



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL – JANUARY 2026

### TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR WOMEN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS/CONSORTIA FOR THE INVESTING IN WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR A GREENER ECONOMY IN BENIN" (IIW-B) GRANT

#### 1. Introduction

The AECF, LLC (Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund) is a leading non-profit development organization that supports innovative enterprises in the agribusiness and renewable energy sectors with the aim of reducing rural poverty, promoting climate resilient communities, and creating jobs.

We catalyze the private sector by surfacing and commercializing new ideas, business models and technologies designed to increase agricultural productivity, improve farmer incomes, expand clean energy access, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve resilience to the effects of climate change. We finance high risk businesses that struggle to access commercial funding; we are committed to working in frontier markets, fragile contexts, and high-risk economies where few mainstream financing institutions dare to go.

To date, we have supported over 510 businesses in 26 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, impacted more than 33million lives and created over 35,000 direct jobs.

AECF is headquartered in Kenya and has offices in Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Nigeria, South Sudan, Benin, and Somalia. Find more about AECF on [www.aecfafrica.org](http://www.aecfafrica.org)

#### 1.0. Our Gender Lens Investing Strategy

AECF'S ambition for gender lens investing stems from its vision to create a prosperous, enterprising and resilient rural Africa, which is pursued through our mission to unlock the power of the private sector to positively impact the lives of the rural and marginalized communities in Africa. It is also detailed in the institutional gender strategy, which outlines the approach taken to invest with a gender lens, in a way that drives sustainable change for the rural poor. The strategy seeks to integrate a gender analysis throughout the investment process, which allows female entrepreneurs and businesses working for and with women, equal access to finance.

#### About the Investing in Women in Benin programme

The Investing in Women in Benin (IIW-B) is a six-year gender transformation and economic inclusion programme implemented by AECF with funding from Global Affairs Canada. The programme aims to economically empower women as entrepreneurs in sectors of activity with a high positive impact on the climate in the fields of technological innovation, digital technology, agriculture, production, processing, crafts and trade to remove the obstacles preventing them from contributing to the development of their activities.



The programme aims to improve the participation and economic resilience of women entrepreneurs in a greener economy in Benin. These include.

- I. Access to finance for women-owned SMEs, women's cooperatives and emerging women entrepreneurs.
- II. Improving the capacity of women-owned/led SMEs and women's cooperatives to sustainably develop the value chains in which they primarily work, using climate-smart approaches.
- III. Overcome entrenched social and cultural resistance to women's empowerment at national, sectoral and community levels.

## 2. Purpose of the Assignment

As part of the implementation of the program “Investing in Women's Entrepreneurship for a Greener Economy in Benin” (IFEV-B) and in particular the implementation of a certain number of activities related to Gender, AECF is launching this call to recruit experienced Women rights Organization to implement activities at both community and Government level.

### Objective of the call for proposals

The objective of the call for proposals is to identify women's rights organizations (WROs) to carry out activities contributing to the achievement of the project objectives in reducing gender inequality. The detailed reference framework is provided below.

## 3. Scope of Works

WROs will be granted to deliver the following from the Project Result Framework:

**Output 1:** Provide structured empowerment support to women farmers and engage gender and climate champions to identify power dynamics at the household and community levels

**Output 2:** Delivery of leadership, SGBV training and mentorship for women entrepreneurs.

Specific activities include:

- Identify and take charge of champions (10 men and 65 women leaders) from communities to advocate for women's inclusion, human rights and GBV management under the leadership of IFEV.
- Design and launch (75) community Gender and Climate Champions program to train and deploy at the community level
- Launch the community activity program to deploy these gender and climate champions
- Train 120 community leaders in women's inclusion, GBV management and human rights
- Map seven (07) communities and identify power dynamics at the household level
- Train women entrepreneurs in leadership and gender-based violence
- Design and launch a mentorship programme for investees (SME and cooperatives)
- Train 15 businesses and cooperatives in politic processes and human rights frameworks



**Output 3:** Provide training and operational support to women and men gender champions to facilitate participation in relevant policy processes & human rights frameworks, particularly related to women's economic participation and greener economy

**Output 4:** Produce guidelines for Men for Women Champions, through a participatory and climate-sensitive approach, in collaboration with local women's advocacy organizations

**Output 5:** Organize meetings, workshops and other forums to enable local women's advocacy organizations to engage with formal and informal patriarchal structures at the local and regional levels regarding gender and climate-sensitive laws and environmental and social awareness.

**Specific activities include;**

Create 'men for women' champion's guidelines using a climate responsive and participatory approach

Deploy, monitor the performance of guidelines with male gender champions and revise as necessary

Support champions to plan and implement activities

- Map 40 (forty) local women's advocacy organizations at the community level
- Design and facilitate engagement meetings with these organizations and community leaders, Identify targets for each engagement meeting (min 100 people in total)
- Engage leaders to advocate for gender- and climate-sensitive laws within patriarchal formal and informal structures
- Evaluate biannually the advocacy approach
- Review annually the "gender and climate champion" approach and guidelines
- Train champions and support them operationally in policy processes and human rights frameworks to improve women's economic participation

**Output 6:** Create effective coalitions and dialogue platforms to advocate for increased participation of women in climate-smart value chains.

- Specifically, engage other like-minded WROs, advocacy organizations, etc to form a coalition to drive advocacy for increased participation of women in climate-smart value chains.

**Output 7:** Train government technical officers and policymakers in gender- and climate-sensitive policies.

- Specifically, together with the Gender Specialist, deliver quarterly dialogues to discuss policy recommendations for action.

**Output 8:** Develop and disseminate data and knowledge products to inform policy reforms to improve women's economic participation in climate-friendly economic activities

- Specifically, participate in the quarterly reflections and learning sessions for the project implementing team, government stakeholders and association leaders.



### 3.1 Deliverables

WRO will provide the following deliverables based on above outputs in the scope:

- **Annual workplan**

WRO shall develop an Annual Workplan translating the outputs into sequenced, measurable, and costed activities. The workplan shall include:

- A results framework with activities, outputs, indicators, and targets
- An activity matrix detailing timelines, responsibilities, locations, and target numbers
- A schedule of advocacy engagements, community meetings, and champion deployment
- A monitoring and learning plan, including biannual advocacy evaluations and annual review of the Gender and Climate Champion model
- An activity-linked budget

- **Quarterly report**

WRO shall submit Quarterly Reports tracking implementation progress and performance. Each report shall include:

- Summary of key achievements, challenges, and mitigation measures
- Progress against outputs, with quantitative and qualitative data
- Analysis of risks and adaptive actions taken
- Planned activities for the next quarter

- **Annual reports**

WRO shall submit an Annual Report consolidating results, outcomes, and emerging impact.

The report shall include:

- Analysis of achievements under outputs
- Annual review of the Gender and Climate Champion approach, including sustainability considerations
- Assessment of outcomes related to women's inclusion, GBV prevention and management, and human rights
- Financial summary and efficiency analysis
- Strategic recommendations

- **Capitalization process report**

WRO shall prepare a Capitalization Report documenting knowledge, learning, and replicable practices.

The report shall include:

- Selected capitalization items and implemented plan,
- Good practices and innovations, challenges and constraints encountered documented or captured and analyzed
- Scalability and replicability assessment
- Policy and programming recommendations



All deliverables shall be evidence-based with participants' lists, activity photos and other relevant documentation, aligned to agreed indicators, and submitted according to approved formats and timelines.

#### 4. Duration

The project will be run for a period of two (2) years with key deliverables as mentioned above in section 3.1 above.

#### 5. Reporting

The lead organization will work in close collaboration with IIW-Benin team while reporting to the Gender Officer.

#### 6. Proposal submission (to be submitted in PDF format)

While Women Rights Organizations can submit individually, due to the scope and scale of delivery, consortium applications are preferred.

Applicants must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications.

a) A technical proposal including the following:

- A profile of the lead consortium representative (max. 3 pages) explaining why they are the most suitable for the work
- A comprehensive description of the consortium's understanding of the Terms of Reference and indicating any major inconsistency or deficiency in the Terms of Reference and proposed amendments
- A detailed methodology for implementation, including the tools to be used.
- CVs of the proposed team members and a description of their respective roles
- A complete work plan for the entire review period.
- Detailed reference list with contacts indicating the scope and magnitude of similar assignments
- Letters of reference/recommendation from previous companies/assignments

All documents related to the technical proposal must be compiled into a single PDF file, organized with a clear table of content.

b) A financial proposal

Financial proposal in USD clearly showing the cost of the activities listed above, the proposed team member, roles, and proposed days and the proposed professional fee.

**N/B: SUBMITTING THE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL DOCUMENT AS ONE DOCUMENT WILL AUTOMATICALLY LEAD TO DISQUALIFICATION OF THE APPLICANT.**

#### 7. Evaluation criteria

**MANADATORY EVALUATION CRITERIA.**



a) Mandatory Requirements to be attached: -

- Organizations/consortium profile and CVs of Key personnel.
- Certificate of incorporation or Certificate of Registration and other statutory documents.
- Valid Tax Compliance certificate.
- Passports/National IDs of the lead organization representative and team composition

**N/B: FAILURE TO ATTACH AND ADHERE TO THE ABOVE REQUIREMENTS WILL RESULT IN AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFICATION.**

An evaluation committee will be formed by the AECF and may include employees of the businesses or organizations to be supported. All members will be bound by the same standards of confidentiality. The applicants should ensure that they fully respond to all criteria to be comprehensively evaluated.

The AECF may request and receive clarification from any consortium when evaluating a proposal. The evaluation committee may invite some or all the applicants to appear before the committee to clarify their proposals. In such an event, the evaluation committee may consider such clarifications in evaluating proposals.

In deciding the final selection of qualified bidder, the technical quality of the proposal will be given a weighting of 70% based on the evaluation criteria. Only the financial proposal of those bidders who qualify technically will be opened. The financial proposal will be allocated a weighting of 30% and the proposals will be ranked in terms of total points scored.

The mandatory and desirable criteria against which proposals will be evaluated are identified in the table below.

Key Areas for Evaluation/ Assessment	Weighted Award
<b>(A) TECHNICAL PROPOSAL</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>i) An understanding of the mission requirements;</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate an understanding of the Assignment (<b>Has understanding – 5 points, No understanding – 0 point</b>)</li> </ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An in-depth understanding of Gender Lens Investing Standards and trends, entrepreneurs mentoring, root causes of Gender inequalities, Sexual and Gender based violences. (<b>Has understanding – 5 points, No understanding – 0 point</b>)</li> <li>• Understanding Agriculture, Renewable Energy, women economic empowerment, youth engagement, Fragile context and climate change in sub-sectors in sub-Saharan Africa will be added advantage. (<b>Has understanding – 5 points, No understanding – 0 point</b>)</li> </ul>	10



<b>ii) Methodology and work-plan that will deliver the best value on the Assignment:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate the strategy and capacity to deliver the task(s) within a realistic timeline, underpinned by value for money. <b>(Demonstrates – 25 points, Does Not Demonstrate – 0 points)</b></li> </ul>	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy that demonstrates the capability to deliver a part of this Assignment virtually. <b>(Has strategy – 6 points, No strategy – 0 point)</b></li> </ul>	6
<b>iv) Relevant services undertaken by the bidder in past engagements:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate relevant experience and recent engagements with private sector companies in Investment Readiness or development projects. Experience in supporting companies in the Agriculture and Climate smart technologies sub-sectors in sub-Saharan Africa is an added advantage. <b>(Yes – 15 points, No – 0 points)</b></li> </ul>	15
<b>v) Detailed reference list indicating the scope and magnitude of similar assignments:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 3 signed Letters of reference from past customers or associates to the Specialist, clearly indicating the previous experiences and the value and impact on the business or project supported. <b>(3 points for each signed Letter)</b></li> </ul>	9
<b>(A) FINANCIAL PROPOSAL</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity, relevance, reality to market value/ value for money cost for the Assignment (tax free).</li> <li>Financial proposal can be an indicative estimate guided by the proposed methodology Investment Readiness and other activities costs.</li> </ul>	30
<b>Total score</b>	<b>100</b>

## 8. Application details

The AECF is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The AECF considers all interested candidates based on merit without regard to race, gender, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

- Interested consortia are requested to submit their technical and financial proposal to [aecfprocurement@aecfafrica.org](mailto:aecfprocurement@aecfafrica.org) by **16<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 5pm (EAT)**.
- All questions and clarifications should be directed to the procurement email by **6<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 5pm (EAT)**.
- The subject of the email should be **TOR - CALL FOR GRANT FOR THE INVESTING IN WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR A GREENER ECONOMY IN BENIN**. The AECF shall not be liable for not opening proposals that are submitted with a different subject or responding to questions that did not meet the deadline as indicated.



#### 9. Disclaimer

AECF reserves the right to determine the structure of the process, number of short-listed participants, the right to withdraw from the proposal process, the right to change this timetable at any time without notice and reserves the right to withdraw this tender at any time, without prior notice and without liability to compensate and/or reimburse any party.

***NB: The AECF does not charge an application fee for participation in the tender process and has not appointed any agents or intermediaries to facilitate applications. Applicants are advised to reach out directly to the AECF PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT.***