



**ASPEN NETWORK
OF DEVELOPMENT
ENTREPRENEURS**

Accelerating Women Climate Entrepreneurs (AWCE) Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

Featured Questions

Can AWCE funding be used as investment capital or other direct support to SGBs?

Unfortunately, no. AWCE funding can only be used for programmatic support. Previous winning proposals have included budget items for administration and program management, case studies, dissemination and marketing, research and design, technology development, travel, workshops, and more. Indirect costs or overhead may also be included.

ANDE lists a few organization types that are eligible to apply, but I'm not familiar with them. What do they mean?

ANDE references organization types in the RFP from our membership categories. While you don't need to be a member to qualify, we use these categories across our work:

- **Capacity Development Providers:** Organizations that provide business development and advisory services to SGBs.
- **Investors:** Funds or financial entities that focus on providing capital to [small and growing businesses \(SGBs\)](#) in developing countries. Investments include debt, equity, and quasi-equity and are generally under US\$2M. In addition, some "investor" members also provide capacity development services.
- **Research and Advisory Service Providers:** Organizations that provide consulting, research and advisory services as the main mission of the organization, as well as associations that provide a service to the sector as a whole.

ANDE also lists **Non-Governmental Organizations** and **Non-Grantmaking (Operating) Foundations** as options in the application. What do these mean?

- **Non-Governmental Organizations:** Organizations independent from government involvement which typically serve humanitarian or environmental goals. We encourage applicants to select this organization type if your organization is a non-profit, non-governmental entity that does not fit the description for Capacity Development Provider, Investor, or Research and Advisory Service Provider listed above.
- **Non-grantmaking (Operating) Foundations:** Non-governmental organizations (as described above) which are named "foundation" but do not make charitable grants.

Do smallholder farmers or companies seeking less than USD \$20,000 in financing qualify as small and growing businesses (SGBs)?

A key piece of the SGB definition is that SGBs are small but poised for growth. They are not livelihood-sustaining small businesses which start small and stay that way. If you'd describe the businesses impacted by your proposal in this way, then they qualify.

I. Eligibility

Does my organization have to be an ANDE member to apply?

No, the Accelerating Women Climate Entrepreneurs (AWCE) Fund is open to ANDE member organizations and non-member organizations.

Does my organization have to support women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs?

Yes, organizations applying for the fund must support women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs within AWCE Fund priority sectors of Agriculture, Sustainable Energy, and Water and Sanitation. This fund seeks to support the growth of women climate entrepreneurs in the SGB sector whose businesses have a positive climate impact in Sub-Saharan Africa. **Women Climate Entrepreneurs are women entrepreneurs whose locally available, contextually-appropriate goods and services prioritize or significantly contribute to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change.**¹ For the purposes of the fund, ANDE has defined **Gender lens investing**, and **SGB focused investors**, available in the call for concept notes, linked [here](#).

Is there a geographic focus for this fund?

The Accelerating Women Climate Entrepreneurs (AWCE) Fund is focused on Sub-Saharan Africa. SGB service providers with proposed projects in only the following eligible countries will be considered:

Central Africa

Angola, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Democratic Republic, Congo Republic

Eastern Africa

Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

Southern Africa

Botswana, Eswatini (Formerly Known as Swaziland), Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Western Africa

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

¹¹ Please refer to the [2015 Paris Climate Agreement](#), [OECD Rio Markers](#) and [SDG13](#) for climate change priorities.

Projects implemented in multiple countries will be accepted.

Unfortunately, projects taking place outside of these countries **will not** be considered.

[My organization is based outside the geographic focus of the fund. Am I still eligible to apply?](#)

Yes, however, given that AWCE Fund seeks to alleviate the financing gap faced by women climate entrepreneurs in **Sub-Saharan Africa** SGB markets, we strongly encourage partnerships with organizations headquartered and/or founded there.

[Our consultancy firm or organization does not provide direct support to women climate entrepreneurs, but we support other organizations that support women climate entrepreneurs directly. Do we qualify?](#)

Yes, organizations that support other organizations directly supporting women climate entrepreneurs small and growing businesses (SGBs) qualify.

II. Guidelines to Consider

[Can my organization submit more than one concept note/proposal?](#)

Yes, an organization may submit or be involved in up to two concept notes/proposals. However, if successful, an organization can only be a lead or partner on one proposal.

[Are proposals addressing the broader issue of climate financing with a gender lens in Sub-Saharan Africa within the scope of this fund?](#)

ANDE understands the scale of *climate action* and *gender equality* as United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and as a broad area of focus for the SGB sector, however, AWCE Fund will only focus on increasing investment into **women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs** and closing the investment gap faced by organizations supporting women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs.

[What kind of budget line items are allowed?](#)

While there are no overt restrictions on budget line items, we expect that all proposed budgets will be well thought-out, with reasonable amounts under each line-item to carry out the project in a reasonable and efficient manner. Previous winning proposals have included budget items for administration and program management, case studies, dissemination and marketing, research and design, technology development, travel, workshops, and more.

Indirect costs or overhead may also be included in the overall budget.

Cost-sharing is permitted. Proposals can request funding for a subset of a project, not a standalone project. If funding request is for an entire budget, please indicate that. If not, include total projected cost of project and indicate which portion this grant would support. A list of project funders, including prospective and committed, is required.

[In the list of project funding, can we budget for items like contracting Technical Assistance \(TA\) providers and accounting support?](#)

Yes, however, if the funding required exceeds US \$65,500 total, note that any additional funding required to make this project successful should be indicated in your application.

What does it mean when you ask for information about other project funders for our proposal?

If funding request is for entire budget, please indicate. If not, include total projected cost of project and indicate which portion this grant would support. For example, you could list the total budget as US \$1 million, but total requested from this fund as US \$65,500. Proposals facing this circumstance will be evaluated based on their ability to implement the project with or without additional funding. Please be clear if additional funding needed is already secured or not.

Do we need to have identified all potential partner organizations in the concept note or can some be identified later (i.e. indicate number and type, but specific organizations or firms still being finalized)?

Ideally, we would like to have a sense for prospective and confirmed partners at this stage especially given our preference for interventions led by or in partnership with locally-headquartered organizations, however, we understand how things might change between the concept note and proposal.

Can some of the funding be used for business or partner development?

Applications for this fund will be evaluated for efficiency in the sense of how these funds are being used to finance a relevant intervention. Any line item needs to support the rationale of the fund.

What is the maximum percentage of services that can be contracted?

Contracting is allowable with no percentage maximum. However, note that the funding through AWCE Fund cannot be used for loan guarantees, debt, equity etc. It is intended as grant capital only.

III. Use of Funds

What types of SGB support models qualify for this funding?

AWCE Fund is open to any type of model that catalyzes investment into women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs within AWCE's priority sectors of Agriculture, Sustainable Energy, and Water and Sanitation. An accelerator is an example of a model AWCE Fund will support, however, there are many others that qualify.

Do proposals for research initiatives qualify?

A purely research driven proposal would not qualify because we are looking to fund the piloting of interventions that tackle the investment gap for women climate entrepreneurs in SGB's in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Are subawards or grants to founders eligible budget items?

We would consider this funding SGBs directly, so no. Not an eligible budget item.

Can AWCE funding be used to fund working capital (sewing machines, work sheds, etc.)?

Technically, yes, however, budget line items must show a sufficient use of funds to tackle financing for women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

IV. Metrics, Evaluation, and Learning

What percentage of target beneficiaries must be women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs organizations?

Your application must defend how your organization is tackling the investment gap for women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs in Sub-Saharan Africa. There isn't a requirement in terms of number of women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs impacted. Proposed interventions need to tackle the financing challenges facing women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs in the target region.

What types of outcomes is the fund looking for? **Successful completion** of the program or **number** of women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs impacted vis a vis their access to financing in light of the intervention?

The objective of the fund is to provide runway to interventions that have the capacity to address the financing gap for women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs in Sub-Saharan Africa. A combination of the two is best suited for sustainability and tackling this challenge of a financing gap for women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs in the region.

V. Other

Is there a specific timeframe within which the project needs to be completed? Or can the 11 months start at any time in the next year?

The project must begin in December 2021 and end in October 2022.

Is AWCE Fund focused on targeting international impact capital or local financing, such as through banks?

Ultimately, we are looking to tackle the financing gap for women climate entrepreneurs in SGBs in the Sub-Saharan Africa and we see increased access to both or either types of capital addressing this issue.

What kind of support will my organization get from ANDE?

Winners will receive programmatic support as well as monitoring, evaluation, and learning assistance from ANDE, structured around cohort meetings and quarterly check in calls in advance of reporting deadlines.

How important is innovation in my proposal?

Incredibly important as this fund recognizes that some of the existing interventions aren't working or scaling to tackle the investment gap, thus we are looking for creative new ideas.