



Terms of Reference: Project 1- Commercial Forestry



Kenya- UK PACT

Call for Proposals: Nature-Based Solution

27/08/2025

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1. Executive summary

This Call for Proposals (CfP) under the Kenya-UK PACT programme presents a strategic opportunity to deliver high-impact technical assistance and capacity-building projects in the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) sector. Aligned with Kenya's climate mitigation priorities and the UK–Kenya Strategic Partnership, the CfP focuses on advancing commercial forestry, agroforestry, and ecosystem restoration.

Two projects are eligible for funding, each with a 12-month implementation period (January–December 2026) and a budget of up to £650,000. The CfP aims to catalyse inclusive, sustainable development by encouraging participation from women, youth, and marginalized groups, while contributing to Kenya's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and green growth agenda.

Applicants are invited to propose innovative, contextually relevant interventions that build institutional capacity, strengthen value chains, and promote equitable restoration outcomes.

Grant value: Project budgets may range from £400,000 to £650,000, with a cap of £150,000 per project in FY2025/26 (Jan 2026–Mar 2026), and up to £500,000 in FY2026/27 (Apr 2026–Mar 2027). Higher project budgets may be considered on an exceptional basis depending on proposed activities and value for money against expected outcomes.

Project duration: 12 months. All projects are assumed to have a start date in January 2026. The projects must have a clear indication of the outputs and outcomes expected to be achieved in the first year, as well as in each subsequent year of implementation.

Deadline for submission of applications: 26th September 2025, 19.00 EAT/ 17:00 GMT+1

Apply on the [Kenya-UK PACT web page](#) for the project of your choice (further application guidance is found later in this document)

2. Introduction

The UK and Kenya have committed to work together to accelerate action on climate change while creating green jobs. To support this partnership, the UK Government is looking to extend its UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (UK PACT) programme in Kenya with technical assistance and capacity-building projects supporting the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) sector.

This call for proposals aims to support activities which are strategically aligned to national priorities on climate change mitigation and key policy areas identified through consultations with government counterparts.

3. What is Kenya-UK PACT?

UK PACT (Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions) is a unique capacity-building programme. Jointly governed and funded by the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development

Office (FCDO) and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) through the UK's International Climate Finance, it works in partnership with countries with high emissions reduction potential to support them to implement and increase their ambitions for tackling climate change.

UK PACT is a key part of the UK's technical assistance under the UK–Kenya Strategic Partnership (2025–2030), which outlines joint priorities across four pillars: trade, investment and green growth; climate and nature; science and technology; and security and stability. Under the climate and nature pillar, Kenya and the UK are committed to demonstrating global leadership on climate, nature, and energy—mobilising finance for adaptation, resilience, and mitigation, and supporting biodiversity conservation. UK PACT contributes to this goal by advancing Kenya's transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy through clean energy scale-up, strengthened climate systems, green finance mobilisation, and nature-based solutions.

4. What is UK PACT already funding?

UK PACT has been partnering with Kenya since July 2021 to support the acceleration of nature-based solutions for low-carbon, climate-resilient development.

Previous and ongoing projects have contributed to strategic capacity building in key areas such as commercial forestry sector development, land and ecosystem restoration, strengthening national monitoring systems, and REDD+ readiness.

This Call for Proposals (CfP) builds on lessons and momentum from the previous CfP in 2022, including past partnerships with institutions such as Gatsby Africa and CIFOR-ICRAF, and aims to scale up high-impact interventions that have demonstrated promise in contributing to Kenya's NDC goals.

Further information on previous and ongoing projects can be found on the [Kenya-UK PACT](#) webpage.

5. Why are we focused on Nature-based Solutions in Kenya?

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are a national priority in Kenya, contributing 40% of projected GHG emission reductions through land use and forestry, while supporting 3.6% of GDP and over 300,000 indirect jobs (National Forest Resources Assessment Report, 2021).

Despite this potential, challenges persist, including limited forest restoration, weak tree-growing incentives, unsustainable timber supply, uncontrolled urbanization, and land degradation. Vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities often face barriers to meaningful engagement, including fragile land tenure systems and limited access to finance.

The Government of Kenya has responded with the 15 Billion Tree Campaign, targeting the restoration of 5.1 million hectares and 30% forest cover by 2050, alongside the National Agroforestry Strategy (2021–2030) and a review of the Forest Conservation and Management Act to strengthen governance and attract private investment.

However, a comprehensive demand scoping exercise conducted by Kenya UK PACT identified the need for stronger institutions, inclusive planning, enhanced technical capacity, and innovative private sector engagement to scale up NbS and ensure equitable and sustainable restoration outcomes.

6. Funding Priorities in this call for proposals.

As a demand-informed programme, the Kenya-UK PACT Country Fund aligns its support with the Government of Kenya's existing plans and policies. Through consultation, UK PACT has identified key Nature-based Solutions opportunities in accelerating progress in access to quality germplasm, increased uptake of commercial forestry and agroforestry especially through enterprises and strengthening action on conservation of degraded riparian reserves & wetlands.

The programme's primary goal is to protect and restore ecosystems through diverse approaches that also deliver climate, social, and economic benefits—such as job creation, improved public health, and enhanced ecosystem services. By improving ecosystem quality and unlocking green economic opportunities, the programme supports Kenya's climate goals and promotes inclusive progress for all communities

This call for proposals identifies specific projects eligible for funding, each with defined outputs and interventions. While creativity and additional ideas are encouraged, applicants must address the stated interventions at a minimum to ensure proposal eligibility.

Thematic Area: Commercial Forestry

- **Project 1: Strengthening commercial forestry on all land categories in Kenya**

7. Terms of Reference for Project 1

Project 1: Strengthening commercial forestry on all land categories in Kenya

Government counterpart(s): Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (MECCF) & County Governments.

This project seeks to support the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (MECCF) and County Governments.

The project will be funded by UK PACT in support of the MECCF's technical assistance requirements.

The British High Commission Nairobi is leading government engagement for this Call for Proposals. The proposed project is the result of intensive consultation with the Government of Kenya. To avoid confusion with government counterparts, we therefore do not encourage applicants to have direct engagement with government on this project during the application process or prior to receiving an award.

Thematic area: Commercial Forestry

Project description:

Background

Kenya faces rising deforestation, unsustainable land use, and climate change impacts, with women and marginalized communities disproportionately affected by resource scarcity and environmental degradation. In response, UK PACT has supported the development of Kenya’s Industrial Wood Sector Vision 2050 and ongoing policy reforms to establish an inclusive public-private partnership (PPP) regulatory framework for sustainable management of public plantations.

Expanding commercial forestry across all land categories—including public, private, and community land—offers a pathway to carbon storage, forest expansion, land restoration, and reduced illegal logging, while creating economic opportunities for women, youth, and historically excluded groups.

Proposed interventions include boosting productivity per acre, developing an investment-ready pipeline of projects, and equipping MSMEs with business advisory support to seize emerging opportunities. This approach promotes responsible land use, supports sustainable livelihoods, and strengthens long-term environmental and social resilience.

Aims and objectives

The primary objective of the project is to scale up sustainable commercial forestry across all land categories—enhancing carbon sequestration, reducing deforestation, promoting sustainable land use, and driving economic growth. It aims to stimulate the commercial forestry value chain and strengthen trade linkages to support sector growth.

The project will take an inclusive approach, intentionally targeting enterprises led by women, youth, and persons with disabilities to foster sustainable livelihoods and equitable benefit sharing. It will also promote responsible land use that respects customary rights, addressing structural inequalities in resource access and ensuring long-term environmental and social resilience.

Proposed duration:

12 months (assumed start in January 2026 and end in December 2026)

Intervention Area	Strengthening commercial forestry on all land categories in Kenya
Government Counterpart(s)	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (MECCF) County Governments.
Aims and Objectives	The primary objective of the project is to scale up sustainable commercial forestry across all land categories—enhancing carbon sequestration, reducing deforestation, promoting sustainable land use,

and driving economic growth. It aims to stimulate the commercial forestry value chain and strengthen trade linkages to support sector growth.

The project will take an inclusive approach, intentionally targeting enterprises led by women, youth, and persons with disabilities to foster sustainable livelihoods and equitable benefit sharing. It will also promote responsible land use that respects customary rights, addressing structural inequalities in resource access and ensuring long-term environmental and social resilience.

Key Activities

- Develop knowledge products to build stakeholder capacity to support the adoption of sustainable commercial forestry value chains across all land categories.
- Enhance knowledge to improve transparency, strengthen sustainable management, and establish monitoring systems for commercial forestry plantations and timber value chains.
- Build capacity of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through business incubation, to participate in business opportunities across the sustainable commercial forestry value chain
- Enhance private sector production and marketing of high-quality commercial forestry germplasm through research, development, and collaboration with KEFRI.
- Increase production of high-quality, improved commercial forestry seedlings for uptake by investors through demonstration plots and targeted capacity building for commercial farmers.

Key Outputs

The activities are expected to yield the following key outputs; targets are indicative and may be refined during the inception phase.

- Four (4) Inclusive knowledge products for each commercial forestry value chain are developed to enhance stakeholder capacity and promote the adoption of sustainable commercial forestry practices across all land categories.
- Technical capacity of 100 stakeholders- including commercial forestry operators and relevant public sector officials—is strengthened to improve transparency in timber value chains, promote sustainable management practices, establish effective monitoring systems, and support policy influence for sustainable commercial forestry.
- Capacity of Eight (8) micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) built to enable their participation in business

	opportunities across the sustainable commercial forestry value chain. (Ensure representation from women-led businesses, youth entrepreneurs, and enterprises from marginalized communities.) • Research and development leading production of at least 1.2 metric tons of high quality improved, site and market-suited commercial forestry seeds by the private sector • Production of at least 15 M high quality improved commercial forestry seedlings through private and community nurseries in 5 counties, and marketing to investors/farmers for tree growing. <i>(Earmark opportunities for women, youth, indigenous communities, and marginalized groups)</i>
Expected outcomes and impact	• The outputs are expected to lead to increased uptake of commercial forestry investments, with a focus on creating economic opportunities for women, youth, and marginalized groups. • The long-term impact envisioned is an inclusive and vibrant commercial forestry sector that empowers MSMEs to innovate across existing and emerging value chains, while significantly contributing to climate change mitigation and policy influence.
Useful resources	• National Forest Policy 2023 • Kenya National Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2027 • Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry

8. Important things to consider in your application.

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI)

All proposals must consider accessibility and inclusivity as a key action area in creating a more democratic, equitable and just transition to reduced emissions. As a result, all projects are required to mainstream GEDSI within the projects stated above and ensure adequate expertise and resources are available throughout delivery to achieve this. Illustrative examples of potential activities include:

- Conducting a GEDSI analysis and systematically considering the differentiated needs, knowledge, experiences, and priorities of women, youth, and historically disadvantaged and other marginalised groups in all project activities.

- Set minimum gender and diversity quotas for leadership positions in CFAs, and other community governance structures.
- Conducting enhanced needs assessments and meaningfully engaging with civil society groups, including women's rights organisations and organisations of people with disabilities, to better understand NbS and employment needs and opportunities.
- Ensuring that the development of a green economy is built on inclusive supply chains, removing barriers faced by small businesses, marginalised groups.
- Facilitating increased engagement of women, youth, poor households, people with disabilities, and historically disadvantaged and other marginalised groups in decision-making, public consultation, and participatory planning.
- Increasing the integration of GEDSI-considerations in policies, regulation, and planning processes and/or improved implementation of these.

We will score all projects using GEDSI selection criteria to ensure that projects seek to understand and address the needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups. All proposals are required to:

- Consider the key differences in the ways that local communities, youth, women, lower-income households, marginalised groups, and people with disabilities access and use energy and contribute to Nature-based Solutions. Key issues may include those of affordability, accessibility, safety, and representation.
- Identify specific outputs that would address some of the issues faced and integrate these activities through the project.
- Ensure that the project's monitoring and results framework explicitly states how GEDSI outcomes will be achieved through the project's outputs.
- To reflect FCDO's commitment to the localisation of delivery, additional consideration will be given to consortia which include local organisations, women-owned entities, and entities owned by people with disabilities.

Applicants are encouraged to review UK PACT's [GEDSI Guidance](#) when developing their proposals.

Budget and funding availability

Each proposal will be assessed independently. We will support projects with grants valued up to of £150,000 per project in FY2025/26 (Jan 2026–Mar 2026), and up to £500,000 for FY2026/27 (Apr 2026–Mar 2027). Higher project budgets may be considered on an exceptional basis depending on proposed activities and value for money against expected outcomes. All projects are assumed to have a start date in January 2026. The projects must have a clear indication of the outputs and outcomes expected to be achieved in the first year, as well as in each subsequent year of implementation.

Proposals can be submitted for more than one project. However, separate applications should be prepared for each project.

Government engagement

The British High Commission Nairobi is leading government engagement for this call for proposals. The projects stated above are the result of intensive consultation with the Government of Kenya. To avoid confusion with government counterparts, we therefore do not encourage applicants to have direct engagement with government on these projects during the bidding process or prior to receiving an award.

As a demand-informed programme, the Kenya-UK PACT Country Fund aims to align its support with the Government of Kenya's existing plans and policies surrounding a clean energy transition. Applicants are advised to refer to these references, which include:

[National Agroforestry Strategy 2023-2032 \(DRAFT\)](#)

[National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Strategy 2023-2032](#)

[Kenya National Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2027](#)

[Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry](#)

9. Application Timeline

Stage	Date
1. Terms of Reference (TORs) and application process launched	27 th August 2025
2. Deadline for receipt of clarification questions	22 nd September 2025
3. Publication of answers to clarification questions will take on a weekly basis starting the week after the CfP is launched. Consolidated clarifications will be published on the Kenya-UK PACT web page	1 st September – 22 nd September 2025
4. Deadline for submission of applications	26 th September 2025
5. Applicants notified	w/c 10 th November
6. Due Diligence	w/c 10 th November – w/c 8 th December 2025
7. Grant Signing	January 2026
8. Project start date & Co-creation	January 2026

10. Application Guidance

All applications to UK PACT Country Funds are made and submitted via the my.ukpact.co.uk portal.

Applicants should read the Terms of Reference and Applicant Handbook to understand what is required to submit a strong proposal for this call.

The screenshot shows the 'Welcome to UK PACT Application Portal' page. On the left, under the 'Login' heading, it says 'Let's get you started — choose an option below to continue.' There are two buttons: a dark 'Sign In' button and a light 'Sign Up' button, separated by an 'Or' text. On the right, there are three sections: 'New Applicants' with instructions to click 'Sign Up', 'Existing Applicants' with instructions to click 'Sign In', and 'Forgot Password' with instructions to click 'Sign In' or 'Sign Up' and follow prompts.

What do you need to submit?

You will submit 4 key documents using the UK PACT templates provided and available for download via the CfP webpage here. These are:

1. Project Proposal

Please ensure that you populate the proposal template as fully as possible, to avoid submitting an incomplete application.

2. Budget and workplan

Note: All proposals must include an inception phase of one month in the workplan, during which time any necessary engagements with the Government of Kenya will be carried out, deliverables confirmed and theory of change finalised. At the end of this period a revised workplan may be required.

3. Theory of Change

4. Risk register

Additional supporting documentation may be submitted, such as CVs of key staff.

11. Eligibility Criteria

What are the eligibility criteria?

Eligibility criteria

Applicant

- We invite all organisations with relevant experience in delivering technical assistance and capacity-building projects. This could be think-tanks, consultancies, academic institutions, community organisations, NGOs, professional associations, or any similar organisations that have the knowledge, skills and experience to deliver an eligible project.
- Proposals from private sector entities are welcomed, noting however that profit cannot be funded through grant funding and projects must be submitted on a not-for-profit basis. Companies are encouraged to refer to the Applicant Handbook and Implementing Partner Handbook for clarity on eligible costs.
- Government agencies, departments, and state-owned enterprises are not eligible to receive UK PACT funding—either as lead organisations or consortium partners. However, in exceptional cases, limited budget allocations may be considered for government-affiliated entities only where such support is critical to project delivery and does not involve direct financial transfers. These exceptions must be clearly justified and approved in advance by the UK PACT team.
- We encourage consortia to apply.

Project

- Proposals can be submitted for more than one project, but a consortium cannot apply more than once to the same project.
- **Budgets must not include tangible assets or capital expenditure.**

Application

- All applications must be coherent and legible.
 - All relevant sections must be completed.
 - Applications must be submitted in English.
-

12. Selection Criteria

Area	Heading	Criteria description	Weighting
Technical (70%)	Impact	The applicant clearly articulates how the project will help the counterpart achieve and accelerate carbon emissions reductions in relevant sectors. The proposal includes a clear impact pathway showing how outputs will lead to transformational outcomes.	15
		Strong emphasis is placed on the project's potential for innovation and scalability, including opportunities for replication, expansion across geographies or sectors, and integration into broader policy or institutional frameworks.	25
	Project description, methodology and workplan	The applicant clearly demonstrates how the project responds to the terms of reference and outlines a coherent plan to deliver expected outputs. The workplan includes a description of activities, stakeholder engagement, and delivery timelines. The proposal should present innovative approaches or methodologies that enhance effectiveness and efficiency and show how the project design supports scalability and long-term sustainability.	
	Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI)	The applicant clearly identifies how the project will seek to understand and address the needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups. The proposal has considered the key differences in the way that local communities, men, women, lower-income households, marginalised groups and people with disabilities are impacted by a just transition. The proposal has successfully mainstreamed GEDSI in their project and identified specific outputs that would lead to desired GEDSI outcomes.	15

	Knowledge, skills, experience and team structure The proposed project team has relevant knowledge and experience in the subject area and has the skills in place to deliver the project. This includes knowledge, skills and experience in the specific thematic area the proposal responds to, technical assistance/capacity building, and public sector project implementation. The core skills, experience and knowledge required to deliver all elements of the project that have been outlined (including project management, monitoring and evaluation, and GEDSI mainstreaming) are covered and the team is well structured and available to mobilise quickly. To ensure effective knowledge transfer and capacity building, applicants must demonstrate a strong understanding of Kenyan priorities and delivery context, as well as bringing relevant expertise required. Additional consideration will be given to consortia which include local organisations, women-owned entities, youth-owned entities, and entities owned by people with disabilities.	15
Project Management (15%)	Project management The proposal outlines a clear plan for mobilising the project quickly and effectively. There are robust project management mechanisms to ensure activities stay on track and deliver project results. The applicant provides a clear plan for managing consortia where applicable. The applicant has clearly outlined the key risks associated with delivery with clear plans for mitigating these and an understanding of the likelihood and impact of each. This includes impacts on marginalised/indigenous groups and changing political and security contexts.	10 5

	Environmental sustainability	The applicant has outlined a robust approach to minimising any negative impact on the environment due to this project. For example, through minimising travel, tracking emissions, implementing environmental policies, carbon off-setting etc.	Y/N
Financial (15%)	Budget	The budget is clearly linked to the activities and outputs outlined, with appropriate allocation of time and resources, and costs that appear reasonable for the activities proposed, including sufficient allocation for project management, reporting and data collection to allow for close coordination with UK PACT.	10
	Value for money	The application provides confidence that the project will represent good value for money, including FCDO's Four Es (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity). The Four Es are detailed in the Applicant Handbook .	5

How do we score each criterion?

Score	Description
5 (Excellent)	Demonstrates an expert understanding of the project and proposes excellent and accurate solutions which address all requirements, and which are innovative where appropriate. Responses are excellently tailored to the context in all aspects. The level of detail and quality of information provides the highest degree of confidence in the ability to deliver.
4 (Very Good)	Demonstrates a very good understanding of the topic relating to delivery of the project. Responses are relevantly tailored to the context in the majority of aspects and build very well on the solutions. There is

sufficient detail and quality of information to give a strong level of confidence that they will deliver.

3 (Good)

Demonstrates a good understanding of the topic relating to the delivery of the project. Responses are reasonably tailored to the context for many of the aspects. There is a good level of detail and quality to give a good level of confidence that they will deliver.

2 (Satisfactory)

Demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the topic relating to delivery of the project. Some appetite to tailor to context where required. Provides a limited level of detail and the quality of information provided gives only some level of confidence that they will be able to deliver satisfactorily.

1 (Unsatisfactory)

Demonstrates a poor understanding of the topic relating to delivery of the project. Poor tailoring to the context where this is required. Generally, an unsatisfactory and a low level of quality information and detail, leading to a low level of confidence that they will deliver.

0 (Fail)

Failure to address the material requirements of the project. No tailoring of responses to meet the context. No quality responses providing no confidence that they will deliver.

What to do if you have questions?

Applicants should read these terms of reference in conjunction with the [Applicant Handbook](#) for full details of how to apply. Further questions on the scope of this call for proposals can be addressed to: kenya@ukpact.co.uk. **Clarification questions will be accepted until 19:00 EAT (17:00 GMT+1) on 22nd September 2025 and answers will be published on the Kenya-UK PACT Call for Proposals web page.**

13. Glossary.

Term	Definition
UK PACT	UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions – A UK government-funded programme that provides technical assistance

	and capacity building to support partner countries in accelerating their climate transitions.
NbS (Nature-based Solutions)	Actions that protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems to address societal challenges such as climate change, food security, and disaster risk, while providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits.
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation – A UNFCCC mechanism that incentivizes developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon development.
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion – An approach that ensures equitable participation and benefit-sharing for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups in development processes.
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises – Businesses that play a critical role in economic development and are targeted for support in commercial forestry and agroforestry value chains.
CFAs	Community Forest Associations – Local community-based organizations that manage forest resources under participatory forest management frameworks in Kenya.
KEFRI	Kenya Forestry Research Institute – A national institution mandated to conduct research in forestry and allied natural resources.
Germplasm	Genetic material of plants used for breeding, conservation, and research. In this context, it refers to high-quality tree seeds and seedlings for commercial forestry and agroforestry.
Theory of Change	A comprehensive description of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context, used to guide project design and evaluation.
Value for Money (VfM)	A principle used to assess whether an intervention delivers the best possible outcomes using the least resources, based on the Four Es: economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity.
Inception Phase	The initial period of project implementation (typically one month) during which detailed planning, stakeholder engagement, and refinement of deliverables and workplans take place.
Call for Proposals (CfP)	A formal invitation for eligible organizations to submit project proposals for funding under a specific thematic area or programme.
15 billion Tree Campaign	A Government of Kenya initiative aiming to restore 5.1 million hectares of degraded land and achieve 30% national tree cover by 2050.

UK PACT

www.ukpact.co.uk

For any enquiries, please get in touch via email at communications@ukpact.co.uk