inclusion for WSME to maximize the impact and the scalability of the model? (10)	Does the project demonstrate the potential sustainability and scalability of the model going forward? (10)	Does the applicant articulate M and E plan and mitigation to risks? (10)	

## Application and Timelines

The call for proposals will be financed through the Gender Equality Trust Fund (GETF) of the African Development Bank Group.

- Proposals should be submitted through the application platform and include the *Application proposal template* available on the platform in Word format; [\(you can also download it here\)](#).
- *Application proposals* can be submitted either in English or French and they should not exceed 10 pages including cover page and any annex. NB: Any proposal of more than 10 pages will not be assessed.
- Application proposals should be submitted via the platform with the subject title “Name of lead organization\_Name of project”, **by Midnight GMT on Friday 25th November 2022.**

## Application process on the platform

- Step 1 : Answer the preliminary questions
- Step 2 : Download and complete the *Application proposal template* (in Word format)
- Step 3 : Upload your Application proposal (maximum 10 pages) on the platform
- Step 4 : Submit your application through the platform

**A webinar will be held on Friday 4th November 2022 to answer any questions.** Here is the link to register to the Zoom meeting

<https://afdb.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAvcuizr0iHNBargqag4a5lqHIEUWAtTYG>

Awardees will be contacted directly and announced through the Bank’s website and other outlets.

Short-listing and selection shall be done in accordance with the Bank’s policies, rules, and procedures. The Bank is under no obligation to shortlist any company, partnership, entity, or association

For any queries, you can contact the project team on [afawa@afdb.org](mailto:afawa@afdb.org) .