



The Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda

CCA Cross Regional Connectivity Grants Program

Supporting Commonwealth member states in undertaking cross-regional peer-to-peer learning activities to enhance knowledge, build capacity, and facilitate greater trade and investment.

Frequently Asked Questions

THE BASICS

1. What are the objectives of this grant program?

- A. This program is intended to support Commonwealth member states in undertaking cross-regional peer-to-peer learning activities aimed at enhancing their knowledge, building their capacity, and growing their expertise to facilitate greater trade and investment.

With pandemic-related travel restrictions easing after two years, Commonwealth member states can again benefit from in-person engagement to explore and exchange learnings and best practices in various areas of development.

The program will support Commonwealth member states to deliver such activities, while enabling interventions and engagements that work toward achieving Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda (CCA) objectives of greater cross-Commonwealth connectivity, trade, and investment.

2. Who may apply for a grant?

- A. The program is open to bids from groups of public and private sector entities representing at least two regions of the Commonwealth. The regions of the Commonwealth are Africa; Asia; Caribbean and Americas; Europe; and the Pacific.

Grant recipients will ideally be regional secretariats/organisations with broad Commonwealth membership representation, and which are already institutionally aligned to receive grant funding.

Each bidding group must be led by a single public or private sector entity who will be responsible for delivery of the project. Grant funding will be provided solely to lead entity.

- 3. What sort of agreement with partner/host country is expected?**
- A. Lead entities are expected to have made contact and received agreement from the partner entities in advance of their application for grant funding to ensure viability of proposals. This agreement with receiving/hosting parties must be evidenced in the bidding process.
- 4. How much money can be applied for?**
- A. Individual grants are limited to £25,000 with funds primarily intended to cover transportation, accommodation, in-country logistics and event hosting.
- 5. Are they co-funding requirements for proposals?**
- A. Yes, co-funding contributions of at least 25% of the requested amount are required to ensure effective program delivery, given the limited size of the grants.
- 6. What is the expected duration of project proposals?**
- A. Each project will be expected to be completed within 12 months. Following completion of project activities, beneficiaries are expected to complete and submit an End of Project Report.
- 7. How many grants will be awarded?**
- A. Up to four grant agreements will be awarded this call round, subject to the quality of proposals.
- The intention is for future calls to be opened on an annual basis.
- 8. How many Commonwealth countries may be involved?**
- A. There is no limit to the number of Commonwealth member countries involved in/benefiting from this program. We encourage bids from organisations that represent several Commonwealth countries to maximise the beneficiaries of the program.
- 9. May non-Commonwealth countries be involved?**
- A. Lead entities/applicants must be Commonwealth member countries (list [here](#)) or entities based in Commonwealth member countries.
- Grant funding will only be awarded to Commonwealth member country governments or entities based in Commonwealth member countries.
- International/multilateral organisations whose members include Commonwealth member countries are eligible to apply, though Commonwealth funding must be attributable to expenditure on Commonwealth countries.
- Non-Commonwealth countries can be involved in co-financing arrangements for the project but cannot receive grant funding under this program.

PROJECT AND APPLICATION DETAILS

10. What sort of program activities can be funded?

- A. Project proposals must align with the objectives and initiatives of the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda Action Plan (accessible [here](#)), focusing on one of the following Connectivity Clusters/work programs:
1. Business to Business Connectivity
 2. Digital Connectivity
 3. Physical Connectivity
 4. Regulatory Connectivity
 5. Supply-Side Connectivity

Proposed projects should be designed around peer-to-peer learning exchanges between groups of public and/or private sector representatives from at least two regions of the Commonwealth. The regions of the Commonwealth are Asia; Africa; Caribbean and Americas; Europe and the Pacific.

Examples of activities to foster knowledge exchange and experience sharing may include:

- Visits and meetings between government agencies, businesses, and other organisations to learn how policies and programs are implemented in practice or how mutual trade and investment challenges are addressed.
- Discussions or workshops on trade and investment topics, helping to share experiences and exchange learnings and best practices.
- Social events to build relationships or formalise agreements.

All (100%) grant funding must be dedicated toward proposed project activities and funds are primarily intended to cover transportation, accommodation, in-country logistics and event hosting.

11. What is the application process?

- A. Calls for proposals will be publicly advertised and open for two months. Applications must consist of:
- i A technical proposal, detailing the proposed project
 - ii A budget, detailing how funding will be expended
 - iii Additional supporting documents evidencing project team experience, partner support, and high-level project endorsement.

Each project is expected to be completed within 12 months. Following completion of the project activities, grantees are expected to complete and submit an End of Project Report.

Templates for the technical proposal, budget/financial breakdown and End of Project Report are available on the Program Procurement page ([here](#)).

12. How will proposals be appraised?

- A. Appraisal will be on the basis of six criteria:
 1. Relevance
 2. Impact & Effectiveness
 3. Sustainability
 4. Value for Money
 5. Inclusivity
 6. Regional & Cluster Balance

13. What do we mean by “Relevance”?

- A. The relevance of proposals will be scored against the following criteria:
 1. Does the project fit within an approved policy, strategy or program of work adopted by the proponents?
 2. Is that policy, strategy, or program of work endorsed at the highest relevant level (e.g., an agreed decision of the relevant committee of Ministers at the regional level)?
 3. Is proof of advance contact and commitment to host evident in receiving country/countries at the highest relevant level?
 4. Does the project fit neatly within the objectives in general and the specific initiatives in the Connectivity Action Plan?

14. What do we mean by “Impact & Effectiveness”?

- A. The impact and effectiveness of project proposals will be scored against the following criteria:
 1. What difference will the intervention make to the beneficiaries?
 2. Does the project serve as a possible model for similar interventions by other groups of Commonwealth members?
 3. Why is the Commonwealth best placed to support this intervention?

15. What do we mean by “Sustainability”?

- A. The sustainability of project proposals will be scored against the following criteria:
 - 1. Does the proposal foresee intended project impacts in the medium and long term?
 - 2. How will the project outcomes be taken forward by the beneficiaries in the short term? For e.g. Is there reporting back to the Ministerial/political level responsible for the policy/strategy?
 - 3. In the case of interventions involving the private sector, will private sector stakeholders be expected to explore future collaboration amongst themselves?

16. What do we mean by “Value for Money”?

- A. The value for money of project proposals will be scored against the following criteria:
 - 1. Are the activities cost-efficient?
 - 2. Would an alternative approach deliver the same result for less cost?

17. What do we mean by “Inclusion”?

- A. The inclusion of project proposals will be scored against the following criteria:
 - 1. How does the project address the participation of women or youth in its design and delivery?

18. What do we mean by “Regional & Cluster Balancing”?

- A. The entire package of proposals will be assessed to ensure that there is geographic balance across the different regions of the Commonwealth, as well as balance across the Connectivity Agenda’s five Clusters/work programs.

In this context, this means the collective group of approved proposals will strive for wide geographic coverage among proposals that fulfil the five criteria and touch on the work of as many of the CCA’s five Clusters as possible.

19. What costs are not eligible for grant funding expenditure?

- A. In general, the following categories in this non-exhaustive list are not covered:
 - i Government staff time;
 - ii Work that is part of a government’s usual day-to-day activities;
 - iii Ministerial-level travel;

- iv Excessive and unnecessary travel;
 - v Sub-contracting not identified in the project proposal.
- If you are in doubt, please ask us.

20. What if I don't spend all the money?

- A. Unspent funds need to be returned to us.