GLOBAL CENTRE ON BIODIVERSITY FOR CLIMATE

October 2026

Research Grant Competition 4 Invitation to Apply Overview

UK International Development
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

DAI

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GLOBAL CENTRE ON BIODIVERSITY FOR CLIMATE

1. Introduction and Competition Information

Applications are invited to apply for grant funding from the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC). GCBC is an Official Development Assistance (ODA) research programme funded by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) working in partnership with DAI Global as the Fund Management Lead (FML). It generates evidence on how the protection, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity can strengthen climate resilience and reduce poverty.

The GCBC organises Research Grant Competitions (RGCs) to fund projects focused on specific research themes. The fourth competition (RGC4) was launched in September 2026 and the theme for RGC4 is:

Enabling transformative change: addressing drivers of biodiversity loss in three critical regions

The theme calls for research proposals that address the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in the **Amazon, the Congo Basin and the Coral Triangle.**

GCBC aims to fund projects covering terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems within these three regions, aiming to create a balanced portfolio of projects across key ecosystems under pressure.

Research priorities within the theme for this call are:

1. Socio-ecological dynamics and transformative pathways
2. Commodity markets and financial flows
3. Governance and institutions

RGC4 will be a two-stage process:

1. *Project Concept Note (CN)* ***Stage 1***: Applicants for this stage must submit a Concept Note on GCBC's online platform (*Annex D04- Concept Note Application Form) outlining their proposed project. This will be assessed using criterion outlined in Annex D05-RGC4 CN Scoring & Selection Criteria. Successful applicants will be invited to proceed to a Full Proposal (FP) stage.
2. *Full Proposal (FP)* ***Stage 2***: Applicants for this stage must submit a Full Project Proposal, consisting of both commercial and narrative documents, along with responding to RGC compliance requirements (Section 6

provides an overview). Full details of this stage will be released (through an Invitation to Proposal pack) to successful applicants on completion of the CN stage (mid-February 2027).

*Note: All annexes will only be made available after the Concept Note window opens for applications.

This Invitation to Apply (ITA) pack relates to Stage 1 (Project Concept Note, CN) of the Competition only. Stage 2 (Full Proposal, FP) is referenced throughout the document to ensure that applicants are aware of the Full Competition process.

The headline information regarding the RGC is as follows:

- All applicants must submit projects that align with the GCBC Research Strategy (Annex D03) and the RGC4 Theme Paper (Annex D02)
- GCBC will accept applications for projects **between £200k and £1.5m**. Applicants must include an indicative budget they wish to receive for their project in the Concept Note submission.
- GCBC will accept applications for projects of between **24 and 48 months** duration.
- The closing date for receipt of applications for Stage 1 is **12:00 PM (noon) GMT on 30th of November 2026.**

1.1 Competition Timetable

Step	Activity Title	Date (and time)
	Stage 1 – Project Concept Note (CN)	
1	Positioning for Impact and Concept Note Webinar	13th October 2026
2	Application window opens (for a period of 6 weeks)	19th October 2026
3	Deadline for asking clarification questions	30th October 2026
4	Deadline for GCBC response to clarification questions	9th November 2026
5	Application window closes	12:00 PM (noon) GMT 30th November 2026
6	Assessments on all applicants (see Annex D05)	1st December 2026 – 7th February 2027
7	Stage 1 (CN) notifications & feedback sent to applicants/applications. Successful applicants are invited to partake in Stage 2(FP).	8th – 12th February 2027
	Stage 2 – Full Project Proposal (FP)	
8	Application window opens (for a period of 8 weeks)	Early March to mid-April 2027
9	Deadline for asking clarification questions	mid-March 2027
10	Deadline for GCBC response to clarification questions	End March 2027
11	Assessments on all applicants	May – June 2027
12	Inform successful applicants with an Offer Letter	July 2027
13	Inform unsuccessful applicants	July 2027
14	Due Diligence on successful applicants	July – August 2027
15	Grant Award Letters and Grant Funding Agreements drafted and shared	September 2027
16	Final date for Grant Funding Agreements to be signed	September 2027

All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted via the GCBC e-platform application portal (see section 9).

Applicants **must** read **all** the supporting documents in the ITA Pack before submitting their application. All documents are available on the GCBC e-platform.

By applying for this RGC, Applicants are confirming that they are willing to submit a full proposal at FP stage.

Furthermore, Applicants agree to the acceptance of the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) Terms and Conditions (see Annex D10- Model Grant Agreement Template[1]) if their application is successful after the FP stage. Applicants will be expected to confirm their agreement on the GCBC e-platform as part of their Concept Note (CN) submission.

2. GCBC Programme Information

2.1 Overview: A brief introduction

The Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC) is an Official Development Assistance (ODA) research programme funded by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Its aim is to generate evidence on how the protection, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity can strengthen climate resilience and reduce poverty.

Through a global network of researchers, practitioners and communities, GCBC seeks to advance understanding of the interconnected challenges of biodiversity loss, climate change and poverty, while ensuring that research findings inform policy and practice at national and international scales. The GCBC Research Strategy sets out GCBC's research approach, key areas of research interest and investment strategy (see GCBC-Research-Strategy_26_8_26-FINAL-1.pdf).

The programme contributes to the UK's international commitments on nature and climate, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement, and the Sustainable Development Goals. GCBC is part of the UK Government's portfolio of ODA research on Climate Food and Nature and sits within the UK's International Climate Finance portfolio

GCBC funds research relevant to the multi-scalar challenges linking biodiversity loss, climate change and poverty. This includes understanding how local and regional socio-ecological systems and practices (e.g. farming, natural resource use, conservation and restoration), interact with wider structures that enable or constrain them (e.g. governance, finance, political economy).

[1] This template is subject to change

The GCBC research agenda is therefore inherently multi/transdisciplinary and brings these systems together, spanning the following three interacting levels:

- Practices, livelihoods and delivery systems
- Socio-ecological systems and outcomes
- Knowledge, structural and enabling systems

GCBC recognises that research that connects across levels is of particular value, as it generates evidence that is both contextually grounded and structurally informed, and more likely to yield insights relevant beyond a single setting.

2.2 Introduction to Defra and the GCBC Partnership

The **UK Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)** supports the delivery of His Majesty's Government's ("HMG") international poverty reduction and sustainable development priorities including through the delivery of ODA-funded programmes.

In March 2023, Defra appointed DAI Global UK as the Fund Management Lead (FML) for GCBC. Together, Defra and DAI form the GCBC Partnership, working collaboratively in complementary roles to deliver the aims of the programme.

Defra provides strategic oversight and is responsible for ensuring alignment with UK International Climate Finance priorities, ODA requirements and wider government objectives on biodiversity, climate and poverty reduction. Defra also acts as the Strategic Science Lead, setting the programme's strategic scientific direction, identifying priority research areas, and ensuring it remains aligned with emerging evidence needs.

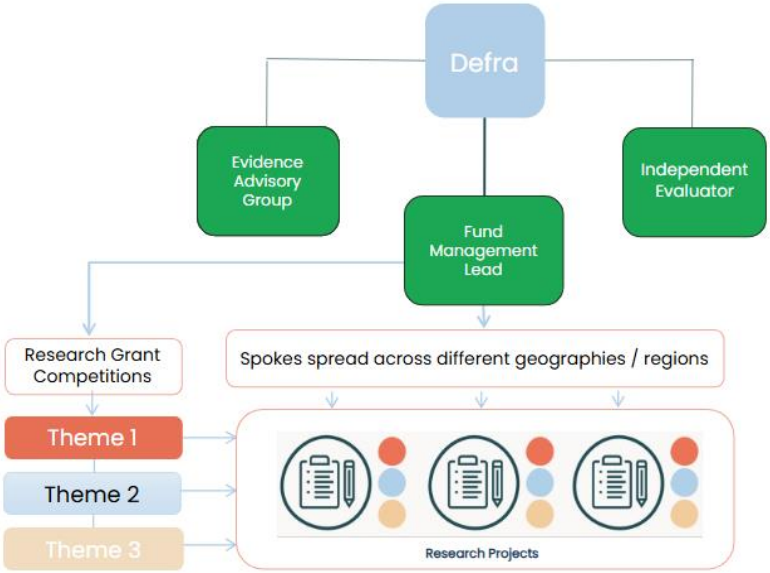
DAI Global UK brings a global footprint, broad networks, and over 50 years' experience delivering complex, multi-country programmes that tackle the technical issues that GCBC seeks to address: sustainable use of biodiversity, climate change and poverty reduction through improved livelihoods. As the FML, DAI Global UK is responsible for the operational management and delivery of the programme. This includes designing, managing and administering transparent, efficient and ODA-compliant Research Grant Competitions (RGCs), awarding Grant Fund Agreements (GFAs) to successful grantees, and providing ongoing oversight of grantee performance, risk, compliance, finances and payments.

In addition to the GCBC Partnership, Defra has convened an Evidence Advisory Group for the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (EAG) to provide independent advice and scrutiny on the design, scope, and outputs of the GCBC.

Defra have also appointed ITAD as the **Independent Evaluator** (IE) for GCBC and they will evaluate the GCBC processes, performance, and impact. ITAD will complete their mid-term evaluation of the programme in late 2026/early 2027.

The structure of GCBC is outlined in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: GCBC Organisation chart



2.3 Programme Theory of Change

The GCBC has a programme level Theory of Change (ToC) (See Figure 2 below) outlining how the programme expects to deliver change through two parallel but interconnected impact pathways.

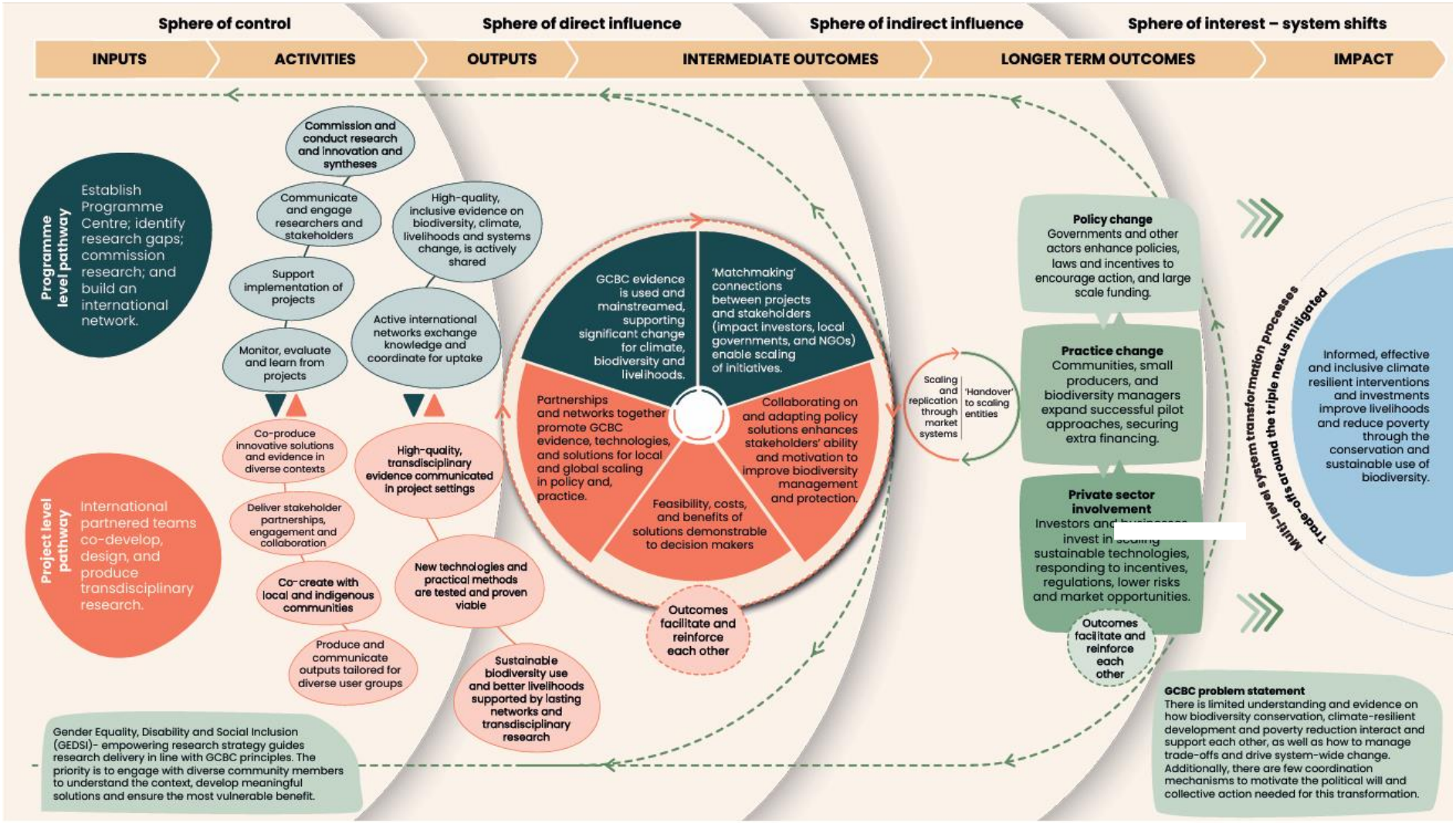
The *Project Delivery Pathway* describes how project outputs lead to outcomes and impacts. The *Programmatic Delivery Pathway* describes how cross-programme activities lead to outputs and impacts beyond the influence of individual projects. With three cohorts of grantees now implementing projects there are advances being made along the Project Delivery Pathway. Sufficient evidence and insight are now emerging to allow cross-programme comparison and synthesis, and to identify additional ways to add value to the research and support further progress along the Programme Pathway.

The FML have also developed a strategic programme-level learning strategy and made substantial progress in its early implementation.

A new Research Strategy has also been completed to complement the Theory of Change.

If applicants are successful in the Stage 1 (CN) of the RGC, applicants will be expected to produce Logframes in line with the GCBC Theory of Change at the Full Proposal stage. Applicants should therefore design projects that address the overarching intended outputs, outcomes, and impact, with a view of building this into their project proposals should they be successful at the Concept Note stage of the grant competition.

2.4 GCBC Theory of Change



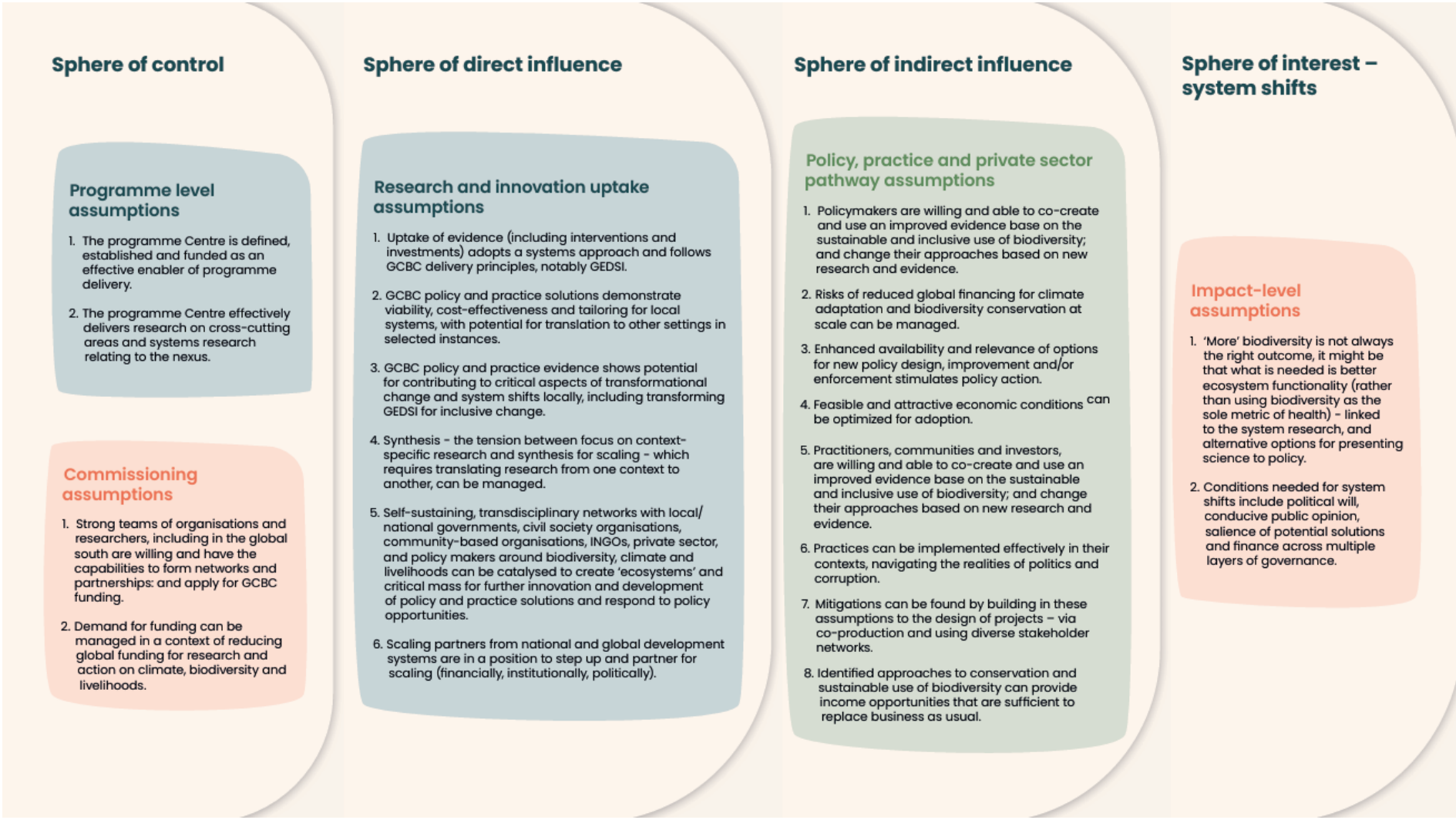


Figure 2: GCBC Theory of Change

3. GCBC Research Grant Competition Four (October 2026)

3.1 Specification of Requirements (Overview)

3.1.1 Theme

The Theme of RGC4 is Enabling transformative change: addressing drivers of biodiversity loss in three critical regions (Amazon, Congo and Coral Triangle). The Theme Paper (Annex D02) provides detailed information regarding the context and focus of RGC4 (including indicative but not exclusive areas of research to stimulate innovative approaches to address the theme). When designing projects, applicants should refer to the information in this paper and also read the GCBC Research Strategy (Annex D03) for wider contextual information regarding the Strategic Aims of the GCBC.

3.1.2 Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible for assessment:

3.1.3 Grant Size

- Grants must not exceed a total value of £1.5m and be of a minimum value of £200k.
- Note: the value of any individual grant may not exceed 25% of the applicant's or Lead Consortia's Partner's average income/turnover for the past 3 years.

➔ When outlining the indicative budget in your concept note, please ensure that you carefully consider all relevant budget subcategories, including: staff costs, travel costs, equipment costs, sub-contractors costs, and overhead costs. In particular, it is important that applicants fully consider the time and resources required to respond to quarterly financial reporting and budgeting requirements, when assembling their budgets. At this stage, detailed information is not required; however, it is important to note that only a 10% variance is allowed between the Concept Note budget and the Full Proposal budget, if an applicant is invited to prepare a full proposal. As a result, the Concept Note budget should be carefully planned and considered from the outset.

3.1.4 Research Period

- The research period will run for up to a maximum of 48 months from Financial Year 2027/28.
- The start date will be confirmed at the Full Proposal stage but at this point it is envisaged that all grants will commence on **1st October 2027**.
- GCBC will consider project concept notes that range between 24-48 months.

3.1.5 Geographic focus

Research must be conducted in or directly relevant to at least one of the three focus regions: the Amazon, the Congo Basin, or the Coral Triangle including the mangroves of the South China Sea and Sundaland forests. Research must focus on countries covered by OECD DAC eligibility.

- **French Guiana** is an overseas territory of France and is not on the DAC list.
- **Guyana** is expected to graduate from the DAC list in 2027, which may end its ODA eligibility. Under Grant Funding Agreement Section 27.11.A, Defra may reduce, suspend or terminate funding if a recipient country stops being ODA eligible.

Applicants should verify current DAC list status at the time of application as the list is subject to periodic revision.

Table 1. ODA-eligible countries within each of the three focus regions.

Region	ODA-eligible countries
Amazon	Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela
Congo Basin	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of the Congo
Coral Triangle	Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste

Activities taking place in countries subject to UK sanctions are unlikely to receive funding. *(Please note: Russian organisations are ineligible to be a Lead Applicant or Partner.)*

3.1.6 Delivery Partner / Organisation eligibility

Lead organisation: The lead organisation must be a not-for-profit Research Organisation. For lead organisations in the UK this requirement is met if it is eligible to receive UKRI funding on the day that the Concept Note window closes (if an organisation has already applied to UKRI **prior to 19 October 2026** this is acceptable but approval by UKRI remains a risk for the applicant) - see **Research organisations eligible for UKRI funding – UKRI**.

For lead organisations outside of the UK, status as a Research Organisation will be judged by their answers to the questions set out in Annex D09. (These questions are similar to those that UK-based organisations must answer to be eligible to receive UKRI funding.) This includes demonstrating relevant research expertise and evidencing the capacity to deliver the proposed research. This is in addition to providing evidence that the organisation has generated substantial research income over the last 3 years.

- Note that this is in addition to the standard due diligence that will be applied to all successful applicants that reach contracting stage.
- At CN stage both UK and non-UK lead organisations will be asked to confirm that they meet the Research Organisation requirement and that they will be able to provide proof when it is requested at Due Diligence stage, should the application be successful. Failure to provide proof will result in the proposal being rejected. It is therefore especially important that non-UK Research Organisations that intend to be the lead on an application are familiar with Annex 09.
- Community of Practice – GCBC will establish a Community of Practice (CoP) for RGC4 to support learning, synthesis and collaboration across funded projects. Lead Organisations must be willing to participate in CoP activities, including periodic research exchanges.
- Research Integrity Concordat - Lead organisations must be willing to adhere to the commitments outlined in the Research Integrity Concordat found here: The-Concordat-to-Support-Research-Integrity-2025.pdf

- Applicants must not be under any debarment or exclusion due to professional or fiduciary malpractice.

    - Any proposed activities must be eligible for ODA funding (the primary purpose being to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries).
    - Applications for project concept(s) must be:
        - led by an Organisation with offices in one of the specified ODA eligible countries listed in Table 1, or
        - led by an Organisation which forms part of a consortium with at least one organisation that has an office in an ODA eligible country or countries listed in Table 1.

    - A UK-based Partner or a presence in the UK is not essential

    - The GCBC encourages applications from the Lead Delivery Partners/Organisations based in one of the specified ODA eligible countries. New and equitable partnerships involving local project Partners are also encouraged.

- We value partnership as a means to -
    - transfer skills and knowledge
    - position research outputs
    - influence change
    - create a route to sustainability
    - facilitate transdisciplinary / multidisciplinary research

  At least one partner must be based in the focal geography where research will be carried out.

- Partner organisations can include:
    - ✓ non-government organisations,
    - ✓ civil society organisations,
    - ✓ multilateral organisations,
    - ✓ academic institutions,
    - ✓ private sector partners (may be consortia members, but are ineligible to receive grant funds for profit, or act as consortia Lead Delivery Partners)
    - ✓ Government organisations (but funding cannot be used as a substitute for activities that would normally be part of the government or agency's core functions).

UN bodies are eligible under the same terms and conditions as other applicants

- PhD Students are not eligible for funding under this grant competition.

3.2 Climate, Poverty and GEDSI

The GCBC is funded entirely through Official Development Assistance (ODA) and UK International Climate Finance. Projects must therefore promote the economic development and welfare of ODA-eligible countries as a primary objective, while also contributing to climate resilience.

Applicants should demonstrate a clear and context-specific understanding of the relationships between biodiversity, climate change, poverty and inequality. Project designs should explain how the proposed research will contribute to poverty reduction and climate-resilient development, identify the people expected to benefit, and consider how benefits, risks and opportunities may differ between social groups.

High-quality research at the biodiversity–climate–poverty nexus should be co-created with, and where appropriate led by, the people most affected by these challenges. This principle is central to the GCBC's Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) approach, which explains how GEDSI should be embedded across all GCBC-funded projects. The full GEDSI Approach is also included as Annex D11 and should be consulted for further guidance on applying these expectations throughout the project lifecycle.

All GCBC-funded research must meet minimum standards of GEDSI compliance. Applicants should:

- identify relevant inequalities, barriers to participation and groups that may be marginalised or excluded;
- ensure that project activities do not exacerbate existing inequalities or create new risks, in line with the principle of "do no harm";
- explain how affected groups and intended beneficiaries will be meaningfully and accessibly engaged in the research;
- identify and mitigate risks relating to exclusion, inequity, safeguarding and unintended negative consequences;
- collect and analyse data disaggregated by sex or gender, disability and other relevant characteristics where appropriate, ethical and feasible; and

- ensure that the project has appropriate expertise, responsibilities and resources to implement its GEDSI commitments.

At the Concept Note stage, applicants will be asked to provide a concise response explaining the principal GEDSI considerations relevant to their proposed project and how these may influence the research approach, partnerships, team capability and indicative budget. The GEDSI response will not receive a separate score at Concept Note stage. Assessors will use it to identify whether there are no material concerns, whether further development is required at Full Proposal stage, or whether a significant concern should be considered during moderation.

Projects are encouraged to go beyond minimum compliance where this is relevant and proportionate to the research. An empowering approach may address practical barriers that prevent marginalised groups from participating in or benefiting from research. A transformative approach may seek to challenge the institutional norms, power relations, policies or practices that perpetuate exclusion and inequality.

GEDSI considerations should be integrated throughout the research process, from project design and governance to implementation, learning, uptake and impact. The approach should be proportionate to the project's scope and context. Meaningful GEDSI integration should strengthen the quality, relevance and potential uptake of the research, rather than being treated as a separate or additional exercise.

4. Application Approach and Steps

4.1 Competition Timeframe

The RGC4 and award timeframe are outlined in Section 1 of this document. The timetable is subject to change. All Applicants will be informed of any changes/updates with appropriate notice. Notifications of any changes/updates will be published on the GCBC e-platform.

4.2 Application Process

Applications must be submitted on the GCBC e-Platform. Please refer to Section 9 of this overview for the registration link.

Applicants are required to complete the RGC4 Project Concept Note online (Annex D04 provides an offline copy, but submission is via the online platform).

More detailed instructions of how to use the e-Platform are available in Annex D06-Application Portal Instructions.

The GCBC E-platform Helpdesk is an email address that is continuously monitored throughout the RGC. The GCBC e-platform helpdesk has two primary functions:

- The helpdesk will respond to individual clarification requests regarding technical issues with the e-Platform within one working day (e.g. if your application documents fail to upload).
- The helpdesk will allow potential applicants to ask questions regarding the RGC within a set time period (see RGC timetable in Section 1). The Fund Management Lead will publish all clarifications (see RGC timetable in Section 1) for all Applicants to access via the e-platform. This will be in an anonymised format. There is a Q&A sheet that is provided on the e-Platform, which has relevant questions that applicants may require answers for. The Helpdesk email is: infogcbc@gcbc.org.uk

Applications must be successfully uploaded via the GCBC e-Platform on or before **12:00 PM (noon) GMT on 30th November 2026** to be eligible for assessment. Any application sent after this time will not be eligible for assessment. We strongly advise you to submit your application well ahead of the deadline to avoid any last-minute difficulties.

5. Qualifications for Stage 1 (CN)

5.1 Overview of organisational qualification envelope

At Stage 1 (CN) - The Lead Applicant must present how they would fulfil the RGC requirements through the submission of a project Concept Note on the e-Platform. An offline copy is available in Annex D04- Concept Note Application Form (CN).

Applicants are required to fill out the application form on the e-platform with the following Sections:

- **Eligibility Section** - The answers to your questions in this section determine your eligibility for the RGC4 grant. In the online application platform you must pass this section before you can proceed to the other sections of the application.
- **Section A** - Information about the applicant organisation- covers critical organisational information including registration details, registered address, Lead Organisation, key contact person.

- **Section B** - Summary information about the project- covers key project information such as the Project Name/Title; Alignment to the GCBC themes; the region/country of the project, and the duration.
- **Section C** - Detailed information on the project - the only scored section covers detailed information regarding the project including, project summary, problem definition, research questions, methodology, impact, partners/key stakeholders, GEDSI and budget.

Note: Applicants must fill out all sections of the CN to be eligible.

Declarations - Two declarations will be required via the e-Platform (Annex D08 - offline copy):

- Declaration 1: The Lead Applicant, Consortium and Proposed Project can meet the CN eligibility criterion as stated in Section 3.
- Declaration 2: The Lead Applicant can meet the requirements of eligibility in Full Proposal (FP) stage, which will include having the appropriate documents and procedures in place, and that they can sign the GFA terms and conditions (Annex D10 - Model Grant Agreement Template). This will form part of the Due Diligence process that DAI will commence after the assessment and selection of successful proposals.

5.2 Assessment & Selection Criteria for Stage 1 (CN)

The Assessment and Selection process for the RGC4 Project Concept Notes is conducted within an estimated 9-week period and is summarised as follows:

- Soon after the submission deadline passes, the Project Concept Notes undergo eligibility sifting. This includes checking the submission against the communicated eligibility criteria and performing a technical eligibility sift (against the GCBC objectives and theme of RGC4).
- The full Technical Assessment of the eligible CNs is then conducted by independent Assessors, with relevant technical expertise and experience.
- The information regarding how applications will be scored and selected is provided in Annex D05 - RGC4 CN Scoring & Selection Criteria.
- The Assessors' scores and comments then form the basis of a report to Defra on the quality of all CNs.
- A moderation meeting attended by the Defra (the Strategic Science Lead) then uses the report as a basis for identifying a set of strong proposals that cover an appropriate range of themes and geographies, and that will, once officially approved, form the final list of CNs that will progress to the Full Project Proposal 'Stage 2'.

- The last step is the formal CN outcome notification (including appropriate feedback) to all CN applicants.

5.3 Full Proposal (Stage 2) - Organisational requirements and due diligence

At Concept Note stage, applicants are not required to submit all organisational policies and supporting evidence listed below. However, the Lead Organisation must confirm that it understands these requirements and is willing and able to provide the required information[2] if invited to the Full Proposal stage and selected for due diligence.

Safeguarding	• A Safeguarding policy • Child Protection Policy • Modern Slavery Policy • An updated register of safeguarding issues
Ethical Behaviour	• Conflict of interest policy • Code of conduct (or the ability to meet the DAI code of conduct) • Whistleblowing policy and procedures • Fraud, bribery and corruption policy and procedures • Adhere to the 5 commitments of the Research Integrity Concordat
Financial Management	• Financial Management Policy and Procedures • Procurement Policy
Governance	• Proof of tax compliance • Organisational Risk Management Framework • Policy for dealing with conflict or sanctions in high-risk environment • Organisational escalation points/organogram • Insurance coverage (UK equivalent to Employer's Liability; Public Liability Insurance; and Professional Indemnity Insurance) • Quality Assurance or Quality Management Policies and/or systems

[2] The GCBC wishes to support Applicants to meet the eligibility requirements during the FP stage. It will be open to accepting applicants to FP stage but only if there is a clearly planned approach to meeting the eligibility requirements if the applicant is successful through the full application process.

	• Registration to IATI[3] (or willingness to obtain registration/report to IATI) • Research institution confirmation / self-assessment
Environmental Policies	• Net zero policy or equivalent environmental policy
Data Management	• Policy to safeguard IT and mobile communication systems • Policy on the management of data and data security
Human Resources	• HR and Recruitment policy (including ability to undertake vetting and anti-terror checks on staff) • Equality and Diversity policy • Procedures to conduct Partner due diligence and vetting
Duty of Care	• Procedures/Systems for management of emergencies involving staff and third parties • Appropriate travel policies • Risk mitigations for areas of potential safety/security threat • Health and Safety Policy incl. compliance with Health and Safety legislation and industry guidance

Applicants invited to submit a Full Proposal will receive further guidance explaining which documents and information must be provided with the proposal, and which will be reviewed during due diligence.

Applicants provisionally selected for funding must complete DAI's due diligence process before a Grant Funding Agreement can be signed. Where proportionate and acceptable to DAI and Defra, some gaps may be addressed through specific pre-award or inception conditions. However, material weaknesses that cannot be adequately managed may result in the application being rejected.

[3] The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is the global campaign to create transparency in the records of how aid money is spent. More information available here

DAI's Grantee Due Diligence process

DAI's Grantee Due Diligence (DD) approach uses four simple steps to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of a grantee's capacity and processes, enabling DAI to support the grantee to address gaps, and manage and mitigate risks:

Step 1 – Grant Capacity Assessment Tool (GCAT) Review: The GCAT is initially filled out by the Grantee, with support from DAI's Due Diligence team. The aim of the GCAT is to provide the Due Diligence team with information regarding the Grantee's policies, procedures and approaches to risk management and mitigation, and areas to strengthen to manage ODA funds. The tool covers: Governance, Financial Management; Human Resources, Ethics & Safeguarding; Delivery; Environmental Issues; and Terrorism and Security. The Due Diligence team will review the GCAT and establish questions for the post-clarification meeting.

Step 2 – Post DD Clarification Meeting: This detailed meeting is designed to ask further questions and clarify any information provided by the Grantee through the GCAT. These questions aim to form a wider picture of the Grantee's risk management approach, as well as anything specific that stood out on the GCAT. Notes are taken during the meeting.

Step 3 – Due Diligence Assessment and Analysis of Findings: The DAI project team will review and assess the full information (GCAT and meeting notes) and fill out a DD form for each grantee. The form provides a risk rating, as well as a summary of proposed next steps. The form is completed and presented to the Defra for a final decision to proceed or not.

Step 4 – Post-award conditions: Any DD next steps form part of the Grantees Award Letter and implementation is monitored by the Fund Management Lead during Inception.

6. Information regarding FP stage

Unsuccessful applicants after the Stage 1 (Project Concept Note) stage of the RGC process will be notified and provided with feedback on their application.

Successful Applicants after Stage 1 will be invited to participate in Stage 2 and submit a Full Project Proposal (FP) and supplied with an Invitation To Proposal (ITP) documentation pack.

The ITP pack will only be shared with the invitees after the completion of the CN stage.

The Stage 2 (Full Proposal) will consist of the following process:

- Applicants will be invited to write a full project technical and commercial proposal, outlining in more detail their proposed project.
- In support of their proposed project, applicants will develop and submit a full budget, showing the fee rates of proposed experts and full project expenses.
- Applicants will draft and submit a project-level Logframe, building on the programme-level thematic Theory of Change and proposed indicators.
- The FML will host several capacity building workshops during the FP stage to help applicants understand what is required to develop and deliver the best possible proposals for assessment. Details of these workshops will follow the release of the ITP pack.
- Once the applications are submitted, the proposals will undergo a full technical and commercial assessment. The details of the assessment will be shared in the ITP pack.
- Successful Applicants after Stage 2 (FP), will be offered an Outcome Letter, stating the willingness of GCBC to proceed with their application.
- Unsuccessful applicants at this point will be offered feedback on their proposal and will be removed from the process.
- Successful applicants will then go through a period of Due Diligence (*see Box 1*).
- After the full Due Diligence process has concluded, the FML will generate reports to be shared with Defra for further consideration and a final decision.
- Once Defra have communicated their decision to the FML, applicants that have been successful will receive a Grant Offer Letter and progress to the Grant Funding Agreement signing stage, which is essential for the awardees to receive grant funding.
- Once the Grant Award Letter and GFA have been signed, the project will begin.

7. Wider Funding Landscapes

Defra is working together with other UK Government Departments to enable greater coordination and coherence across research programmes that aim to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises to benefit people in the Global South.

Programmes are designed to be complementary in scope and opportunities identified to add value and maximise collective impact through post-award management.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) have been working with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA) and key actors across sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to scope a new transdisciplinary research programme which aims to enhance understanding of the **scalability and contextualisation** of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in SSA.

The programme aims to address a lack of knowledge about the suitability and feasibility of NbS in different sub-Saharan African contexts and at different scales, and their potential impacts on local communities and ecosystems. The goal is to better understand how NbS can increase resilience to climate-associated risks and be mainstreamed into transformative agendas towards more equitable and sustainable development.

The programme particularly seeks to address issues of equity and temporal sustainability within NbS, through considering gender equity and social inclusion (GESI), knowledge mobilisation and the integration of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC) in NbS design, planning and implementation.

Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CLARE) is a partnership between the FCDO and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada. The £96M programme aims to **accelerate the delivery of new and improved knowledge, data and tools focused on tacking real-world natural hazard, climate change adaptation and resilience problems facing the poor and vulnerable** across Africa and Asia-Pacific.

The key research areas of the programme are around understanding climate change, informing early risk-action systems, and supporting development in a changing climate to be resilient. CLARE launched the first call for concept notes in 2022: https://idrc.ca/en/news/clare-launches-call-concept-notes

Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia (REDAA) is a £35M development programme that supports research and action in sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia by offering grants and facilitating mutual learning between partners. It is funded by the FCDO and implemented by the International Institute for Environment and Development. Funded initiatives are locally led, interdisciplinary, and focused on **solutions for ecosystem restoration and climate resilience, enabling people and nature to thrive**. REDAA launched its first research call in June 2023.

Resilient economy and security through ecosystem transitions grants – UKRI - Apply for funding for research projects under the **Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)-**Defra co-funded Resilient Economy and Security through Ecosystem Transitions (RESET) programme. Projects will improve understanding on how, when and why ecosystems transition, reorganise or collapse, to sustain functions, strengthen economic prosperity, societal resilience and national security.

- You must be based at an eligible UK research organisation to apply.
- The full economic cost (FEC) of your project can be up to £2.5 million. We will fund 80% of the FEC.
- Funding is available for up to three years. You must start by 14 February 2027.

Biodiversa + Novel ecosystems: biodiversity, socio-ecological consequences and future trajectories. Co-funded by the European Commission, this call, alongside a range of actions under the Biodiversa+ Flagship Programmes, will contribute to achieving one of Biodiversa+'s strategic objectives: producing actionable knowledge to drive transformative change and halt and reverse biodiversity decline.

8. Applicant Guidance Annexes for Stage One

Annex	Document
D01	**Application Guidance Note**
D02	**RGC4 Theme Paper**
D03	**GCBC Research Strategy**
D04	**Concept Note Application Form (offline copy)**
D05	**RGC4 CN Scoring & Selection Criteria**
D06	**Application Portal Instructions**
D07	**GCBC Privacy Policy**
D08	**Agreement of Application Submission (offline copy)**
D09	**Research Organisation Questionnaire**
D10	**Model Grant Funding Agreement (GFA)**
D11	**GEDSI Approach**

9. e-platform Portal Registration

All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted via the GCBC e-platform portal hosted by MetricsLed.

To apply for RGC4 register on the application portal (https://gcbc.metricsled.com)

Guidance is provided in Annex D01-Application Guidance Note, and D06-Application Portal Instructions. Applicants **must** read **all** the supporting documents in the ITA Pack before submitting an application.

Applications must be successfully uploaded via the GCBC e-Platform on or before **12:00 PM (noon) GMT on 30th November 2026** to be eligible for assessment. Any application sent after this time will not be eligible for assessment.

We strongly advise you to submit your application well ahead of the deadline to avoid any last-minute difficulties.

ENDS