

2026: Call for Proposals in Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia
Answers to Applicants' Questions - Concept Note (Stage 1)
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No.	Questions in English	Answers in English
Section: Categorisation / Catégorisation		
1	Could you please clarify whether the 25% co-financing threshold from IFE is calculated against the total project budget or only the job creation component?	The 25% threshold refers specifically to Category 4 and represents the maximum co-financing share applied to the eligible investment measures of the total project cost of the job creation component. Please refer to the Guidelines for Applicants for eligible investment costs. Please see section 2.2 "Project Categories" and 2.4.3 "Eligible Expenditures" in the guidelines for applicants. For the labour migration component the potential IFE co-financing is 80% of the eligible costs.
Section: Eligibility / Eligibilité		
2	Are newly established NGOs eligible to apply for the grant?	NGOs are eligible to apply if they have been operating for at least three years and fulfill the general eligibility conditions. Exceptions may apply for newly established NGOs is a subsidiary of another entity, which fulfills the eligibility criteria
3	Can NGOs that support youth in establishing startups apply for the grant?	NGOs may apply provided they meet the eligibility criteria and can demonstrate that supported self-entrepreneurs and freelancers comply with minimum income and working hours requirements. IFE grant can only finance the eligible investment measures indicated in section 2.4.3 of the guidelines for applicants and cannot be used for sub-granting activities.
4	Could you please clarify whether a project already in the investment phase could be considered eligible if it involves a clearly distinct, high-impact expansion that has not yet been initiated?	A project that has already started the investment phase is not eligible. However, eligibility may be considered in cases where an expansion is clearly phased, with each phase being operationally viable and financially sustainable on its own. In such cases, the new expansion phase may be submitted as the project.
5	Can the grant be used as blended finance to support SME credit lines or be sub-granted to third parties?	No, the grant cannot be used as blended finance for credit lines or lending to SMEs. IFE does not finance financial institutions, lending portfolios, other-lending mechanisms, or sub-granting to third parties.

6	Could you please advise whether projects already implemented by an NGO that require scaling up are eligible for the grant?	Scale-up projects are generally eligible provided they represent a clear mature expansion plan of existing activities, such as increased production capacity or additional infrastructure, and result in direct job creation in the private sector. However, funding is limited to eligible investment costs (e.g. equipment and infrastructure), and operational costs are not eligible. Kindly refer to section 2.4.3. "Eligible Expenditure" in the guidelines for applicants
7	How should a consortium comprising a private commercial entity and a private NGO, collaborating on a demand-driven but non-profit training center, address key requirements such as (a) IFE co-financing, (b) evidence of secured funding, (c) the ratio of grant size to average revenues, and other relevant eligibility criteria?	In a consortium comprising of a private commercial entity and an NGO, the applicable requirements depend on the nature of the project and on the lead applicant. If the project is not for profit (please check carefully the requirements for a not-for profit project!) and the lead applicant is the NGO, the following applies: (a) co-financing requirements and evidence of funding are evaluated at the project level and must be inline with the eligible investment measures set out in the guidelines for applicants. (b) Evidence of own contribution must be presented at a concept note stage, the own contribution can be in cash or a mixture of cash and in-kind contribution, please refer to section 2.4.2 "Own contribution" in the guidelines for applicants. (c) the turnover requirement of the grant size to the average annual turnover is determined by the nature of the project, in case of a not for profit project the average yearly budget of the applicant entity must be greater than or equal to 25% of requested grant for the job creation component. please see section 1.1 "general eligibility conditions"
Section: General / Générale		
8	Could you please elaborate further on the concept of project additionality?	Project financial additionality requires demonstrating that reasonable efforts were exerted to close the 100% of the funding gap, but failed for reasons beyond the applicant means (e.g. loan rejection or unviable financing terms). in the event of financial additionality cannot be fully proven, applicants may demonstrate developmental additionality by showing that IFE support would enable developmental outcomes that would not otherwise occur, supported by clear evidence. Please refer to Annex 6 in the Guidelines for Applicants.
9	In the context of a consortium, is it possible to obtain funding for a new project implemented by certain consortium members, while another consortium member is independently undertaking a significant expansion outside the scope of the application?	Each project is assessed on its own merits. Several projects submitted by an applicant is generally permissible, provided the consortium ability to demonstrate sufficient financial and operational capacity and ensures the projects remains feasible and meets IFE requirements.
10	Does the fund provide any strategic preference or an added advantage to applications submitted by German companies or entities with German ownership or partnership structures?	Applications involving German companies are welcomed to apply. However, there is no requirement or specific preference for German ownership or partnership structures.
11	Could you please clarify how development impact is assessed in relation to additionality?	If financial additionality cannot be fully substantiated, additionality may still be demonstrated through clear and measurable development impact that would not take place without the IFE support, such as delivering tangible benefits to marginalized or vulnerable groups, contributing significantly to environmental sustainability, applying high standards of environmental and social (E&S) practices, and generating broader benefits beyond the core project scope.

12	For Component #1, which is open to all sectors, could you please clarify whether primary agriculture, trading activities, and food processing are considered eligible?	all sectors are welcome to apply for the job creation component.
13	As a non-profit development entity working with NGOs, entrepreneurs, and the private sector, could we propose a collaboration model with NGOs that provide suitable premises for establishing production units, where IFE funding would be used for machinery and equipment, and the project would generate decent jobs within these units?	Yes, IFE funding may be provided for machinery and equipment where the project generates decent job opportunities. However, the project scope must be clearly defined, including ownership, implementation structure, roles of all partners and nature of job creation. It is important to note that IFE does not finance financial institutions, does not allow sub-granting, and does not support lending portfolios.
14	Could you please clarify the difference between the Concept Note (CN) and the Full Project Proposal, and at which stage the business plan and feasibility study are required to be submitted?	The difference between the Concept Note stage, a reasonable level of maturity is expected, ideally supported by at least preliminary feasibility study elements, envisaged funding plan, preliminary designs and cost quotations. Full feasibility studies are not mandatory at this stage but if available would strengthen the application maturity. Applicants with suitable Concept Notes are then invited to submit Full Project Proposal, in which full details have to be provided for allowing a due diligence of the proposed project. Please refer to Section 4 and Annex 6 in the Guidelines for Applicants.
15	As a public sector entity with existing training infrastructure—including facilities, equipment, and classrooms—could you please clarify whether these assets can be considered as part of our contribution to the project?	If the existing training structure and equipment is necessary for the envisaged new project, their value can be considered as in-kind contribution. In that case funding may be provided for the expansion of such facilities or for additional infrastructure and equipment required. But please note that IFE does not finance operational costs or ongoing projects.
16	Can consortium members be registered in countries other than the country where the Call for Proposals is taking place?	In the case of a consortium, at least one consortium member must be legally registered in the country where the Call for Proposals is taking place. The remaining consortium members can be registered in Africa, EU, or the EFTA region, in accordance with the eligibility criteria.
17	If a project application is rejected, are applicants encouraged to revise and resubmit it in upcoming Calls for Proposals?	Yes, applicants are encouraged to revise and resubmit their proposals in subsequent calls. If a project was not successful in a previous call, it is advisable to address the feedback and strengthen the proposal accordingly. Revised applications that clearly adress the prior weaknesses may be positively assessed.
18	For the own contribution, can funds be sourced from external investors, or must they be provided directly by the applicant entity or the project?	The applicant's own contribution may be obtained from various sources, including own funds, bank loans, external or angel investors, and in-kind contributions. However, applicants must provide clear and credible evidence that these funds will be secured and realized.
19	Could you please clarify the maximum duration of the investment phase and the operational phase?	The investment phase may include up to 12 months of preparatory activities (e.g. licensing and initial setup) and up to 24 months of implementation; however, the total duration of the investment phase must not exceed 30 months. Following this, the operational phase is monitored for a period of three years, during which KPI achievement (particularly job creation) is assessed.
20	Could you please clarify how applicants can demonstrate that job creation is directly related to the implementation of the project?	Job creation linkage to the project should be clearly outlined as part of the submission, including a employment plan demonstrating how the proposed jobs are directly linked to and result from the project. For jobs created at 3rd party entities, Letters of Intent have to be provided.

21	What evidentiary standards and criteria are applied to assess the absence of market distortion?	At the Concept Note stage, a preliminary market assessment including supply and demand analysis and basic competitor mapping, is recommended. At the Full Proposal stage, a more detailed analysis will be expected. Projects that risk creating market distortion, such as those involving dominant market positions, may not be supported.
22	Could you please clarify how Category A classification for E&S is determined—whether through applicant self-assessment or KfW appraisal—and whether any screening checklist or exclusion list is required upfront, as well as which sectors or activities typically trigger a Category A classification?	The project must not fall under Environmental and Social Category A, which includes activities with significant adverse environmental or social impacts. Additionally, the project must not include any activities listed under the IFC Exclusion List, as adapted by KfW (see https://www.kfw.de/PDF/Download-Center/Konzernthemen/Nachhaltigkeit/Ausschlussliste_EN.pdf). In addition, IFE conducts its own assessment during the evaluation to identify the categorization of the project.
23	Could you please clarify the language requirement for application submission?	Applications are accepted in both English and French.
24	Could you please clarify how financial additionality can be substantiated, particularly what evidence is required to demonstrate engagement with banks or other financiers?	Financial additionality can be substantiated by demonstrating engagement with financial institutions or other funders through documented evidence, such as email correspondence, rejection letters, or indicative term sheets. This may include cases where financing is offered but does not fully cover the funding gap. Please refer for details to Annex 6 of the Guidelines.
25	For Component #2, Do applicants need to sign a Letter of Intent with entities such as EGC or AHK when engaging them for consultation under the project?	While agreements with entities such as EGC or AHK are not mandatory, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate engagement with relevant service providers supporting the labour mobility to Germany. This may include letters of intent, MoUs, or other forms of communication confirming their role in facilitating the process. Such evidence strengthens the proposal by demonstrating a clear and credible implementation pathway.
26	Does project maturity refer to the level of planning and preparation, rather than the commencement of implementation?	Yes, that is correct. Project maturity refers to the level of planning and preparation, which can include the completion of relevant studies demonstrating that the project is operationally viable and financially sustainable, and ready to commence once the required funding is secured.
27	Can applicants submit more than one proposal?	Yes, applicants may submit more than one project. However, they must clearly demonstrate sufficient financial and technical capacity to implement multiple projects simultaneously. In addition, please check the fulfilment of additionality criteria.
28	Can the own contribution be provided all as in-kind, or must the minimum percentage (e.g. 15%) be strictly in cash?	The applicant's own contribution may be in cash or a combination of cash and in-kind contributions; however, it cannot be fully in-kind. A minimum of 15% must be provided in cash, and must not be less than €100,000.
Section: KPI / ICP		
29	In assessing employment impact, does the fund place greater emphasis on white-collar and highly skilled jobs, or are blue-collar and vocational job creation outcomes considered equally?	The grant does not differentiate between white-collar and blue-collar employment; both are accepted. The key requirement is the creation of new, decent jobs in alignment with KPI 1 criteria in the Guidelines for Applicants.
30	For Component #2: Could you please clarify whether the identification and facilitation of employment opportunities in Germany are the responsibility of the service provider, or whether they involve coordination with the German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the broader labour market?	The identification of opportunities in Germany, as well as the full implementation of the project components, falls exclusively under the responsibility of the applicant. Applicants may involve cooperation partners for job placements in Germany, but keep the overall responsibility.

31	For Component 2, is it necessary to have a private sector partner in Germany to ensure employment opportunities for trainees?	<p>It is not necessary to have a private partner in Germany nor to submit signed Letters of Intent (LoI) from German Employers. However, a plausible explanation has to be provided of how and by whom (which partners) job placements in Germany can be achieved for the beneficiaries of the labour migration component. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cooperation with other initiatives, who are actively engaged in labour migration activities towards Germany and who demonstrate existing links with German employers, professional associations etc. •Cooperation with German professional associations, who have demonstrated their interest in supporting job placements in Germany. •Cooperation with specialized recruiting agencies, who can demonstrate their relationship with German employers in the respective occupational sectors. <p>Please note that placement services must be based on recognised standards of fair recruitment, particularly with regard to transparency towards participants.</p>
32	Could you please clarify the distinction between KPI 2 and KPI 3? Specifically, if a portion of employees receives training, should they be reported under KPI 3 only, or also under KPI 2?	<p>KPI 2 relates to existing employees and captures improvements in their working conditions, such as salary increases, benefits (e.g. healthcare, pensions, transport), or relevant upskilling.</p> <p>KPI 3, on the other hand, applies to new beneficiaries and focuses on training activities directly linked to the project with a minimum of 5 days.</p>
33	Could you please clarify what is meant by direct job creation?	<p>Direct job creation refers to employment that arises exclusively as a direct result of the project. For example, adding a new production line that requires additional workers, or expanding a distribution network that leads to increased hiring, where such jobs would not exist without the project. Contrary, jobs created through indirect effects of the project (e.g. through an improvement in social and economic conditions), are not eligible and cannot be counted.</p>
34	Are all KPIs mandatory for every project to fulfill?	<p>No, only KPI 1 (private sector job creation) is mandatory. Inclusion of KPI 2 and/or KPI 3 is optional but can provide additional scoring points.</p>
35	Is the nursing profession currently in demand in the German labour market, and is it considered a priority sector for Labour mobility component?	<p>Under Component #2, the healthcare sector is eligible for the labour mobility component <u>only in Egypt</u>. Applicants should refer to the Guidelines for Applicants for the full list of eligible sectors. It remains the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate clear demand in the German labour market, including evidence of potential employers willing to recruit the trained nurses.</p>
36	Are indirect jobs generated through institutions, activities, subcontractors, or suppliers taken into account?	<p>No, indirect jobs are generally not considered. Jobs created by suppliers or subcontractors that would grow organically, with or without the project, are not eligible. However, in cases where the project directly induces the creation of specific, dedicated capacities within a supplier's operations (e.g. a new production line tailored exclusively to the project) or at third parties (e.g. construction of a food processing plant and a Third-Party entity hires new staff to produce inputs to the plant), such jobs may be considered, provided a clear and direct link to the project can be demonstrated.</p>

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Company Address:
Investitionen für Beschäftigung
(Investing for Employment) GmbH
Eulenkrugstrasse 82
22359 Hamburg | Germany