



KFW

SIFA

Skills Initiative for Africa

Skills are our Future
Les compétences sont notre avenir

Instruction Guide for Applicants

January 2019

WINDOW I

WINDOW II

WINDOW III

www.SkillsAfrica.org

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Introduction and Background

Africa is growing and to fuel this growth it needs skilled labour that caters to the needs of the growth sectors of the economy. The importance of employable skills development in a broader sense is increasingly understood by African governments and significant efforts have been made. The Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) have laid down the vision and ideals for the continent's accelerated development and technological progress to serve as pillars for the continent in the foreseeable future. The African Union's Agenda 2063 calls for a paradigm shift towards transformative education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, research, innovation and creativity required to nurture the future. To unleash the potential of skills development and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), the African Union has developed a "Continental TVET Strategy" that provides a comprehensive framework for skills development and youth employment. Nonetheless, a shortage of qualified teachers, scholarships and inadequate infrastructure as well as an absence of practical vocational curricula and missing or inadequate technical and didactical equipment still pose significant challenges to the successful implementation of the Strategy.

SIFA - Skills Initiative for Africa

The Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) is an initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC) supported by the German Government to strengthen occupational prospects of young people in Africa.

SIFA Financing Facility

Under the SIFA, a Financing Facility for Skills Development has been established. The Facility is implemented by the AU's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency - NPCA), with financing from Germany through KfW. The Financing Facility for Skills Development is designed to coherently address the common challenges in skills development by upscaling and/or disseminating local best practices and supporting innovative and sustainable approaches and thereby foster the employment and entrepreneurship of youth, women, and vulnerable groups including refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons, the disadvantaged and disabled.

The Financing Facility for Skills Development provides funding on a competitive basis for the implementation of innovative and sustainable skills development initiatives. It is for initiatives, which directly engage the private sector, address market needs, and can have a regional impact. Initiatives must align with national strategies with the perspective of improving quality-based employment-oriented skills development.

Objectives and Results

The overall development objective for the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) at the political level is:

Employment perspectives of young people in Africa are improved.

The objective of the Financing Facility is:

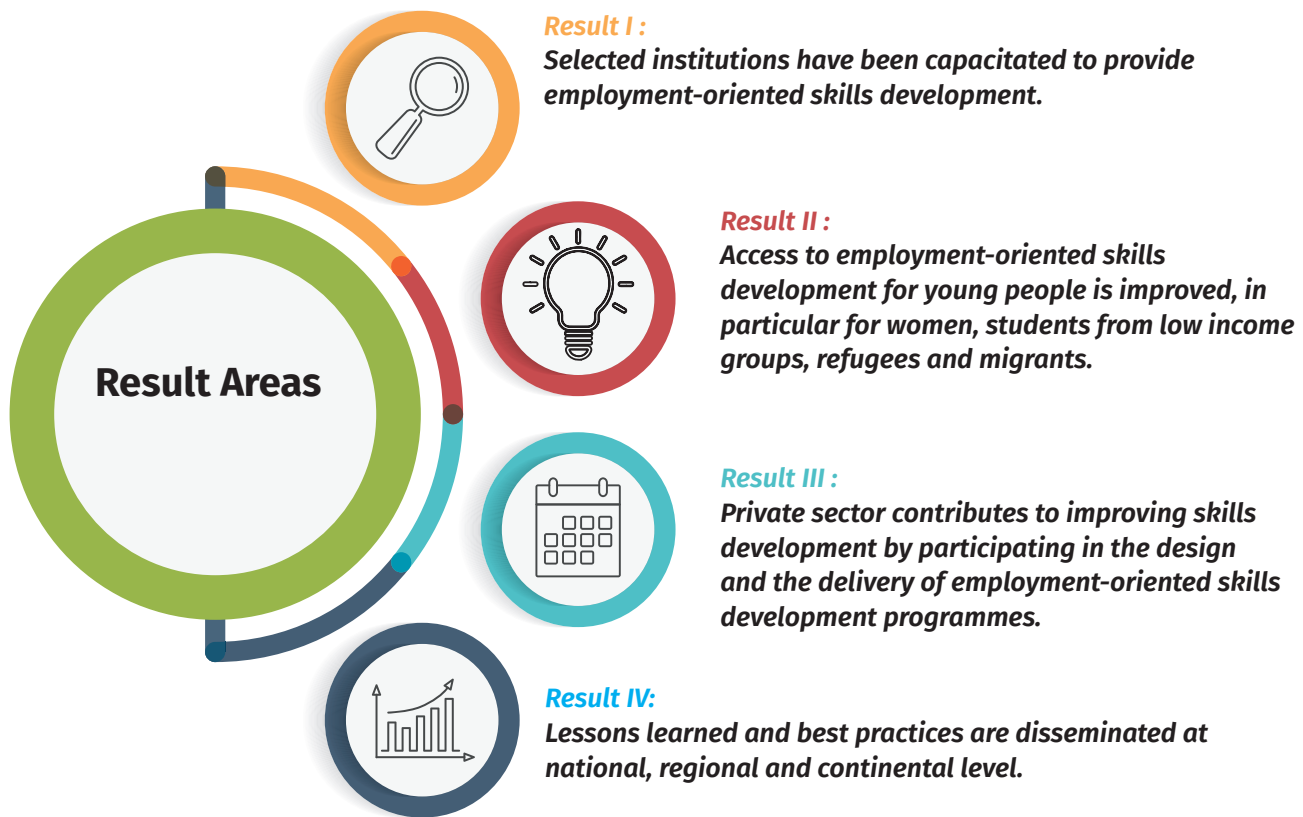
To increase quality and innovation in practical, employment-oriented skills development through the implementation of sustainable, nationally and regionally-relevant skills development initiatives.



To begin with seven countries have been selected as pilot countries – Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tunisia and Togo.

Result Areas

The Financing Facility comprises 4 key result areas:





Result I: Selected institutions have been capacitated to provide employment-oriented skills development.

Strategies for enhancing skills development have been discussed and agreed upon at the level of the African Union and in a number of member states. However, operationalization and implementation of these policies along with the required investment in infrastructure, equipment as well as human capital have still not been adequately addressed. Therefore, the Financing Facility shall provide support and funding to selected applicants for improving and strengthening their capacities to provide employment-oriented skills development.



Result II: Access to employment-oriented skills development for young people is improved, in particular for women, students from low income groups, refugees and migrants.

Even in countries with a relatively well-developed skills development landscape, there are huge differences for different population groups regarding the access to these programs. In particular, women have limited access to skills development programs. Therefore, the Financing Facility shall put particular attention on promoting initiatives that target female students and that are designed to facilitate their access. The Financing Facility shall also support implementation of the Valletta Action Plan, which calls for launching projects to enhance the professional skills and employability of young people to address the refugee crisis and the causes of irregular migration.



Result III: Private sector contributes to improving skills development by participating in the design and the delivery of employment-oriented skills development programmes.

Practical, financial as well as strategic cooperation with the private sector is one key to successful skills development, but presents a challenge in most countries. Therefore, the Financing Facility shall provide incentives for forging partnerships between stakeholders and for mobilizing public and private sector support for skills development. Private sector involvement is a key criterion for the selection of project proposals.



Result IV: Lessons learned and best practices are disseminated at national, regional and continental level.

There are many member states as well as public and private organizations that are already participating in skills development initiatives and which have gained a wealth of experiences. This “tacit knowledge” is currently often only available on the national level. However, in the light of an array of common challenges, these country experiences are of high value continent-wide. These opportunities and challenges of skills development can be best addressed through a regional strategy stimulating a competition of ideas among countries and serving as a dialogue platform among member states and possibly even sectors. Learning from each other would allow spill-overs of experiences among countries and benchmarking of approaches against best practices.

Funding Windows Overview

WINDOW I

I

Large skills development investment projects proposed by domestic training entities in partnership with companies.

Grant Amount per project

Up to EUR 3 million

Thematic Area

Large investment projects in modern work place skills development, building the capacity of public and private training institutions to deliver quality skills programs for the youth in priority growth sectors.

Eligible Applicants

Lead: Domestic public or private accredited training provider

Primary partner: Domestic private sector entity

Counterpart (Applicant's own) contribution

At least 10 % of total project cost/investment

Project Implementation Period

Up to 30 months

WINDOW II

II

Skills development investment projects proposed by International private sector entities in collaboration with domestic skills training entities.

Grant Amount per project

Between EUR 1 and EUR 1.5 million

Thematic Area

Smaller investment projects that build the capacity of public and private training institutions to deliver innovative skills programs for youth employment.

Eligible Applicants

Lead: International company with training activities

Primary partner: Domestic public or private accredited training provider

Counterpart (Applicant's own) contribution

At least 30 % of total project cost/ investment

Project Implementation Period

Up to 36 months

WINDOW III

III

Innovative skills promotion pilot projects proposed by domestic training entities in partnership with public or private companies.

Grant Amount per project

Between EUR 0.2 and 1 million

Thematic Area

Smaller, innovative (pilot) projects, such as the following technical and didactical interventions:

Eligible Applicants

Lead: Domestic public or private entity. If the Lead is public then one of the partners must be private.

Counterpart (Applicant's own) contribution

At least 10 % of total project cost/investment

Project Implementation Period

Up to 24 months

Funding Windows

The three Funding Windows that have been defined for the Financing Facility to provide funding for eligible projects are as follows:

WINDOW I

Large skills development investment projects proposed by domestic training entities in partnership with companies.

Thematic area: This window supports employment-oriented skills development through large investment projects in modern work place skills development, and building the capacity of public and private training institutions to deliver quality skills programs for the youth in priority growth sectors.

The window can fund a combination of the following 5 technical and didactical interventions:

1. Procurement of training equipment
2. Construction, rehabilitation or expansion of learning infrastructure

However, the activities below can be funded only in combination with both or either of the above core activities and only up to 5 % of the total project cost:

3. Training of trainers
4. Curriculum design
5. Learner scholarships

Grant Amount per project:

Up to EUR 3 million. Once a grant amount is approved, no additional funds will be made available and the Applicants will be responsible for ensuring the full financing and completion of the project. All taxes and duties must be borne by the applicant and shall not be financed from the grant.

Counterpart (Applicant's own) contribution:

At least 10 % of total project cost in cash terms, evidenced by relevant invoices, or as complementary (in-kind) measures that can be quantified in cash terms. The counterpart contribution can be used to cover taxes and duties for financing through the Grant. Tax exemptions can be counted as counterpart contribution.

Project implementation duration:

Up to 30 months

WINDOW II

Skills development investment projects proposed by International private sector entities in collaboration with domestic skills training entities.

Thematic area:

This window is for employment-oriented skills development projects led by international companies in collaboration with domestic training providers aimed at achieving global quality skills standards to improve youth employability in priority growth sectors. This window supports smaller investment projects that build the capacity of public and private training institutions to deliver innovative skills programs for youth employment.

As for *Window I*, *Window II* can also fund the same combination of 5 technical and didactical interventions::

1. Procurement of training equipment
2. Construction, rehabilitation or expansion of learning infrastructure

However, the activities below can only be funded in combination with both or either of the above core activities and only up to 5 % of the total project cost:

3. Training of trainers
4. Curriculum design
5. Learner scholarships

Grant Amount per project

Between EUR 1 million and 1.5 million. Once a grant amount is approved, no additional funds will be made available and the Applicant will be responsible for ensuring the full financing and completion of the project. Taxes and duties to be borne by the Applicant shall not be financed from the Grant.

Counterpart (Applicant's own) contribution

At least 30 % of total project cost in cash terms, evidenced by relevant invoices, or as complementary (in-kind) measures that can be quantified in cash terms. The Applicant's contribution can be used to cover taxes and duties that are not eligible for financing through the Grant. Tax exemptions can be counted as counterpart contribution.

Project implementation duration

Up to 36 months

WINDOW III

Innovative skills promotion pilot projects proposed by domestic training entities in partnership with public or private companies.

Thematic Area:

This window is to finance smaller, innovative (pilot) projects such as image campaigns for skills development, ICT-based approaches to skills development, and entrepreneurship/mentorship programs.

Specifically, the following technical and didactical interventions are eligible for funding:

- Image campaigns for promoting skills development
- ICT-based approaches to skills development
- Entrepreneurship/mentorships programs
- Equipping of workshops, classrooms, alternative/innovative learning spaces
- Student or Learner Scholarships
- Curriculum design
- Training of Trainers Program (excluding recurrent costs)

Grant Amount per project:

Between EUR 0.2 and 1 million. Once a grant amount is approved, no additional funds will be made available and the Applicant will be responsible for ensuring the full financing and completion of the project. All taxes and duties must be borne by the Applicant and shall not be financed from the Grant.

Counterpart (Applicant's own) contribution:

At least 10 % of total project cost in cash terms, evidenced by relevant invoices, or as complementary (in-kind) measures that can be quantified in cash terms. The counterpart contribution can be used to cover taxes and duties for financing through the Grant. Tax exemptions can be counted as counterpart contribution.

Project implementation duration

Up to 24 months

WINDOW I

For all three funding windows, premium will be placed on employment-oriented skills development initiatives that are of high quality, relevant to priority growth sectors, financially viable and ready to implement. Innovativeness, involvement of the private sector, positive impact on growth-oriented employment opportunities for youth, women, the disabled, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, sustainability of the initiative and prospects for regional replicability and upscaling are among the important factors that must be addressed.

WINDOW II

WINDOW III

Ineligible project costs

The following costs (activities) are NOT supported by the SIFA Financing Facility:

- Normal recurrent costs such as staff salaries, rental or maintenance of equipment
- Import duties, VAT, or other public charges

However, these costs may be financed through the applicant's counterpart contribution.

Eligible Applicants for each Window

Eligible Applicants will be experienced stakeholders in the field of skills development. One responsible Lead will always form a consortium with either one or two partners.

WINDOW I

The Lead must be a domestic entity and a public or private accredited training provider. The primary partner needs to be from the domestic private sector.

Lead

- Public TVET institutions supported by sector ministry
- Legally autonomous public TVET institution
- Accredited private training provider
- Registered domestic NGO or Foundation accredited to offer skills training
- National TVET Agency or TVET authority responsible for TVET provision

The Lead must have one of the following as a primary partner

- Domestic public or private company
- Domestic Chamber of Commerce or Industry and Employer Association that supports skills development
- Incubation centre or company involved in product development

In addition, the lead can have one of the following as a secondary partner:

- Public TVET institution supported by sector ministry
- Legally autonomous public TVET institution

- Accredited private training provider
- Registered domestic NGO or Foundation accredited to offer skills training
- Chamber of Commerce or Industry or Employer Association that supports skills development
- International NGO or Foundation accredited to offer skills training
- National TVET Agency or TVET authority responsible for TVET provision

WINDOW II

The Lead must be an international company. The primary partner needs to be a domestic public or private accredited training provider.

Lead

International company with training activities

The Lead must have one of the following as primary partner

- Public TVET institution supported by sector ministry
- Legally autonomous public TVET institution
- Accredited private training provider
- Registered domestic NGO or Foundation accredited to offer skills training
- Domestic Chamber of Commerce or Industry and Employer Association that supports skills development

In addition, the Lead can have one of the following as secondary partner

- Public TVET institution supported by sector ministry
- Legally autonomous public TVET institution
- Accredited private training provider
- Registered domestic NGO or Foundation accredited to offer skills training
- Domestic Chamber of Commerce or Industry and Employer Association that supports skills development
- National TVET Agency or TVET authority responsible for TVET provision

WINDOW III

The Lead must be a domestic public or private entity. If the Lead is public then one of the partners needs to be private.

Lead

- Public TVET institution supported by sector ministry
- Legally autonomous public TVET institution
- Accredited private training provider
- Registered domestic NGO or Foundation accredited to offer skills training
- Chamber of Commerce or Industry and Employer Association that supports skills development
- National TVET Agency or TVET authority responsible TVET provision

Partner(s): One or two partners to be selected from among the entities below:

- Public TVET institution supported by sector ministry
- Legally autonomous public TVET institution
- Accredited private training provider
- Registered domestic NGO or Foundation accredited to offer skills training
- Chamber of Commerce or Industry and Employer Association that supports skills development
- Domestic public or private company
- International NGO or Foundation involved in training provision
- National TVET Agency or TVET authority responsible for TVET provision

Eligibility Criteria

General Eligibility Requirements

Each Applicant (consortium) must:

- Consist of legally registered entities according to the list of eligible entities
- Be able to demonstrate financial capacity for the last three years
- Demonstrate their human capacity to implement the proposed project idea
- Demonstrate proof of counterpart funding

Each Applicant must provide the following evidence as proof of eligibility of the consortium:

- Copies of documentation of legal status / registration showing that the Lead and its Partners belong to the list of eligible entities
- Copies of accreditation documents of training providers
- Audited or certified financial statements of the Lead for the last three years
- Number and qualifications of relevant staff
- At least one reference of a project with a financial scope that is similar to the proposed project idea
- Commitment letter for counterpart funding, showing breakdown of estimated value of proposed complementary (in-kind) measures

Eligibility Requirements for Applications - Concept Note

- The proposed project idea (outline of activities) must belong to one of the stated eligible project activities.
- For construction works and procurement of equipment, the application must include documentation for ownership or lease hold of buildings or lands.
- The application must address the skills and employment needs of women and youth (e.g. access, enrolment, job opportunities, etc.) in proposed project concept (outline of activities).
- The application must demonstrate private sector engagement in the proposed project activities

Applications will be considered NON-eligible if they do not demonstrate the above stated requirements.

Eligibility Requirements for Applications - Full Proposal

The full proposal must include

- A detailed implementation plan with timelines
- A detailed budget
- A proposal-specific results framework
- Draft technical designs and/or specifications for construction and equipment, including draft procurement plan,
- Draft operational and maintenance plan, including financing
- A market assessment analysing the growth potential of the industrial sector under consideration within the specific country, and an assessment of the training needs against the skills currently available

Applications will be considered NON-eligible if they do not demonstrate the above stated requirements.

Requirements for Counterpart Contribution

Evidence needs to be provided for all counterpart contributions during the course of project implementation. Information on status of the counterpart contribution needs to be included in all financial reports.

With regard to the counterpart funding, the available options are:

- I.** Co-financing of invoices
- II.** Implementation of project-related (in-kind) measures that can be quantified in cash terms
- III.** Payment of taxes (e.g. VAT, import duties and other public charges) on works, goods and services rendered to the project
- IV.** Recurrent costs, such as salaries for additional project-related staff, and utility charges (e.g. water, electricity, heating) for the duration of the project

Provision of project-related in-kind measures

The provision of project-related in-kind measures may include the following:

- Use of project-related specialized workshop/training equipment, cost of which can be quantified in cash terms
- Use of project-related specialized facilities owned or long term leased by the applicants, e.g. dormitories or kindergartens (for children of female trainees/learners) cost of which can be quantified in cash terms

Documentation for Counterpart Contribution at Concept Note stage

Applicants must submit a Commitment Letter, detailing the complementary (in-kind) measures and indicating Tax/VAT registration number.

Documentation for Counterpart Contribution at Full Proposal stage

- **For option (II): implementation of project-related in-kind measures**
Applicants must submit evidence (e.g. inventory lists, lease agreements etc. covering the stated project-related in-kind items) for easy verification of the in-kind measures and costs. The in-kind measures that shall be accounted for as counterpart contribution must be quantified in cash terms and included in the cost and financing plan of the project.
- **For option (III): payment of taxes**
Applicants must submit evidence of estimated cost of taxes to be paid. During implementation, verification of the payments must be included in the financial reporting.

Assessment Criteria and Scoring of Proposals

The selection of project proposals shall be guided by the following assessment criteria and corresponding maximum scores:

Viability and readiness to implement (20 points maximum):

Viability of the skills initiative (project) concept and readiness-to-implement. It is important that proposals, in particular if focused on construction or large procurements, are ready-to-be implemented projects, i.e. a prior concept development /technical planning exists (and is documented) e.g. detailed design, specifications, approvals, environmental studies and certificates etc. Furthermore, counterpart funding is substantiated and documented.

Innovation (5 points maximum):

Proposals present innovativeness in terms of innovative training design and delivery or technology-enabled learning or digitalised skills programmes and financing partnerships.

Sustainability (5 points maximum):

Proposals outline growth potential of the sector in the specific country, training needs, and a viable sustainable financing strategy. Risks and how they will be mitigated as well as measures and strategies to sustain the investment / initiative are explained.

Regional impact and replicability (10 points maximum):

Proposals demonstrate possibility for becoming a regional show case / best practice provider of employable skills development, such as importance for regional development goals, offering access to skills training for students from the region or drawing on regional expertise and potential for becoming a regional centre of excellence.

Involvement of the private sector (10 points maximum):

Proposed project must involve the private sector from the start and show evidence of involvement of private sector in design of training, institutionalisation of the involvement in design and delivery of training and further institutionalisation in the form of internships and job fairs supported by relevant MOUs.

Access for/impact on women, youth, and vulnerable groups including refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons, the disadvantaged and disabled (20 points maximum):

Proposals must include specific measures to address the specific needs or employment opportunities for women, youth and vulnerable groups, such as widows, migrants and internally displaced persons (e.g. female and youth enrolment, advocacy strategies and retention and job placements).

In addition, the project will be assessed based on the overall quality of the proposal (20 points maximum) as demonstrated by the coherence and completeness of the documentation provided, and relevance (10 points maximum) in terms of the expected impact on employability and contribution to national human resource development agenda.

The total maximum score is 100 points. All eligible proposals will be ranked and the highest ranked will be selected. To qualify for short-listing, the proposal must obtain a minimum score of 60 points.

The three highest ranked concept notes for each participating country will be short-listed and invited to submit Full Proposals. Only one Full Proposal per Funding Window per participating country will be selected for funding.


Application Process

1 Concept Note (CP)

1. Launch of calls for proposals

 Applicants please check eligibility criteria and the Instruction Guide for Applicants

 Register into the online application system SmartME on the website SkillsAfrica.org

 Create and submit the concept note in SmartME

2. Concept notes received, screened and short-listed

2 Full Proposal (FP)

3. Short-listed CN applicants invited to submit Full Proposals

 Check the Instruction Guide for Applicants

 Create and submit the Full Proposal through the online application system SmartME

4. Full Proposals assessed and ranked

5. Due Diligence conducted on short-listed FPs

6. SIFA Investment Committee selects winners

7. Winners sign Implementation Agreement with NEPAD

8. Grantees execute project

9. Regular reporting by grantees

10. Auditing by NEPAD/SIFA and Project Close-out

Application Process

The SIFA Application Process is in two-stages, comprising:

Stage 1: Submission of Concept Note (CN)

Stage 2: Submission of Full Proposal (FP), ONLY for short-listed Concept Notes

Concept Note Stage

Interested applicants submit a Concept Note for evaluation. The Concept Note is intended to be brief, focusing on the fulfilment of the eligibility and selection criteria of the proposal/ applicant and introducing the key aspects of the activity proposed to be supported.

Upon submission of Concept Notes in the online management system (SmartME), the SIFA Financing Facility will check eligibility and subsequently conduct an independent evaluation against assessment criteria and prepare an assessment report of the shortlisted Concept Notes. The assessment report will be sent to the SIFA Investment Committee. Upon No-Objection, the Leads of the shortlisted Applicants are notified of the outcome of the evaluation procedure and invited to submit Full Proposals by a letter signed by the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) approximately 8 weeks after the Concept Note application deadline.

Full Proposal Stage

The Applicants invited to submit Full Proposals must do so in the online management system using the same log in credentials. The Full Proposal must include a detailed implementation plan with realistic timelines, detailed budget, proposal-specific results framework with objectives, targets and indicators, detailed technical design or equipment specifications including confidential cost estimate, environmental and social management checklist, procurement plan, list of force account measures and an operational and maintenance plan. The Full Proposal must also include roles and responsibilities of the partners, evidence of private sector involvement and training innovation, training curriculum where necessary, and measures to address project sustainability. Formats for supporting documents will be provided to shortlisted applicants.

For Funding Window I, Applicants whose Concept Notes have been short-listed can seek assistance to develop their Full Proposal. Approximately 10 days of services will be available for each shortlisted applicant who can request this assistance by e-mail - with receipt and read acknowledgment. The short-listed applicants will then be given access to submit a request form in the SmartME online system. In the request they must clearly specify what they need assistance with and submit draft Terms of Reference for the envisioned tasks. The experts to support the short-listed Applicants will be assigned by the SIFA Financing Facility. The experts will be drawn from a pool of experts approved by the NPCA. However, the NPCA will not be liable for the services rendered by the experts assigned to the Applicants.

Due Diligence/Verification

During preparation of Full Proposals, the SIFA Financing Facility team will carry out due diligence including verification visit on the short-listed projects to verify all information submitted, including:

The registration

- The organisational and financial capacity
- The technical validity of the proposal e.g. proposed construction or rehabilitation or specification of the equipment, where applicable

The due diligence/verification will in most cases include on-site visits. The applicants will be informed via e-mail of the planned on-site due diligence visits.

After the final evaluation, the NPCA will send the assessment and ranking of the shortlisted Full Proposals to KfW for No-Objection. Upon No-Objection, the assessment and ranking of the shortlisted Full Proposals is presented to the SIFA Investment Committee for final approval. The Leads of the winning Applicants are then officially informed by a letter signed by the NPCA inviting them to negotiations and signature of Implementation Agreements. The Implementation Agreements will be signed between the Applicants and the NPCA. All Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the final evaluation.

While implementing a SIFA funded grant, the Grantees are required to follow all approved rules and guidelines on financial management, procurement and environmental, social, health and safety safeguards.

General Rules

- Concept Notes and Full Proposals received after the submission deadline will be rejected.
- Concept Notes and Full Proposals must be submitted online in the SmartME system. No other form of submission is allowed.
- Concept Notes and Full Proposals shall be submitted in English or French language.
- All financial information included in the Concept Notes and Full Proposals shall be in EURO (or converted to EURO at an acceptable currency exchange rate).
- SIFA's grant decision is not binding until the Implementation Agreement with annexes has been signed with the NPCA following successful negotiations. All SIFA Project grantees must sign KfW anti-corruption declarations.
- SIFA Financing Facility reserves the right to reject any Concept Note or Full Proposal until signing of the Implementation Agreement.
- All SIFA Project Grantees must sign KfW Anti-corruption declarations.

Call Schedules and Timelines

Activity	WINDOW I	WINDOW II	WINDOW III
Step 1 Opening of Call* – all eligible candidates are invited to submit Concept Note Applications	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
Step 2 Deadline for submission of Concept Note Applications (Closing of Call)	12 weeks after opening	8 weeks after opening	6 weeks after opening
Step 3 Concept Note Applications Assessed – shortlisted applicants invited to submit Full Proposals	8 weeks after Step 2	8 weeks after Step 2	6 weeks after Step 2
Step 4 Deadline for submission of Full Proposals	8 weeks after Step 3	8 weeks after Step 3	6 weeks after Step 3
Step 5 Assessment and shortlisting of Full Proposals	6 weeks after Step 4	6 weeks after Step 4	4 weeks after Step 4
Step 6 Due Diligence and Selection of Winning Proposals	6 weeks after Step 5	6 weeks after Step 5	6 weeks after Step 5

*Note: Opening of calls will take place on a country-by-country basis after the launch of the various windows in each participating country.

Application Submission Tool

SmartME

The SIFA Financing Facility has established an online system/electronic tool (SmartME) for the preparation and submission of Proposals for both Concept Notes and Full Proposals. This tool is available for applicants at the SIFA website: www.skillsafrica.org or www.skillsinitiative-for-africa.com

The SmartME system is utilised to manage the Calls for Proposal and offers various advantages to the applicants when used during the preparation and submission process.

Applicants are able to log onto the system once the Call has been opened and apply directly online. An applicant can draft, complete and submit a Proposal during each stage of the application process without the need of having to store any documentation or lose any unsaved work. All additional documentation can be uploaded into the system and remain available to the applicant as long as it is needed.

Thus, all proposals (Concept Note and Full Proposal) must be submitted in the application format in the SmartME online management system. Submitting a proposal in hard (paper) copy, e.g. via e-mail, either at the Concept Note or Full Proposal stage is not permissible and will not be accepted. Nor is it possible to submit a proposal (application) only at the Full Proposal stage.

The Smart ME system covers the whole Call for Proposals process from Concept Note to Reporting and Monitoring of selected Projects.

Registration on SmartME

The registration on the Smart ME system is as follows:

- Follow the link to register for the SIFA Call for Proposals as given in the advertisement or type in the URL: www.skillsafrica.org
- Register for the SIFA Call for Proposals by providing your first and last name, email address and your chosen password as well as your location. You may also be required to provide a mobile number for authentication
- An e-mail with login credentials will be sent to the stated e-mail address
- Sign into the system and begin developing your Proposal
- Applicants can at any time log out of the system and return to the same access point as all work will be saved as it is entered.

Privacy of Applicant Data

All data entered into the SmartME system is secure. All the operations and practices regarding the collection, storage and processing of personal information are in accordance with the EU Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC and the Finnish law 22.4.1999/523 implementing the Directive.

Disbursement of Grants

Payment for works and services rendered and goods supplied under a SIFA Financing Facility grant will be done upon submission of evidence and proof of expenses. Full disbursement procedures will be made available to the selected winning Applicants/Grantees.

Procurement of Works, Goods and Services

The procurement of works, goods and services will be done in close collaboration with the NPCA. Approved national or public procurement rules and procedures will apply, depending on the type of project and the project amount. All expenses related to the project implementation, including the accounting and procurement procedures, will be subjected to auditing by NPCA and KfW for compliance with the rules and conditions attached to the Implementation Agreement. The approved procurement rules and procedures will be made available to the selected winning Applicants/Grantees.

Reporting

Upon signing the Implementation Agreement, the Applicants commit to report - on the SIFA Financing Facility according to the results, activities and associated indicators stated in their proposal. This reporting will be done in the online management system (SmartME).

In addition, the SIFA Financing Facility may visit to collect additional information, stories, lessons learnt etc., and the Applicants must commit to be available and provide information if required. Visits may be unannounced.

Commitment by Applicants upon Signing the Implementation Agreement

Upon signing an implementation agreement with the NPCA, the Applicants must commit to the following:

- Quarterly reporting to the SIFA Financing Facility according to the stated results and associated indicators in the Full Proposal application (both quantitative and qualitative)
- Contribute to possible additional monitoring and evaluation (lessons learnt) exercises, surveys, etc.
- Allow un-announced site visits by the SIFA Financing Facility team
- Agree to follow the approved SIFA Guidelines on Procurement of Works, Goods and Services
- Compliance with national and IFC Environmental, Social, Health and Safety Standards
- Keep to project duration timeline
- Full financing and completion of the project in case of cost increases or overruns

Further Information

Go to **www.Skillsinitiative-for-Africa.org** or **www.SkillsAfrica.org** to access the detailed information on the different funding windows and how to apply, the application templates, the Instruction Guide for Applicants, and the frequently asked questions (FAQ).

Q and A

Consult for general questions the FAQ page on

www.Skillsinitiative-for-Africa.org/FAQ or **www.SkillsAfrica.org/FAQ**

- If you do not find an answer you can submit your question through the contact page **www.Skillsinitiative-for-Africa.org/Contact** or **www.SkillsAfrica.org/Contact**
- Your question and answer will be published on the website's FAQ page **www.Skillsinitiative-for-Africa.org/FAQ** or **www.SkillsAfrica.org/FAQ**

SmartMe

Visit the SIFA Financing Facility online management system (SmartME) helpdesk for technical problems. The SmartME fully operational helpdesk support function is located on the application page once the Applicant has logged into the system. The helpdesk responds to queries within 48 hours.

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