

Frequently Asked Questions for ICF-China Green Finance Programme

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PROGRAMME

1. WHY HAS THE UK GOVERNMENT CHOSEN TO SUPPORT CHINA'S GREEN FINANCE?

The UK Government is developing a major new Technical Assistance Programme (TAP) to support middle-income countries in delivering their Paris commitments, meeting demand by utilising international low carbon skills and expertise where appropriate.

We will provide targeted support in line with areas of greatest need, which align with the UK's distinct climate expertise. Research suggests this may include (but not be limited to) climate legislation and governance, energy decarbonisation, green finance and services linked to halting deforestation.

2. HOW IS THE ICF CHINA GREEN FINANCE PROGRAMME DIFFERENT TO THE PROSPERITY FUND?

The ICF China green finance programme builds on the success of the low-carbon Prosperity Fund work the UK has already implemented in China in recent years. Given that green finance is an area of close strategic alignment between China and the UK, the time is now right to establish a dedicated programme for this topic.

In practical terms, there will be some differences in the application and project monitoring processes, though these are unlikely to be significant.

3. WHY DOES THE FUND ONLY SUPPORT ONE-YEAR PROJECTS?

The UK's Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth, Claire Perry, recently approved funding for early activities in three countries, including China. Subject to evaluation and assessment of these early activities there may then also be scope for longer term activity. We are very excited to commence this programme with the current call for proposals.

4. HOW BIG IS THE FUND? / HOW MANY PROJECTS WILL BE SUPPORTED THIS YEAR?

The fund is £2 million. The indicative scale of support for each project is £150,000-£500,000. We will decide the number of projects according to the proposals received – there is no pre-determined number of projects.

5. HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE FOR NEXT YEAR?

Subject to evaluation and assessment of early activities there will be scope for longer term activities and further funding for activities up to 2021.

6. ARE YOU LOOKING TO FUND A SET NUMBER OF PROJECTS UNDER EACH OF THE FOUR PILLARS?

No, we have no set allocations in mind and will score each project on its own merits, regardless of which pillar it addresses. However if two projects score the same and one is in a pillar with no projects, then that could inform our decision of which project to support.

7. WILL THE PROGRAMME ONLY SUPPORT MAJOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE GREEN FINANCE MARKET, OR WILL THERE BE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALLER PARTICIPANTS TOO?

Our call for bids is an open and transparent process and welcomes all organisations for innovative ideas, as long as those ideas suit our strategic priorities and can deliver high impact. When assessing bids we will balance all factors when considering implementers.

ELIGIBILITY

1. WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS? CAN ANY ORGANISATION TYPE APPLY?

Any type of organisation can apply, provided it has a legal status.

2. CAN AN ORGANISATION APPLY MORE THAN ONCE?

Each organisation can only be the lead implementing organisation in one application. However, it is possible to be a supporting organisation in multiple applications.

3. IS CO-FUNDING A REQUIREMENT?

No. Demonstrating co-funding could, however, be one way to demonstrate value for money and potential for transformational impact, which are two of the five assessment criteria.

4. IS HAVING AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNER A REQUIREMENT?

Yes. Technical Assistance projects allow exchange of expertise and best practice among Chinese and international stakeholders. Strong engagement and support of the host government or other key beneficiaries and stakeholders is essential. The Grant Contract will only be signed with one implementing partner, which must be nominated as the lead implementer.

5. WE FOUND AN EU INSTITUTE AS OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNER. DO YOU REQUIRE A UK ORGANISATION AS A PARTNER?

No we don't require a UK partner. The requirement is to have at least one Chinese and one international (i.e. non-Chinese) organisation in your project.

6. WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF 'CHINESE ORGANISATION'? CAN WE WORK WITH AN NGO THAT WORKS IN CHINA?

The only formal requirement is that the Chinese partner has a legal status in China. However the track record, and hence the likelihood of achieving transformational change, will be crucial considerations when assessing concept notes.

ASSESSMENT

1. WHAT ARE THE MAIN CRITERIA TO SELECT PROJECTS TO FUND?

Bids will be assessed on the following criteria: strategic fit; potential for transformational impact; value for money; additionality; and deliverability.

Please refer to section 4.2 under *Bidding Processes* in the [ICF China Green Finance Call for Proposals Strategy and Guidelines](#).

2. ARE ALL FIVE CRITERIA WEIGHTED EQUALLY?

No, the first two criteria (strategic fit and potential for transformational impact) will each be weighted 1.5 times each of the other three.

3. HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE BENEFITS FOR THE UK WHEN ASSESSING BIDS?

We hope to foster two-way exchange and sharing of best practice between Chinese organisations and those from other countries, including the UK, during project implementation.

4. IF THE PROPOSAL COVERS ALL FOUR PILLARS OF YOUR STRATEGY, DOES THAT MEAN IT WILL BE BETTER THAN A PROPOSAL THAT ONLY COVERS ONE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF YOURS?

‘Quality over quantity’ is our principle. The concept note should align closely with at least one of the four objectives of the call for proposals. However, projects which address more than one objective will not necessarily score higher than those that only address one. A project that only addresses one objective can achieve higher impacts and better value for money than one that touches a bit of everything.

5. WHEN WILL WE KNOW THE RESULT OF FIRST ROUND APPLICATIONS?

We will take up to three weeks to review the applications after the deadline of 29 June. Applicants should be informed of the result in the second half of July.

6. WILL UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS ALSO BE NOTIFIED?

We will inform all applicants of the result via email. If you have not received notification by late August, get in touch with the embassy ICF team.

7. WILL WE RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON OUR BIDS WHEN WE GET OUR SCORE?

Yes, but can’t guarantee level of detail.

8. WHO WILL THE PANEL CONSIST OF?

Full project proposals will be assessed by a Programme Board consisting of senior officials from the British Embassy Beijing, BEIS London and an external sector expert. This expert will be someone who has no potential conflict of interest.

9. I HAVE RECEIVED FUNDING FROM THE EMBASSY BEFORE, WILL IT IMPACT MY APPLICATION?

This will not have any direct impact on your application, though each applicant’s track record in successful project delivery is likely to be considered under the ‘deliverability’ assessment criterion.

10. IF PROJECT STARTS IN SEPTEMBER, WHEN SHOULD THEY BE CONCLUDING?

Project must conclude within 12 months of signing the grant agreement, which we expect to take place in September.

11. DO PROJECTS HAVE TO BE 12 MONTHS LONG, OR CAN THEY BE SHORTER?

Projects can be shorter than 12 months, and in some cases may offer a better balance of value for money and potential for transformational impact.

12. WILL YOU CONSIDER PROPOSALS THAT INCLUDE AREAS IMPORTANT TO THE GREEN FINANCE SYSTEM BUT WHICH ARE NOT CURRENTLY REFLECTED IN THE STRATEGY?

The four pillars listed in the [Strategy](#) are the current priorities for HMG work in China. We have provided some example projects but these are only indicative, not exhaustive. We will only fund projects that meet our strategic requirements during 2018-19. Priorities after 2019 will be reviewed and may include areas that are not included in the current Strategy.

OTHER QUERIES

1. OUR PROJECT IS ABOUT GREEN FINANCING ALONG THE BELT AND ROAD COUNTRIES, RATHER THAN FOCUSING IN CHINA ONLY. IS THIS ACCEPTABLE?

Most of your activities should take place in mainland China, however this may result in some of the impact being felt elsewhere. For example, a BRI project in Vietnam would be out of scope for this call, but working with a Chinese bank, in China, to help green their financing of BRI project could be in scope. If you are unsure whether your proposal would be in or out of scope please check in with the team at icf.china@beis.gov.uk.

2. OUR PROJECT IS ABOUT GREEN TECHNOLOGIES, ESPECIALLY GREEN FINTECH/AI/BLOCKCHAIN THAT IS VERY POPULAR NOWADAYS. DOES THIS ALIGN WITH YOUR STRATEGIES?

If you can demonstrate the link between these technologies and the greening of the financial system, it can be relevant to the 'Innovation' pillar of our Strategy. i.e. how these technologies can address barriers of green investment, for instance, how the exploitation of these technologies can reduce the costs of issuing green bonds, or help companies better disclose environment information.

3. WILL THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (INCLUDING COPYRIGHTS) RELATING TO TECHNOLOGIES BELONG TO THE MAIN IMPLEMENTER? AS WE PLAN TO

INVEST MANY RESOURCES INTO THIS PROGRAM, WE WANT TO FULLY OWN THE IP AND COPYRIGHTS.

The specific arrangements around IP will depend on the specific context. The core principle is that the ICF China grant funding cannot be used primarily for private profit, or for a project where private profit comes at the cost of wider benefits. How this applies to your project will depend on the details of the activities you are planning. If you would like to discuss any specific issues in this regard please check in with the team at icf.china@beis.gov.uk.

GENERAL APPROACH TO TAP

1. WHERE WILL THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (TAP) GO NEXT, FOLLOWING THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS IN CHINA AND THE UPCOMING CALLS IN MEXICO AND COLOMBIA?

This is currently under review. We hope to be able to say more about this in the autumn.

2. HOW IMPORTANT IS MEASURING CLIMATE IMPACT IN YOUR PROGRAMME?

This is critical to overall climate finance, however in terms of TAP we recognise that it is challenging to directly attribute impact to individual interventions. We are undertaking research into how we might be able to reliably quantify impact for the TAP.