CCAC Circular Economy Challenge 2026

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Question	Answer
GENERAL APPLICATION	
Can proposed projects be integrated with the implementation or scale-up of existing initiatives?	Yes, the proposed project can be integrated with existing initiatives or support the scaling up of ongoing projects, as long as it aligns with the objectives and priorities outlined in the call. CCAC funding should have a clear value add/additionality to ongoing activities with impact aligned with the scope of the *CCAC Circular Economy Challenge - Unlocking Value from Organic Waste: Building Markets for Circular Economy Solutions*
Is prior engagement with the CCAC a requirement?	No, prior experience working with the CCAC is not a requirement and does not in itself give an organization a stronger chance of being selected. All proposals are evaluated based on the quality of the submission, relevance to the objectives, and the capacity of the organization to deliver. We welcome applications from both new and existing partners. You are asked to explain any existing engagement with the CCAC/UNEP in the concept note.
Is there a limit to the number of concept notes an organization can submit as a Lead Applicant?	No, there is no maximum number of concept notes an organization can submit as a Lead Applicant. Each submission will be evaluated independently based on the content of the proposals. However, we expect that organizations ensure that there is internal coordination on the submission of proposals to avoid duplication.
Is there a limit for one organization to take part in an application consortium?	No, there is no limit to the number of application consortia in which an organization may participate. An organization may be involved in multiple consortium applications, provided it meets all eligibility and participation requirements for each application.

What is expected in the Project Pitch section of the concept note form?	The Project Pitch is an opportunity for applicants to present their project idea in a concise and compelling manner. This section should clearly articulate the central concept, proposed approach, key outcomes/objectives, expected mitigation potential, and anticipated impact of the proposed initiative. It will serve as a critical reference point for reviewers during the evaluation process.
For proposals addressing multiple focus areas, is equal emphasis required across all, or can one area be the primary focus?	While proposals must address at least two focus areas, it is not required that each receives equal emphasis. One focus area can be primarily addressed as long as the other(s) is/are meaningfully integrated, and the overall approach remains coherent and aligned with the objectives of the call.
Does the CCAC recommend using a specific logical framework or Theory of Change (ToC) throughout the project design?	No specific Theory of Change is provided for this call for proposals beyond the description of the challenge provided on the website. Your concept note should clearly outline the challenge, the proposed solution, the proposed approach (outcomes, output/activities), the intended impact, and the ability of your organization to undertake the proposed activities. All proposals submitted should be aligned with the goals of the CCAC 2030 Strategy and CCAC Super Pollutant Prioritisation Strategy for 2026-2030 available online here: Our 2030 Strategy | Climate & Clean Air Coalition
Where can the CCAC's gender criteria, referenced in the Call, be accessed?	Detailed guidance on developing a gender responsive project will be shared at Step 2 of the project. Gender mainstreaming resources are available on the CCAC website here: Gender Mainstreaming for Climate and Clean Air Action | Climate & Clean Air Coalition, and you can access the CCAC Gender Strategy here: CCAC Gender Strategy | Climate & Clean Air Coalition. Please note that CCAC project funding asks you to achieve, at a minimum, a Score 1 on the OECD DAC Policy Marker for Gender Equality. You can find that marker and its requirements here: Definition and Minimum Recommended Criteria for the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker | Climate & Clean Air Coalition

Is registration on the UN Partner Portal required for all project partners? If not mandatory, does registration strengthen the application, and what are the potential benefits for future collaboration?	To receive funding from the CCAC, not-for-profit organizations involved in project implementation must self-register in the UN Partner Portal and complete the due diligence process. Organizations do not need to be registered before applying for funding; however, it is recommended to register as soon as possible. Additional information on registration is available here: UN Partner Portal. Registering in this UN Secretariat-wide portal also makes the organization visible as a potential partner to other UN entities.
Can proposals be submitted in other languages?	We ask that submissions are made in English to ensure consistency and facilitate the review process. If you are unable to submit in English, please contact the Secretariat via email at secretariat@ccacoalition.org for further guidance.
Is there a minimum co-funding amount for this Call?	There is no minimum co-funding for proposals submitted. Proposals will be evaluated based on their overall impact potential and cost effectiveness, particularly at Step 2 of the application process when detailed budget proposals are developed.
FUNDING AND BUDGET	
Is the $2,000,000 project size the maximum inclusive of co-funding, or is it the maximum CCAC contribution?	A maximum of $2,000,000 CCAC funding can be requested per project. This amount excludes co-funding/co-financing.
What can be classified as an in-kind contribution?	This refers to non-monetary resources provided by government, organization, or partners to support the project. Examples of in-kind contributions are: expert services, office space facilities, equipment and materials, logistical support, and data/tools provided without cost.
Does the CCAC allow organizations to include indirect costs and/or	CCAC projects are administered through UNEP Partnership Agreements which do not support overhead costs. The budget should include direct costs only. This

administrative support in the project budget under this Call?	includes staff and personnel costs related to project activities, including project management.
Does the CCAC allow for procurement costs?	CCAC project funding is administered through UNEP Partnership Agreements, which, in principle, allow for incidental procurement only $20,000 or 15% of the total budget for agreements of $200,000 and below, and up to $40,000 or 15% for agreements above $200,000. The predominant purpose of a cooperation agreement cannot be for the acquisition of goods, works or services. We encourage you to follow these guidelines; however, if proposed incidental procurement rates exceed these thresholds, the project budget will require additional assessments, approvals, and, if approved, additional monitoring requirements. At Step 1 - Concept note stage, your proposal will not be excluded for exceeding incidental procurement rates. We will ask you for follow-up information on individual costs as necessary during Step 2 - Ful Proposal stage proposal of the application process.
What is the maximum budget allocated per project?	The budget for each project is up to $2,000,000. The number of projects selected will depend on the total cost of approved projects.
The concept note mentions that co-funding or in-kind contributions are highly recommended. Is co-funding part of the selection criteria?	**Co-funding is not a selection criterion.** Available co-funding or in-kind contributions will be evaluated within the context of the proposal, recognizing that some organizations have more access to additional funding streams/resources than others. Co-funding will be viewed positively in the overall cost-effectiveness of proposed activities as it relates to maximizing the impact of proposed activities and therefore of CCAC investment. If applicable, please disclose in the relevant co-funding fields whether this funding is confirmed/secured or not.

If a project focuses on a single country, is it advisable to request a smaller funding amount?	No, multi-country projects are not mandatory for this call, and projects may have sub-national, national, or regional scopes. The amount of funding requested should reflect the intended impact, the ambition of the proposed outcomes, outputs, and activities, and the costs to achieve these.
Are letters of participation required from potential co-funders, governments, or other stakeholders?	No, letters of endorsement are **not required** at the concept of note stage; however, they are seen as positive signals of concrete engagement from relevant stakeholders. The CCAC Secretariat may follow up for additional information on stakeholder engagement in the absence of letters of endorsement submitted during Step 2 - Full Proposal stage of the application process.
What types of private sector involvement are eligible for funding?	**For-profit organizations are not eligible for funding.** However, co-funding or in-kind contributions from private sector stakeholders or other donor schemes than those of CCAC are encouraged. Private sector stakeholders may be involved in project activities but cannot receive CCAC funds.
Does the CCAC allow advance payments, or are payments strictly results-based?	UNEP Partnership Agreements specify the payment schedule and are agreed upon by both parties in advance. The first payment is issued after countersignature. Subsequent payments are released based on the reporting cycle and depend on the rate of expenditure and delivery of results.
TECHNICAL	
What are the expectations regarding monitoring and follow-up of mitigation and co-benefit estimates? What level of depth and detail should be planned or integrated into monitoring?	If selected for funding, you will be provided with an Impact Assessment Form to be completed during your project/at project completion to provide the assessed impact of project activities. The information provided will depend on whether your project has a direct or indirect mitigation potential (i.e. reducing emissions or creating an enabling environment for emissions reductions in the future). All project activities should be robustly monitored throughout the project lifecycle, and sustainability measures should ensure that project activities continue to have benefits after the project is completed.

Can projects work with multiple types of organic waste?	Yes, proposals may combine different types of organic waste, such as food waste from wholesale markets, restaurants, hotels, commercial kitchens and institutions, including unsold produce, food scraps and preparation waste; organic residues and by-products from food-processing industries, such as fruit and vegetable peels, trimmings and pulp; separately collected green waste, such as grass clippings and leaves; or relevant agricultural organic residues, where their recovery or treatment can deliver demonstrable methane reductions. provided they demonstrate clear methane mitigation potential and contribute to viable circular economy business models. However, not all organic waste streams have the same methane mitigation potential. For example, agricultural residues left to decompose in dry fields generally generate little methane, whereas organic waste disposed of in landfills or open dumps can generate significant emissions. Applicants should identify the waste streams concerned, explain how they are currently managed, and demonstrate how the proposed activities will reduce methane emissions while supporting commercially viable and scalable circular economy solutions. Where multiple waste streams are combined, applicants should also explain how their separate collection and treatment will be organized.
What does "large organic waste generator" mean?	Large organic waste generators are commercial or institutional entities that produce significant and relatively concentrated volumes of organic waste, creating opportunities for separate collection, efficient logistics, and commercially viable waste valorization or circular economy business models. Examples include food processors, wholesale and central markets, hotels, restaurants, institutional kitchens, agribusinesses, and other major commercial or institutional waste generators.

	The Call does not prescribe a specific minimum volume or tonnage threshold. Proposals may focus on a single large generator, or a group of generators whose combined waste streams provide sufficient scale for shared collection, treatment or valorization solutions. Applicants should demonstrate that the proposed waste stream have sufficient volume and predictable availability to support the proposed business or organizational model, with clear potential for methane mitigation, financial sustainability and replication.
Are particular treatment technologies or valorization approaches preferred?	The Challenge does not prescribe a specific technology. Solutions may include composting, anaerobic digestion, black soldier fly systems, nutrient recovery and other appropriate organic waste valorization approaches. Applicants should justify their choice based on the characteristics of the waste stream, local conditions, methane mitigation potential, and long-term commercial viability.
How should applicants demonstrate the commercial viability and scalability of their proposed solutions?	Applicants should explain how their proposed business model could remain financially sustainable beyond CCAC funding. Relevant considerations include the availability and consistency of organic waste streams, collection and operational costs, potential service fees or other revenue sources, identified buyers or end-users, and opportunities for replication or expansion.
Must projects involve agricultural partners or end-users?	Not necessarily. The Challenge encourages linkages between the waste and agriculture sectors, particularly through the production and commercialization of compost, digestate, animal feed, and other waste-derived products. However, proposals may also develop viable circular economy business models involving other end-users, provided they meet the Challenge's focus area requirements and demonstrate methane mitigation potential.

How will methane/GHG emission reductions be measured?	Applicants should use internationally recognized methodologies and guidance (e.g. IPCC Guidelines) appropriate to the proposed intervention and context. At the Concept Note stage, applicants should provide a credible indicative estimate of expected methane/GHG emission reductions, state the chosen methodology, and include the proposed baseline and key assumptions. Detailed MRV requirements may be refined at the full proposal stage.
PARTNERSHIPS AND CONSORTIA	
Is there a minimum number of applicants per consortium?	Yes, a consortium should have two or more organizations. **The engagement of local organization/s in a consortium is required.** Applicants are encouraged to involve relevant national and subnational government authorities, particularly those responsible for waste management and service delivery. in the development of the proposal.
Can NGOs partner with academic institutions, inter-governmental agencies, or UN entities?	Yes, not-for-profit entities are eligible to co-apply for funding with not-for-profit academic institutions, intergovernmental organizations, and/or UN entities, as well as other (not-for-profit) NGOs. Engagement with national and subnational governments is also encouraged. Private sector organizations are not eligible to receive funding but can be a partner in the proposal and provide in-kind or matching funds. If you have individual questions related to your organization's eligibility, please contact the CCAC Secretariat at secretariat@ccacoalition.org.
Can research organizations affiliated with universities, national research institute, and/or government research institute participate in this call?	Yes, as long as this is a non-profit organization.

Can a project cover multiple countries?	Yes.
Is advocacy work eligible if it forms a component of a broader project concept?	Yes, as long as advocacy activities are clearly related to the theory of change of the project, and the targeted outcomes, activities are eligible for consideration of funding. If your project is short-listed and invited to Step 2 - Full Proposal submission, all projects are required to include communications activities in project logical frameworks to ensure knowledge sharing and awareness-raising of project results/activities.
If a project focuses on a single country, is it advisable to request a smaller funding amount?	Not necessarily. Multi-country projects are not mandatory for this call, and projects may have sub-national, national, or regional scopes. The amount of funding requested should reflect the intended impact, the ambition of the proposed outcomes, outputs, and activities, and the costs to achieve these
Are letters of support from local/subnational governments or partners encouraged at the concept note stage?	Yes, letters of support are encouraged if available but are not required at the concept note stage. Applicants should, however, demonstrate a good understanding of the local waste management context and explain how they will engage relevant local authorities, waste generators, service providers, and other stakeholders. Existing local partnerships and relationships that can support effective project implementation are also encouraged.
Can a government institution partner with an international organization to respond to the call, and who should serve as the lead applicant?	Yes, government institutions at national, regional, provincial, or municipal/local levels can partner with international organizations. A lead applicant is expected to have the capacity to implement and monitor the full project lifecycle. Either institution, or other not-for-profit entities, can serve as lead applicant.