

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (REOI)

African Development Bank Climate Change and Green Growth Department

1. REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The African Development Bank's Climate Change and Green Growth Department, through the African Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA) Secretariat, hereby invites expressions of interest from Regional Member Countries (RMCs), including national and sub-national government agencies, to participate in a multi-country technical assistance initiative supported by the Africa Circular Economy Facility (ACEF).

This initiative aims to support the **development or implementation of National Circular Economy Roadmaps**, with the goal of strengthening institutional capacity and creating enabling environments for a just, inclusive, and resource-efficient transition to circular economic (CE) models.

Eligible government entities are invited to submit a concept note outlining their interest in receiving support for one of the following:

- The development of a new national CE roadmap; or
- Targeted support to implement priority actions from an existing CE roadmap or strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

Circular Economy Opportunity in Africa

Africa stands at a pivotal moment in its development trajectory. Rapid urbanization, population growth, and increased resource demand are placing unprecedented pressure on the continent's natural capital. At the same time, these dynamics offer an opportunity to shift away from the conventional linear economic model of "extract–use–dispose" toward a more sustainable and resilient model grounded in circularity. A CE, defined by principles of resource efficiency, product life extension, and regeneration, has the potential to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and create inclusive, climate-resilient economies.

The economic case for CE in Africa is compelling. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the value of recoverable materials from waste across Africa is estimated at USD 7.6 billion annually, yet only about 10% of the continent's waste is currently recycled. With over 70% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa directly dependent on land, forests, and natural ecosystems for their livelihoods, and with natural capital representing between 30% and 50% of total wealth in most African countries, better stewardship of resources is both a development imperative and a strategic priority. Furthermore, the continent's youthful population, projected to represent over 40% of the global youth by 2030, is a driving force for innovation, particularly in areas such as digital platforms, repair and reuse, and community-based business models, which are central to circular transitions.

The circular economy also presents climate and economic benefits. Circular practices such as material efficiency, product lifecycle extension, and regenerative agriculture can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A joint report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the UN Climate Champions Team highlights that CE strategies in just five key sectors, cement, plastics, aluminium, steel, and food, can reduce global emissions by 9.3 billion tonnes by 2050, roughly equivalent to eliminating current emissions from all forms of transport globally. In Africa, circularity can enable economic diversification, enhance resilience to climate shocks, and reduce vulnerability to global commodity price volatility.

Despite growing interest, many African countries face significant challenges in operationalising the circular economy. These include fragmented policies, weak regulatory and institutional frameworks, low public awareness, and limited access to technical expertise and finance. To address these gaps, national circular economy roadmaps have emerged as strategic tools to guide the transition. Roadmaps help align circularity with national development goals, consolidate existing policies, identify priority sectors, and define measurable outcomes. Critically, they provide a platform for multi-stakeholder engagement, including public institutions, private sector actors, academia, and civil society.

There is growing international momentum around national CE roadmaps. According to a 2024 stocktake by UNIDO and Chatham House, 75 national CE roadmaps or policy frameworks have been launched globally, with 71 of them developed since 2016. This includes a growing number of roadmaps in developing countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These policy instruments typically cover a wide range of sectors, 17 on average, and incorporate more than 2,800 individual policy actions across regulatory, fiscal, and informational domains. Their implementation has been supported by governance arrangements such as inter-ministerial task forces and dedicated CE units, alongside monitoring frameworks to track progress.

The African Development Bank's Commitment

The AfDB promotes CE as a cross-cutting strategy aligned with its Ten-Year Strategy and operational priorities (the “High Fives”). CE supports inclusive and green growth across key areas: agriculture, energy, industrialization, regional integration, and improved livelihoods, by increasing value chain efficiency and resilience.

To accelerate CE adoption, AfDB hosts the **Africa Circular Economy Facility (ACEF)**, a multi-donor grants trust fund established to support RMCs and private actors in mainstreaming CE principles. ACEF finances technical assistance, capacity building, and knowledge generation aligned with Agenda 2063, the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement.

The African Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA)

ACEA is a government-led coalition established to champion CE across Africa. It was launched during the 23rd United Nations Conference of Parties (COP23) by the governments of Rwanda, Nigeria, and South Africa, with a mandate to foster knowledge exchange, policy coherence, investment mobilisation, and cross-country collaboration. Rwanda, Nigeria, and South Africa currently serve as Co-chairs of the Alliance. Other member countries of the Alliance include Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Senegal, Cameroon, and Morocco. ACEA is supported by the AfDB, which hosts its Secretariat within the Climate Change and Green Growth Department.

3. THE SUPPORT TO BE PROVIDED UNDER THIS MULTI-COUNTRY PROJECT

This multi-country technical assistance initiative aims to strengthen African countries' institutional capacity to design and implement national CE roadmaps that are aligned with their development needs, priorities, and climate commitments. The support provided under this project will be demand-driven and tailored to the specific needs of participating Regional Member Countries (RMCs), whether at the national or subnational level.

Technical assistance refers to the targeted provision of expert support, tools, and capacity-building services to public sector stakeholders in order to formulate policy frameworks, facilitate cross-sectoral coordination, and operationalize circular strategies. The assistance will be delivered through a combination of advisory services, workshops, analytical inputs, and institutional support to reinforce CE governance, planning, and implementation.

Two main types of support will be offered under this initiative:

a) Development of a National CE Roadmap

Countries that do not yet have a CE roadmap may request support to develop one. Assistance will cover the full cycle of roadmap formulation, typically including:

- Stakeholder mapping and engagement to ensure an inclusive and participatory process;
- Baseline assessments to identify CE opportunities, barriers, and sectoral priorities;
- Drafting of a national CE vision and strategic objectives;
- Definition of sectoral action plans, priority interventions, and policy measures;
- Establishment of implementation and monitoring frameworks.

Where relevant, support may also include the integration of CE into broader policy instruments such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), green growth strategies, or national development plans.

b) Support to the implementation of an Existing Circular Economy Roadmap

For countries that have already developed CE strategies or roadmaps, technical support may be provided to accelerate implementation and reinforce institutional mechanisms. This may include:

- Prioritisation, sequencing, and costing of roadmap actions;
- Preparation of bankable projects to mobilize public or blended financing;
- Definition of key performance indicators (KPIs) and design of monitoring systems;
- Development of data collection tools and institutional arrangements for oversight;
- Awareness-raising and stakeholder sensitization to enhance ownership and visibility.

All technical assistance will be designed to reinforce national leadership, foster multi-stakeholder collaboration, and build long-term institutional capacity to sustain circular economy transitions beyond the project's duration.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

This call for expressions of interest is open to RMCs of the African Development Bank. Eligible applicants include national governments, ministries, sub-national authorities (such as regional or municipal governments), and public agencies with a demonstrated mandate in policy planning, environmental management, industrial development, or sustainable development.

Applications must be submitted by a public institution acting as the lead proponent. Collaborative submissions involving multiple government agencies or partnerships with research institutions, civil society, or development

partners are permitted, provided that the lead applicant is a government entity and clearly assumes coordination responsibility.

Interested applicants should demonstrate the following:

- Institutional capacity to coordinate multi-stakeholder initiatives and manage the implementation of technical assistance or policy projects;
- Commitment to the circular economy agenda, including evidence of existing CE-related strategies, programs, or stakeholder engagement;
- Experience with development planning, policy formulation, or project implementation in relevant sectors (e.g., waste, agriculture, industry, infrastructure, green economy);
- Availability of technical staff or designated focal points to work with the ACEA Secretariat and consultants during project implementation;
- Willingness to co-finance part of the proposed intervention, either through in-kind contributions (e.g., staff time, facilities, data access) or direct financial support.

Please note that an expression of interest does not imply automatic selection. Proposals will be reviewed against predefined eligibility and evaluation criteria, and shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full project proposal at a later stage.

To ensure coherence and facilitate coordination at the national level, only one submission per country will be considered under this call. In the event that multiple EOIs are received from the same country, the ACEA Secretariat will reach out to the concerned parties to facilitate internal alignment and identify a single lead submission for review.

5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Interested eligible applicants must submit a **Concept Note** using the dedicated template provided in the annex of this REOI. The Concept Note must clearly outline the applicant's interest in receiving technical assistance and the type of support requested: either for developing a national CE roadmap or for its implementation.

The Concept Note must provide concise and well-structured information on the following elements:

- The objective and expected outcomes of the proposed support;
- The relevance and alignment of the proposed activities with the national development strategies and CE-related policy frameworks;
- A brief description of the current context, including institutional landscape, CE-related initiatives (if any), and key challenges;
- A summary of the main activities to be undertaken, including intended beneficiaries and outputs;
- An indicative implementation timeline, including major milestones and delivery phases;
- A preliminary budget overview, indicating estimated costs and proposed co-financing contributions (if applicable);
- A Results-Based Logical Framework, including outputs, outcomes, indicators, and assumptions;
- An outline of the institutional arrangements, including the lead agency, focal point(s), and coordination mechanisms.

A minimum co-financing of **5% of the total estimated budget** is encouraged, either in cash or in-kind (e.g. staff time, venue, data access, local logistics). While not mandatory, co-financing will be considered positively and proportionally in the evaluation of submissions, as an indication of local ownership and commitment.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to develop a **full project proposal** using a second-stage proposal template. Only submissions using the official template and received within the stated deadline will be considered.

6. SCOPE AND DURATION

The technical assistance provided under this call will support targeted activities related to the development and/or implementation of national circular economy (CE) roadmaps. Each selected proposal is expected to be implemented over a period of **up to 12 months**, starting no earlier than 01 September 2025, depending on project readiness and administrative processing.

Proposals are expected to be commensurate with the scope of work proposed and should generally remain within an envelope of **up to EUR 100,000** per intervention. Applicants are encouraged to provide a realistic budget aligned with their capacity to deliver and the results envisioned. Proposals that demonstrate value for money and leverage additional co-financing (financial or in-kind) will be viewed favourably during the selection process.

7. EVALUATION

The selection process will follow a two-stage approach coordinated by the ACEA Secretariat and supported by the ACEF. In the first stage, Expressions of Interest will be evaluated based on the Concept Note submitted. Following the evaluation, a shortlist of promising applicants will be invited to submit a full project proposal using a detailed proposal template provided by the ACEA Secretariat. In the second stage, full proposals will undergo a final technical review and consolidation process led by the ACEA Secretariat. The best-rated project proposals will be submitted to the ACEF governance structure for appraisal and funding decision, in accordance with the ACEF Operational Guidelines. Only projects that successfully pass both stages will be considered for financing.

8. SUBMISSION DETAILS

Expressions of Interest must be submitted electronically using the Concept Note template attached to this REOI.

EOIs should be submitted by email to the address below with the subject line “EOI - National CE Roadmap” no later than **15th September 2025 at 23:59 GMT**. Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Submissions and any requests for clarification may be directed to:

ACEA Secretariat
Climate Change and Green Growth Department
African Development Bank, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire
E-mail: ACEAsecretariat@afdb.org, with copy to: m.o.kane@afdb.org

All applications must be submitted in English or French.