

Partnerships with Women-Owned Companies: Call for Expression of Interest

Frequently Asked Questions

Pre-application

1. What is the purpose of the Call for Expression of Interest (CEI)?

The CEI is organized by the “Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment” (WEE) project. The WEE project is part of the Special Initiative “Decent Work for a Just Transition” of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which is implemented by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) GmbH and other organizations. The WEE project aims to empower women in the private sector by creating good new jobs for women, improving their working conditions, and empowering women-owned businesses.

The purpose of the CEI is for GIZ to establish partnerships (iDPPs) with women-owned companies to implement project ideas proposed by the companies and chosen in the selection procedure. Projects should achieve one or more of the following goals:

- New good jobs for women in the partner company and the respective business sector.
- Improved working conditions for women employed in the partner company and its business sector.
- Improved performance of women-owned businesses in the partner company’s supply chain and business sector.

2. What are “Integrated Development Partnerships with the Private Sector” (iDPPs)?

iDPP is a type of partnership that GIZ can offer to companies. iDPP enables GIZ to co-implement projects with individual companies on equal footing to achieve joint development goals. The partner company is expected to match the volume of resources GIZ invests into the project. Under this CEI, no monetary transactions occur between GIZ and the partner company; instead, both parties contribute their own separate resources to the project.

3. How will project ideas be developed?

Potential partner companies will identify a project they would like to implement that can promote women economic empowerment and support achievement of at least one of the key goals highlighted (1. Good new jobs for women, 2. Improved working conditions for women employees, and/or 3. Improved performance of women-owned businesses). The company identifies activities required to achieve project goals, what costs it plans to contribute to the partnership, and the contribution it would like GIZ to make. Companies should then develop and submit a concept note to GIZ.



4. What can GIZ contribute to the implementation of projects under this CEI?

GIZ generally limits its support to the following categories: fees for external national and international experts (e.g. for research, training, technical advisory/support); project operating costs (e.g. workshop costs, event costs, travel costs); costs for materials, equipment, and capital goods (if in reasonable relation to the overall budget and if certain important circumstances apply).

5. Does GIZ provide direct cash contributions to companies to implement their project ideas under this CEI?

No, companies will not receive support in cash. There will be no transfer of funds between the partner company and GIZ.

6. If companies would like GIZ to contribute materials, equipment, or capital goods to their project, what conditions need to be met?

GIZ can contribute materials, equipment, or capital goods to the project, but one of the following options must apply at the end of the project:

- Option 1: Equipment is officially handed over to a public-sector organization or an organization that qualifies as contributing to public benefit (e.g. NGO, cooperative/farmer group, government organisation, technical training institute, private sector chamber/association, etc.).
- Option 2: Equipment is sold by GIZ to the partner company (at purchase price minus depreciation during the project duration).
- Option 3: Equipment is provided free of charge to the partner company if its provision can be justified as promoting the general public interest (a strong public-benefit case must be made).

7. What kind of costs can companies count as their contribution to the proposed project?

Costs caused exclusively and exhaustively by the proposed project are eligible to be counted as contributions by the partner company.

The following cost categories can generally be counted as a contribution by the partner company: costs related to company's own employees working on the project; fees for external experts or service providers; travel costs; project operating costs for the project; costs of materials, equipment, and capital goods (if certain conditions are met); and investments into infrastructure (for public-benefit or public-sector use).

The following costs are generally not eligible: sales and distribution costs (including advertising); municipal trade tax; costs of independent research and development; write downs (except for materials, equipment and capital goods made available to the project); entertainment costs; grants received by other organizations.

8. Which companies are eligible to submit a project idea?

The CEI is open to profit oriented women-owned enterprises with additional eligibility criteria as detailed below:

- **Ownership:** Company is majority-owned by a woman / women (at least 51%).
- **Nature of company:** Company must be profit-oriented and not engaged in business practices that are unsustainable or harmful to development outcomes.



- **Legal entity:** Company is privately owned and must be legally registered in Rwanda for at least 2 years.
- **Business sector:** preference is given to labour-intensive sectors that have the capacity to create more new jobs.
- **Financial and human resources of company:** Company must have sufficient financial and human resources to co-implement the project idea with GIZ. The company should have had an annual revenue of at least 20,000 Euros in 2023.

9. Which project ideas are eligible for submission in this CEI?

The proposed project idea is eligible if:

- The project contributes significantly to one or more of the following goals (see applicable definitions under Q 10 – Q 12 below):
 - (1) good new jobs for women in the partner company and the respective business sector
 - (2) improved working conditions for women employed in the partner company and its business sector
 - (3) improved performance of women-owned businesses in the partner company's supply chain and business sector.
- The project contributes to sustainable development and goes beyond an investment in the partner company's core business.
- The partner company invests resources into the project – in-kind or in-cash – which match or exceed the contribution expected from GIZ.
- The project has a commercial benefit for the partner company (purely charitable activities cannot be supported).
- The project can be implemented within 12 months.
- The project region is within Rwanda.
- Project would not come about without GIZ support.
- Nature and extent of planned changes are measurable over the project duration.
- Project design is coherent, objectives and activities are realistic and cost-benefit ratio is appropriate.
- Project will create structures to ensure the sustainability of results and changes achieved.

10. How is a “good job” defined in the context of project ideas aimed at creating good jobs for women?

Both formal and informal new jobs can be considered "good" if they meet the following minimum requirements:

- Fulfilment of a minimum employment duration (20 hours/week over 26 weeks within a year or at least 520 working hours/year; exception when the employee quits the job).
- Payment of at least 50,977 RWF per month.
- Compliance with ILO core and basic labor standards (1. no child labor (above 16 years), 2. no forced labor, 3. prohibition of discrimination in employment and occupation, 4. freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, 5. occupational safety and health).



11. How is “improved working conditions” defined in the context of project ideas aimed at enhancing working conditions of women employees?

Improvements in employment conditions can include one or more of the following factors:

- Increased income (adjusted for inflation)
- Access to new employee development programs (like training and career growth)
- Access to new company welfare programs (such as healthcare, childcare such as lactation rooms, flexible schedules, maternity leave, secure commuting support)
- Formalization of informal jobs (such as inclusion in social security system i.e. pension and health insurance),
- Improved workplace safety (including protection against sexual harassment)
- Improved employee representation (introduction of ways for employees to voice concerns, such as works councils, complaint systems, legal help).

12. How is “improved performance” defined in the context of project ideas aimed at enhancing the performance of women-owned businesses in the company’s supply chain?

Performance of a business is considered improved when it confirms one of the following:

- More tailored employee training
- More efficient supply chain management
- Participation in SME purchasing/sales cooperatives for economies of scale.
- Product innovation or diversification
- Obtaining product or sustainability certification
- Applying for financing
- Receiving new customer inquiries (including from export markets)
- Applying for an export license.

13. How long will the partnership last?

The partnership can implement projects of up to 12 months duration.

14. When should the implementation of project ideas start?

Partnerships will begin implementation in Q4 2024.

15. What is the value of the support that partner companies will receive from GIZ for projects?

The company can qualify for in-kind support from GIZ ranging from 20,000 to 60,000 Euros. The company is expected to match or exceed the volume of resources GIZ contributes to the project.



16. What are some examples of viable project ideas?

The following are three simple examples of eligible iDPP projects:

1. A woman-owned company seeks to employ 80 more qualified job seekers. The partner company and GIZ decide to conduct a project together to train and qualify 200 women for the business sector. GIZ covers the expert fees of a comprehensive training program to upskill the women. The partner company covers the costs of its staff providing inputs to the training, facilities for all the trainings, as well as materials and staff costs for on-the-job coaching for a cohort of potential new hires.
2. A group of woman-owned companies in proximity seek to improve workplace childcare for their female employees by providing appropriate facilities. Together with GIZ, the partner companies seek to improve the working conditions for 300 women. GIZ covers fees of experts to consult on childcare at the workplace standards, trains caretakers and consults the businesses on how they can cover running costs. The partner companies provide the premises for a model childcare centre, equip it with appropriate materials and hire caretakers. The partner companies share their experience with the model for childcare with other companies in regular events, open days and in company networks.
3. A woman-owned company seeks to improve the productivity and output quality of its suppliers (e.g. female-majority agricultural cooperatives, women microbusinesses, etc.). The partner company and GIZ decide to implement a supplier development project together, targeting 5 women-owned businesses. GIZ covers expert fees for technical trainings and coaching for the suppliers on different topics as well as purchases small-scale equipment and tools for them. The partner company covers costs of workshops, training materials, travel of suppliers, and staff mentoring suppliers.

Application process

17. What documents and information are required for the application?

Companies must submit a short concept note in a standard format. The concept note format is available to download on the webpage announcing the CEI. Applicants will be required to provide information including an overview of the business's operations, a description of the proposed project idea, an overview of contributions the company will make to the project, a list of contributions expected from GIZ, and expected results.

18. Is there a specific format or template for the application?

Yes, the standard concept note template on the webpage announcing the CEI is mandatory. Projects ideas submitted in a different format will not be considered.



19. Can multiple companies jointly apply and distribute their contributions among partners?

Yes, a concept note can be developed by multiple company partners, however, it should be submitted just once by one company in the lead. Moreover, it is generally recommended to limit the number of partners to a maximum of two active partners that are contributing and receiving the support per proposal. This is to avoid the project becoming more complex as more partners are involved.

20. Can one company submit two different applications?

Yes, a company can hand in more than one application if they feel equally strong about both of ideas. However, it is recommended to consider whether both ideas can be combined into one project to make it even stronger.

21. How can companies submit their application?

Companies must submit their concept note to rwanda@invest-for-jobs.com before the deadline published on the webpage announcing the CEI.

22. Where can companies ask more questions related to the CEI?

Companies may send questions regarding the CEI to rwanda@invest-for-jobs.com.

Post-application process

23. How will ideas in the concept notes be evaluated?

Ideas will be evaluated based on several factors, including the quality and credibility of the submitted concept note, the degree to which the project achieves the CEI's goals as stated above, and the resources the company is willing to invest into the project in relation to the requested assistance from GIZ.

24. Will companies be notified regarding the selection or rejection of their project idea?

Companies that submit a concept note before the deadline will be notified if their project idea is selected or not. Please note that evaluation may take some time.

25. What happens next if a project idea is selected?

Companies will receive a formal notification by email to inform them. Successful project ideas will proceed to the next stage of project development.