



Call for concept notes: From knowledge to climate-resilient action in African countries

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) is pleased to announce a call for concept notes under CDKN's [new five-year phase](#) (2022-27).

The goal of CDKN's current programme is to advance gender-equitable and socially-inclusive climate-resilient action by mobilising knowledge, capacity and leadership in the global South from local to global levels. Our vision is to improve the well-being of the most climate-affected people, especially marginalised groups.

The 'knowledge-to-action' call will support projects led by African organisations that **mobilise Indigenous and local knowledge** to support **locally-led and inclusive climate-resilient action in Africa**. Projects must align to **at least one or more of the following CDKN themes** working to achieve climate resilience:

- Driving **gender equity and social inclusion**
- Improving **access to finance** for locally-led climate-resilient action
- Supporting **just and appropriate ecosystem-based approaches**
- Enhancing **climate literacy**
- Empowering **young people**

This is an open and competitive call. After assessing the concept notes, up to ten projects will be invited to develop proposals and up to five projects will be selected for funding.

Deadline for submissions of concept notes: Sunday 07 May, 2023 (23h59 Central African Time)

Duration of grants: Up to 3 years (36) months

Budget: Up to US\$ 150,000 per project

Contact email: grants@cdkn.org

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1. Overview

The challenge and opportunity

There is a growing appreciation that local people and communities in Africa and the global South more widely have the knowledge, experience and capacity to develop and implement their own effective resilience solutions. This was particularly evident during Covid-19, where [CDKN and partners shared numerous stories](#) from around the world of people, particularly women and young people, self-organising to help themselves to respond to the pandemic despite limited external and government support and resources.

Local people and communities are finding diverse ways to be resilient in the face of multiple intersecting and compounding risks, including climate vulnerability, economic poverty, lack of development services and political marginalisation. However, they largely have inadequate influence and leadership opportunities in decisions and actions that most affect them, despite their rich experience and knowledge of resilience.

Economically and socially marginalised groups in particular – such as women, young and elderly people, children, people with differing abilities, diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity, Indigenous Peoples, people living in informal settlements, marginalised ethnic groups, and migrants and displaced people – are often worse-affected by climate change, and lack the opportunity to use their agency and voice in planning and implementation processes.

There is thus an urgent need to put local and marginalised people at the centre of climate-resilient action. Acknowledging this, organisations around the world are adopting the [principles of locally-led adaptation](#) that recognise the expertise and talents of individuals and communities on the climate frontlines to shape their own responses to the climate challenge.

The importance of incorporating Indigenous and local knowledge, especially in Africa, is also being recognised as core to equitable local action. The IPCC reinforced the findings of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)¹ that “the diversity of African Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge systems provide a rich foundation for adaptation actions at local scales (high confidence)”.²

Objectives of the call

This knowledge-into-action call aims to **support locally-led climate-resilient action** across the themes of **gender equity and social inclusion, finance for resilience, ecosystem-based approaches, enhancing climate literacy and empowering young people** in Africa.³

Through these initiatives CDKN aims to **mobilise Indigenous and local knowledge** for supporting resilience action that is **shaped by local understanding and experience**. Projects can engage other knowledge types, such as academic evidence, but great care must be taken to ensure **knowledge-to-action co-creation processes provide safe and inclusive spaces for various knowledge holders to come together** in a way that respects the value and validity of each.⁴

In the application form, applicants are asked to show how their project is **bringing together a combination of knowledge holders and types⁵ with other relevant stakeholders to support locally-led action**.

CDKN will play an active role in collaborating with projects as appropriate and as needed, providing **capacity strengthening support and facilitating peer learning**, especially in the areas of gender equity and social inclusion, finance for resilience, ecosystem-based approaches, climate literacy, empowering young people as well as moving local knowledge into action. Furthermore, CDKN will **link project teams with the CDKN network** and seek to provide opportunities to **attend regional and global events** to share their insights and learnings, and garner global recognition for their work.

A more detailed outline of what CDKN could offer to the projects is included in annex 2.

2. Grant information and scope

The call is open to projects from any African country. Projects must focus on **locally-led climate-resilient action at the lowest appropriate level** to respond to the project’s **particular challenge being addressed**. This can range from actions at a community level, to those at a landscape or ecosystem scale, or over several government jurisdictions, depending on the nature of the issue. Irrespective of the scale at which the project is implemented, **power should be given to local individuals**,

¹ IPBES (2019). *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. Retrieved from: <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>

² IPCC (2022). Chapter 9: ‘Africa’. Executive Summary and Section 9.4.4. Full reference: Trisos, C.H., I.O. Adelekan, E. Totin, A. Ayanlade, J. Efitre, A. Gameda, K. Kalaba, C. Lennard, C. Masao, Y. Mgaya, G. Ngaruiya, D. Olago, N.P. Simpson, and S. Zakieldeen, 2022: Africa. In: *Climate change 2022: Impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegria, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press.

³ The following countries are considered high risk by IDRC and as such will require additional approval by IDRC: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia, Zimbabwe.

⁴ Scodanibbio, L., McNamara, L., du Toit, M. and Cundill, G. (2023). *The role of knowledge brokers in advancing climate action*. Cape Town: Climate and Development Knowledge Network. Retrieved from: https://cdkn.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/CDKN%20Role%20of%20knowledge%20brokers_WEB.pdf

⁵ CDKN recognises a diversity of knowledge types need to be engaged for sustainable and equitable action on the ground: local knowledge developed by people and communities specific to the places where they live; Indigenous and traditional knowledge comprising the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings; experiential, applied knowledge held by practitioners and those working in the field based on their practical experience; and scientific knowledge generally provided by academic researchers.

households, groups, organisations and communities to define, prioritise, design, implement, monitor and evaluate the initiative.

Geographic diversity is important to us and as such we will endeavour to support **no more than one project per country** where possible. Transboundary and multi-country projects will be accepted.

CDKN will disburse up to five grants of up to US\$ 150,000 each for a period of up to three years with an end date of no later than October 2026. Additional financial support may be made available to support the sustainability of interventions.

3. Basic eligibility

- Lead organisations must be based in Africa. Further preference will be given to African organisations, that is organisations founded in and led from Africa.⁶
- One organisation, or a group of organisations may apply. Groups comprising African organisations or those from the global South will be given preference.
- At least one organisation must have an established presence in the locality in which the project is based.
- Successful applicants will need to have at least one person within the team with reasonable English or French language skills who can communicate with the CDKN team throughout the project.
- All projects should be locally-led and the concept note should clearly substantiate why this is the case.
- Projects must align with at least one of the CDKN themes namely: gender equity and social inclusion, finance for resilience, ecosystem-based approaches, enhancing climate literacy and empowering young people. However, every project **must** incorporate a substantial gender and social inclusion element irrespective of their principal focus.
- Projects must agree to comply with safeguarding and ethics principles.

Only concept notes that meet these basic eligibility criteria will be considered for review.

4. How to apply

Applicants are encouraged to complete the online application form. The online application form is not available via mobile phones. You need to sign-up [here](#) and create a password. Once signed up, you will be sent a login registration number. Take note of this registration number, as you will need it to log in. Anyone with the registration number and password can then [login using this link](#), and edit the application.

Forms need to be completed and submitted by **Sunday 07 May 2023 at 23h59 Central African Time (CAT)**. No late submissions will be accepted except by prior arrangement.

Should you not be able to complete the application online, the application forms can be downloaded here; [English form](#), [French form](#), completed, and emailed to grants@cdkn.org by the deadline. If you do anticipate problems related to internet connectivity that will affect submitting by the deadline, please do alert us at least one week before the submission date. Concept notes completed by those who will be delivering the work will be given preference. As such we have included a declaration in the application form.

⁶ This is as opposed to organisations founded in and based in the global North with satellite offices in Africa.

A virtual information session will take place in English with French interpretation on **Thursday 13 April 2023**, from **11h00 to 12h00 Central African Time (CAT)** to assist you with completing your application. Please pre-register for the session [here](#).

Any additional inquiries related to the call and application process should be sent by e-mail to grants@cdkn.org. Allow three days turnaround time for all queries. Inquiries that affect all applicants will be added to the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) available on the CDKN website.

5. Evaluation criteria

Concept notes will be evaluated according to the following criteria and weighting:

<p>Locally led and mobilising local knowledge The degree to which the project mobilises Indigenous and/or local knowledge for locally-led climate-resilient action. This includes the degree to which local actors have ownership and are involved in designing and implementing activities, and the degree to which the project responds to local contexts, is accountable to local actors, and incorporates existing local practices and local knowledge.</p>	<p>30%</p>
<p>Alignment with CDKN themes The degree to which the project aligns to CDKN's thematic areas: gender equity and social inclusion, finance for resilience, ecosystem-based approaches, climate literacy and empowering young people.</p>	<p>20%</p>
<p>Gender equity and social inclusion The degree to which gender equity and social inclusion considerations are integrated into the initiative as well as the composition of the project team. Teams are encouraged to have at least equal representation of women as well as equal representation of marginalised people in leadership roles in the project as well as the project team.</p>	<p>20%</p>
<p>Sustainability The degree to which the initiative will have sustained impact beyond the project duration through, for example, enhancing capacities of individuals and organisations to further build on the work, institutionalising activities in community, local, sub-national and / or national governance structures, collaborating with related interventions, leveraging or enhancing capacities to access other funding sources, amongst others.</p>	<p>20%</p>
<p>Realistic scope The degree to which the budget, activities and work-plan seem reasonable and achievable within the timeframes and budget constraints.</p>	<p>10%</p>

6. Selection process

A selection committee will be convened to review applications. The committee will select an initial short list of up to ten concept notes. These short-listed teams will be asked to submit a short proposal and budget that expands upon the initial application for review and funding consideration and will be invited to an interview to talk about their project. All efforts have been made to keep the proposal short and simple to complete. Guidelines on preparing full proposals, deadlines, and the evaluation criteria will be provided to applicants invited to submit a proposal. Only successful applicants will be notified that their concept notes have been selected for the proposal stage.

Timelines (2023)

Wednesday 29 March: Call for concepts notes released

Thursday 13 April 11h00-12h00 Central African Time (CAT): Information session

Sunday 07 May 23h59 Central Africa Time (CAT): Deadline for concept note submission

Before 31 May: Lead applicant advised of review results and request for proposals released

June: Proposals submitted

July: Lead applicants advised of the results of the selection process

August: Project commencement

Glossary

Climate literacy: Being aware of climate change, its anthropogenic causes and implications.⁷

Ecosystem-based approaches: Ecosystem management activities that use biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall strategy to increase resilience.

Indigenous knowledge: The understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings. For many Indigenous peoples, Indigenous knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of life, from day-to-day activities to longer-term actions. This knowledge is integral to cultural complexes, which also encompass language, systems of classification, resource use practices, social interactions, values, ritual and spirituality. These distinctive ways of knowing are important facets of the world's cultural diversity.⁸

Locally-led: Where localities, communities, local groups, households and individuals have greater individual and collective agency over defining, prioritising, designing, monitoring and evaluating climate-resilient actions, and working with higher levels to implement and deliver resilience solutions.⁹

Local actors: The people and communities on the frontline of climate change, including the formal and informal institutions below national level that are composed of or directly accountable to local people. In certain very specific contexts (such as very small island states) local actors can include regional or national institutions.¹⁰

⁷ IPCC (2022). 'Annex II: Glossary' [Möller, V., R. van Diemen, J.B.R. Matthews, C. Méndez, S. Semenov, J.S. Fuglestedt, A. Reisinger (eds.)]. In: Climate change 2022: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegria, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 2897–2930, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.029.

⁸ UNESCO (2018) in IPCC (2022). Op cit.

⁹ Adapted from IIED's definition of locally-led adaptation: Soanes M, Bahadur, AV, Shakya, C, Smith, B, Patel, S, Rumbaitis del Rio, C, Cogger, T, Dinshaw, A, Patel, S, Huq, S, Musa, M, Rahman, MF, Gupta, S, Dolcemascolo, G and Mann, T (2021). *Principles for locally led adaptation*. IIED, London. <https://pubs.iied.org/10211iied>

¹⁰ Steinbach, D, Bahadur, A, Shakya, C, Thazin Aung, M, Burton, C-JC, Gallagher, C, Mbewe, S, Greene, S, Regmi, BR, Granderson, A, Ramkissoon, C, Kostka, W, Andon, L, Greenstone-Alefaio, T, Dolcemascolo, G, Gupta, S, Tewary, S, Lopez, M, Barnes, J, Binte Mirza, A, Bodrud-Doza, Md, Akhter, F, Rousseau Rozario, S and Reyes, C (2022). *The good climate finance guide for investing in locally led adaptation*. IIED, London. Retrieved from: <https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/2022-11/21231IIED.pdf>

Local knowledge: The understandings and skills developed by people and communities, specific to the places where they live. Local knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of life, from day-to-day activities to longer-term actions. This knowledge is a key element of the social and cultural systems which influence observations of and responses to climate change; it also informs governance decisions.¹¹

Resilience: The capacity of interconnected social, economic and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding or reorganising in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure. Resilience is a positive attribute when it maintains capacity for anticipation, adaptation, learning and/or transformation.¹²

¹¹ Adapted from UNESCO (2018) in IPCC (2022). Op cit.

¹² Adapted from Art Council (2016) in IPCC (2022). Op cit.

Annexures

Annex 1: About CDKN

CDKN is a global Southern-led programme founded in 2010. We work to improve the well-being of the most climate-affected people in the global South, especially marginalised groups, through transformative climate action. CDKN combines knowledge, research and advisory services in support of locally-led and owned climate-resilient action. We work in partnership with public, civil society and private sectors at local, sub-national, national, regional and international levels.

CDKN’s current phase (2022-27) is being implemented through [Step Change](#), a Canada-Netherlands partnership to drive equitable and inclusive locally-led adaptation. CDKN’s goal is to **advance gender-equitable and socially-inclusive climate-resilient action by mobilising knowledge, leadership and capacity** in the global South from local to global levels. Our objectives are to:

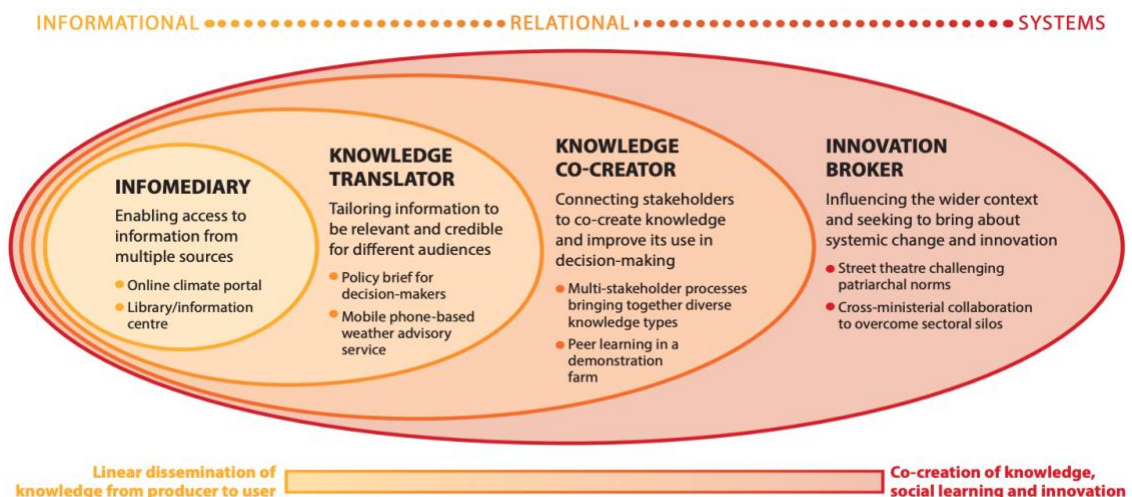
- Support integration of gender equity and social inclusion in policies and practice to achieve climate-resilient action
- Improve access to equitable finance that enables locally-led climate resilient action
- Strengthen implementation of just and appropriate ecosystem-based approaches

CDKN implements activities in countries in South Asia (principally India, Bangladesh, Nepal) and Latin American (principally Colombia, Ecuador and Peru). We are scaling up within Africa, with a pan-African programme and focal countries in East, West and southern Africa.

The programme is managed by [SouthSouthNorth](#), and implemented in partnership with [Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano \(FFLA\)](#) and [ICLEI South Asia](#). CDKN is co-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

CDKN focusses on moving knowledge into increased action on climate change using a knowledge brokering approach (figure 1).

Figure 1: Spectrum of knowledge broker roles, adapted from Harvey et al. (2012) and Shaxson et al. (2012)¹³



The range of knowledge brokering activities can be understood **along a spectrum**, where **knowledge brokers** link producers and users of knowledge to facilitate the generation, dissemination, and

¹³ Scodanibbio, L., McNamara, L., du Toit, M. and Cundiill, G. (2023). Op cit.

eventual use of that knowledge.¹⁴ Activities knowledge brokers may undertake range from tailoring and sharing information (on the left-hand side) to seeking to bring about systemic change (on the right-hand-side).

Local individuals, groups and organisations play critical knowledge brokering roles to facilitate change in their communities, given their deep understanding of their sociocultural and community context. They may collect, manage and share data on local climate risks and vulnerabilities (on the left-hand side of the spectrum), foster partnerships between local authorities and climate-affected groups, or seek to shift systems and practices to build resilience by, for example, challenging patriarchal norms and land tenure systems (right-hand side). Local climate knowledge brokers must be supported in their role to facilitate change and climate-resilient action, including through recognising the critical role they play.

Annex 2: What CDKN can offer the selected projects

CDKN looks forward to collaborating with the selected initiatives to support their impact in fulfilment of our goal to mobilise knowledge, capacity and leadership in the global South to achieve gender-equitable and socially-inclusive climate-resilient action. This could include:

- **Showcasing your work via CDKN communications channels.** This includes our website (www.cdkn.org) and social media channels (Twitter [@cdknetwork](https://twitter.com/cdknetwork), 15,200 followers; [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cdknetwork), 12,200 followers; Facebook www.facebook.com/CDKNetwork, 8,900 followers).
- **Facilitating access to and strengthening capacities for meaningfully engaging on global and regional platforms.** Providing opportunities for you to network and share your expertise, knowledge and learning at global and regional webinars, events and conferences.
- **Peer learning and advocacy for Southern leadership.** Supporting learning across the projects about the real-world practice of locally-led adaptation and contributing to building a community of LLA practitioners. Collaborating with you to advocate for inclusive LLA at global and regional levels, and strengthening the capacity of global and regional actors on how to better support LLA.
- **Mentoring and skills training on knowledge brokering tools and approaches.** This can range from producing climate change strategies and packaging information in different formats (e.g. posters, videos, graphics, briefs) for target audiences (communities, media, local governments, etc.) to managing co-creation processes that create safe spaces for diverse types of knowledge to come together.
- **Mentoring and skills training on gender equity and social inclusion, finance for resilience and ecosystem-based approaches.** This includes leveraging the expertise, networks and influence of our GESI, finance and EbA thematic experts to support the impact of projects.

Annex 3: Integrating gender equity and social inclusion

CDKN is committed to driving more gender-equitable and socially-inclusive policy and practice in finance, EbA and climate-resilient action. We value equality of outcomes, not simply equality of opportunity, for women, girls, people with differing abilities and other marginalised groups. We believe it is vital to embrace equitable approaches to climate-resilient action, which explicitly address historic disadvantage and current prejudice. Our aspiration is that we can support grantees in the knowledge-to-action programme to be GESI-transformative – driving long-term practical changes in

¹⁴ Scodanibbio, L., McNamara, L., du Toit, M. and Cundiill, G. (2023). Op cit.

structural power relations and norms, roles and inequalities that define the differentiated experiences of people.

CDKN will support projects that are either:

- GESI-integrated - Projects that effectively integrate gender equality and inclusion considerations in their design and propose a team that is diverse and includes relevant expertise on gender and inclusion, or
- GESI-specific - Projects where the expected outcomes are centred on supporting gender equality and inclusion. The proposed team for a GESI-specific project should be diverse and include significant expertise on gender and inclusion, and strategic collaborating partners.

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