



**Contracting Authority:** Southern African Development Community

**SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING UNDER THE  
SADC HIV AND AIDS SPECIAL FUND**

**ROUND IV**

Guidelines  
for grant applicants

Budget; USD 6,000,000.00

Reference: SADC/3/5/2/397

Deadline for submission of concept note and full application: DATE 23<sup>rd</sup>  
JUNE 2025

## NOTICE

This is an open call for proposals, where all documents are submitted together (concept note and full application). In the first instance, only the concept notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the lead applicants who have been pre-selected, the full applications will be evaluated. After the evaluation of the full applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority and the signed 'declaration by the lead applicant' sent together with the full application.

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## **1. *PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING UNDER THE SADC HIV AND AIDS SPECIAL FUND-ROUND IV***

### **1.1. BACKGROUND**

During the Extraordinary Summit held in July 2003 in Maseru, Lesotho, Heads of State and Government approved the establishment of the SADC HIV and AIDS Special Fund. This Fund is part of the Maseru Declaration on HIV and AIDS, which all Heads of State and Government from the 14 Member States of SADC are signatories.

The Fund primarily consist of contributions from MS and other regional and non-regional sources, including the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations, workers and employer's organizations, as well as private philanthropic organizations.

The fundamental principle of the Fund is to create additional resources at the regional level without disrupting or diminishing existing financial flows to individual Member States

The management and administration of the Fund will adhere to strict principles of transparency, accountability, good governance, efficiency in terms of cost and deployment of Funding, as well as professional management in line with SADC's rules and procedures.

The Fund will allocate resources to small projects and initiatives that aim to enhance the capacity, effectiveness, or impact of existing HIV and AIDS programs within Member States.

### ***STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE FUND***

The Steering Committee of the Fund will oversee the management of the fund. It is made up of the Permanent Secretaries of Ministries of Health and Directors of the National Aids Authorities of Member States and SADC Secretariat. The Steering Committee endorse the proposals selected for funding and submits to the Joint Committee of Ministers Health and Ministers Responsible for HIV and AIDS for their approval. The Steering Committee is also responsible for the review of progress reports on the implementation of the projects and provide appropriate guidance.

### ***PRINCIPLES FOR FUNDING***

The Fund will support research projects or intervention projects in HIV and AIDS. Projects submitted for funding consideration must adhere to the following criteria:

- i. Involve a minimum of three SADC Member States (MS). Member States are encouraged to collaborate and develop a joint proposal for funding. Any potential executing agencies, whether governmental or non-governmental, must not have a history of serious professional misconduct as determined by any established authority.
- ii. Be of short-term duration, not exceeding 3 years and not less than 18 months.
- iii. Be simple to undertake and have significant public health benefits
- iv. Be fundamentally of low cost in nature: the cost must not exceed a total amount of USD600,000.00 SADC contribution; Additional funding may be sought from other sources. If a project requires funding beyond USD 600,000.00, there must be evidence that the excess costs will be covered.

While Member States are eligible for funding, they may subcontract executing agencies or other national/regional partners for project implementation.

Prospective beneficiary Member States shall be fully involved from the onset of project development and throughout its execution if the proposal is approved

## **1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES**

The overriding principle of the Fund is that it should result in additionality at the regional level, and in no way should it disturb existing financial flows to individual Member States. Projects research/intervention to be funded shall be within the context of, and contribute to, the priorities as articulated in the Maseru Declaration of 2003, in the SADC HIV and SRHR Strategic Framework. In addition to that the Projects should be also in line with the priorities of the countries where they are expected to be implemented.

**The priorities to be considered are as follow:**

- i. HIV Prevention, with particular focus on Youth (AGYW and ABYM);
- ii. Innovation and use of new technologies in HIV Prevention and Management
- iii. HIV and AIDS treatment particularly focusing on 95:95:95 and 10:10:10 targets and ending AIDS by 2030; (Targeted HIV Case Finding Services with the aim of identifying remaining HIV positive individuals who are not aware of their HIV diagnosis, linking the newly HIV diagnosed individuals to anti-retroviral treatment)
- iv. Mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS and cross cutting issues; including (HIV prevention and sexual violence, Norms and behavior change, GBV and post-GBV care services.)
- v. Capacity Development for effective programming, planning and management of HIV and AIDS integrated responses;
- vi. Community-led monitoring activities by providing service users with information on proper service provision or Service delivery specifically for PLHIV.
- vii. Cross-border projects in selected Cross Border Points: a project to be implemented at Cross Border Points should demonstrate strong engagement from the Government to sustain operations after the project
- viii. Promotion of operational research;
- ix. Support for pooled/joint procurement and local/joint production of medicines.
- x. Any other innovative priority aimed at contributing towards ending AIDS

### **Priority beneficiaries:**

Proposals should target beneficiaries belonging to one or more of the following groups:

- People Living with HIV (PLHIV) or People at High Risk of acquiring HIV
- Key Populations (KP), which include men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, people who inject drugs, and people in prisons and other enclosed settings
- Pregnant and breast-feeding women
- Children, adolescent boys and young men (ABYM), and adolescent girls and young women (AGYW)
- Migrants, refugees, displaced and Mobile populations

The selection of target beneficiaries should be justified by community needs and project activities should directly address the beneficiaries.

### **Illustrative project examples can include (but not limited to):**

- Engage with established networks, clubs, and/or support groups of Positive Living and KP to distribute quality messaging on HIV prevention, care, and support.

- Facilitate community led monitoring activities by providing service users with information on proper service provision.
- Create demand for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) condoms, and other forms of HIV prevention.
- Reduce stigma, discrimination, and GBV toward members of vulnerable groups and people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Create demand for HIV testing reaching boys and men.
- Build capacity and empower communities to sustainably reduce new infections in older women and the spread of HIV
- Educate community members about their rights around HIV-related health services and how to ensure their rights are upheld.
- Educate target beneficiaries on democracy and governance related to the National HIV response.
- Provide peer-counseling approaches to support adolescent HIV care and support.
- Engage local leaders on changing community and social norms that increase risk of HIV infections in AGYW and vulnerable populations.
- Support case management adherence by tracking and tracing people who experience treatment interruption or are not virologically suppressed

### 1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is **USD 6,000,000.00**. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Each project/action will not exceed a **total maximum amount of USD 600,000.00**. This amount will depend on the nature and scale of the proposal.

*Applicants are free to apply for smaller amounts of grants for the Contracting Authority consideration.*

#### a) Size of grants

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

- Minimum percentage: **70 %** of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: **100%** of the total eligible costs of the action

b) The grant may cover the entire eligible costs of the action if this is deemed essential to carry it out. If that is the case, the lead applicant must justify full financing in section 2.1 of Part B of the grant application form. The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. The absence of any justification may lead to the rejection of the application.

## 2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the SADC Procurement and Grants Policy 2019 SADC Procurement and Grants Guidelines of August 2021, which is applicable to the present call (available on the Internet at this address <https://www.sadc.int/procurement-documentshttp://www.sadc.int/opportunities/procurement/sadc-procurement-documentation/>) and in line with the Framework for the Implementation of the SADC HIV and AIDS Special Fund Round 4.

## 2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors:

- The **'lead applicant'**, i.e. the entity submitting the application form (2.1.1),
- if any, its **co-applicant(s)** (**where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as "applicant(s)"**) (2.1.1),
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s). (2.1.2);

(2) the actions:

Actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.4);

(3) the costs:

- types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.5).

<b>2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))</b>
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### Lead applicant

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must:

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profit-making **and**
- be established in a one or more than one SADC Member State **and/or**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action.

(2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in section 2.5.2 of the SADC Guidelines for Procurement and Grants August 2021;

In Part B section 8 of the grant application form ('declaration by the lead applicant'), the lead applicant must declare that the lead applicant himself, the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies) are not in any of these situations.

The lead applicant may act individually if established in one or more SADC Member States, or with co-applicant if not established in a SADC Member State, as follows:

- (i) Eligible applicants must be established in one or more SADC Member States must.
- (ii) The co-applicant shall be responsible for the implementation of a minimum of 35% of the total eligible costs or a minimum of 20% of total eligible costs in the case of two or more co-applicants

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as such in the grant contract. The lead applicant is the main interlocutor of the Contracting Authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

### **Co-applicant(s)**

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself/herself.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Part B section 4 of the grant application form. If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action (together with the lead applicant)

<b>2.1.2. <i>Affiliated entities</i></b>
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The lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) may act with affiliated entity(ies).

**Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant and/or to co-applicant(s):**

Only entities having a structural link with the applicants (i.e. the lead applicant or a co-applicant), in particular a legal or capital link.

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

- (i) Control on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings:

Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:

- Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control.
  - Entities directly or indirectly controlling the applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant.
  - Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the applicant (sister companies).
- (ii) Membership, i.e. the applicant is legally defined as a e.g. network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate, or the applicant participates in the same entity (e.g. network, federation, association) as the proposed affiliated entities.

The structural link shall as a general rule be neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. This means that the link would exist independently of the award of the grant; it should exist before the call for proposals and remain valid after the end of the action.

By way of exception, an entity may be considered as affiliated to an applicant even if it has a structural link specifically established for the sole purpose of the implementation of the action in the case of so-called "sole applicants" or "sole beneficiaries". A sole applicant or a sole beneficiary is a legal entity formed by several entities (a group of entities) which together comply with the criteria for being awarded the grant. For example, an association is formed by its members.

#### 1 What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

- Entities that have entered into a (procurement) contract or subcontract with an applicant, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for an applicant,
- Entities that receive financial support from the applicant,
- Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with an applicant on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,
- Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant contract (unless this consortium agreement leads to the creation of a "sole applicant" as described above).

#### How to verify the existence of the required link with an applicant?

The affiliation resulting from control may in particular be proved on the basis of the consolidated accounts of the group of entities the applicant and its proposed affiliates belong to.

The affiliation resulting from membership may in particular be proved on the basis of the statutes or equivalent act establishing the entity (network, federation, association) which the applicant constitutes or in which the applicant participates.

If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for implementation contracts and financial support to third parties) may be accepted as eligible costs, provided they comply with all the relevant rules already applicable to the beneficiary(ies) under the grant contract.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the lead applicant and the co-applicant(s). They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Part B section 5 of the grant application form.]

<b>2.1.3. Associates and Contractors</b>
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The following entities are not applicants nor affiliated entities and do not have to sign the "mandate for co-applicant(s)" or "affiliated entities' statement":

- Associates

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Part B section 6 — ‘Associates participating in the action’ — of the grant application form.

- Contractors

The beneficiaries and their affiliated entities are permitted to award contracts. Associates or affiliated entity(ies) cannot be also contractors in the project. Contractors are subject to the procurement rules set out in the Procurement rules agreed between the Lead Applicant and the Contractors.

#### ***2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made***

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

#### **Duration**

The initial planned duration of an action may not be less than **18 months nor exceed 36 months**.

#### **Location**

Actions must take place in at least 3 Member States of SADC region.

#### **Types of action**

This grant will support the following types of action:

- HIV Prevention,
- Treatment and care,
- Research on Key and vulnerable population,
- Training and Innovation on health and HIV Financing,
- Cross border intervention and others.

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses.

#### **Types of activity**

Actions which may be financed under this call are applied research related activities including: innovation, technology HIV Prevention , Treatment and care , research on Key and vulnerable population, training , innovation on health and HIV Financing, innovative cross border intervention .

#### **Financial support to third parties<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

Applicants shall not propose financial support to third parties.

### **Visibility**

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicize the fact that the SADC has financed or co-financed the action. As far as possible, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the SADC must incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the SADC support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

Applicants must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the SADC Secretariate financing (see the Communication and Visibility of external actions specified by the SADC Public Relations Unit available by request).

### **Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities**

The lead applicant may not submit more than **two application(s)** under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be awarded more than **two grant(s)** under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not submit more than **2 (two)** application(s) under this call for proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be awarded more than **2 (two)** grant(s) under this call for proposals.

#### ***2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included***

Only 'eligible costs' can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for 'eligible costs'.

The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on any or a combination of the following forms:

1. Actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies).

2. One or more simplified cost options

Simplified cost options may take the form of:

- **unit costs:** covering all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by reference to an amount per unit.
- **lump sums:** covering in global terms all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance.
- **flat-rate financing:** covering specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by applying a percentage fixed ex ante.

The amounts or rates have to be based on estimates using objective data such as statistical data or any other objective means or with reference to certified or auditable historical data of the applicants or the affiliated entity(ies). The methods used to determine the amounts or rates of unit costs, lump sums or flat-rates must comply with the criteria established in Annex E, and especially ensure that the costs correspond fairly to the actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies), are in

line with their accounting practices, no profit is made and the costs are not already covered by other sources of funding (no double funding). Refer to Annex E for directions and a checklist of controls to assess the minimum necessary conditions that provide reasonable assurance for the acceptance of the proposed amounts.

Applicants proposing these forms of reimbursement, must clearly indicate in worksheet no.1 of Annex B, each heading/item of eligible costs concerned by this type of financing, i.e. add the reference in capital letters to "UNIT COST" (per month/flight etc), "LUMPSUM", "FLAT RATE" in the Unit column. (see example in Annex E)

Additionally in Annex B, in the second column of worksheet no.2, "Justification of the estimated costs" per each of the corresponding budget item or heading applicants must:

- describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs, lump sums and/or flat-rates, to which costs they refer, etc.
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount<sup>2</sup>
- identify the beneficiary who will use the simplified cost option (in case of affiliated entity, specify first the beneficiary), in order to verify the maximum amount per each beneficiary (which includes if applicable simplified cost options of its affiliated entity(ies))

At contracting phase, the Contracting Authority decides whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicants, by analysing factual data of grants carried out by the applicants or of similar actions and by performing checks established by Annex E.

The total amount of financing on the basis of **simplified cost options** that can be authorised by the Contracting Authority for any of the applicants individually (including simplified cost options proposed by their own affiliated entities) **cannot exceed USD 30 000** (the indirect costs are not taken into account).

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the Contracting Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of SADC Secretariat co-financing as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

The simplified cost option may also take the form of an apportionment of Field Office's costs. Field Office means a local infrastructure set up in one of the countries where the action is implemented or a nearby country. (Where the action is implemented in several third countries there can be more than one Field Office). That may consist of costs for local office as well as human resources.

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<sup>2</sup> Examples:- for staff costs: number of hours or days of work \* hourly or daily rate pre-set according to the category of personnel concerned;- for travel expenses: distance in km \* pre-set cost of transport per km; number of days \* daily allowance pre-set according to the country;- for specific costs arising from the organization of an event: number of participants at the event \* pre-set total cost per participant etc.

A Field Office may be exclusively dedicated to the action financed (or co-financed) or may be used for other projects implemented in the partner country. When the Field Office is used for other projects, only the portion of capitalised and operating costs which corresponds to the duration of the action and the rate of actual use of the field office for the purpose of the action may be declared as eligible direct costs.

The portion of costs attributable to the action can be declared as actual costs or determined by the beneficiary(ies) on the basis of a simplified allocation method (apportionment).

The method of allocation has to be:

1. Compliant with the beneficiary's usual accounting and management practices and applied in a consistent manner regardless of the source of funding and
2. Based on an objective, fair and reliable allocation keys. (Please refer to Annex F to have examples of acceptable allocation keys).

A description prepared by the entity of the allocation method used to determine Field Office's costs in accordance with the entity's usual cost accounting and management practices and explaining how the method satisfy condition 1 and 2 indicated above, has to be presented in a separate sheet and annexed to the Budget.

The method will be assessed and accepted by the evaluation committee and the Contracting Authority at contracting phase.

At the time of carrying out the expenditure verifications, the auditors may check if the costs reported are compliant with the method described by the beneficiary(ies) and accepted by the Contracting Authority.

Adequate record and documentation must be kept by the beneficiary(ies) to prove the compliance of the simplified allocation method used with the conditions set out above. Upon request of the beneficiary(ies), this compliance can be assessed and approved ex-ante by an independent external auditor. In such a case, the simplified allocation method will be automatically accepted by the evaluation committee and it will not be challenged ex post.

When costs are declared on the basis of such allocation method the amount charged to the action is to be indicated in the column "TOTAL COSTS" and the mention "APPORTIONMENT" is to be indicated in the column "units" (under budget heading 1 (Human resources) and 4 (Local Office) of the Budget).

### Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the General Conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex F of the guidelines).

The applicants (and where applicable their affiliated entities) agree that the expenditure verification(s) referred to in Article 15.7 of the General Conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex F of the guidelines) will be carried out by {the Contracting Authority or any external body authorised by the SADC Secretariat.

Salary costs of the personnel of national administrations may be eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the action were not undertaken.

#### Contingency reserve

The budget may include a contingency reserve not exceeding **7%** of the estimated direct eligible costs. It can only be used with the **prior written authorization** of the Contracting Authority.

#### Eligible indirect costs

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total must not exceed 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading in the standard grant contract. The lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the grant contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the Special Conditions of the grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

If any of the applicants or affiliated entity(ies) is in receipt of an operating grant financed by the SADC Secretariat, it may not claim indirect costs on its incurred costs within the proposed budget for the action.

#### Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind mean the provision of goods or services to beneficiaries or affiliated entities free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for beneficiaries or affiliated entities, they are not eligible costs.

Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing

#### Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a SADC Secretariat grant;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred in accordance with Article 7.5 of the General Conditions of the standard grant contract, at the latest at the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- taxes, including VAT, unless the Beneficiary (or, where applicable, its partners) can show it cannot reclaim and the applicable regulations do not exclude coverage of taxes;
- credit to third parties.

#### Disbursement of funds

Financial management of the project shall be within the existing SADC Secretariat institutional financial arrangements. Within the administrative rules, Member States can agree on mechanisms to expedite disbursements of Funds. Disbursements of Funds to the project shall be in tranches such that the first disbursement does not exceed 25% of the total amount of the project Funding. 75% of any previous disbursement must be cleared before the next disbursement is effected. A clear detailed financial and technical report must be submitted as part of the application for any subsequent disbursements, according to the Guidelines of the Implementation of the Projects which will be part and parcel of the agreement to be signed.

## **Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct**

### **a) Absence of conflict of interest**

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application.

### **b) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards**

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

### **Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and sexual abuse:**

SADC applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

### **c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery**

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. SADC reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

### **d) Unusual commercial expenses**

Applications will be rejected or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

Grant beneficiaries found to have paid unusual commercial expenses on projects funded by SADC are liable, depending on the seriousness of the facts observed, to have their contracts terminated or to be permanently excluded from receiving further funds.

### **e) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud**

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If breach of

obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

## **2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW**

### **2.2.2. Application forms**

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the concept note and the full applications in the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A).

Applicants must apply in English.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the concept note or any major inconsistency in the application e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the grant application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

### **2.2.3. Where and how to send applications**

Applications must be submitted in one original version, the complete application form (Part A: concept note and Part B: full application form), budget and logical framework (i.e. the application must not be split into several different files). **The application must be zipped in one folder for easy identification and consideration.**

Where a lead applicant sends several different applications (if allowed to do so by the guidelines of the call), each one has to be sent separately and zipped.

The applications with the name of the organization as a zip folder through a **DRAG AND DROP COLLAB LINK** indicated below (It does not provide automatic reply/ notification after dropping the zip folder)

Applications must be submitted electronically via collab as provided for in section 2.2.3 below

**Lead applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist (section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.**

### **2.2.4. Deadline for submission of applications**

The deadline for the submission of applications **23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025** electronically to the collab link below. Both Concept Note and Full Application should be submitted together zipped to the collab

link provided below on or before the closing date and time at or before **23:59hrs Botswana local time**. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

For submission of Concept note and Full Grant Applications should be done through;

**Collab Link:** <https://collab.sadc.int/s/Z9wQ5BgNBAsrDx7>

**For technical assistance during submission please consult the below emails during working hours (i.e. 7:30 to 16:30 hours) from Monday through Friday for ICT Team to assist.**

#### **2.2.5. Further information about applications**

An information session on this call for proposals will be held on **22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025 at 10.00 hours virtually see link below.**

**Topic: SADC HIV SPECIAL FUND Grant Guidelines information Session- Round IV**  
**Time: 22 MAY, 2025 10:00 AM Harare, Pretoria**

Microsoft Teams Need help?  
Join the meeting now  
Meeting ID: 391 032 475 717  
Passcode: YE6AG2Zx

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than **30<sup>th</sup> May 2025** to the below addresses, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: [tchabwera@sadc.int](mailto:tchabwera@sadc.int) and [mmikuwa@sadc.int](mailto:mmikuwa@sadc.int)  
with a copy to: [lkumboneki@sadc.int](mailto:lkumboneki@sadc.int); and [dtimbo@sadc.int](mailto:dtimbo@sadc.int)

The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies to clarifications will be given no later than **6<sup>th</sup> June 2025 16.00hours**. Closing day for receiving application shall be **23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 at or before 23.59 hours Botswana local time**.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the SADC Secretariat website. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

### **2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS**

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

- Selection and awards of grants under this support (SADC HIV FUND) will follow rules and procedures as outlined in the SADC Procurement and Grants Policy 2019 and SADC Procurement and Grants Guidelines 2021. In case of discrepancy between the two, the provisions within the Policy prevail,
- If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

# **(1) STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION**

During the opening and administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in section 7 of Part B of the grant application form. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Part A of the grant application form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

## **Scores**

<b>1. Relevance of the action</b>	<b>Sub-score</b>	<b>30</b>
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals?*	5x2**	
1.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or region(s) is the proposal (including synergy with other initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5x2**	
1.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4 Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as environmental issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, or innovation and best practices and the other additional elements indicated under 1.2. of the guidelines for applicants?	5	
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	<b>Sub-score</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action?  In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders?	5x2**	
2.2 Is the action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results?	5x2**	

**TOTAL SCORE**

**50**

\* Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses more than one priority as indicated in Section 1.2 (objectives of the programme) of these guidelines.

\*\*these scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Once all concept notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

**Firstly, only the concept notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.**

Secondly, the number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to 300% of the available budget for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the Contracting Authority will send letters to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation.

The evaluation committee will then proceed with the lead applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

## (2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the full application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The full applications that pass this check will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

**The selection criteria** help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and any affiliated entity(ies).
- **Applications that did not receive a minimum of 65 points will not be considered further**

**The award criteria** help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximize the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

*Scoring:*

The evaluation grid is divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

## Evaluation Grid

Section	Maximum Score
<b>1. Financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient experience of project management?	5
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
<b>2. Relevance of the action</b>	<b>30</b>
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	30
<b>3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2 Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
3.3 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action? Is any evaluation planned?	5
3.4 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
<b>4. Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
4.2 Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects? (Including scope for replication, extension and information sharing.)	5
4.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?: - financially ( <i>how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?</i> ) - institutionally ( <i>will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?</i> ) - at policy level (where applicable) ( <i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc?</i> ) - environmentally (if applicable) ( <i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i> )	5
<b>5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5
5.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5x2**

<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>
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If the total score for section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected

*Provisional selection*

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

### **(3) STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITY(IES)**

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority (see section 2.4). It will only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

- The declaration by the lead applicant (section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants and the affiliated entity(ies) will be verified according to the criteria set out in sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

## 2.4. SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

A lead applicant whose application has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by the Contracting Authority. It will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the lead applicant, (if any) of the co-applicant(s) and (if any) of their affiliated entity(ies)<sup>3</sup>:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity<sup>4</sup>. Where the Contracting Authority has recognized the lead applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, it should be submitted, instead of the statutes or articles of association, a copy of the document proving their eligibility in a former call (e.g. a copy of the Special Conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime<sup>5</sup>. This obligation does not apply to Member States which have signed a framework agreement with the SADC Secretariat.
2. For action grants exceeding USD 300 000 and for operating grants above USD 200 000, the lead applicant must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by SADC or National Law. That report shall certify the accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available. In all other cases, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available.

This requirement shall apply only to the first application made by a beneficiary to an authorising officer responsible in any one financial year.

3. The external audit report is not required from (if any) the co-applicant(s)) or affiliated entities.
4. A copy of the lead applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed)<sup>6</sup>. A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies)).
5. Legal entity sheet (see Annex G of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead applicant and (if any) by each co-applicant), accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the contracting authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.
6. A financial identification form of the lead applicant (not from co-applicant(s)) conforming to the model attached as Annex H of these guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be located in the country where the lead applicant is established.

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<sup>3</sup> The Contracting Authority may decide not to request supporting documents for applications for a grant not exceeding USD 60 000.

<sup>4</sup> Where the lead applicant and/or a co-applicant(s) and or an affiliated entity(ies) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided.

<sup>5</sup> To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

<sup>6</sup> This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship or that are in most need in receipt of direct support, nor to public bodies and to international organisations. It does not apply either when the accounts are in practice the same documents as the external audit report already provided pursuant to section 2.4.2.

7. The lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in and sign the declaration on honour certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.5.2 of SADC Procurement and Grants Guidelines August 2021)

The requested supporting documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the SADC Secretariat, a translation into English of the relevant part of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of SADC Secretariat other than English, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, into English.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the lead applicant by the Contracting Authority, the application may be rejected.

After verifying the supporting documents, the evaluation committee will make a final recommendation to the Contracting Authority, which will decide on the award of grants.

NB : In the eventuality that the Contracting Authority is not satisfied with the strength, solidity, and guarantee offered by the structural link between one of the applicants and its affiliated entity, it can require the submission of the missing documents allowing for its conversion into co-applicant. If all the missing documents for co-applicants are submitted, and provided all necessary eligibility criteria are fulfilled, the above mentioned entity becomes a co-applicant for all purposes. The lead applicant has to submit the application form revised accordingly. accordingly.

## **2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION**

<b>2.5.1. <i>Content of the decision</i></b>
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The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint.

### 2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2025	10.00 hours
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	16.00 hours
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	6 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	16.00 hours
4. Deadline for submission of open procedures: applications	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2025	23.59 hours Botswana local time
5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	16.00 hours
6. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)	18 <sup>th</sup> August 2025	16.00 hours
7. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	16.00 hours
8 Contract signature	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	16.00 hours

All times are in the time zone of the country of the Contracting Authority.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3, and 4) and may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the SADC Secretariat website.

### 2.6. CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AFTER THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract (see Annex F of these guidelines). By signing the grant application form (Annex A of these guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract.

#### Subcontracting/secondary procurement

Where implementation of the action requires the beneficiary(ies) and its affiliated entity(ies) (if any) to award procurement contracts, those contracts must be awarded in accordance with article 6 of the Special Conditions of contract to the standard grant contract.

**3.**

#### **4. LIST OF ANNEXES**

##### **DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED**

Annex A: Grant Application Form (Word format)

Annex B: Budget (Excel format)

Annex C: Logical Framework (Excel format)

##### **DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION<sup>7</sup>**

Annex D: Daily allowance rates (Per diem)

Annex E: Guidelines and Checklist for assessing Budget.

Annex F: Standard Grant Contract

- Annex II: general conditions
- Annex IV: standard request for payment
- Annex V: model narrative report
- Annex VI: model financial report

[-Annex VII: model report of factual findings and terms of reference for an expenditure verification ]

[-Annex VIII: model financial guarantee]

[-Annex IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets]

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<sup>7</sup> The Contracting Authority must also publish these documents.