



## **SADC CHALLENGE FUND TO SUPPORT CAPACITY BUILDING OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on people and communities across the globe and women have been disproportionately impacted. The pandemic saw a deepening of gender inequalities that negatively impact women daily.

In response to the impacts on women arising from COVID-19, the SADC Challenge Fund will support non-profit organizations and women in business associations that are already supporting the capacity building and/or training of women entrepreneurs to improve their skills in business and product development. The aim is to contribute towards increasing the participation of women-led businesses and female entrepreneurs in selected priority sectors and value chains in line with the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (SISR) as detailed further below. The Challenge Fund is implemented under the SADC Project on Industrialization and Women Economic Empowerment (IWEE) and is funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development as part of the CESARE programme. In cooperation with the SADC Secretariat, the project is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in partnership with GOPA Worldwide Consultants GmbH.

The competition is open to Non-profit-making organizations (NPOs) registered in the SADC Member States. Up to 16 subsidies will be offered at the value of up to EUR 20,000 each<sup>1</sup>. Support can be provided to NPOs capacitating women enterprises that aim to establish new business activities or expand their existing services and products.

Fundable activities include, but are not limited to:

- (i) training initiatives covering aspects of financial management; IT skills / use of digital tools; marketing, sales and customer service; negotiation and pricing and trade/export;

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on the outcome of the call for proposals, the total number of subsidies and the respective amount in EUR may be adjusted

- (ii) business skills development covering areas such as expanding customer base; scaling up production; entering new markets / geographies; developing new products / services; developing new sales / marketing channels and developing networking opportunities;
- (iii) product development support such as training in value addition skills or techniques; technical assistance related to a specific issue / challenge e.g. prevention of post-harvest losses, meeting standards, etc and purchase of capital equipment to enhance product development / value addition opportunities e.g. processing equipment; and
- (iv) capacity building through provision of mentorship; advisory support and/or leadership.

Applications can be submitted in English, French or Portuguese and will not be judged on the basis of the language used nor on the level of proficiency in English.

## **STAGE ONE**

The Call for Proposals will **open** on the **15<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at midday 12 noon (GMT+2, SAST)**. The call will **close** on the **12<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at midnight (GMT+2, SAST)**. The information about the Challenge Fund is available on the SADC web site and on the GIZ SADC/Botswana Facebook page.

Applicant NPOs have to fulfil a number of criteria during stage one of the two-step process to qualify and be shortlisted for the Challenge Fund as follows:

- (i) The NPO has been duly registered in a SADC Member State as a non-profit organisation for at least two consecutive (2) years prior to the application. Profit-making organisations and government bodies or their proxy are not eligible.
- (ii) The NPO must demonstrate compliance with all national and local laws and regulations that are relevant to its registered status and activities.
- (iii) The applicant NPO must be directly responsible for the preparation and implementation of the action, and it cannot act as an intermediary.
- (iv) Preference will be given to organisations established by women to support women but not to the exclusion of others that can support organisations working in sectors dominated by men or where the capacity of the organisation is extensive and with strong track records of working with women entrepreneurs.
- (v) The NPO must provide evidence in its project proposal of current or future women empowerment activities in one or more of the following sectors/value chains:
  - Agro processing
  - Mineral beneficiation
  - Pharmaceuticals
  - Leather
  - Textile and clothing
  - Tourism
  - Services (including ITC, business support services, services supporting cross border trade, energy, and transport)

- (vi) The NPO must submit:
- At registration stage:
    - Copies of valid registration and/or operation /licensing and tax clearance certificates, demonstrating proof of registration for the last 2 years at minimum.
    - Their Tax Identification Number (TIN).
    - Overview of number of staff employed for the past two years (full time/part time).
  - In the event of being invited to submit a Full Proposal the NPO must provide:
    - Bank statements (last available 3 months), organisation financial accounts and/or similar financial management evidence.
    - A budget in local currency with no lump-sum administration allowance and no transfer of funds to other end recipients, in the template provided.
    - A schedule of proposed activities, as per the template provided.

## **How to Apply**

### Step 1:

Applicants will be required to register on a digital system using the following link: <https://ee.humanitarianresponse.info/x/ri8hjYoG> providing the following information:

- Name of NPO (in full)
- Country of operation
- Name and email address of the main contact
- Website (if applicable)
- Contact number with country code

### Step 2:

When the applicant has registered, they will be able to access the eligibility the questionnaire on the KOBO digital system by clicking on the following link <https://ee.humanitarianresponse.info/x/dsHhmzcu> . If the organisation is eligible to be considered for a local subsidy, they will be invited to submit a Concept Note on the same system. Although the system is digital, every application that is assessed digitally to be eligible will also be assessed manually to ensure that all questions are completed accurately.

If an applicant meets the eligibility criteria as above, it will then undergo a competitive process where the 20 best Concept Notes will be selected to go to Full Proposal Process. Applicants eligible at Concept Note stage who are not selected to progress to the next stage will also be notified by email of the outcome of their application. GOPA will provide a summary at the end of the first stage of the most common reasons for rejection of Concept Notes to enter the Full Proposal stage.

## **STAGE TWO**

If selected as one of the top 20 Concept notes, the applicant will be requested to submit a Full Proposal. Technical support can be provided by the GOPA implementation team to

develop the proposal if necessary. The second phase is also competitive as only up to 16 proposals can be awarded a local subsidy.

Criteria considered in the second stage of the application process are the following:

- *COVID-19 Impact Mitigation:* Innovative and proven approaches in projects to redress the impact of the pandemic.
- *Economic Impact:* Consideration of a project's potential to contribute to the growth and viability of the beneficiary group.
- *Social Impact:* Assessing the social benefits that the project activities will provide such as networking opportunities, improved work-life balance through time saving, improved food and nutrition security, and opportunities for youth participation, among others.
- *Environmental Impact:* Consideration will be given to interventions that align with SADC objectives to support and produce positive environmental impacts and mitigate environmental risks.
- *Replicability:* The potential of the intervention to replicate its work with other groups or in other Member States.
- *Additionality:* The NPO needs to clearly demonstrate that the funding from the Challenge Fund is critical for the NPO to be able to implement its interventions.

Potential applicants will have the opportunity to ask questions related to the Challenge Fund up to one week before the closure of the application window. Answers will be published weekly under FAQs on the SADC website. Technical issues with the KOBU platform can be reported at the email address below until the closure of the application window.

**For further clarification, technical queries and/or additional information please contact:**  
[mutsa.denhere@gopa.de](mailto:mutsa.denhere@gopa.de)

When an NPO completes the registration and the questionnaire they will be required to confirm that they accept the Terms and Conditions of the Challenge Fund as set out below.

#### **Terms and Conditions of the Challenge Fund**

- I. The call for project Concept Note is not and shall not constitute an award commitment on the part of the SADC IWEE Challenge Fund.
- II. All awards will be subject to the Challenge Fund Terms and Conditions and are entirely contingent on the availability of funding.
- III. GOPA, the Fund Implementing Team, reserves the right to accept or reject any project Concept Note or cancel the solicitation process at any time, and shall not be liable to the proposing organizations submitting the Concept Notes for such rejection or cancellation of the request for Concept Notes.
- IV. Individual feedback on any Concept Note will not be provided except to let an eligible candidate organisation know if they are successful or unsuccessful in their concept note or Full Proposal phase application.

- V. All information provided by GOPA in this contest is offered in good faith. Individual items are subject to change at any time without notice to applicants. GOPA shall not be responsible for any use of information provided by the applicant or for any claims asserted therefrom.
- VI. Any conflict of interest must be declared in writing to GOPA.
- VII. No individual answers will be provided to applicants in the application process except for the purposes of providing additional information and assisting if possible with technical queries. GOPA will publish all answers to questions/queries raised on SADC website as a weekly FAQ for all applicants to consider.
- VIII. GOPA will keep the applicant's data in accordance with European Union General Data Protection and Regulation.
- IX. Information submitted by applicants can be retained for the purposes of the Challenge Fund.
- X. Company information will be kept private.