REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
Climate Gender Equity Fund (CGEF)
Introduction

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with the support of Amazon, has launched the Climate Gender Equity Fund (CGEF, or the Fund) – a public-private partnership to leverage funding to scale climate finance that advances gender-equitable climate action. CGEF will increase access to climate finance for gender-responsive, women-led, and women-benefitting organizations that address climate change. CGEF seeks to reach a goal of US$60Mn in capital from corporations, foundations, bi/multilaterals, and other funders. CGEF seeks to harness the power of collective action to bridge the gender-climate finance gap and is thrilled to have Amazon, Visa Foundation and Reckitt as Founding Members. CGEF is one of the first major activities of USAID’s Climate Finance for Development Accelerator (CFDA), a US$250Mn initiative designed to mobilize US$2.5Bn in public and private climate investments by 2030 to fund a range of climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions focused on scaling up the transition to an equitable and resilient net-zero economy.

CGEF’s grantmaking will be managed by 2X Global, an international non-profit membership organization and the leading global industry body working at the nexus of climate and gender finance.

CGEF aims to increase access to finance for the investment vehicles, businesses, and community-based organizations developing and scaling women-led and women-benefitting climate solutions in global emerging markets where USAID operates.

This request for proposals (RFP) formally launches the first CGEF funding round and seeks to reach climate- and gender-smart fund managers and entrepreneur networks aiming to unlock capital for long-term and systemic change at the nexus of gender and climate finance across developing markets. The funding round seeks applications from the following:

1. **Climate- and gender-smart emerging impact investment funds (and investment vehicles), with strong preference for women-led funds/vehicles**: Grants seek to support investment funds and vehicles aligned with the 2X Criteria and that advance climate solutions and increase gender equality by developing, scaling, and investing in climate mitigation and adaptation businesses and solutions.

2. **Network organizations and intermediaries supporting women entrepreneurs working in climate action, with preference for entities operating in Africa**: Grants seek to support intermediaries that facilitate financing or provide other forms of support to women entrepreneurs working at the frontlines of climate action (such as women entrepreneur networks, incubators, accelerators, business service providers, and field building associations).

**Founding Members:**

![USAID](logo_usaid.png) ![Amazon](logo_amazon.png) ![Visa Foundation](logo_visa.png) ![Reckitt](logo_reckitt.png)
Background

There is an ever-growing body of evidence that identifies the critical role women have to play in climate change mitigation and adaptation - women are innovators, leaders, entrepreneurs, workers, and customers in climate related fields. Women and girls, especially from underrepresented and marginalized groups, are disproportionately affected by natural and climate disasters given that they represent the majority of the world’s poor and are proportionally more dependent upon threatened natural resources. While these populations often bear the brunt of climate risks and disasters, they are also critical stakeholders at the front lines of climate mitigation and adaptation.

Given these deep and systemic barriers, gender equity and inclusive finance are critical to addressing the climate crisis. With their unique skills and knowledge, women and girls, in all their diversity, understand what their communities need, and this knowledge makes them powerful change agents in designing and implementing climate solutions that benefit their families and communities. However, gender equity is poorly integrated or not incorporated at all in the broader climate finance ecosystem. While climate finance flows amounted to more than US$600Bn in 2021, only 1% integrated a gender lens -- revealing the vast opportunity for change and growth. This emphasizes the need to support and elevate women and girls as an integral part of the climate movement. It requires reducing the market barriers that prohibit them from accessing finance, empowering them as critical leaders through networks and mentorship, and equipping them with tools to actively bring localized climate solutions to fruition.
Grant Categories

To be eligible for funding in this first round, your organization must be either:

1. A gender-smart and/or women-led emerging fund manager (incl. investment vehicles) investing in climate-smart solutions in countries where USAID works; or
2. A network organization or intermediary supporting women entrepreneurs at the forefront of climate action in countries where USAID works

Organizations may propose to use grant funding for a variety of purposes including building their own capacity to provide gender-smart and gender-transformative climate finance, sustaining their own organization through vital working capital, making track record deals and/or portfolio investments, providing pre- or post-investment technical assistance (TA) to pipeline or portfolio companies and/or, in the case of network organizations, making grants to women entrepreneurs advancing climate-smart products or services. Preference will be given to proposals that include the use of funds to invest in or extend grant funding to women-led businesses leading climate solutions. Preference will also be given to proposals that emphasize how use of funds will be catalytic in nature, particularly for mobilizing additional private capital for women-led climate solutions.

Applicants - both fund managers and networks - can decide how to structure their proposals by choosing what amount they propose to use for their own organization (e.g., as working capital) and deciding what amount they propose to invest in or grant out to women-led and -owned businesses. For fund managers, grants for pipeline and portfolio companies may be provided in the form of pre-investment or post-investment technical assistance or in the form of investment capital (any instrument).

CGEF anticipates awarding multiple grants under this RFP in each category with an aggregate value of up to US$2Mn for this first funding round. CGEF is targeting grant awards of US$100,000 to US$300,000, but will consider grants up to US$500,000 depending on the proposed level of impact. The final grant amounts will be determined by 2X Global and the grantee based on an agreed upon set of activities.

If selected to receive funding, CGEF will work with award recipients to determine the optimal funding mechanism based on the nature of the recipient organization and the proposed set of activities. CGEF expects to begin deploying grant funding in January 2024. Grant activities are expected to last for 18-24 months. CGEF reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time. Applicants who apply to this round of funding (regardless of whether they are selected) will not be precluded from participating in future grant rounds.

---

1 If a fund manager uses a portion of the grant to make investments in gender-smart companies, it is expected that such investments are made within 18-24 months, recognizing that the tenor of the investment itself can be significantly longer.
Application Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RFP opens</td>
<td>September 13, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question submission deadline</td>
<td>September 20, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers posted / webinar</td>
<td>September 22, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFP closes</td>
<td>October 6, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grantee selection</td>
<td>November 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grantee announcement</td>
<td>December 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eligibility

Geographic Scope:

- Fund manager grant applicants must apply to use the grant funding for work and/or investments made in countries where USAID works. Preference will be given to local fund managers in emerging markets.

- Network and intermediary organization applicants must apply to use grant funding to support women entrepreneurs in countries where USAID works. Preference will be given to organizations based and operating in Africa.

Organizational Qualifications:

To be eligible to receive grants from CGEF, organizations under both category 1 and 2 must meet the following criteria:

- Be registered, formally constituted, recognized by and in good standing with the appropriate authorities, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations.

- Demonstrate adequate administrative and financial systems to comply with accountability and reporting requirements.

- Have adequate financial resources (appropriate for the stage of their business) or the ability to obtain them, as well as the ability to comply with the award conditions, taking into account all existing and prospective commitments of the applicant.

- Have a satisfactory record of performance, and;

- Have a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics and be otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a grant under applicable laws and regulations.
The following organizations are **not eligible to apply** for grant funding:

- **Any organization that has been found to have misused USAID funds in the past**

- **Partner government implementing entities including an office, organization, or body at any level of a public administration system (ministry, department, agency, service, district, or municipality) including parastatals and quasi-governmental entities, and universities**

- **Public international organizations**

- **Political parties, groupings, or institutions or their subsidiaries and affiliates**

- **Organizations that advocate or promote anti-democratic policies or illegal activities**

- **Faith-based organizations whose objectives are for discriminatory and religious purposes, and whose main objective for the grant is of a religious nature**

- **Any organization included in any supplementary information concerning prohibited individuals or entities that may be provided by USAID**

- **Any organization whose name appears in the System for Award Management, www.SAM.gov, or visual compliance screening with an active exclusion**

- **An organization that refuses to sign all required certifications and assurances required by CGEF**

- **Any organization with a questionable reputation around gender equality.**
Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a grant selection committee using the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review Category</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear and detailed gender focus/impact at both the fund manager/network level and the portfolio/entrepreneur level</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear and detailed climate focus/impact at both the fund manager/network level and the portfolio/entrepreneur level</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential and level of climate innovation as it relates to adaptation or mitigation of the applicant’s model</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalytic nature of funding, particularly for mobilizing additional private capital for women-led climate solutions</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Key Personnel capacity to carry out proposed activities</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past performance and successes (of the applicant organization or of key persons in previous roles)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (out of 100)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted through the online application portal hosted on Equilo. This will allow applicants to review, save and submit applications. Within this application form, applicants will also be required to complete the 2X Assessment for Funds or Organisations. Please include a high-level budget in your application. CGEF will only review applications submitted via the online application portal. Any proposal submitted via email or elsewhere will not be reviewed or considered for grant funding.

Applications will be open from September 13, 2023 to October 6, 2023 11:59PM EDT.
Impact Monitoring

Grant recipients will be required to put in place a monitoring and reporting plan and should include in their proposal an approach to monitoring. Grant recipients will be required to report to CGEF semi-annually on select key performance indicators (KPIs). In addition to the indicators below, applicants will be asked to include additional KPIs specific to their proposed activities.

CGEF KPIs

- Increased private capital mobilized: Value of investment mobilized (USD) for climate change outcomes
- Improved climate change capacity: Number of women-led or women-benefiting organizations with improved capacity to assess or address climate change mitigation and adaptation issues
- Increased representation: Increased voice/leadership of women in climate-related decision-making in the local economy
- Improved climate outcomes: Projected greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced or avoided
- Increased financial returns: Number of women-led or women-benefiting enterprises with improved participation in the local economy

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL:
Grant Announcement at COP28

CGEF anticipates that the successful grant applications will be announced at the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai scheduled for November 30 through December 12, 2023. A select number of grantees may be invited to send a senior leader to attend the announcement at COP28 with expenses paid by CGEF or its funders. Within your application please indicate your availability and willingness to travel if selected.
Terms and Conditions and Disclaimers

No Commitment to Award Grants

CGEF’s issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of 2X Global. CGEF reserves the right to reject any or all applications received and reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Amendments

CGEF reserves the right to amend, revise, add to, or withdraw all or any part of this RFP at any time. Organizations will remain responsible for all costs and expenses incurred by them, their staff, and their advisors or by any third party acting under their instructions in connection with any amendments.

Confidentiality/Use of Data

To support CGEF in the evaluation and analysis of proposals, documentation and data submitted by the grant applicants will be shared with the Grants Selection Committee and other third parties including funders for review, and otherwise may be used by CGEF in its sole discretion.

Conflict of Interest

Applicants shall exercise reasonable care and diligence to prevent any actions or conditions that could result in a potential conflict of interest in applying for grants under this RFP. Applicants must disclose to CGEF any circumstances/information, including but not limited to personal, institutional, financial, and business, which will or might result in actual or perceived conflict of interest by taking part in the submitting an application under this RFP.