Frequently Asked Questions

JIF Strategic Objectives

1. **What is the aim of the JIF?**
   The Joint Innovation Fund (JIF) is a catalytic finance mechanism under the **Africa-Europe Digital Innovation Bridge (AEDIB)**. The fund is designed to **accelerate the scaling of digitally enabled, commercially viable innovations** with **strong growth- and cross-border cooperation potential between Africa and Europe**. JIF supports innovation that contributes to the digital and green transition.

2. **What is digital innovation?**
   Digital innovation is the strategic use of modern digital technologies to redefine or create new business processes, products, and services, improve customer experiences, and gain a competitive advantage, often involving automation, new business models, and adaptability to emerging technologies.

3. **What is climate-positive innovation?**
   Climate-positive innovations can demonstrate measurable positive impact in at least one of these categories:
   Reduction of emissions or enhancement of the sinks of greenhouse gases such as CO2 and other areas. (**Mitigation**)
   Reduction of the vulnerability of natural and human systems against actual or expected climate change effects, including multiple and long-term risks, and strengthened capacities of these systems to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from climate-related shocks and stresses. This can also include any other area that is in line with this categorization. (**Adaptation and resilience**)
   Please note that shortlisted candidates will be asked to submit more details on the design, targets and measurement of their impact proposition, including key metrics. A consortia could also **present a credible pathway to doing so through project design and implementation.**

4. **How does the JIF address gender equality?**
   JIF reserves funding to entities with **at least 30% women representation** in leadership or founding roles. We also encourage gender-responsive innovations that benefit or empower women and girls and tackle inequality.

Application process

5. **How do I apply?**
   Applications must be submitted through the official online platform: Joint Innovation Facility
   Call opens on: 10th February
   Call closes on: 30th April 23:59 CET / 1st May 1:59 EAT
   You must first fill the **Pre-Screening Questions and submit some key documents for commercial and operational viability check, if eligible** you will be invited to submit your full proposal. As part of the grant proposal submission, applicants will be required to submit a budget using the provided budget template. Administrative costs must not exceed 15% as per budget guideline to be given as part of grant proposal guideline, while there is no set limit for hardware or capital expenditure. However, it is essential that the budget aligns closely with the proposal, demonstrates clear logic, and adheres to the provided budget guidelines and template.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis; therefore, early submissions are strongly encouraged, as evaluation and selection will be conducted in two main batches. See **timelines schedule.

6. **Submitting more than one application for the same innovation project is prohibited.** We also discourage partners from submitting separate applications for distinct projects. If you choose to apply for more than one project, you must clearly justify your organisation's capacity to manage multiple proposals and demonstrate that sufficient internal resources are available to support them throughout the selection and implementation process.
7. **When should I expect feedback after submitting my application?**
   Due to high numbers of applications, only consortia that are shortlisted will be communicated. If you don't hear from us by 31st May 2026, please consider your application unsuccessful.

8. **What is the geographic scope of eligibility?**
   Applicants must form **a consortium of at least two partners from two different countries,** with the **lead partner being an African entity,** in **partnership with an EU-registered entity.**
   In Europe: The European Partner must be from any of **27 EU member states**. All EU members states are eligible. UK and Switzerland are not eligible.
   In Africa: The lead partner must be a registered entity from 14 priorities countries, which are: **Benin, DRC, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.**

Eligibility

9. Who can apply to the Joint Innovation Fund?

A consortium should consist of:

Lead Partner:
For profit companies which are at least 3 years in operation – These are legal entities formed under state law to conduct business activities with the primary goal of generating profit (small and growing businesses (SGBs) or larger companies).
Entrepreneurship Support Organisation (ESO), or an **Innovation Support Organisation (ISO)** which are at least 3 years in operation – By this we mean legally registered organizations supporting, mentoring, training, and or funding entrepreneurs.

2nd & 3rd Partners:
For profit companies – These are legal entities formed under state law to conduct business activities with the primary goal of generating profit (small and growing businesses (SGBs), or larger companies).
Applied research organisations - These are entities, universities, research centres, nonprofit institutes or government affiliated centres that conduct systematic, problem-oriented research aimed at addressing specific societal, industrial or technological challenges.
Non-profit organizations - A nonprofit organization is an entity that is created and operated for charitable or socially beneficial purposes rather than making a profit.

The consortium must submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or letter of Intent as evidence of their partnership and collaboration detailing clear roles and responsibilities of each partner with a clear objective in terms of new or better product or service, use case or new market, and/or process. The MoU or LoI should be signed by all partners forming the consortium. **The lead partner must be a private-sector venture** (small growing business) and an African registered entity.

The lead partner must have at least **3 years of operational history** and provide audited financial statements **or financial reports for past recent 2 years** that are reviewed or evaluated by an external financial expert and signed off as true reflection of your business financial state.

Selection process

10. **How will winners be selected for grant funding?**
    Applications will be reviewed according to the Eligibility and Selection Criteria. Only shortlisted candidates will be asked to prepare a full grant proposal. More information on the selection process and criteria for grant award will be given at that stage.

Funding

11. **What are the conditions of the funding?**
    Entities need to comply with the standards as stipulated in the Eligibility Criteria as well as the requirements of procurement by GIZ. For more information, please visit: https://project-spark.info/joint-innovation-facility/ GIZ reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant that is not compliant with these rules and regulations.
12. **How much funding is available per project?**
    Selected consortia will receive non-dilutive funding of EUR 100,000 or 200,000, disbursed through a milestone-based grant structure over the period of 1 year. The lead partner is eligible to receive portions of the milestone-based grant, provided they pass due diligence.

    **Please note: For a consortium to apply for EUR 100.000 the lead partner needs to demonstrate revenue generated over the past 6-12months of EUR 50.000 similarly, to apply for EUR 200.000 you need to demonstrate revenue worth EUR 100.000.

13. **What can be funded under the JIF?**

    The JIF aims to provide catalytic capital funding joint innovation projects over the period of 1 year. During the grant proposal stage, applicants will need to submit a full budget. The budget should reflect the strategy mapped out in the grant proposal. The procurement of external consultants and goods can be from outside the EU or Sub-Saharan Africa, but must comply with GIZ general terms and conditions (https://www.giz.de/en/workingwithgiz/procurement.html). The grant will be disbursed using a milestone-based approach. Funding will be released upon successful completion of agreed deliverables tied to each project phase.

14. **Do I need to provide proof of the 20% co-financing, with at least 15% being a cash contribution?**

    Co-financing refers to the portion of the project budget that must be covered by the consortium members themselves. Proof of co-financing is required. At least 15% of the total project cost must be a cash contribution, and a higher co-financing amount is strongly encouraged. This commitment must be documented in a verifiable way such as through a bank statement or other formal financial documentation. (**Note: Further guidance will be provided at the grant proposal stage on acceptable documentation formats will be provided.)**

    Please note that the funds awarded under this grant must be used exclusively for the implementation of the proposed project and **cannot be used as collateral for external loans. Own contribution will the first resources to be utilized when implementation kicks off.

15. **What is expected during the due diligence process?**
    The due diligence assessment will be conducted on the lead partner and any partner receiving JIF funds through the lead partner. Any secondary partner that receives funding as per approved budget will equally be subject to eligibility requirement for due diligence (refer to eligibility criteria).
    Due diligence assessment for consortia, will include all the areas of the eligibility criteria including the following:
    - Financial and operational capacity
    - Governance structures and policies
    - Internal controls and accounting systems

- Risk management practices
- Grant management readiness

The assessment will be aligned with the eligibility criteria to ensure consistency and transparency. Documentation such as registration certificates, policies, team structure, and budget breakdowns will be required. For more information on procurement rules and regulations, please visit: https://www.giz.de/en/workingwithgiz/procurement.html.

Further guidance on DD will be provided for if selected to proceed to DD process.

16. Will the due diligence be required for all the partners, the lead and secondary partners?

If funds are to be forwarded to a secondary partner as part of implementation, this partner will equally be subject to eligibility requirements as the lead partner (refer to eligibility criteria)

17. Can a lead partner be involved in multiple application as lead applicant?

Only one application will be considered per lead applicant.

18. **Are there any terms and conditions applicants must be aware of?**

Yes, all applications must comply with the Terms and Conditions of GIZ.

Applications must be submitted exclusively through the official online portal as provided. Submissions via any other channels will not be accepted. No applications will be accepted after the deadline stated in the call for proposals, regardless of reason.

The FAQs may be updated periodically without prior notice, and applicants are expected to comply with the most current version at the time of application.

Please Note:

For further clarification or specific questions, please contact: jif@giz.de

Please double-check that the email address given is correct and that you whitelist the jif@giz.de email to your service provider to avoid important messages being redirected into a spam folder and regularly check your spam folder or take the necessary measures to ensure any messages coming from the JIF address get flagged as important within your email system.