



Business Support Facility for Resilient Agricultural Value Chains

Market-Oriented Value Chains for Jobs and Growth
in the ECOWAS Region (MOVE-ComCashew)

Cashew Research Grant Guidelines for Call for Applications

July 2024

Implemented by



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List of Abbreviations

ABF	Agri-Business Facility for Africa
ATVET	Agricultural technical and vocational education and training institutions
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBS	Cooperative Business School
CA	Conservative Agriculture
CC	Climate change
ComCashew	Competitive Cashew Initiative
EC	Evaluation Committee
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EU-INTPA	European Commission – International Partnerships
FBS	Farmer Business School
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GHG	Green House Gas
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KPI	Key performance indicators
LCU	Local currency unit
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOVE	Market Oriented Value chains for jobs and growth in the ECOWAS Region
MSME	Micro, small, and medium enterprises
OACPS	Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States
RCN	Raw Cashew Nut
VC	Value chain

Section 1: Introduction

Are you involved in any research activity within the cashew sector? Are you in a member state of the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS). Are you from a public research institution or entity with a high interest in sustainability, biodiversity, climate resilience, cashew production systems, as well as local cashew processing and value addition?

Do you have an **innovative research idea** that makes the cashew value chain more productive, sustainable, and climate friendly? This also includes innovations for new product development and value additions.

Does your organization need support for its research activities on cashew with multi-stakeholder approaches through the mobilization of scientific and local knowledge? Do you have consortium partners to collaborate with to foster exchange among researchers and practitioners to share results and build synergies through research proposals?

Then this is a unique opportunity for you to realize your goal!

This document summarizes key steps to follow in applying for the Cashew Research Grant where you may obtain funding to realize your ideas in a better (faster, more efficient, more effective, more sustainable) way and contribute to the resilience of the sector.

Kindly read this guide for more information. Additionally, please ensure to have a close look at the Readiness Programme of the Cashew Research Grant and all related documents that you can find here: <https://www.comcashew.org/matching-grant-fund>.

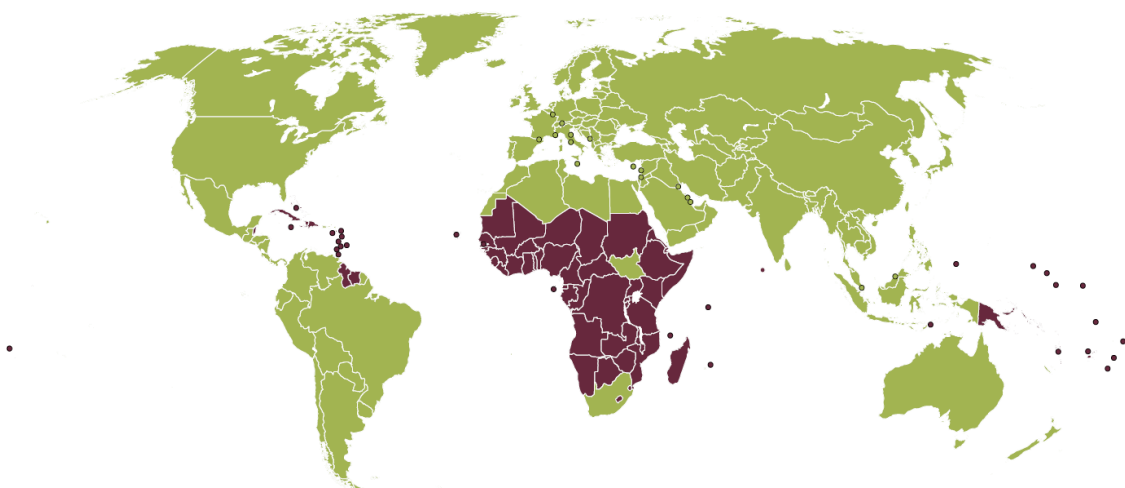


Figure 1: Map of current OACPS member states.

Section 2: Overview of the Cashew Research Grant

This section offers a quick overview of the Cashew Research Grant. For further details on each part, please take your time and go through the document.

Objective of the cashew research grant	<p>The aim of the grant is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ foster South-South Cooperation and collaboration among research entities across OACPS member states ➤ facilitate knowledge and technology transfer across countries through innovative and joint research activities ➤ solve specific research questions/gaps in the cashew value chain.
What do we mean by innovative research idea in the cashew value chain?	<p>Adaptive Research approaches and models, or best-practices developed by public research entities in collaboration with other consortium partners that will support the sustainability of the cashew value chain and value addition</p> <p>The proposals should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) bio-physical science and social science to address the complexity of the innovation processes (ii) multistakeholder approaches to mobilize scientific and local knowledge, foster exchanges among researchers and practitioners to share results and build synergies. Regional and superregional cooperations between research institutions will be prioritized.
Who can apply for the Cashew Research Grant?	<p><u>Lead applicants (public)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research institutions/bodies. • Universities or laboratories • Regional Research Alliances/Consortium • Individuals on behalf of an institution/organization <p>Consortium partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research institutions/bodies. • Universities or laboratories • Regional Research Alliances/Consortium • Individuals on behalf of an institution/organization • International research institutions • Farmer Cooperatives/ producer organizations • Public institutions • Private companies <p>NB: Priority will be given to applicants who apply as a consortium.</p>
Eligibility criteria for the lead applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legally registered public entity with the mandate to enter into binding cooperation agreements. • Experience and expertise in research on Cashew.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of qualified human resources to implement the project. • Capacity to contribute to some budget lines (if possible)
Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed innovative methods with the potential to reduce CO₂ and/or CO₂ equivalents or store CO₂ and/or CO₂ equivalents on the ground in line with internationally recognized standards. • Developed innovations for low emissions and climate resilient agriculture. • Viable projects developed for investments in resilient or climate-smart agribusiness. • Promoted business entities in agriculture, processing, service provision and their professional organizations apply resilient practices. • Shared evidence on professional qualification, policy dialogue and innovations for resilient and lower-emission agribusiness and VC development enhances scaling and South-South Cooperation amongst partners in OACP member states • Best practices and results from professional qualification, and research projects are shared with partners for learning and scaling
Research areas under the Cashew Research Grant	<p>Sustainable Cashew Production Systems- Agroecology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cashew based Agroforestry Systems • Conservation Agriculture • Integrated pest and diseases management systems (bio control measures) • Climate Smart and environmentally friendly GAPs • Water conservation and drip irrigation technics • Diversification and intercropping systems • Soil and plant nutrition (reuse and recycling of crop residues) • biodiversity conservation and habitat management techniques • Carbon credit/ reduction of CO₂ emission • Production and dissemination of high yielding, drought resistant, pest and disease tolerant planting materials • Animal husbandry and cashew production systems <p>Value addition and processing technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing technologies • Economics of processing • Cashew by-products and development of new products • Food safety and nutritional aspects • Marketing and Consumption • Use of renewable energy • Use of cashew shell as source of biofuel • Certification (organic, fairtrade, etc.)
Project duration and size	<p>Maximum of 18 months after contracting. GIZ amount of maximum 125,000 € per research project.</p>

<p>Cashew Research Grant process steps</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of templates and Announcement 2. Official launch of call on 15th July, 2024 3. From 16 -19th July, readiness programme in English, and French for potential applicants will be offered. All information publicly available on the https://www.comcashew.org/matching-grant-fund. 4. Development and submission of full proposals (2 months) 5. Deadline for submission of full proposals latest by 30th September, 12pm GMT (noon). 6. Evaluation of full proposals by Evaluation committee and approval by board 7. Commercial and legal eligibility assessment (KEP) 8. Contracting 9. Implementation, support, M&E cycle, and reporting 10. Audit and closure
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Section 3: Background

Business Support Facility for Resilient Agricultural Value Chains project

The “**Business Support Facility for Resilient Agriculture Value Chains**” is a project to support African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) agricultural value chains’ development, co-financed by the European Union (EU) under the Samoa Agreement with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and by the Federal Ministry of Development and Economic Cooperation (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ.

The project is based on longstanding working experience with the promotion of sustainable agribusiness and value chain (VC) development. Focusing on cashew, cocoa, maize, and livestock value chains, the project aims to contribute to economic and climate resilience of mentioned value chains, as well as food security, increased income, and employment in the 79 OACPS member states under Samoa Agreement.

The project is geared to develop and enhance the capacities of actors along ACP agricultural value chains to attract finance and investment, towards low-emissions and climate resilient practices and value chains through the following outputs:

1. Successful agribusiness training approaches and tools are scaled through self-paced e-learning and blended learning (online and face-to-face formats) for cost-effective capacity development in large scale.
2. Establishment of a competitive Matching Grant Fund (MGF) to
 - Maximize outreach across countries and value chains.
 - Foster excellence and ownership and
 - Mobilize additional resources for implementation. The competitive MGF shall translate the strategic and thematic directions of the component in up to 85 meaningful and cost-effective consortia projects involving private and public actors along VCs.
3. Experience and achievements under Outputs 1 and 2 are valued with partners for learning, for South-South Cooperation, for further scaling and institutionalizing the approaches of the Business Support Facility.

The Business Support Facility for Resilient Agricultural Value Chain project covers the period from 1st March 2023 until 28th February 2027. It is implemented by two projects of the German Development Cooperation, GIZ, namely MOVE ComCashew working in the cashew value chain and the Agri-Business Facility (ABF), working on cocoa, maize, and livestock (sheep, goat, cattle). The current call for research proposals is hosted by MOVE ComCashew.



The Market-Oriented Value Chains for Jobs and Growth in the ECOWAS Region (MOVE-ComCashew)

The Market-Oriented Value Chains for Jobs and Growth in the ECOWAS region (MOVE) project focuses on building resilient cashew and rice value chains to contribute to the creation of jobs and income in West Africa, with ECOWAS as its main political partner. The project is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-financed by the European Union (EU) under the Samoa agreement with the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project is being implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH jointly with numerous private and public partners.

MOVE is implemented in Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal, and represents the merger of two previously well-established regional projects: The Competitive Cashew Initiative (ComCashew) and the Competitive African Rice Initiative (CARI). Both respective brands (ComCashew and CARI) are kept under the umbrella of the MOVE project. MOVE has five (5) main output areas:

Output 1: increasing the share of value added in the ECOWAS region.

Output 2: Enhancing the viability of production systems.

Output 3: Increasing the demand for regional products.

Output 4: Scaling good practices in supply chain development.

Output 5: Strengthening policy advice and public-private cooperation.

Section 4: Guidelines for Cashew Research Grant Applications

Cashew Research Grant and its objective

A financing and partnership tool designed to support innovative research ideas/ projects in the cashew sector that are in line with the Business Support Facility goals and needs in the sector.

The aim of the grant is to

1. Foster South-South Cooperation and collaboration among research entities across OACPS member states.
2. facilitate knowledge and technologies transfer across countries through innovative and joint research ideas
3. to solve specific research tasks/gaps in the cashew value chain.

The outcome/results of the research should be scalable and help in policy formulation.

Who can apply for the Cashew Research Grant?

The cashew research grant consists of a lead applicant (which must be a public entity) and its consortium partners. Individual research entities are also allowed to apply for the grant.

The general idea of the research grant is to create a public good that is supporting the existing network the applicant operates in. This can be achieved through knowledge and innovative technologies production based on open access rules or through capacity strengthening of actors on proven research approaches along the value chain.

Lead applicants (public)

- Research institutions/bodies.
- Universities or laboratories
- Regional Research Alliances/Consortium
- Individuals on behalf of an institution/organization

Consortium partners

- Research institutions/bodies.
- Universities or laboratories
- Regional Research Alliances/Consortium
- Individuals on behalf of an institution/organization
- International research institutions
- Farmer Cooperatives/ producer organizations
- Public institutions
- Private companies

Please note that **lead applicants must come from a public research institution.**

In terms of the requirements for a consortium, all partners must be legally recognized and empowered to enter into binding agreements. It is fundamental **that each consortium consists of at least one national partner.**

To qualify for the grant, a full proposal is to be developed and submitted together with a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that clarifies the roles, governance structures in the consortium, responsibilities, and contributions of each partner for evaluation.

Pre-existing research linkages between consortium partners prior to the Cashew research grant call for proposals should be indicated in the proposal, as it may be beneficial for the application. All cashew research grant consortium partners may make a specified contribution to the project, which can be provided in cash, in kind, or a combination of the two. OACPS member states are eligible for application.

Note: Priority will be given to

- Applicants who apply as a consortium.
- Regional projects (projects implemented in more than 1 country)
- Women and youth led research consortia

Project duration and size

Each Cashew Research Grant project will last up to **18 months** after signing of the contract. A final decision on the duration of the project will be made between GIZ MOVE and the research grant partners during the proposal review stage. You will find details on the stages below (kindly refer to section 5).

The financial contribution from EU INTPA, OACPS and BMZ (further referred to as contribution through GIZ / GIZ-part) for each cashew research grant project will be maximum **125,000 €** for the entire duration of the project, depending on the coverage and proposed impact of the project.

Which Research topics will be supported?

Cashew production plays an important role in the economies of many of OACPS (Organization of African Caribbean and Pacific State) member states. Introduced in most production countries as an afforestation crop, cashew is constantly gaining popularity among farmers and has become overtime a commercial/cash crop with high market demand providing income and employment opportunities for millions of people. However, the sector has faced several challenges including low productivity due to poor farming systems and climate change effects, as well as post-harvest losses and waste along the value chain due to limited local value addition and processing technologies.

Sustainable Cashew Production Systems- Agroecology

Many cashew farmers face the negative effects of climate change in their cashew production systems, but they lack adaptation measures strategies. Erratic rainfall patterns and weather conditions disrupt the flowering and fruiting cycles of the crop, affecting yield and quality. Climate change also alters pest and disease dynamics, complicating efforts to control the proliferation of cashew-related pests and diseases. Increased air humidity can facilitate the spread of fungal infections, such as powdery mildew and anthracnose, causing yield losses. Smallholder cashew farmers are particularly vulnerable to climate change due to lack of access to climate adaptive and sustainable farming practices. They face increased risks of crop failure, income loss, and food insecurity, threatening their livelihood.

Given the current growth of cashew production and the trend towards monoculture with an increased pressure on natural resources (land, biodiversity, etc.) and ecosystem functions, innovative and resilient farming practices that foster diversified sustainable cashew-based farming systems is of particular importance to gain momentum for a resilient cashew landscape.

How could cashew research contribute to generate knowledge, technologies and innovations (based on farmers' innovation identification and characterization and research proposals) to address these challenges?

Research proposals are expected to address the following topics by integrating systemic approaches:

- Diversified cashew based sustainable Agroforestry Systems
- Conservation Agriculture and to manage cashew-based farming systems
- Integrated pest and diseases management systems (bio control measures especially in East Africa)
- Climate Smart and environmentally friendly GAPs
- Water conservation and drip irrigation technics
- Diversification and intercropping systems
- Soil and plant nutrition (reuse and recycling of crop residues)
- Biodiversity conservation and habitat management techniques
- Carbon credit/ reduction of CO² emission
- Exchange, dissemination and adaption of high yielding, drought resistant, pest and disease tolerant planting materials
- Animal husbandry and cashew systems

Local value addition and processing technologies

Despite the growing production levels, the in-country cashew processing remains as low as 10% of the Raw Cashew Nuts in Africa. Meanwhile, promotion of local RCN and by-product processing holds immense potential not only to create employment opportunities in producing countries but also to reduce emissions towards climate mitigation through shortening of supply chains, hence, reducing the carbon footprint from export (by up to 30%). Using cashew nut

shells (estimated to stand at about 16 million EUR with a turnover of EUR 110 / ton as at 2019) as renewable energy could contribute to offset carbon emissions.

Therefore, proposals that could identify, characterize and discuss the innovations developed by SMEs in cashew processing and value addition in producing countries, assess the economic relevance and performances of the main innovations, identify the gaps to be addressed through different mechanism (survey, consultation, etc.); foster exchanges among researchers and practitioners to share results and build synergies, are targeted under this call.

The research proposals are expected to address the following research topics by integrating systemic approaches:

- Processing technologies
- Economics of processing
- Cashew by-products and development of new products
- Food safety and nutritional aspects
- Marketing and Consumption
- Use of renewable energy
- Use of cashew shell as source of biofuel
- Certification (organic, fairtrade, etc.)

The proposals should include (i) bio-physical science and social science to address the complexity of the innovation processes, (ii) multistakeholder approaches to mobilize scientific and local knowledge, foster exchanges among researchers and practitioners to share results and build synergies. Regional and superregional cooperations between research institutions will be prioritized.

General information on the Budget and costs

The budget format is used as basis for settlement. You may create additional files with more detailed information for your own internal use. **All items listed in the budget must be included in the project description to ensure that the project reference is clear.**

The budget table contains formulas that must be retained.

Please keep the two-decimal-place format. We advise rounding up figures to the nearest unit.

Kindly note that costs are agreed at a value of 'up to'. Find [here](#) the budget template for more information.

Cashew Research Grant Project indicators

Research project indicators that fulfil the overall KPI of the Business support facility project mentioned in the overview table will be used to measure the success or failure of the cashew research grant projects. They may include the following:

Climate change (strategy for adaptation and/or mitigation)

- A panel of experts confirms that 60% of supported projects under category innovation successfully reduce CO₂ and/or CO₂ equivalence or store CO₂ and/or CO₂ equivalence on the ground in line with internationally recognized standards.
- Innovations for low emissions and climate resilient agriculture
- Viable projects developed for investments in resilient or climate-smart agribusiness.
- 75% of the promoted business entities in agriculture, processing, service provision, 50% led by women, 50% led by youth) and their professional organizations apply resilient practices.
- Contribution to climate resilience (strategy for adaptation and/or mitigation)

Innovation

- Sustainable cashew production system
- Local value addition and processing technologies

Cross-cutting issues

- Shared evidence on policy dialogue and innovations for resilient and lower-emission agribusiness and VC development enhances scaling and South-South Cooperation amongst partners in ACP countries.
- Best practices and results from research projects are shared with partners for learning and scaling.

It is also important to note that including and empowering women and youth within the value chains is one of the key objectives of the cashew research grant. Applicants should indicate in their proposals if there are women and young people represented in the research team, as this will be looked upon favourably during the selection process.



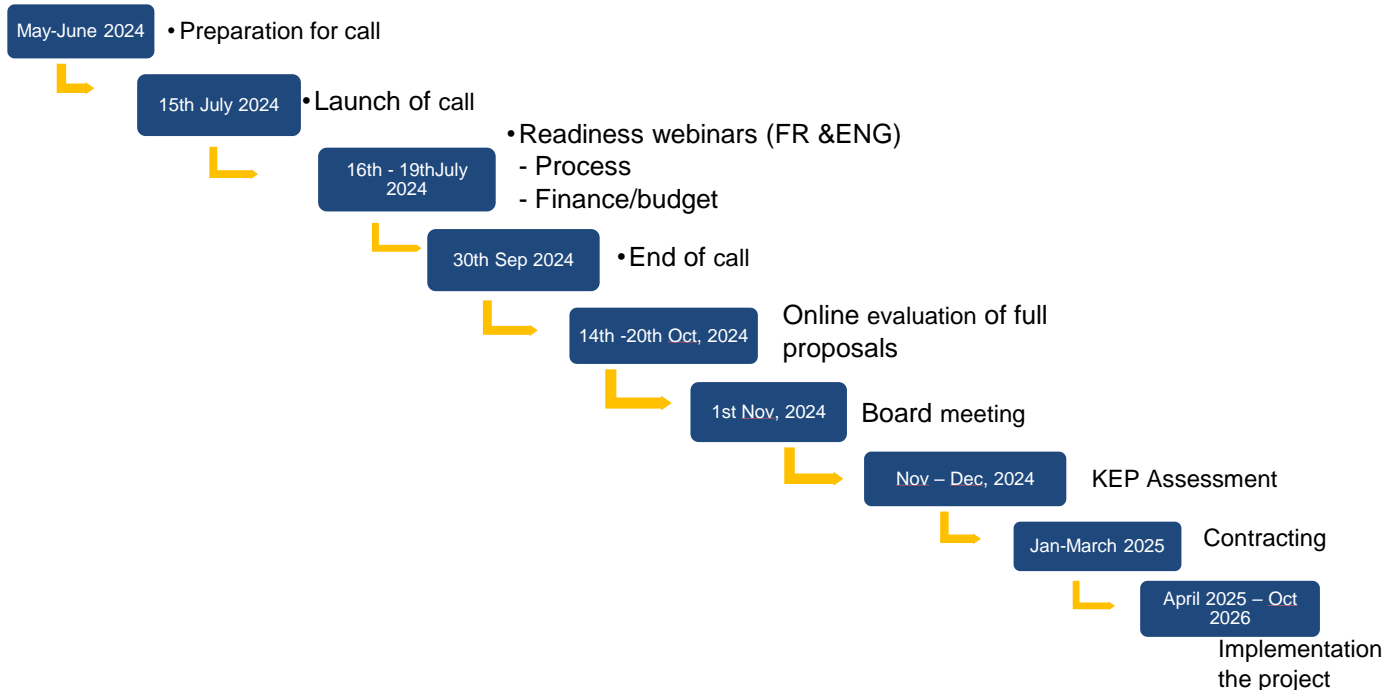
Section 5: Cashew Research Grant Application Process

The Cashew research grant process will commence with a publicized call for full proposals. The call will last for 2 months. Once GIZ MOVE ComCashew receives all completed full proposals, they will be assessed and evaluated by a dedicated, independent evaluation committee.

They will evaluate the full proposals based on pre-validated objective scoring criteria. The final decision on which projects shall be financed would be taken by the Cashew research Grant Board, made up of representatives from OACPS, EU-INTPA, BMZ, GIZ (being the secretary) and chair of the Evaluation committee. Once the final decision has been made on which projects will be supported, the GIZ team will work closely with the selected applicants in refining the project and to ensure the final proposal meets the contracting requirements and technical research grant criteria. Commercial and legal eligibility (KEP) will be conducted for all selected applicants and appropriate contracts will be prepared by GIZ. The current call for the research grant is managed by the GIZ MOVE ComCashew team.

Application Process

1. Timeline for the current call:



Readiness Program: All documents, including this and further detailed guidelines about the Cashew Research Grant application and entire process, will be made available on the MOVE ComCashew and partner websites with the launch of the call. In addition, webinars on the application process will be organized after the launch of the call. Webinar details will be made available on MOVE ComCashew website, partner websites and social media platforms.

Partners will have the opportunity to ask all questions by contacting cashew-research@giz.de during the application process.

Potential research entities and consortia have the chance to submit full proposals that must, however, align with agreed-upon quality and eligibility criteria.

Applicants must hand in a completed full proposal by **September 30, 2024**, to be considered for evaluation and subsequent support through the Cashew Research Grant. The template for full proposal is provided in [Annex 1](#) . A signed Memorandum of Understanding is also expected from all consortia partners ([see Annex 2](#)) .

2. Evaluation of Full proposals:

The received full proposals will be assessed by an independent Evaluation Committee.

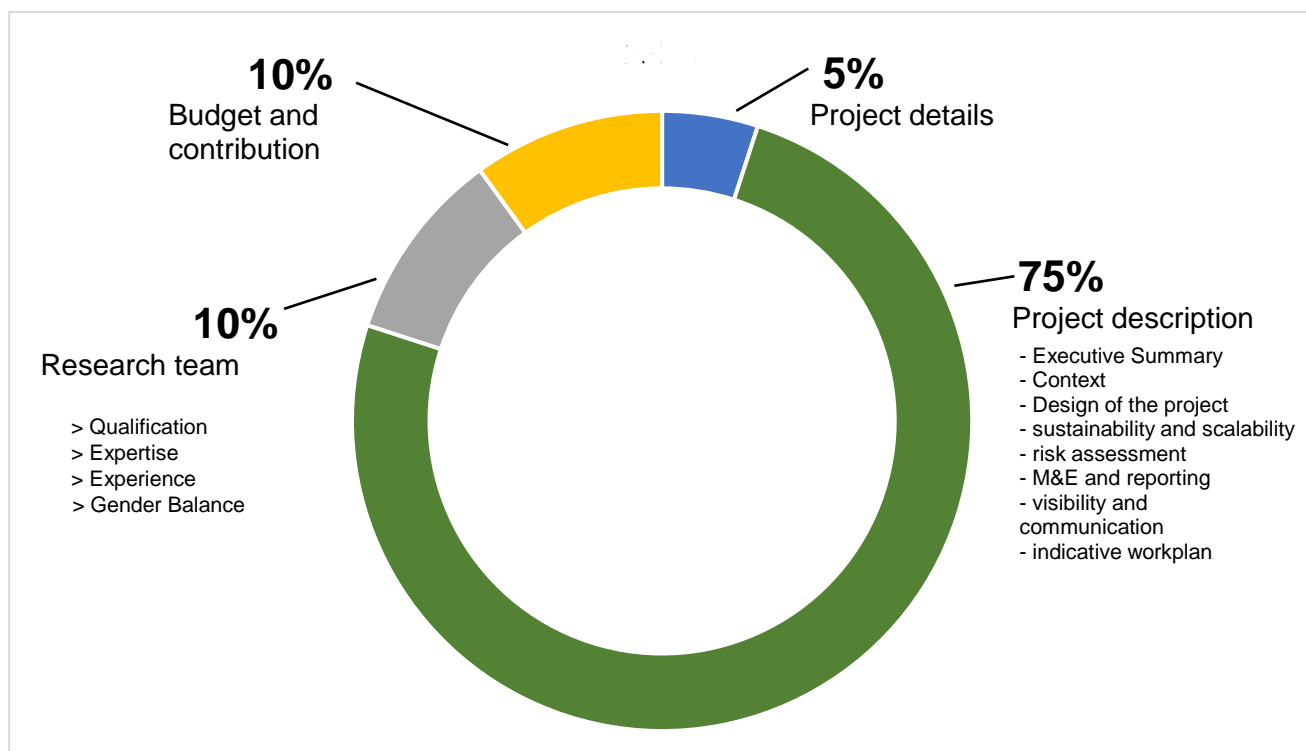
The members of the evaluation committee will come from private entities, governmental

and non-governmental institutions, providing diverse perspectives and expertise to support a fair, impartial, and transparent selection process. The application languages will be English or French.

Scoring systems and assessment protocols are prepared by MOVE ComCashew and validated by the EU and OACPS. The Evaluation Committee will evaluate all Full proposals that are submitted and assign an overall score according to technical criteria. For example, it will be assessed how well each proposed project addresses key challenges. To maximize the chances of your proposed project being selected, please read these guidelines carefully and provide detailed information as required in the full proposal template. Only high scoring Full proposals will be selected.

How will your proposals be assessed?

The full proposals will be assessed based on the following criteria, as included in the template:



- 3. Board Meeting and approval:** The final decision regarding evaluated full proposals will be made by the Cashew research grant board and communicated in writing to all applicants. After the board approval, an external consultant will conduct the commercial and legal eligibility assessment (KEP) for approved projects. The results of the KEP assessment will be communicated to successful applicants.
- 4. Contracting and Implementation:** Following the KEP results, a contract format will be prepared between GIZ MOVE ComCashew and the research entity representing the



consortium. The GIZ MOVE ComCashew finance and administration team will also be in contact with you to explain the nature of the contract and answer any questions. The (lead) research entity shall be legally responsible for the project's implementation and will consult regularly with the GIZ MOVE ComCashew project team, who will be available on an ongoing basis to help. The agreed funding shall subsequently be released to the (lead) research entity to implement the approved activities according to the agreed schedule of disbursement.

In terms of reporting requirements, the lead research entity will be required to provide regular technical and financial reports (bi-annually) that will be focused on the key interventions tied to the constraints that the Research Grant is addressing using the reporting template provided by GIZ MOVE ComCashew. An external audit will need to be performed for all research projects.

At the end of the agreed project period, once the final technical and financial reports are received from the lead research entity and the final external audit report has been submitted, GIZ MOVE ComCashew will formally close the project.

Data Protection

For Cashew research grant applicants, please note that information will only be used internally for the process of partner selection and assessment of proposals and will not be shared without the prior consent of the applicants. Please do not hesitate to contact the GIZ MOVE ComCashew team for further clarification.

Annexes

Annex 1: Full proposal template

Annex 2: Memorandum of understanding template

Annex 3: Excel template for budget and contributions