Terms of Reference: GCF Project Expert

April 2026

ABOUT THE NDC PARTNERSHIP

The NDC Partnership is a global coalition, bringing together more than 260 members, including more than 140 countries, developed and developing, and more than 110 institutions to deliver on ambitious climate action that helps achieve the Paris Agreement and drive sustainable development. Governments identify their NDC implementation priorities and the type of support that is needed to translate them into actionable policies and programs. Based on these requests, the membership offers a tailored package of expertise, technical assistance, and funding. This collaborative response provides developing countries with efficient access to a wide range of resources to adapt to and mitigate climate change and foster more equitable and sustainable development. The NDC Partnership Support Unit (SU) is jointly hosted by the World Resources Institute (WRI), the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the UN Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC). For this project, the consultant will be contracted through WRI.

BACKGROUND

Developing countries face significant challenges in accessing finance at scale to advance their climate goals. While dedicated climate funds like the GCF exist, the process to identify needs, prioritize projects, submit proposals and access funds is long and complex. These challenges are exacerbated for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), who often have limited capacity to devote to these processes.

An artificial intelligence (AI)-powered tool, developed with buy-in from prospective user countries and technical support from a leading technology company, will simplify and accelerate the proposal process, reducing administrative overhead, improving proposal quality, and increasing access to climate finance for those who need it most. This tool will directly support LDCs, SIDS, and other vulnerable countries in accessing urgently needed finance for prioritized mitigation, adaptation and crosscutting climate projects.

By acting as a bridge between vital projects and funding systems, this tool will empower countries to unlock resources and drive transformational change. We call it Project Ponte, or “bridge” in Portuguese.

The project is being co-developed by the NDC Partnership Support Unit, the World Resources Institute Data Lab, and the Netherlands. Technical development of the AI tool will be carried out through the WRI Product Studio process. Country and partner stakeholder engagement will be managed by the NDC Partnership Support Unit through this consultancy.

The Support Unit seeks a consultant with extensive GCF project development experience to help guide the tool's design and applicability to GCF Investment Criteria requirements and support the user outreach and testing of the AI tool.

SCOPE OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES

This consultancy covers the following scope of work:

Activities

- Negotiate and document data access and security measures with the GCF Secretariat, ensuring compliance with relevant data classification and handling requirements.
    - Provide document reviews or prepare related documentation summaries, as needed.

- Based on careful review of the project objectives, advise on and collect all GCF documentation required to inform the development of the AI tool (e.g. Investment Criteria, Board approved projects, etc.), and clean, reformat, and sort the documentation for use, as needed.

- Provide expert guidance on GCF requirements and processes, with a focus on supporting integration of GCF Investment Criteria and examples of well-structured, previously approved, GCF Concept Notes into the tool design
    - Flag risks where tool outputs could generate misleading or noncompliant guidance and support the overall tool iteration process.

- Coordinate with the WRI Data Lab technical team to ensure all data inputs are clear and accessible for integration into the AI tool.

- Develop clear and practical use cases for the AI tool to guide development and testing, this could include, for instance, developing questions to guide the user testing group in their review.

- Lead virtual stakeholder engagement with LDCs/SIDS and partners coordinated through the user testing group, including supporting the WRI Data Lab technical team in integrating user feedback.

- Clear communication of timelines and expectations to guide user testing group members on their engagement in the project.

- Stakeholder interviews on common user challenges to inform product requirements.
    - User testing and qualitative feedback on core tool features.
    - Technical evaluations to validate that the tool's outputs are accurate, appropriately calibrated to GCF Concept Note standards, and fit for use by country users.

- Support virtual presentations of prototype results to partner audiences.

Deliverables

Specific deliverables include:

Deliverables	Deadline
Develop a GCF data access agreement (approximately 3-5 pages in length). ▪ The Expert will engage with GCF Secretariate representatives as part of the data access agreement workstream. ▪ Development of the document will include initial drafting of the agreement, incorporating feedback from the wider project team, and document finalization.	June 2026
Develop a guidance document (approximately 5-10 pages in length) with recommendations for how the WRI Data Lab technical team can integrate GCF Investment Criteria and Concept Note best practices into the prototype AI tool. ▪ This will require desktop review and research and direct discussions with GCF representatives and the project team. ▪ Lead the drafting of the initial guidance document, circulate with the wider project team and the GCF Secretariate representatives for comment and feedback, and incorporate feedback into a final deliverable. ▪ Consolidate and clean all documentation required to inform the AI tool's backend (e.g. GCF Investment Criteria, board approved projects, etc.)	July 2026
AI Tool testing, evaluation of results, and continuous improvements ▪ Following finalization of the guidance document, the Expert will support the WRI Data Lab technical team on implementing guidance and recommendations and will review interim results to assess the tool's efficacy and provide continued guidance as the tool is tested. A short status report summarizing the testing results (no more than 5 pages in length) should be delivered.	October 2026
Final summary report (approximately 5 pages in length) on completion of Lead activities and responsibilities and PPT deck. ▪ Along with a final summary of deliverables and stakeholder engagement support, the report should include a list of high-level recommendations for future updates of the tool such that it remains applicable to evolving GCF Concept Note criteria. ▪ Short PPT (max 15 slides) to present the tool as part of its launch.	November 2026

CONTRACT TERMS

Timeframe and Duty Station

This is a home-based consultancy position. The expected working hours should overlap with US Eastern time zone, with flexibility to operate in additional time zones on an as-needed basis, including for user group consultations and collaboration with South Korea-based GCF representatives. The expected start date is May 25, 2026. There is no expectation of travel for this position.

Reporting Requirements

The GCF Project Expert will work under the direct supervision of the NDC Partnership Support Unit Climate Finance Associate and will work in close collaboration with NDC Partnership Support Unit and WRI Data Lab staff.

QUALIFICATIONS

Academic and Professional Requirements

- Advanced degree in public policy (climate/environment), economics, public finance, sustainable development, or a similar field;
- At least 5 years of experience in climate/environment and sustainable development in LDCs and/or SIDS;
- At least 2 years of experience in developing adaptation, mitigation, and crosscutting GCF project Concept Notes and Funding Proposals in LDCs and/or SIDS, including supporting/leading project design in alignment with the six GCF project investment criteria;
- Positive track record in mobilizing GCF funds;
- Demonstrable experience working directly with GCF Direct Access Entities in LDCs and/or SIDS, including stakeholder engagement;
- Demonstrated skills in managing and aligning diverse groups of stakeholders, including development agencies, non-state actors / civil society, financial institutions, the private sector, and others;
- Excellent writing, editing, digital, and oral communication skills;
- Experience with the application, design and/or testing of AI tools and development of climate-related databases a plus;
- Proficiency in English.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Evaluation Criteria

The following elements will be the primary considerations in evaluating all proposals submitted in response to this TOR:

- Completion of all required elements;
    - CV
    - Short proposal demonstrating how the candidate is well suited to deliver the activities above (max 5 pages)
    - Daily remuneration expectation (in USD)

    - Conflict of Interest Declaration (form available further below)
- The extent to which the consultant's proposal fulfills WRI's stated requirements as set out in the TOR;
- Debarment and sanctions – WRI will not consider proposals from consultants that are presently debarred by the U.S. government or named on any restricted parties lists;
- Sustainability – WRI values sustainability and all other factors being equal, will favor a proposal to more sustainably perform the work.

The applicant offering the best overall value will be selected. For this procurement, the price aspect is considered to be of equal importance to the non-price aspect.

Selection Process

No application/proposal development costs shall be charged to WRI / all expenses are to be borne by the bidders. WRI may award to the bidder offering best value without discussion. However, WRI reserves the right to seek bidder clarifications and to negotiate with those bidders deemed to be within a competitive range.

WRI may, at its discretion and without explanation to the prospective consultants, choose to discontinue this TOR without obligation to such prospective consultants, or make multiple awards under this TOR. Contracts will not be awarded to consultants debarred by the US government or named on restricted parties lists.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please submit a complete application package including Cover Letter, CV, and the completed Conflict of Interest Declaration (see Annex) with the subject '**Project Ponte – GCF Project Expert Application**' to

- Max Russer, Climate Finance Associate, NDC Partnership Support Unit: max.russer@ndcpartnership.org
- Ryan O'Connor, Knowledge Tools Analyst, NDC Partnership Support Unit: Ryan.OConnor@ndcpartnership.org
- Molly McGregor, Head of Knowledge Management, NDC Partnership Support Unit: Molly.McGregor@ndcpartnership.org

All proposals must be received **by 5:00pm EDT on May 1, 2026** in electronic format to the contacts listed above.

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Conflict of Interest Declaration

World Resources Institute (WRI) policy requires that its staff **must** work to deliberately avoid actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest related to procurement at both the individual and organizational levels. When a conflict of interest concerning WRI procurement exists, transparency shall be the guiding principle in addressing it.

All actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest **must** be declared.

An **actual** conflict of interest occurs when a decision or action would be compromised without taking appropriate action to eliminate the conflict, such as when:

- An offeror is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to WRI due to competing duties or loyalties;
- An offeror's objectivity in carrying out the requested services is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties;
- An offeror has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors.
- An offeror has an existing personal relationship with WRI staff or a member of the evaluation team for this request for proposals.

A **potential** conflict of interest is where such a situation as described above could arise in the future.

A **perceived** conflict of interest is any situation in which a reasonable third party would conclude that conflicting duties or loyalties exist.

Offeror's Name or Company/Organization Name:

_____

☐ There are no entities or persons with which the above-named offeror has a relationship that *creates, or appears to create,* a conflict of interest with the work that is requested in this request for proposals.

☐ The following is a list of entities or persons with which the above-named firm has relationships that create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this request for proposals. For each entity listed below you must discuss the actual, potential or perceived conflict in a separate attachment.

No.	Name of Entity/Person	Relationship
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Authorized Representative (Print Name):

_____

Authorized Representative Signature:

_____

Date:

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