Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

1. **How do I apply?**
   Applications must be submitted through the official online platform: Joint Innovation Facility Circularity Call

   Call opens on: 2nd November 2026
   Call closes on: 28th Feburary 2027

   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. Pre-screening applications must be submitted by 29th January 2027 at the latest, so that successful applicants have at least two weeks to complete and submit the full grant proposal by 28th February 2027. 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 12% as per budget guideline to be given as part of grant proposal guideline. It is essential that the budget aligns closely with the proposal, demonstrates clear logic, and adheres to the provided budget guidelines and template.

   PLEASE NOTE: Pre-screening applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis; therefore, early submissions are strongly encouraged. See **timelines schedule**.

2. **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.

3. **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.

4. **What is the geographic scope of eligibility?**
   Applicants must form **a consortium of two or three partners,** with the **lead partner being an African for-profit company,** in **partnership with a second partner who must be an EU-registered for-profit company.**
   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 African partner(s) must be from one of the 10 SWITCH-2-CE priority countries, which are: **Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa and Zambia.**

5. **What type of entities are eligible to apply for the JIF Circularity Call?**
   The consortium must be led by an African for-profit company in partnership with an EU for-profit company. A third partner is optional and can be an applied research organisation, a non-profit organisation, a public sector entity, or another for-profit company from the EU or Africa.\

6. **How much funding is available per project?**
   Selected consortia will receive non-dilutive funding of between EUR 100,000 and EUR 200,000, disbursed through a milestone-based grant structure up to end of 2028. The lead partner is eligible to receive portions of the milestone-based grant, provided they pass due diligence.

Strategic Alignment

1. **What is the aim of the JIF Circularity Call?**
   The Joint Innovation Facility (JIF) Circularity Call supports African circular businesses and their European partners to develop or deepen **commercially viable partnerships and joint ventures** that introduce or expand circular business activities. It combines catalytic funding, technical expertise, business partnerships and market connections, and focuses on two priority value chains: **plastic packaging and plastic waste**, and **electronics and e-waste**. The call is a collaboration between Project SPARK and SWITCH-2-CE in East and Southern Africa, combining complementary approaches to strengthen circular businesses and Africa–Europe partnerships. The call falls under **SWITCH-2-CE ESA Financing Facility**, implemented by Expertise France and GIZ on behalf of the European Union. The Facility aims to improve access to and use of financing for circular economy businesses and business models in the region, providing catalytic financial instruments tailored to the needs of different private sector segments

2. **What kind of Africa-Europe collaboration is the call looking for?**
   The call wants to strengthen long-term commercial partnerships between African and EU businesses. Your consortium should have a clear partnership objective, for example jointly improving or extending a product, service or process, entering a new market, or scaling across borders. You should also show the mutual value of the partnership, how local ownership is ensured, and how the partners intend to keep working together after the grant period.

3. **What does circular impact mean for this call?**
   Your project should show clear potential to speed up the transition to a circular economy by reducing the consumption of material resources or extend their lifetime through a circular business model. It should also deliver improvements that go beyond business-as-usual practices in the local market.

4. **Does our solution need to be replicable?**
   Yes. Applicants need to show that the circular solution or business model has clear potential to be replicated in other markets, sectors or contexts.

Partnerships & Teams

1. **Who can apply to the JIF Circularity Call?**

   A consortium should consist of:

   Lead Partner:
   African for-profit company with 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.

   2nd Partner:
   EU for-profit company. These can be more mature start-ups, innovative SMEs or larger companies.

   3rd Partner (optional):
   An **applied research organisation**, a **non-profit organisation**, a **public sector entity**, or a **for-profit company from the EU or Africa**.

   The consortium must submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Letter of Intent (LoI) as evidence of the partnership. It should set out the role of each partner and the intended collaboration, with a clear partnership objective such as jointly improving or extending a product, service or process, entering a new market, or scaling across borders. The MoU or LoI must be signed by at least the lead and second partners. If a third partner is involved, a letter of support is required as a minimum. Existing and new joint ventures can both apply. The lead partner

must have at least **3 years of operation** and provide reviewed and/or audited financial statements **for the past 2 years**, with audited statements preferred.

2. **How does the JIF Circularity Call address gender equality?**
   The JIF Circularity Call prioritises gender responsiveness. **Gender-centred and women-led ventures** are especially encouraged to apply.

Business Model

1. **What kind of business model is the call looking for?**
   The call supports projects that build on an existing, tested solution or business activity and have an established or emerging commercially viable business model. You should also demonstrate a clear market need and enough market potential for the proposed circular economy solution.

2. **What should our growth strategy show?**
   Present a clear strategy and realistic pathways for growth and replication. Where relevant, this includes expanding into markets across borders.

3. **How do we show that the project will last beyond JIF Circularity funding?**
   Explain how the partnership will support the commercial integration or scaling of your circular business activities, and how operations will be sustained once JIF Circularity funding ends.

4. **What are the revenue generation requirements?**
   Any 2nd or 3rd consortium partner receiving funding as a transfer from the African Lead partner must have **generated revenue in the past 12months of at least 50% of the funds requested by JIF Circularity.** For example, if you seek EUR 100,000, you need to have generated at least EUR 50,000 in commercial revenue in the last 12 months. Note: Grant funding is not considered revenue generated.

Circularity

1. **Which circular economy activities are eligible?**
   Your project must address at least one of the following four circular economy activity categories:
   - Circular design and production (upstream approaches)
   - Circular use (midstream approaches)
   - Value recovery (downstream approaches)
   - Circularity enablers, such as virtual marketplaces, digital tools and applications, and data repositories that facilitate circular business activities. Consultancy services are excluded.

   The definitions of these four categories are set out in the Harmonized Circular Economy Finance Guidelines. Please make sure your proposed solution aligns with them.

2. **What do upstream, midstream and downstream approaches mean?**
   Upstream approaches intervene at the design and production stage of a product to prevent waste and reduce resource use at source. This can include design for durability, repair and reuse, material reduction, and the use of recycled inputs.
   Midstream approaches focus on the use phase. They aim to keep products and assets in use for longer or to increase how intensively they are used. Examples include reuse, repair, refurbishment and remanufacturing.
   Downstream approaches deal with products and materials after use or at end of life. This can include collection and sorting, recycling and material recovery.
   The call welcomes all three, with a particular interest in innovative upstream and midstream approaches.

3. **Which value chains does the call focus on?**
   Projects must focus on one of two priority value chains: **plastic packaging and plastic waste**, or **electronics and e-waste**. Your application should clearly show how the project

contributes to circularity within the chosen value chain and which circular economy activities it addresses.

4. **How should we measure the impact of our project?**
   Clearly outline how the impact will be measured, using both qualitative descriptions and quantitative indicators. The project must also not introduce material risks to other environmental or social objectives.

Finance

1. **What can be funded under the JIF Circularity Call?**
   The JIF Circularity Call aims to provide catalytic capital funding to to support the integration or expansion of circular business activities within existing companies and ecosystems, as well as market entry and expansion into new markets in Sub-Saharan Africa and the EU. 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.

2. **Do I need to provide proof of the 50% co-financing, with at least 25% 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. The consortium must commit a minimum co-financing contribution of 50%, including a cash contribution of at least 25%. A higher cash contribution is 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 full grant proposal stage on acceptable documentation formats.)**
   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.

3. **What is expected during the due diligence process?**
   The due diligence assessment will be conducted on the lead partner and any partner (2nd or 3rd partner) receiving JIF Circularity funds through the lead partner. Any EU partner or third consortia partner that receives funding as a transfer from the African Lead partner 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.

4. **Will the due diligence be required for all the partners, the lead and the second or third partner?**
   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).

5. **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.africa/joint-innovation-facility-circularity-call/ GIZ reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant that is not compliant with these rules and regulations.

Others

1. **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.circularity@giz.de

Please double-check that the email address given is correct and that you whitelist the jif.circularity@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.