



**Reforestation for Communities Prosperity in Eastern Uganda -
ReForEst Uganda - NDICI AFRICA/2023/450-049**



Contracting authority:

Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)

**Reforestation for Communities Prosperity in Eastern Uganda
ReForEst Uganda**

NDICI AFRICA/2023/450-049 (AID 12967/01)

Guidelines for grant applicants

Reference: ReForEst/CFP/2025/02

Title:

**Restoration, Improved Management and Conservation of High-Value
Forests, and Community Support for Preservation and Increased Tree
Cover in Eastern Uganda and Napak District, Karamoja**

**Deadline for submission of proposals:
December 1st, 2025 – h.16:00 EAT**



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NOTICE

This is an open call for proposals, where all documents are submitted together (concept note and full application). In the first instance, only the concept notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the lead applicants who have been pre-selected, the full applications will be evaluated. After the evaluation of the full applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected (including those placed on the reserve list). Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority and the signed 'declaration by the lead applicant' sent together with the full application.

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1. REFORESTATION FOR COMMUNITIES' PROSPERITY IN EASTERN UGANDA - REFOREST UGANDA

1.1. BACKGROUND

Reforestation for Communities Prosperity in Eastern Uganda - ReForEst Uganda is a five-year Action implemented by AICS with funding from the European Union under the programme Partnership for Forest (P4F) in Uganda, in the frame of the Forest Partnership between the European Union and the Government of Uganda signed in November 2023. The action contributes to Ugandan strategies related to environmental conservation and adaptation to climate change. It is fully aligned to the Uganda NDP III and NDP IV programs and objectives. The initiative, with a budget of 14 million Euros, covers a number of districts in the Eastern Region and its three sub-regions: 1. East Central, 2. Elgon; 3. Teso and in the Napak District in the Karamoja region. The Action will contribute to Ugandan strategies related to environmental conservation and adaptation to climate change. Partnership and coordination with MoWE, NFA and UWA ensure full ownership and alignment to national policies and strategic plans. The Action will be also integrated in synergy with the ongoing national programs implemented by Government of Uganda, the World Bank, and other donors. The strategy behind the action is to interlink biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable livelihoods in an integrated and sustainable manner through increased access to green finance and incentive schemes that encourage the conservation/restoration of forests, the promotion of agroforestry and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), and the protection/restoration of critical ecosystems. The intervention is strongly business-oriented since it aims at providing individuals and community groups with new income opportunities thus decreasing their dependence on forest resources and ensuring direct benefits from ecosystem services, with strong private sector engagement. The initiative will engage and empower communities to restore and manage ecosystems through community-based activation processes and promoting Collaborative Natural Resources Management approaches to encourage working partnerships between forest-wildlife reserve adjacent communities and State Forest Departments Uganda Wildlife Authority, as well as Local Governments, Civic Society, and the Private Sector and the Traditional Rulers.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The objectives of the Action are:

- **The global objective** of the project is to enhance the sustainable contribution of Uganda's forests resources to national inclusive economic growth and to global efforts to address climate change and loss of biodiversity
- **The specific objective** is to contribute to the eastern region's environmental sustainability and economic growth by promoting reforestation, agroforestry, and nature-based enterprises
- **The expected outputs- results of the actions are:**

Output 1: Increased tree cover by promoting restoration, improved management and conservation of high-value forests, and community support for preservation

Output 2: Agroforestry and the regeneration of indigenous tree species are promoted and contribute to reducing pressure on forest reserves and provide livelihood benefits

Output 3: The livelihoods of communities residing in the project area are improved by developing sustainable non-timber value chain enterprises and strategies with a direct link to forest conservation.

Output 4: The capacity of institutions and stakeholders to sustainably manage forests and access forest finance is enhanced.



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The Priorities for this Call are as Follows:

With reference to the attached Description of the Action (DoA) (Attachment 1) the priorities of this call for proposals lie within the output 1 and output 2 of the Action:

OUTPUT 1: Increased trees cover by promoting restoration, improved management and conservation of high-value forests, and community support for preservation.

OUTPUT 2: Agroforestry and the regeneration of indigenous tree species are promoted and contribute to reducing pressure on forest reserves and provide livelihood benefits.

The intervention will contribute to increasing and conserving the forested area in the eastern region and Karamoja (Napak District) by restoring natural forests and woodlands, enhancing their sustainable management through collaborative resource efforts with communities. Emphasis will be given to the regeneration of indigenous tree species, and community involvement in their sustainable management.

The intervention envisages to promote agroforestry with indigenous and exotic useful tree species using intercropping practices. The intervention which intends operating off reserves has a focus on indigenous tree species. Farmers will be given the opportunity to link with various financial institutions and to register with the voluntary carbon credit market, to peruse incentives to encourage investments in agroforestry and cushion the initial phases of trees growth when costs are usually greater than benefits.

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 2.700.000,00 (two million seven hundred thousand Euros). The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Size of grants

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must not exceed the below maximum amount:

- maximum amount: EUR 2.700.000,00 (two million seven hundred thousand Euros)

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must not exceed the below maximum percentage of total eligible costs of the action:

- Maximum percentage: 100% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.4.).

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the contracting authority) must be financed from sources other than the general budget of the Union or the European Development Fund¹.

The grant may cover the entire eligible costs of the action if this is deemed essential to carry it out. If that is the case, the lead applicant must justify full financing in Section 2.1 of Part B of the grant application form. The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. The absence of any justification might lead to the rejection of the application.

¹ Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.



2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide (PRAG), which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address:

<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG>).²

2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- (1) the actors (2.1.1.):
 - the **'lead applicant'**, i.e. the entity submitting the application form.
 - if any, its **co-applicant(s)** (where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as 'applicant(s)');
 - and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s);
- (2) the actions (2.1.3.):
 - actions for which a grant may be awarded.
- (3) the costs (2.1.4.):
 - types of cost that may be considered in setting the amount of the grant.

2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))

Lead applicant

In order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must:

- a) be a legal person, **and**
- b) be a profit- or non-profit-making, **and**
- c) be either a non-governmental organization, or a private company, or a public sector operator, or a local authority or an international (inter-governmental) organization as defined by Article 159(1) of the EU Financial Regulation, registered towards the relevant authority in Uganda, **and**
- d) be effectively established in³ a Member State of the European Union or in an eligible country or territory as defined under Article 28(1) of NDICI-GE5⁴

² Note that a lead applicant (i.e. a coordinator) whose pillars have been positively assessed by the European Commission and who is awarded a grant will not sign the standard grant contract published with these guidelines, but a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. All references in these guidelines and other documents related to this call to the standard grant contract shall in this case be understood as referring to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement template.

³ To be determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned and that its head office is located in an eligible country. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot



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(this obligation does not apply to international organisations) **and**

- e) be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), if any, not acting as an intermediary, **and**
- f) not being in any of the situations listed in Section 2.4. of the practical guide, **and**
- g) demonstrate expertise in similar projects in Africa. This set of experience and competences may be complemented by co-applicants and/or affiliate entities, **and**
- h) possess a minimum of ten-year experience in forestry, agroforestry, NTFPs, Rural Development, **and**
- i) demonstrate adequate planning, monitoring, evaluation, advocacy, communication capacities applicable to the action proposed, **and**
- j) demonstrate the capacity to manage a yearly project portfolio of at least one million Euros (1.000.000,00 Euros).

The relevant experiences mentioned at points g), h), i) and j) must be clearly reported in the related section of the Concept Note as well as in the Full Application Form. Kindly note that proofs of the reported experiences might be requested by the Evaluation Committee at any stage of the evaluation procedure.

The lead applicant may act individually or with co-applicant(s).

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in Annex G (special conditions). The coordinator is the sole interlocutor of the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide. Where applicable, and in accordance with the relevant laws, applicants affiliated entity(ies) established in Italy should be required to submit the necessary documentation for the request of the anti-mafia certificate to the competent authorities (Italian D.L. 159/2011).

Co-applicant(s)

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself.

In addition to the categories referred to in Section 2.1.1, the following are however also eligible: be established in any of the countries belonging to the Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as member countries or eligible for development aid according to the OECD-DAC List of ODA Recipients

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Part B Section 4 of the grant application form.

If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action (together with the coordinator).

be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a 'Memorandum of Understanding' has been concluded.

4

https://trasparenzabeirut.aics.gov.it/moduli/downloadFile.php?file=oggetto_allegati/25189151526276329200_Oguidelines_elissa_cfp_2025_01.pdf



2.1.2. Affiliated entities

The lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) may act with affiliated entity(ies).

Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant and/or to co-applicant(s):

Only entities having a structural link with the applicants (i.e. the lead applicant or a co-applicant), in particular a legal or capital link.

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

- (i) Control, as defined in Directive 2013/34/EU on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings:

Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:

- Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control;
- Entities directly or indirectly controlling the applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant;
- Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the applicant (sister companies).

- (ii) Membership, i.e. the applicant is legally defined as a e.g. network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate or the applicant participates in the same entity (e.g. network, federation, association...) as the proposed affiliated entities.

The structural link shall, as a general rule, be neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. This means that the link would exist independently of the award of the grant; it should exist before the call for proposals and remain valid after the end of the action.

By way of exception, an entity may be considered as affiliated to an applicant even if it has a structural link specifically established for the sole purpose of the implementation of the action in the case of so-called 'sole applicants' or 'sole beneficiaries'. A sole applicant or a sole beneficiary is a legal entity formed by several entities (a group of entities) which together comply with the criteria for being awarded the grant. For example, an association is formed by its members.

What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

- Entities that have entered a (procurement) contract or subcontract with an applicant, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for an applicant,
- Entities that receive financial support from the applicant,
- Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with an applicant on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,
- Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant contract (unless this consortium agreement leads to the creation of a 'sole applicant' as described above).

How to verify the existence of the required link with an applicant?

The affiliation resulting from control may in particular be proved on the basis of the consolidated accounts of the group of entities the applicant and its proposed affiliates belong to.



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The affiliation resulting from membership may in particular be proved on the basis of the statutes or equivalent act establishing the entity (network, federation, association) which the applicant constitutes or in which the applicant participates.

If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for implementation contracts and financial support to third parties and subcontractors) may be accepted as eligible costs, provided they comply with all the relevant rules already applicable to the beneficiary(ies) under the grant contract.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the lead applicant and the co-applicant(s). They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Part B Section 5 of the grant application form.

2.1.3. Associates and contractors

The following entities are not applicants nor affiliated entities and do not have to sign the ‘mandate for co-applicant(s)’ or ‘affiliated entities’ statement:

- **Associates**

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Part B Section 6 — ‘Associates participating in the action’ — of the grant application form.

- **Contractors**

The beneficiaries and their affiliated entities are permitted to award contracts (subcontracting or implementation contracts). Beneficiaries, affiliated entity(ies), recipients of financial support or associates cannot be also contractors in the project. Contractors are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

- **Recipients of financial support**

If allowed by the call for proposals, and under the conditions laid herein and in the grant contract, the beneficiaries and their affiliated are permitted to provide financial support to other third parties. These third parties are neither beneficiaries, affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

Each actor should only participate in a single role in an action. This is to avoid any potential conflicts of interest and ensure clear allocation of rights and obligations as well as certainty on cost eligibility.

2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not exceed 36 months.



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Sectors or themes

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Main SDG:

Life on land (SDG 15)

Other significant SDGs:

Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8);

Climate Action (SDG 13);

Peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16).

Gender Equality (SDG5);

SDG 12 – responsible consumption and production.

OECD-DAC Cods target:

312 Forestry

410 Environment Protection

43040 Rural Development

Location

The Action must take place in Uganda, and more specifically in the Eastern Region and in Karamoja in the following 16 (sixteen) districts:

East Central sub-region: Jinja, Luuka, Kamuli

Elgon sub-region: Mbale Sironko, Balambuli Namisindwa

Teso sub-region: Soroti, Kaberameido, Amuria, Kapelebyong, Katakwi, Kumi, Ngora, Serere

Karamoja: Napak

Types of Actions

Applicants shall describe how the action will encompass all the standard activities listed below. Additional and complementary activities are allowed as far as necessary to achieve the objectives of this call for proposals.

TYPE OF ACTION 1

- I. Restoration and sustainable management of natural high-value forests and woodlands, found outside forest reserves and protected areas, for conserving and increasing the forested area in the Eastern region by restoring natural high-value forests and woodlands and enhancing their sustainable management through collaborative resources management efforts with communities. Emphasis will be given to the regeneration of indigenous tree species, and community involvement in their sustainable management

This cluster of activities will bring about the following result:

Increased tree cover by promoting restoration, improved management and conservation of high-value forests, and community support for preservation

TYPE OF ACTION 2

- II. Implementation of agroforestry activities using indigenous and exotic useful tree species employing several agroforestry technologies. This may also be achieved by offering farmers some incentives to encourage investments in agroforestry to cushion the initial phases of trees growth when costs are usually greater than benefits. The activities will actively engage farmers and local communities in agroforestry practices for climate mitigation and adaptation. Through awareness campaigns, training programs, and knowledge sharing, farmers and communities will be encouraged to adopt agroforestry techniques that contribute to climate change mitigation and enhance their resilience to climate-related shocks. Conservation and planting of indigenous trees at the household level, carbon markets and incentive mechanisms (e.g., payment of ecosystem



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services), capacity building in regenerative agricultural practices and techniques are all relevant topics under this component. Existing tree nurseries, producing seedlings of various indigenous species, traditionally used for food security, firewood, traditional medicines, fuelwood, timber will be strengthened, few (3) will be established at community level. Non-timber forest products, in particular cashew, wild mango, shea nuts, non-food bamboo and apiary will be targeted for production in agroforestry farming system.

This cluster of activities will bring about the following result:

Agroforestry and the regeneration of indigenous tree species are promoted and contribute to reducing pressure on forest reserves and protected areas, providing livelihood benefits

The executing agency will need to work closely with the Contracting Authority, with the Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE) with the National Forestry Authority (NFA), the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives, Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Gender Labour & Social Development, Ministry of Education, District Local Government and their Technical Department, Local Communities and their groups, Private Sector, and other relevant stakeholders.

The executing agency shall work within what stated in the Description of Action (DoA) and consult, for information, data and strategies the Studies implemented during the Action inception phase, particularly:

- a. Forests Inventory and Indigenous Trees Nurseries Availability Assessment.

Also, the other two studies, implemented during the inception phase must be kept into consideration to understand the project dynamics.

- b. Feasibility Study for The Establishment of a Green Entrepreneurship Centre

- c. Baseline Assessment and Feasibility Study for Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve Wildlife Corridor

- Relevant cross cutting issues are those extensively presented in the Description of Action (DoA).
- Monitoring and evaluation, lessons learned, and experience sharing are traversal to all the activities, they have to be well articulated, they will be part of the budget within the financial provision for this call.
- An exit strategy needs to be designed and implemented.

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses.
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses.
- actions and measures that may result in violation of human rights in partner countries or causing significant adverse effects on the environment or the climate⁵.

Types of activity

The following are the activities to be implemented within this call for proposal:

NOTE: Activities of Cluster 1 and 2 will benefit at least 4000 (four thousand) farmers and their groups; Attention will be paid to women, women groups and vulnerable people.

ACTIVITY CLUSTER 1: Promoting and piloting Community-based management and protection of forests through Collaborative Forest Management approaches

This cluster of activity shall increase the forested area in the Eastern region and Napak District through the use of **Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) approaches** that ensure sustainable and equitable forest resource management. Partnerships of all interested stakeholders must be promoted including government agencies, timber companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and forest-dependent communities. A capacity assessment of the community groups involved in forest management will be

⁵ Article 29 NDICI.



undertaken; this will lead to the implementation of training, for community members and groups, in leadership and governance. In addition, community groups will be supported to develop proposals for resource mobilization, participatory forest management plans, forest management agreements, and ecosystem conservation plans. **Through the following activities about 1,700 ha of land will be reforested in the three subregions and Napak District.**

Activity 1.A: Piloting Collaborative Forest Management or Community stewardship schemes to engage communities in the restoration and sustainable management of forests

Through this activity, suitable approaches and incentive schemes (e.g., payment for ecosystem services - PES-, produce sharing, joint ownership, etc.) will be identified and piloted to enhance the participation of communities in forest management and ensure they benefit from forest conservation.

Activity 1.B: Restoration of degraded and erosion-prone areas

This activity will allow restoring tree cover, primarily in areas damaged by erosion or in land degradation-prone areas. The intervention will address forest regeneration, and it mainly includes the regeneration of deforested areas originally found on hillcrests in Jinja district.

Activity 1.B.1.: Promotion of afforestation of multi-species in hillcrests together with the introduction of soil and water management and conservation practices, and riverbank revegetation

Restoration and enhancement of tree cover in degraded-prone areas (the degraded hillcrests extending from Buyengo to Namagera in Jinja district), through Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) approaches.

ACTIVITIES CLUSTER 2: Promotion of agroforestry and the regeneration of indigenous tree species to reduce pressure on forest reserves and provide livelihood benefits.

Activity 2.A: Planting Woodlots and firewood trees in schools, churches, and public and private institutions for contributing to reducing pressure on forest reserve.

This includes greening efforts and tree-planting campaigns targeting institutions, to introduce renewable sources of firewood in schools and other institutions located in the proximity of forest reserves (in particular the MENP forest). The sustainable supply of firewood to schools and other institutions is an effective way to reduce pressure on forest resources. Indigenous species will be planted to provide firewood to schools. It involves the procurement of tree seedlings, the planting of trees and tree growing and awareness campaigns. **80 schools**, both private and public, will be targeted in the three subregions. In addition to tree planting, the project will provide the targeted schools with improved cooking stoves. It is estimated that about 5 acres/school will be put under agroforestry (a total of 160 ha). Woodlot plantations shall also be promoted in farms adjacent to forest reserves.

Activity 2.B: promoting agroforestry aiming to the regeneration of useful native tree species.

This activity focuses on the regeneration of indigenous trees in areas where such species have almost completely disappeared (e.g., in the central-eastern subregion and the southern part of Teso). Income opportunities related to the production of forest seedlings will be supported. NTFP and indigenous species will be promoted.

Some of the nurseries will specifically target the production of indigenous species under threat, such as the shea tree in Teso, to promote the regeneration of these species and contribute to the value chains of NTFPs.

Agroforestry will be promoted on about **2500 ha. of land** and finance the strengthening or creation of **12 tree nurseries** with a potential total production of over **1 million seven hundred thousand seedlings/year**.

Activity 2.B.1. Establishment or strengthening of community tree nurseries and private nurseries

The action aims at promoting business models both with groups and individuals. AICS preliminary study shows the potential profitability of commercial nurseries business. Twelve private and community indigenous tree nurseries will be strengthened to produce seedlings of multipurpose trees. These seedlings will be made available to individuals, farmers, and local communities to plant on their farms and



rangelands. The applicant will indicate how it intends to supply the seedlings (free of charge? Against a 10% payment?).

Activity 2.B.2 Establishment of model demonstration farms

About 6 model demonstration farms will be established in the three subregions to showcase best practices in agroforestry and sustainable land management. These farms will serve as learning and training centres for farmers and local communities, providing practical examples of successful agroforestry systems. The model farms will demonstrate the integration of trees, crops, and livestock, showcasing the economic and environmental benefits of sustainable land use practices.

Activity 2.B.3 Development of nature-based investments and enterprises in agroforestry:

The initiative will promote species that provide additional opportunities to improve household's livelihood: producing fodder for animals, fruits for food securities (e.g., balanitis trees – Desert Date).

Activity 2.C. Community-based agroforestry initiative (awareness training, on the job training, incentives.

Farmers, farmers groups, women, women groups, people living with vulnerability and their communities will be actively engage in agroforestry practices for climate mitigation and adaptation. Through awareness campaigns, training programs, and knowledge sharing, farmers and communities will be encouraged to adopt agroforestry techniques that contribute to climate change mitigation and enhance their resilience to climate-related shocks. Conservation/planting of indigenous trees at the household level; carbon markets and incentive mechanisms (e.g., payment of ecosystem services); capacity building in regenerative agricultural practices and techniques are all relevant topics under this component. Seedlings of various indigenous species traditionally used for food security, firewood, traditional medicines, etc., will be produced and distributed to the beneficiary farmers for their reintroduction into the local farming systems. Detailed list of awareness campaign and training, on the job training, their number and topics need to be provided by the applicant.

IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

The forestry and agroforestry components in the EU financed Action “*Reforestation for Communities Prosperity in Eastern Uganda*”- *ReForEst Uganda* play a critical role in the sustainable development of Uganda, particularly in the resource-rich yet vulnerable landscapes of Eastern Uganda and Karamoja. This call for proposals seeks to identify and support innovative approaches that address deforestation, land degradation, and rural poverty through integrated forestry and agroforestry interventions. In line with best practices and lessons learned from previous initiatives, the proposal submitted by the applicant must include a comprehensive and practical implementing methodology demonstrating the proactive involvement of local government structures, traditional cultural leadership, communities, farmers, men and women, and the private sector, churches, charities, civil society. The implementation strategy is a critical component of the proposed proposal. Successful applicants will clearly articulate how they intend to achieve project objectives, ensuring inclusivity, sustainability, and measurable impact.

Additionally, effective coordination mechanisms with the contracting authority must be outlined, along with demonstrating a robust strategy to connect interventions' beneficiaries with green finance opportunities and added value opportunities outlined in the other two components of the Action *ReForEst Uganda*.

The applicant will detail the organizational and implementation strategy it intends to apply in carrying on the activities.

The applicant's implementing methodology should address the following core components:

- Engagement of District Local Government and their technical Departments and related modalities of engagement (possibly through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding stating the roles and responsibilities of the parties). At the District Local Government, it is advised to have a focal person appointed and a Team formed by District Officers (Forestry District Office, Natural Resources Officer MAAIF, DEO, Development and Gender Officer).
- Involvement of Cultural Leaders



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- Other stakeholder and target groups engagement.
- Cross-Cutting Issues

Coordination with the Contracting Authority

A robust system for coordination with the contracting authority is essential to ensure alignment with national policy frameworks, efficient resource utilization, and timely achievement of the Action milestones. Proposals must include a coordination plan that addresses the following aspects:

- **Formal Communication Channels:** Establish a clear structure for formal and informal communication with the contracting authority, including regular progress updates, quarterly review meetings, and ad hoc consultations as needed.
- **Joint Planning and Oversight:** Allocate roles for joint project planning and periodic oversight visits with contracting authority representatives, ensuring transparency and mutual accountability.
- **Reporting and Compliance:** Provide detailed schedules and templates, as requested, for narrative, financial, and technical reporting in line with the guidelines of the contracting authority. Specify compliance mechanisms for procurement, environmental, and social safeguards.
- **Problem-Solving Protocols:** Develop and describe escalation procedures for resolving implementation bottlenecks or disputes in collaboration with the contracting authority.

Financial support to third parties⁶

Applicants may propose financial support to third parties.

Applicants may propose financial support to third parties in order to help achieving the objectives of the action.

The maximum amount of financial support per third party is EUR 60 000 except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult, in which case this threshold can be exceeded. A threshold below EUR 60 000 can be set if appropriate.

In compliance with the present guidelines and notably of any conditions or restrictions in this Section, the lead applicant should define mandatorily in Section 2.1.1 of the grant application form:

- the overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs⁷ (i.e. the results) to be achieved with the financial support
- the different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list
- the types of persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support
- the criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support
- the criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity, and
- the maximum amount which may be given.

In all events, the mandatory conditions set above for giving financial support (points (i) to (vi)) have to be strictly defined in the grant contract as to avoid any exercise of discretion.

⁶ These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

⁷ As per OECD DAC definition, the term 'results' includes 'impact' (overall objective), 'outcome(s)' (specific objective(s) and 'output(s)'.



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Recipients of financial support cannot be designated in the lists of EU restrictive measures.

Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to ensure the visibility of the European Union as the funder or co-founder of the action, through the correct and prominent display of the EU emblem and relevant funding statement. Unless the European Commission agrees otherwise, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must ensure the visibility of EU financing by displaying the EU emblem in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Operational guidelines for recipients of EU funding, published by the European Commission.

All measures and activities relating to visibility and, if applicable, communication, must comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU-funded external action, laid down and published by the European Commission ([Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions | International Partnerships \(europa.eu\)](#)).

Derogation from contractual visibility obligations is permitted in exceptional situations, which may be required in the framework of this action due to security issues for the staff and beneficiaries, local political sensitivities, when this is in the interest of the beneficiary or the contracting authority. In such cases, visibility tools, products, and channels to be used in promoting a given action will be determined on a case-by-case basis, in consultation and agreement with the EU prior to limiting EU visibility. Requests for derogation from contractual visibility obligations should be included in Annex A.2 – Full application form and negotiated as part of the Special Conditions of the contract.

Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may not submit more than one application under this call for proposal.

The lead applicant may not be awarded more than one grant under this call for proposals

The lead applicant may not be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than one application under this call for proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be awarded more than one grant under this call for proposals.

Form of the grant

The grants awarded under this call for proposals take the following form(s):

- Reimbursement of eligible costs that may be based on any or a combination of the following forms as per Section 2.1.4:
 - (i) actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies);
 - (ii) one or more simplified cost options.

2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included and eligibility of results/conditions



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Where the grant takes the form of reimbursement of costs (entirely or partially), only ‘eligible costs’ can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for ‘eligible costs’.

Eligible costs can be reimbursed as actual costs.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines).

The applicants (and where applicable their affiliated entities) agree that the expenditure verification(s) referred to in Article 15.7 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines) will be carried out by the contracting authority or any external body authorised by AICS - Kampala.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, and in case of reimbursement of costs, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the contracting authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of EU co-financing as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

Contingency reserve

The budget may include a contingency reserve not exceeding 5 % of the estimated direct eligible costs (in case of actions comprising also financing not linked to costs, to be calculated on the cost-based component). It can only be used with the **prior written authorisation** of the contracting authority.

Eligible indirect costs

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat rate funding, but the total must not exceed 7 % of the estimated total eligible direct costs (except volunteer costs and project office costs) (in case of actions comprising also financing not linked to costs, to be calculated on the cost-based component). Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading in the standard grant contract. The lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the grant contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

If any of the applicants or affiliated entity(ies) is in receipt of an operating grant financed by the EU, it may not claim indirect costs on its incurred costs within the proposed budget for the action.

Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind mean the provision of goods or services to beneficiaries or affiliated entities free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for beneficiaries or affiliated entities, they are not eligible costs (except for personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or an operating grant if so authorised).

Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing.

Other co-financing shall be based on estimates provided by the applicant.

Ineligible costs

Costs that do not comply with the conditions laid down in the contract are not eligible. The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);



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- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities.
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union (including through EDF) grant.
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred in accordance with Article 7.5 of the general conditions of the standard grant contract, at the latest at the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses.
- in kind contributions (except for volunteers' work);
- bonuses included in costs of staff.
- negative interest charged by banks or other financial institutions;
- credit to third parties.
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations

Bank account

A dedicated bank account shall be opened for the project in the country of implementation or in the country of origin of the lead applicant. To be noted that in case of opening of a dedicated bank account in the country of origin of the lead applicant, the transfer of funds must in any case take place from that bank account (previously authorized by AICS) to a local dedicated bank account specifically dedicated to the project (previously communicated and authorized by AICS), in order to allow the correct traceability of transfers. Transfers to third party accounts are not allowed.

2.1.6. Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct

Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in exclusion decisions for other award procedures and/or financial penalties according to the Financial Regulation in force.

Respect of environmental legislation and core labour standards

Applicants who are awarded a grant must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

Respect of EU values

Applicants who are awarded a grant must commit to and ensure the respect of basic EU values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities.



Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

The European Commission applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

Successful applicants (and affiliated entities) other than (i) natural persons, (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies shall assess their internal policy against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) through a self-evaluation questionnaire (Annex L). For grants of EUR 60 000 or less no self-evaluation is required. Such self-evaluation questionnaire is not part of the evaluation of the full application by the contracting authority, but is an administrative requirement. See Section 6.2.10. of the practical guide.

Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

Unusual commercial expenses

Applications will be rejected or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

Grant beneficiaries found to have paid unusual commercial expenses on projects funded by the European Union are liable, depending on the seriousness of the facts observed, to have their contracts terminated or to be excluded from receiving EU/EDF funds.

Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

2.2.1. Application forms

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the concept note and the full applications in the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A). Lead applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the grant application form and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order.



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Applicants must apply in English:

Please complete the full application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the concept note or any major inconsistency in the application (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Please note that only the grant application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action.

Please note that incomplete applications may be rejected. Lead applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form).

In addition, the following documents should be submitted with the application form:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity. Where the contracting authority has recognised the lead applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, it shall submit instead, a copy of the document proving their eligibility in a former call (e.g. a copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have been subject of a pillar assessment.
2. Legal entity form (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead applicant and by each co-applicant, if any), accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the contracting authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.
3. The declaration on honour (Annex H to these guidelines) signed by the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.4.2 of the practical guide) where the amount of the grant exceeds EUR 15 000.
4. In addition, for the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, the following documents should be submitted⁸:
 - a. For action grants exceeding EUR 750 000 and for operating grants above EUR 100 000, the lead applicant must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by EU or national law. That report shall certify the lead applicant accounts for up to the last three available financial years.

In all other cases, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for up to the last three available financial years. This requirement shall apply only to the first application made by a beneficiary the same contracting authority in any one financial year.

⁸ No supporting documents will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60 000, or the following categories of lead applicants: (i) natural persons in receipt of education support (ii) natural persons most in need, such as unemployed and refugees, and in receipt of direct support (iii) public bodies, including Member State organisations (iv) international organisations.



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The external audit report is not required from the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entities (if any).

- b. A copy of the lead applicant's profit and loss account and the balance sheet for up to the three last financial years for which the accounts were closed. A copy of the latest account is neither required from the co-applicant(s) (if any) nor from affiliated entity(ies) (if any).

These documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. The declaration on honour on exclusion criteria shall be submitted in original. For the other documents, originals shall be kept on file for controls in accordance with the record keeping obligations laid down in Section 2.5.5. of the practical guide.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union or in the language of the country where the action is implemented, a translation into the language(s) of the call for proposals of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than English, it is strongly recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, into <the/one of the language(s) of the call for proposals .

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided by the deadline for the submission of the application form, the application may be rejected.

2.2.2. Where and how to send applications

Full applications (i.e. the full application form, the budget, the logical framework, the declaration on honour on exclusion criteria, supporting documents and the declaration by the lead applicant) must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) to the address below:

Postal Address:

AICS Kampala (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – Kampala Office)

Postal address: EADB Building, 6th floor, Plot 4 Nile Avenue, Kampala

Address for hand delivery:

AICS Kampala (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – Kampala Office)

Postal address: EADB Building, 6th floor, Plot 4 Nile Avenue, Kampala

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by e-mail or fax) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

Applications must be submitted in one original and one copy in A4 size, each bound. The complete application form (Part A: concept note and Part B: full application form), budget and logical framework **must** also be supplied in electronic format in a separate and single file (i.e. the application must not be split into several different files). The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed. Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope.

The outer envelope must bear the reference number **ReForEst/CFP/2025/02** and the title of the call for proposals together with the full name and address of the lead applicant, and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and the list of Annexes that are attached.



Each Annex should be attached as a separate file, as follows:

Annex A: Grant application form, in PDF/A -searchable- and Word format.

Annex B: Budget in PDF/A -searchable- and Excel format.

Annex C: Logical framework in PDF/A -searchable- format.

Etc.

Applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.2.3. Deadline for submission of applications

The applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that there are two different systems for sending applications/full proposals: one is by post or private courier service, the other is by hand delivery.

In the first case, the application/full proposal must be sent before the date for submission, as evidenced by the postmark or deposit slip, but in the second case it is the acknowledgment of receipt given at the time of the delivery of the application/full proposal which will serve as proof.

The deadline for the submission of applications by mail or courier is **1st December 2025 at 16:00 EAT** as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is **1st December 2025, at 16:00 EAT**, as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

The contracting authority may, for reasons of administrative efficiency, reject any concept note submitted on time to the postal service but received, for any reason beyond the contracting authority's control, after the effective date of approval of the concept note evaluation, if accepting concept notes that were submitted on time but arrived late would considerably delay the evaluation procedure) or jeopardise decisions already taken and notified (see indicative calendar under Section 2.7).

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

2.2.4. Further information about applications

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the below address(es), indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: **procurement.kampala@aics.gov.it**

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the website where the call was published: https://trasparenzakampala.aics.gov.it/pagina952_bandi.html as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

Please note that the contracting authority may decide to cancel the call for proposals procedure at any stage according to the conditions set out in Section 6.5.9 of the practical guide.



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2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the contracting authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

2.3.1. STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

During the opening and administrative check, the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Part A of the grant application form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

	Scores*	
1. Relevance of the action	Sub-score	20
1.1 Consistency with the objectives of the call: How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (Section 1.2)?	5	
1.2 Relevance to the country/region/sector needs: How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5	
1.3 Target groups and final beneficiaries: How clearly defined and strategically chosen are the target groups and final beneficiaries? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined? Does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4 Added value elements: Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)?	5	
2. Design of the action	Sub-score	30
2.1 Intervention logic. Does the proposal indicate the expected results (outputs/outcomes/impacts) to be achieved by the action? Does the design of the proposed action identify explicitly the necessary sequence to achieve the desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes and impacts?	5x2**	



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2. Context analysis. Does the design of the action include a robust analysis of the needs to be addressed, including the capacities of the relevant stakeholders? Are those also embedded adequately in the intervention logic?	5	
2.3 Risks and assumptions. Is the design based on clear assumptions (the necessary and positive conditions that allow for a successful cause-and-effect relationship between different levels of results)? Does it take into account also risks (the factors that might hinder the achievement of results)?	5	
2.4 Indicative Activities. Is the indicative list of activities linked to and consistent with the expected outputs?	5	
2.5 Cross-cutting issues: To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, youth, combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	5	
TOTAL SCORE	50	

Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses more than the required minimum number of priorities as indicated in Section 1.2 (objectives of the programme) of these guidelines.

**this score is multiplied by 2 because of its importance

Once all concept notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the concept notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concepts notes whose total aggregate number of requested contributions is equal to 300% of the available budget for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the contracting authority will send letters to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The evaluation committee will then proceed with the lead applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

2.3.2. EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

If the applications pass the opening and administrative checks along the instructions of the Step 1: they will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and any affiliated entity(ies).



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The award criteria help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the contracting authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

Scoring:

The evaluation grid is divided into Sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Evaluation grid

Section	Maximum Score
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
2. Relevance	20
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
3. Design of the action	15
3.1 Intervention logic: Does the proposal indicate the expected results (outputs/outcomes/impacts) to be achieved by the action? Does the design of the proposed action identify explicitly the necessary sequence to achieve the desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes and impacts? Is the indicative list of activities linked to and consistent with the expected outputs?	5
3.2 Logical Framework Matrix: Is the logical framework provided in Annex C complete? Does each result (output, outcome, impact) include an adequate number of indicators that are sufficient in scope to measure its achievement? Is each indicator RACER (Relevant, Accepted, Credible, Easy to monitor, Robust)? Does each indicator have a baseline value (with year), target value (with year), and a credible source of data? If baselines and targets are not available, this is to be justified and a study (or other relevant tools) to be foreseen and budgeted in the proposal? In the case of use of FNLC, are the FNLC results and indicators clearly marked?	5
3.3 Context analysis. Does the design of the action include a robust analysis of the needs to be addressed, including the capacities of the relevant stakeholders? Are those also embedded adequately in the intervention logic?	5
4. Implementation approach	15
4.1 Action plan: Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Are types of activities clearly clustered by output in the Activities Matrix? Is the timeline realistic?	5



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4.2 Monitoring, reporting and evaluation: Does the proposal include an effective and efficient monitoring and reporting system? Is the system in place adequate to update the values of the indicators included in the Logical Framework Matrix - thus informing regularly on progress towards the achievement of impact, outcomes and outputs? Is there an evaluation planned and budgeted (previous, during or/and at the end of the implementation)? If relevant, is the role of third party assessor included?	5
4.3 Project management (technical): Do the co-applicant(s) and (if applicable) their affiliated entities have the necessary technical skills to attain the objectives of the action? Are the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s adequately involved in the implementation (e.g. advocacy, research, capacity building, outreach related activities)?	5
5. Sustainability of the action	15
5.1 Long-lasting benefits: Is the action likely to ensure long lasting and transformative benefits to the target groups and the final beneficiaries?	5
5.2 Multiplier effects: Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, cross-fertilisation of experience and knowledge sharing?	5
5.3 Sustainability How likely the effects are to last after the intervention ends? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial sustainability: which financial resources are available to fund the continuation of the services provided by the intervention? How long are they likely to be available and from which sources?) - Institutional sustainability: which institutional arrangements allow for maintaining the benefits achieved? Is there any measure in place to ensure local ownership? - Policy level sustainability (if applicable): is there any expected policy related effect from the action, e.g. improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods - Environmental sustainability (if applicable): will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact? - Risk analysis and mitigation measures: will the action be accompanied by a good risk analysis (including physical, environmental, political, economic and social risks) and relevant mitigation measures? 	5
6. Budget and efficiency of the action	15
6.1 Budget: Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget? In the case of entire or partly use of financing not linked to costs, are the results and performance indicators adequately reflected in the budget?	/ 5
6.2 Efficiency: Is the relation between the estimated amounts as per budget and the expected results adequate??	/ 10
Maximum total score	100

If the total score for Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under Section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

If the lead applicant applies without co-applicants or affiliated entities the score for point 4.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.



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Provisional selection

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list. The contracting authority informs those lead applicants provisionally selected and those placed on the reserve list, that they will be subject to the final eligibility check.

2.3.3. STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITY(IES) AND OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority see Section 2.2.1 It will by default only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected (including those placed on the reserve list) according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals. In this case:

- The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) and declaration of honour on selection and exclusion criteria will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants and the affiliated entity(ies) will be verified according to the criteria set out in Section 2.1.1, including exclusion criteria.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

In the eventuality that the evaluation committee is not satisfied with the strength, solidity, and guarantee offered by the structural link between one of the applicants and its affiliated entity, it can require the submission of the missing documents allowing for its conversion into co-applicant. If all the missing documents for co-applicants are submitted, and provided all necessary eligibility criteria are fulfilled, the above-mentioned entity becomes a co-applicant for all purposes. The lead applicant has to submit the application form revised accordingly.

2.4. AWARD DECISION

After verifying the supporting documents (step 3), the evaluation committee will make a final recommendation to the contracting authority, which will decide on the award of grants.

The contracting authority may decide not to award any grants and cancel the call for proposals without having the applicants any right to compensation.

The award decision shall indicate the successful applicants, the names of the applicants rejected, and a reserve list (if any).

2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the contracting authority's decision concerning their application. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.

In case of rejection, they will be informed about the reasons for the negative decision. For the avoidance of doubt, please note that for applications rejected for reasons such as non-compliance with the admissibility requirements (for example, if the application was sent after the deadline), with the eligibility (the entity or person is not part of the predefined eligible population of entities or persons), the selection



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(the entity does not have financial capacity or professional or operational capacity) and the award criteria (the proposal does not comply with the predefined requirements such as quality, cost/efficiency), no prior adversarial procedure is required.

Applicants placed on the reserve list will also be informed. The applicable terms to the reserve list are laid down in Section 6.5. of the practical guide.

The successful applicants shall also be informed, and will be requested to provide some information and documents, including (for grants exceeding EUR 60 000) the self evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H. The lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities other than (i) natural persons (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies shall fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire assessing the organisation’s internal policy and procedures against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) (Annex L) (see Section 6.2.10 of the practical guide).

Successful applicants will also be informed if the first instalment of pre-financing is subject to the validation of a financial guarantee by the contracting authority. In this case, the applicant will be requested to send the guarantee in time to proceed to the payment of the first instalment in accordance with the payment provisions of the grant contract.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. See Section 2.12 of the practical guide.

2.6. SIGNATURE OF THE GRANT CONTRACT

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract (see Annex G of these guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A of these guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract. Where the coordinator is an organisation whose pillars have been positively assessed, it will sign a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. In this case, references to provisions of the standard grant contract and its annexes shall not apply. References in these guidelines to the grant contract shall be understood as references to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement.

The budget proposed for the action by the successful applicants at the call for proposals stage must be corrected to remove any obvious arithmetical errors or ineligible costs prior to signing the contract. The description of the action is corrected accordingly if need be.

The contracting authority may decide that other clarifications or minor corrections may be made to the description of the action or to the budget in so far as they do not call into question the grant award decision, do not conflict with equal treatment of applicants, and:

- relate to matters clearly identified by the evaluation committee; or
- aim at taking into consideration changes that have occurred since the date of receipt of the proposal.

These amendments cannot lead to an increase in either the amount of the grant or the percentage of the European Union contribution as set in the guidelines of the call for proposals. In this respect, records of the contacts with the applicants must be kept on the file.

In no case the conditions announced in the guidelines can be altered at this stage. Apart from the above-mentioned clarifications and/or corrections, any other alteration of the initial proposal or deviation from the award conditions laid down in the guidelines is strictly prohibited.

Any other alteration to the successful applicant’s proposal, or negotiation of it, is prohibited.

2.7. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting (if any)	15 October 2025	10:00 EAT



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2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	8 November 2025	16:00 EAT
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	19 November 2025	16:00 EAT
4. Deadline for submission of applications	1 December 2025	16:00 EAT
5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	7 January 2026	-
6. Notification of the contracting authority decision	1 February 2026	-
7. Contract signature	1 March 2026	-

All times are in the time zone of the country of the contracting authority.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3, and 4) and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the web site where the call was published: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

Early detection and exclusion system

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, natural or legal person that assumes unlimited liability for the debts, natural or legal person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment, beneficial owner or any affiliate of the applicant, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract.

For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Annex A	Grant application form (Word format)
A.1	Concept note
A.2	Full application form
Annex B	Budget (Excel format)
Annex C	Logical framework (Excel format)
Annex D	Identification form
Annex H	Declaration on Honour on exclusion criteria
Annex L	Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION⁹

Annex G	Standard grant contract
Annex G.II	General conditions
Annex G.IV	Contract award rules
Annex G.V	Standard request for payment
Annex G.VI	Model narrative and financial report
Annex G.VII-A	Model report of factual findings and terms of reference for an expenditure verification of an EU financed grant contract for external action
Annex G.VII-B	Terms of reference for a third-party assessment in case of financing not linked to costs
Annex G.VIII	Model financial guarantee
Annex G.IX	Standard template for transfer of ownership of assets
Annex I	Daily allowance rates (per diem), available at the following address: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/managing-project/diem-rates_en
Annex K	Additional clarification on financing not linked to costs.

⁹ These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.



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ATTACHMENTS

- ATTACHMENT 1 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION AND OF THE DELEGATED TASKS -
“REFORESTATION FOR COMMUNITIES PROSPERITY IN EASTER UGANDA”
REFOREST UGANDA.
- ATTACHMENT 2 Forests Inventory and Indigenous Trees Nurseries Availability Assessment

USEFUL LINKS

- PRAG <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG>
- Project Cycle Management Guidelines https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project_en
- The implementation of grant contracts, A Users' Guide <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=48169235>
- Financial Toolkit¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/financial-management-toolkit_en
- Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/how-it-works/annual-lifecycle/implementation/anti-fraud-measures/edes_en#data-protection

¹⁰ Please note that the toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with their contractual obligations, beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.