

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FINANCE INITIATIVE

The Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) is pleased to announce its first call for proposals. Up to \$150m of grant financing is available for this call.

The objective of the We-Fi is to address financial and non-financial constraints faced by women-owned/led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in IDA and IBRD eligible countries and territories. The We-Fi aims to achieve this by mobilizing more than \$1 billion in commercial and international financial institution (IFI) finance for entities that provide women entrepreneurs with access to debt, equity, venture capital, insurance products, capacity building, networks and mentors, and opportunities to link with domestic and global markets; and for governments to improve the business environment for women-owned/led SMEs.

Types of activities

The We-Fi seeks proposals that demonstrate complementary public and private sector approaches to building a supportive ecosystem for women's entrepreneurship. This could include activities aimed at improving access to capital and providing related investment and advisory services, as well as activities undertaken by the public sector to improve the business environment, for instance, by identifying and addressing regulatory and legal constraints, creating market opportunities, and developing innovative programs that address capacity constraints, including skills and access to and use of technology, among others.

Funding Criteria

The We-Fi Governing Committee seeks a portfolio of programs that demonstrate: 1) excellent overall program design and strong development impact; 2) mobilization of additional funding to meet the \$1 billion target; 3) complementarity between public and private sector activities; 4) additionality and value for money; 5) a focus on low-income countries and/or women SMEs in hard to reach, underserved areas in other contexts (for instance in remote or poor regions or refugee populations in middle income countries); and 6) partners that have a strong track record for developing innovative new approaches and delivering results.

Preference will be given to proposals that show a robust plan for significant financial mobilization from the private sector, as well as to proposals that seek to scale up proven or evidence-based approaches. Proposed activities need to show how they are coordinated with existing or planned activities of other development partners or initiatives.

For those proposals targeting Africa, special consideration will be given to those with activities in G-20 Compact Countries.¹

² Information on the G20 Compact with Africa:
<https://www.compactwithafrica.org/content/compactwithafrica/home.html>

Allocation decisions will be made by the We-Fi Governing Committee based on the strength of the proposed program, as well as the overall composition of the portfolio that is most likely to achieve the overall development and mobilization objectives of the We-Fi. The We-Fi has a strategic goal of allocating 50 percent of its resources to activities in IDA countries and/or fragile and conflict affected states over the lifetime of the Facility.^{2, 3}

Eligibility

The following accredited multilateral development banks (MDBs) are eligible to apply under this Call for Proposals: African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Inter-American Development Bank, Inter-American Investment Corporation, International Finance Corporation, Islamic Development Bank Group, and World Bank (the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association).⁴

MDBs are encouraged to partner with UN agencies, international financial institutions, civil society organizations, business groups, and/or other entities currently working in this field to help implement activities.

Funding Request

Funding requests may be for a specific project or for an indicative program of several projects. The minimum threshold for requesting funding from the We-Fi is \$10m.

Funding Requests must complete all sections of the [We-Fi Funding Template](#). Funding Requests should not be longer than 50 pages and must be in English and in United States dollars. No one implementing partner may submit more than three separate funding requests.

Proposals should be submitted as a PDF file via email to the We-Fi Secretariat at the following e-mail address: we-fi@worldbankgroup.org. The Implementing Partner should obtain all internal management clearances for the Funding Request in accordance with their own policies and procedures, prior to its submission. Final proposals must be received by **midnight EST on December 15, 2017**.

Proposals submitted to the We-Fi Secretariat will be reviewed by at least three confidential, external technical experts, which report to the We-Fi Governing Committee and are nominated solely by the Governing Committee members. Technical reviewers are fully independent of potential supervising entities of We-Fi projects, including the World Bank. Technical reviewers will score proposals based on the funding criteria as described in the funding proposal template.

Timeline:

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|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Call for Proposals Issued | October 12, 2017 |
| Call for Proposals Closed | December 15, 2017 |
| Awards Announced | February 2018 |

² The We-Fi Operations Manual is available at the following [link](#)

³ The We-Fi Governance Framework is available at the following [link](#)

⁴ Subsequent calls for proposals may be opened to other implementing partners who have been accredited by the We-Fi Governing Committee.