

Bio-Bridge Initiative

Criteria for the Assessment of Seed Funding Proposals

Introduction

This document describes the process and criteria to be used in the evaluation of project proposals submitted by Parties and 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 approaches to address biodiversity-related issues and challenges. To be eligible, potential 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 should demonstrate that technical and scientific cooperation is the most feasible and effective means to address an identified need.

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 under the Convention and its Protocols (**Technical Assessment Phase**).

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. Eligibility Assessment Stage

The following eligibility criteria are to be used by the helpdesk to identify and screen proposals to determine whether or not they 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. Ineligible proposals will not be considered further in the process.

Table 1: Eligibility Assessment Criteria		
Extent to which the proposal:		
No.	Criteria	Checklist
1.	Seeks to promote technical and scientific cooperation between two or more countries and/or national institutions/organizations in different countries	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Involves at least one developing country or a country with economy in transition ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Responds to a need(s), problem(s) or gap(s) that could be addressed through technical and scientific cooperation	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Is aligned with national priorities identified in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) or other national policy document(s) of the requesting country and addresses one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) ²	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Involves institutional development or strengthening through collaboration ³	<input type="checkbox"/>

II. Quality Assessment Stage

After the initial screening, the helpdesk assesses the quality of all eligible 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. Ineligible proposals will not be considered further in the process.

Table 2: Quality Assessment Criteria			
Extent to which the proposal:			
No.	Criteria	Max Score	
1.	Clearly articulates the need/problem/gap to be addressed through technical and scientific cooperation	5	Extent to which the proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

¹All developing countries and countries with economies in transition as well as Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are eligible. However, priority is given to least developed countries, Small Island developing states, megadiverse developing countries.

²The proposal should clearly indicate the national priority and Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) to be addressed and specify which section(s) of the NBSAP and/or other national policy document(s) where the priority is reflected. It should also describe how it seeks to address the priority.

³The proposal should seek to build or strengthen the capacity of institutions and not focus *only* on building the capacity of individuals through training.

Table 2: Quality Assessment Criteria			
2.	Includes SMART and clearly defined objectives and outcomes responding to the expressed need/problem/gap	5	Extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project timelines and milestones are clearly presented • Project activities can be implemented within the proposed timelines (timelines are realistic) • The proposed work flow 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Table 2: Quality Assessment Criteria			
			support)
7.	Identifies potential risks/challenges and describes strategies to mitigate them	5	Extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

III. 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 shortlisted and presented to the Executive Secretary for final selection.

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

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No.	Criteria	Max Score	
1.	Is likely to lead to long-term technical and scientific cooperation	5	<p>Extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Extent to which the project :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens organizational structures and processes of the project partners • Supports the development of the partners’ institutional infrastructure (e.g. state-of-the-art facilities, equipment or supplies) • 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 Aichi Biodiversity Targets	5	<p>Extent to which the project :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces tangible results likely to lead to significant impact/change, complimenting and/or building upon what 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

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

4.	Includes activities and delivery methods/ approaches that are practical, appropriate and effective in addressing the need/problem/gap identified	5	<p>Extent to which the proposed activities and delivery methods/approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	<p>Promotes one or more of the following technical and scientific cooperation modalities and approaches:</p> <p><i>a) Access to and/or transfer and diffusion of biodiversity-related technologies and specialized knowledge and know-how</i></p> <p><i>b) Cooperation in the training of personnel</i></p> <p><i>c) Exchange of experts</i></p> <p><i>d) Joint research and/or joint ventures for the development of relevant technologies /solutions</i></p> <p><i>e) Access to, exchange and/or use of relevant technical and scientific data</i></p>	10	<p>Extent to which the project is likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Extent to which the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

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

7.	Is sustainable	5	<p>Extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

IV. 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.