Call for funding proposals: economics of climate change adaptation in Africa

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

For more information, please visit the Call for Proposals page here.

1. Eligibility

1.1 Who is eligible to apply for the RAIA research grant? Only universities, academic institutions, think tanks, policy or economic research institutes, and independent non-profit research entities are eligible to apply.

1.2 Are non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), consulting firms, private companies, startups, banks, or UN agencies, individual researchers, graduate students (MSc/PhD), or early-career researchers eligible to apply? No. The grant does not accept proposals from private sector/for profit entities, start-ups, banks, or UN entities. The lead applicant must be a university or research organization and not an individual researcher.

1.3. Are new or young organizations (less than 3 years old / without audited financials), grassroots and youth-led organizations, and government institutions or ministries eligible? No. Applicants will need to meet the SEI due diligence requirements, including accounting, finance, and audit requirements. The due diligence form is available here (see "SECTION 4: Supporting Documents"). Government ministries are not eligible to apply, but they are expected to be involved as project partners to identify the key questions for the research and to develop nationally relevant and applicable policy research outputs.

1.4. For organizations applying as a consortium, must the lead applicant meet all eligibility criteria, or can the criteria be shared among consortium partners? The lead applicant organization must meet all the eligibility criteria. The consortium partner(s) are expected to bring complementary expertise and capacity relevant to the proposed research.

2. Geographic scope

2.1. Is the call open to all African countries? Yes, the call is open to all countries in Africa, with priority given to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2.2. Can proposals be multi-country? No. The grant is targeting national economic research.

2.3. Is work at the sub-national / district level acceptable? Yes, it can be, if the work has a strategy to inform national or sector adaptation policies, planning, budget systems and/or fiscal policy.

3. Partnerships & consortia

3.1. Is a consortium mandatory or optional? It is optional. The grant accepts proposals from both consortium and individual organization applicants. The lead applicant organization must meet all the eligibility requirements, and the consortium partner brings additional capacity and expertise. Applicants are required to outline in the proposal the core team (incl. consortium partners) and their respective roles in the project.

3.2. Can multiple institutions apply together? Yes, they can apply together. However, the lead applicant needs to be a locally registered university or a research institute, please refer to question 1.1.

3.3. Can organizations outside Africa participate? Yes, they can participate in a consortium led by a locally registered university or a research institute.

3.4. Can one institution participate in multiple proposals? No, only one application per institution is accepted.

3.5. Can NGOs partner with universities, the private/for-profit sector, or the government? Yes, the grant accepts applications where NGO is part of the consortium provided that the NGO in question demonstrates the expertise outlined in the Terms of Reference and brings expertise and capacity relevant to the proposed research. However, the consortium must be led by a locally registered university or a research institute.

3.6. Are collaborations with Ministries of Finance mandatory, and at what level (national vs district)? No, it is not mandatory, but the work needs to have an approach or strategy to inform national and/or sector adaptation policies, planning, budget systems, and/or fiscal policy. To demonstrate this link to national policies, the applicant organization should provide evidence of an existing partnership, collaboration, or prior working relationship with the government.

3.7. Is a letter of support required by government? Applicants must demonstrate an existing partnership, collaboration or prior working relationship with the Ministry of Finance, similar national finance or economic development authority, and/or line ministries. This documentation could include, e.g., a letter of support from the Ministry, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), framework agreement, or co-developed policy brief.

3.8. How will the Ministry of Finance (MoF) be involved during project implementation? What level of engagement or endorsement from MoF is required? The Ministry of Finance is not required to be directly involved, please refer to question 3.6.

4. Funding size & budget

4.1. Is the funding of US$80,000–US$120,000 per project? The total grant amount is US$80,000–US$120,000 per project, and a total of 10-12 projects will be funded.

4.2. What is the allowable overhead / indirect cost rate? 10% is the maximum allowable overhead cost.

4.3. How many tranches are payments made in? The payments will be made in 3 tranches as indicated in the Terms of Reference (ToR).

4.4. How soon after selection are funds disbursed? After all due diligence procedures have been finalized. The contracts with grantees are expected to be signed in April 2026.

4.5. Is co-financing required? No, co-financing is not required.

4.6. Will the grantees sign an agreement with UNEP or SEI? The contractual agreement will be between the grantees and SEI.

5. Research scope & thematic focus

5.1. What are the priority thematic areas? There are no specific priority thematic areas, but the research projects must address a clearly defined economic barrier to adaptation in the country. The projects may, for example, focus on the quantification of physical climate risks, assessment of the economic impacts of climate change, estimation of adaptation finance requirements, application of economic risk assessments in adaptation planning, integration of climate economics into national planning frameworks, and mainstreaming of adaptation considerations into fiscal and broader economic planning processes.

5.2. Is the focus adaptation only, or can projects include mitigation? The focus is on adaptation only.

5.3. Are sectors like:

- agriculture & food systems
- water
- health
- energy transition
- nature-based solutions
- climate finance
- disaster risk
- biodiversity/ecosystems

eligible?

Yes, except for energy transition. The proposed projects can consider different sectors, however, the research project proposals will need to address a clearly defined economic barrier or gap to adaptation.

5.4. Can proposals address equity, disability inclusion, indigenous knowledge, or fragile/conflict settings? The focus of the research proposals is economics of adaptation. However, all research must consider distributional impacts, gender equality and social inclusion and ensure long-term sustainability and that the benefits of adaptation and climate financing are shared fairly across society.

5.5. Can projects identify challenges or research questions through other ministries (e.g., Ministry of Agriculture) rather than through the Finance Authority? Yes. However, the work needs to have an approach or strategy to inform national and/or sector adaptation policies, economic planning, budget systems, and/or fiscal policy.

6. Methodology & research design

6.1. Are specific methods required or preferred (e.g. CBA, IRR, RCTs, CGE models, quasi-experimental methods)? Proponents are expected to apply scientifically acceptable and robust methods to quantify physical climate risks, assess the economic impacts of climate change, quantify adaptation finance needs, apply economic risk assessments in adaptation planning, incorporate climate economics into national planning frameworks, and mainstream adaptation into fiscal and economic planning.

6.2. Is evidence synthesis allowed? No.

6.3. Is applied, decision-ready policy research preferred over academic theory? Yes. A key outcome of the project is to develop policy relevant and applicable economic research.

6.4. Are economic costs beyond monetary values (e.g. human capital loss) acceptable? Yes, it is one of the key variables in macroeconomic analysis.

7. Team composition

7.1. How many people should be on a research team? At minimum a climate expert, an economist, a social inclusion/gender expert, and a post-doctoral researcher, working in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, similar national finance or economic development authority, and/or line ministries. Please refer to the Terms of Reference for more information.

7.2. Can teams include members from multiple institutions or countries? Yes, application can be submitted as a consortium. However, the lead applicant must be a locally registered university or a research institute.

7.3. Can multiple teams from the same institution apply? Yes, they can apply as a team. Only one application per institution is accepted.

7.4. What are the requirements for a Principal Investigator? The roles are specified in the selection criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference.

8. Application process

8.1. Where is the application link? On the website, see "How to Apply" at the bottom of the page: https://www.sei.org/features/call-for-funding-proposals-economics-of-climate-change-adaptation-in-africa/

- **8.2. Is there a proposal template or ToR?** Yes, the application template and Terms Of Reference are available on the website, see "How to Apply" section at the bottom of the page: https://www.sei.org/features/call-for-funding-proposals-economics-of-climate-change-adaptation-in-africa/

8.3. What are the selection criteria? They are outlined in the Terms of Reference.

8.4. Are examples of previously funded projects available? No, the RAIA grant is a new funding mechanism and thus examples of previously funded projects are not available.

8.5. Will feedback be provided to unsuccessful applicants? Unfortunately, only successful applicants will be contacted.

8.6. Can the deadline be extended? No, the application deadline is 5 March 2026, 23:59 EAT.

9. Project duration & outputs

9.1. What is the expected project duration (6, 9, 11, 12, or 18 months)? The expected project duration is 11 months (April 2026 – February 2027).

9.2. Can projects exceed 11 months? No, 11 months is a firm deadline. Project activities will need to close by February 2027 (please refer to question 9.1). However, the peer reviewed publication process can extend beyond this timeline.

9.3. What are the expected outputs? A technical report, a policy brief, and a peer-reviewed article. The publication of the peer reviewed articles can take place after February 2027.

9.4. Will data need to be open access? Yes, all projects' data and outputs will be open access.

9.5. How is sustainability beyond the project period assessed? Sustainability beyond the project period will be assessed by the extent to which the Ministry of Finance, similar national finance or economic development authority, and/or line ministries adopts climate-informed economic decision-making as a standard, institutionalized practice that is integrated into routine planning and budgeting processes.

10. Capacity building & policy impact

10.1. Is capacity building for government officials encouraged? Yes, working with national institutions to co-develop climate risk analysis, macro-fiscal assessments, and adaptation finance estimates strengthens ownership and enhances the uptake of the project's outputs to inform real policy decisions.

10.2. Can projects support PhD/MSc students? Yes, projects can engage PhD/MSc students and capacity building is highly encouraged. Research institutions and universities are responsible for the engagement and ensuring alignment with the RAIA grant timelines (please refer to question 9.1.).

10.3. How does the programme ensure policy uptake and long-term systems change? By working with national institutions to embed the project's analysis, tools, and processes directly within government decision-making systems, either with with Ministries of Finance and/or sector ministries.

11. RAIA-specific interest

11.1. What is the overall vision and expected impact of Raising Adaptation Impact and Ambition (RAIA)? The overall vision and expected impact of the project is to strengthen national development pathways through the integration of nationally generated economic evidence into adaptation plans, national policy, regulatory, and fiscal policies.

11.2. What would a "successful project" look like from the African policy perspective? Ultimately, success would mean that Ministries of Finance and/or sector ministries use the project's outputs to inform real adaptation and development policy decisions, for example, shaping budget allocations, strengthening fiscal resilience, mobilizing climate finance, and embedding climate risk into economic planning frameworks.

11.3. How does RAIA support locally led adaptation and institutional learning? RAIA moves beyond analysis to build durable systems, skills, and processes that enable national institutions, particularly Ministries of Finance and sector ministries, to lead and continuously refine and embed adaptation strategies into fiscal and economic planning.