Bio-Bridge Initiative

Criteria for the Assessment of Seed Funding Proposals

Introduction

This document describes the criteria to be used in the evaluation of project proposals submitted by Parties, government agencies, institutions or organizations as well as indigenous peoples and local communities for consideration for seed funding under the Bio-Bridge Initiative.

Seed funding support may be provided to catalyze the development of project proposals that promote exemplary technical and scientific cooperation (TSC) approaches. To be eligible, project proposals must, *inter alia*, promote innovative approaches, foster practical and technically sound solutions and demonstrate potential to generate results with lasting or significant impact. They must be aligned with the vision and mission of the BBI and should, among other things, take into account the following principles:

Technical and scientific cooperation refers to a process whereby two or more countries or institutions pursue their individual or collective biodiversity-related goals through cooperative actions and/or exchange of scientific knowledge, expertise, data, resources, technologies and technical know-how. Technical scientific cooperation can include human resources development, institutional building, exchange of expertise, joint training, joint research, joint development and diffusion of technologies (including indigenous and traditional technologies), and the transfer of technology and know-how.

(i) Respond to priorities identified in the relevant National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans;

(ii) Seek to establish long-term cooperation between two or more countries on technical and scientific matters, including joint research and development of technical and scientific innovative solutions[1] to address the key drivers of biodiversity loss;[2] and

(iii) Facilitate the transfer of technologies and/or exchange of specialized knowledge and know-how through institutional collaboration.

They should also demonstrate that technical and scientific cooperation is the most feasible and effective means to address identified biodiversity-related needs in one or more technical focal areas.[3] Please refer

[1] For the purpose of the present document, "innovation" is described as a process that encompasses design, experimentation, application and scaling up of new ideas and solutions, resulting in transformative and more impactful change. Innovative solutions could cover scientific, technical, governance, finance or societal innovation.

[2] The main direct drivers of biodiversity loss are land/sea use change, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species.

[3] In the past calls for proposals such technical focal areas have addressed, among others: access to genetic resources and benefit sharing; agriculture biodiversity; biodiversity and climate change; biodiversity and health; biodiversity monitoring and assessment, including community-based monitoring; biosafety; ecosystem restoration; invasive alien species; marine biodiversity, pollution; protected areas; protection and recovery of threatened species; traditional and local knowledge, etc.

to Section I below for information on the priority focal areas that are eligible for funding under the present call.

The three layers of criteria described below are intended to facilitate systematic and transparent assessment of the submitted proposals for final selection. Specifically, they are designed to help:

(i) Identify project proposals that are in line with the Bio-Bridge mission, objectives and principles, and thus eligible for consideration under the Initiative (Eligibility Assessment Stage);

(ii) Assess the quality of proposals received and to prioritize those to be submitted to the Project Review Panel for the final evaluation (Quality Assessment Phase); and

(iii) Identify proposals with greatest potential to produce concrete output(s) and outcome(s) likely to have the highest impact (Technical Assessment Phase).

Upon request and as appropriate, the Bio-Bridge helpdesk can assist prospective applicants and partners in their efforts to refine their project proposals.

I. Eligible Focal Areas

The project proposals should address one of the following focal areas:

(i) ***Biodiversity and climate change****:* how ecosystem and nature can deliver solutions contributing to adaptation to or mitigation of the impacts of climate change.

(ii) ***Biodiversity and health:*** promoting integrated approaches, such as the One Health approach and the ecosystem approach, on interlinkages between biodiversity and health (including human, wildlife, crop, livestock, and ecosystem health) to address the common drivers of biodiversity loss.

(iii) ***Sustainable use of wild species and wildlife trade****:* addressing sustainable use and wildlife trade, including solutions to control and eliminate unsustainable, illegal and unsafe harvesting, trade and use of wild species.

(iv) ***Biodiversity-related technologies and innovations****:* providing and/or facilitating access to and transfer of technologies and innovations that are relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or make use of genetic resources and do not cause harm to the environment, including by promoting the establishment of joint research programmes and joint ventures for their development.

or

Follow-on TSC projects*:* a limited number of cooperation projects previously supported by the Bio-Bridge Initiative, which have demonstrated impactful and innovative biodiversity solutions and that present an exceptional prospect to be scaled up and/or replicated in other countries, would also be considered.

II. Co-financing requirements

Successful proposals will be required to secure co-financing commitments from the project partners and/or provide evidence of financial support from other relevant funding sources for an amount equivalent to at least 50 per cent of the requested BBI contribution.

III. Eligibility Assessment Stage

The following eligibility criteria are to be used by the helpdesk to identify proposals that are in line with Bio-Bridge mission, objectives and principles. A proposal must meet all the eligibility criteria in order to be accepted for further consideration under the Initiative.

Table 1: Eligibility Assessment Criteria

No.	Criteria - *Extent to which the proposal:*	Checklist
1.	Seeks to promote technical and scientific cooperation on a long-term basis between two or more countries and/or national institutions/organizations in different countries	☐
2.	Involves at least one developing country or a country with economy in transition[4]	☐
3.	Responds to need(s), problem(s) or gap(s) that can be addressed through technical and scientific cooperation, as well as through any associated transfer of technologies and exchange of specialized knowledge and know how	☐
4.	Is aligned with the national priorities identified in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) or other relevant national and/or regional policy document(s) of the countries of the main applicant and the project partners.[5]	☐
5.	Involves institutional development or strengthening through collaboration[6]	☐

[4] Applicants from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, as well as indigenous peoples and local communities, are eligible. However, priority is given to applicants from least developed countries, small island developing States and megadiverse developing countries. **Applicants from countries that have not received funding during the previous rounds of the Bio-Bridge Initiative are strongly encouraged to apply**, namely: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cook Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, DPR Korea, DR Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, North Macedonia, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zambia.

[5] The proposal should clearly indicate the national and/or regional priorities to be addressed and specify which section(s) of the relevant NBSAPs and/or other national and/or regional policy document(s) where such priorities are reflected. It should also describe how it seeks to address these priorities.

[6] The proposal should seek to build or strengthen the capacity of institutions and not focus *only* on building the capacity of individuals through training.

IV. Quality Assessment Stage

The BBI helpdesk assesses the quality of all the proposals against the criteria in Table 2 below and gives a score of 0 to 5 for each criterion. Only proposals with a final score of 80% or higher are submitted to the Project Review Panel for a final evaluation.

Table 2: Quality Assessment Criteria

No.	Criteria – *Extent to which the proposal:*	Max Score	
1.	Clearly articulates the need/problem/gap to be addressed through technical and scientific cooperation	5	Extent to which the proposal: • Sufficiently and concisely describes the need/problem/gap, including its root causes • Describes the significance of the need/problem/gap • Provides empirical data regarding the need/problem/gap • Presents a compelling case (rationale) for the project
2.	Includes SMART and clearly defined objectives and outcomes responding to the expressed need/problem/gap	5	Extent to which: • Project objectives and expected results are clearly defined • Project objectives and expected results are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) • Project objectives and expected results directly related to the expressed need/problem/gap • The proposal clearly describes the change that will occur after the conclusion of the project
3.	Defines appropriate activities and methods to achieve the stated objectives and expected results	5	Extent to which: • Project activities are specific/concrete and logically presented • The proposed activities and methods respond directly to the expressed need/problem/gap • Activities and methods are consistent with the project objectives and expected results
4.	Includes a clear and realistic implementation plan and budget	5	Extent to which: • Project timelines and milestones are clearly presented • Project activities can be implemented within the proposed timelines (timelines are realistic) • The proposed workflow is appropriate • The delivery approaches and methods proposed are appropriate and effective in achieving the stated objectives • The budget is sufficiently detailed and reflects all the proposed activities requiring funding • The budget requested is adequate, reasonable and demonstrates cost-effectiveness and value for money • Sources and amount of co-financing are clearly identified and documented • The project demonstrates ways to optimize resources (for example, by sharing and maximizing existing resources – equipment, facilities, and personnel) and achieve economies of scale

5.	Includes a sound monitoring and evaluation plan, with verifiable indicators	5	Extent to which: • The proposal presents a clear and detailed plan for monitoring, evaluating and reporting the effectiveness of the project • The proposed indicators are objectively verifiable • The baseline for monitoring and evaluating the project is clearly described
6.	Involves broad and diverse partners that have demonstrated commitment to the implementation of the project	5	Extent to which: • The project partners are clearly identified • The project involves multiple partners • The project involves diverse categories of partners • The proposal clearly describes the respective roles and responsibilities of partners • The partners' commitment to the project is clearly demonstrated (e.g., through co-financing or in-kind support)
7.	Identifies potential risks/challenges and describes strategies to mitigate them	5	Extent to which: • Potential risks to the project's success are well analyzed • A risk management strategy with clear mitigation measures described • Mitigation measures are pertinent
8.	Demonstrates the proponents' capacity to effectively implement the project	5	Extent to which the project proponent and partners: • Have a proven track record and experience to successfully implement the project • Have sufficient institutional capacity (policies/ regulations, administrative systems and infrastructure) • Have adequate and qualified personnel capable of carrying out the project successfully • Have sufficient knowledge of the issues and the geographic area covered by the project • Have demonstrated ability to leverage resources from various sources and build partnerships and coalitions
9.	Builds on and leverages other relevant initiatives and programmes	5	Extent to which the project: • Takes into account and builds on the experiences and achievements of previous or ongoing initiatives with similar objectives • Complements (rather than duplicate) the efforts of other relevant organizations and initiatives • Leverages local knowledge and resources • Leverages best practices and lessons learned from other initiatives through partnerships, including with the private sector
10.	Addresses broader sustainable development and social equity issues, including gender equality	5	Extent to which the project: • Generates multiple benefits - social, economic, and environmental • Contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals • Promotes gender equality and empowerment of vulnerable groups

			• Addresses the interests and concerns of indigenous peoples and local communities

V. Technical Assessment Stage

An external Project Review Panel is invited to evaluate selected project proposals for their technical and scientific merit and significance using the criteria in Table 3 below. The Panel gives a score from 0 to 5 for each criterion and the proposals that achieve a final score of 80% or higher are endorsed as vetted proposals. The vetted proposals are publicized through the Bio-Bridge website and showcased at Bio-Bridge events.

Table 3: Technical Assessment Criteria (to be used by the Project Review Panel)

No.	**Criteria –** ***Extent to which the proposal:***	**Max Score**	
1.	Is likely to lead to long-term technical and scientific cooperation	5	Extent to which: • The project is supported by an enabling environment (e.g. national laws and policies, regional agreements and institutional frameworks) • The cooperation is, or will be, formalized through agreements/ institutionalized mechanisms (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding) • Project activities are to be implemented as part of or aligned with the core work of the project's proponents • Partners have committed their own human, technical and financial resources (co-financing) towards the project, which is likely to lead to long-term cooperation • The project includes multiple ways and means through which the partners would cooperate (e.g., joint project planning and development, joint implementation, joint staffing) • The project and the partnership are supported at the highest level of Government or the executive level of the organizations involved
2.	Contributes to institutional building or strengthening	5	Extent to which the project: • Strengthens organizational structures and processes of the project partners • Enhances institutional capacity for resource mobilization (human, technical and financial resources) • Enhances human resources, e.g., through twinning, mentorship and fellowship programmes, exchange visits or study tours • Creates or reinforces networks, communities of practice and knowledge-sharing mechanisms
3.	Adds value to ongoing efforts towards the achievement of the objectives of the Convention on	5	Extent to which the project: • Produces tangible results likely to lead to significant impact/change, complimenting and/or building upon what

	Biological Diversity and its Protocols.		is already being done • Is expected to generate multiple benefits (environmental, social and economic) over and above those of other initiatives • Seeks to maximize the use of best practices and lessons learned • Has a catalytic and multiplier effect
4.	Includes activities and delivery methods/ approaches that are practical, appropriate and effective in addressing the need/problem/gap identified	5	Extent to which the proposed activities and delivery methods/approaches: • Are likely to address the identified need/problem/gap in a timely and impactful manner • Are suitable and appropriate to deliver the desired results • Are likely to result in tangible benefits • Make use of local knowledge and resources
5.	Promotes one or more of the following technical and scientific cooperation modalities and approaches: a) Access to and/or transfer and diffusion of biodiversity-related technologies and specialized knowledge and know-how b) Cooperation in the training of personnel c) Exchange of experts d) Joint research and/or joint ventures for the development of relevant technologies /solutions e) Access to, exchange and/or use of relevant technical and scientific data	10	Extent to which the project is likely to: • Lead to technology transfer e.g., through cooperation in research and development, and innovation • Promote the use of appropriate endogenous technologies • Facilitate access to and exchange of technical and scientific data and knowledge • Promote access to specialized knowledge and know-how • Contribute to the creation of a pool of experts with specialized technical and scientific skills • Result in technologies that can be adapted and used by the intended beneficiaries in the medium and long-term • Involve the exchange of experts • Advance joint research and cooperative ventures for the development of new technologies to meet the needs of collaborating partners • Promote collaboration and networking between academic researchers and industry
6.	Is technically viable	5	Extent to which the project: • Is likely to be effectively implemented/realized under the prevailing local conditions and realities • Offers practical and appropriate solution(s) to addressing the need/problem/gap (solutions with demonstrated effectiveness and likelihood to achieve sustainable results) • Offers solution(s) which are technically sound and well proven • Proposes solution(s) that are easy to maintain and service • Proposes solutions that are acceptable to the intended beneficiaries
7.	Is sustainable	5	Extent to which: • The planned activities and expected benefits are likely to

			continue beyond the project's lifespan • The expected benefits can be derived over a long period of time after the project's lifespan • Additional financial resources and in-kind contributions have been secured • The proposed interventions are environmentally sound and easily adaptable • Clear mechanisms for follow-up coordination and communication among partners are in place
8.	Is innovative	5	Extent to which: • The project adopts creative and unique methods and approaches for addressing the need/problem/gap • The project proposes novel solutions that transcend existing practices • The project seeks to employ state-of-the-art solutions that are likely to improve ways of doing things
9.	Can be scaled-up and/or replicated	5	Extent to which: • The project can be expanded (scaled up) • The project can be repeated in other places (replicated nationally, regionally, and internationally) • The project seeks to communicate and disseminate its results, best practices and lessons learned • The proposed project's results are likely to be adapted and utilized in other cases

VI. Final Selection

Final selection of successful proposals rests with the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity who reviews the shortlist provided by the Project Review Panel and makes a determination based on resources available, regional and thematic balance, among other considerations.