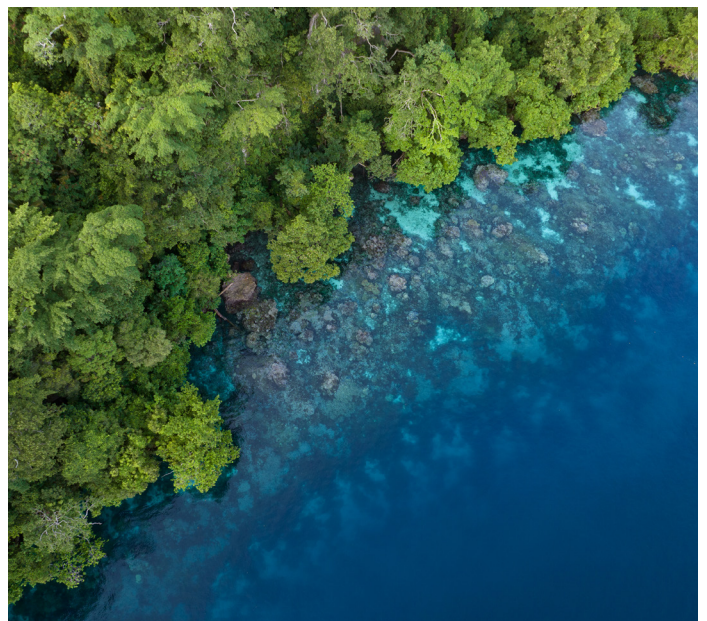**TFCA FINANCING FACILITY**

Third open call for concept notes

Instructions for applicants

DECEMBER 2025

Background

The SADC TFCA Financing Facility (TFCA FF) is a regional financing mechanism established to provide sustainable funding for conservation and management actions in Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Financing Facility was established to become a flexible, responsive, demand and performance driven financing mechanism, with the unique purpose of supporting the establishment and sustainable development of TFCAs. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of the German Government, through KfW Development Bank, provided initial funding for establishment of the TFCA Financing Facility. The long-term vision is for the TFCA Financing Facility to be funded by several international cooperating partners and other innovative financing models to reach an initial resource mobilisation target of EUR 100 million by 2026. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the Project Executing Agency (PEA) for the TFCA Financing Facility through its Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office.

The SADC TFCA FF aims to invest in tangible measures that strengthen ecological connectivity, local economic development, and strengthen institutional capacities of SADC TFCAs. The SADC TFCA FF seeks to address the critical needs for conservation by integrating the three dimensions of "species", "habitat" and "people", and aligning with the overall socio-economic development and regional integration goals of SADC.

€44 MILLION

To date, the German Government through KfW committed a total of €44 million now available for projects in TFCAs.

6TH YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION

The SADC TFCA Financing Facility is currently in its sixth year of implementation-first phase of implementation 2020-2026.
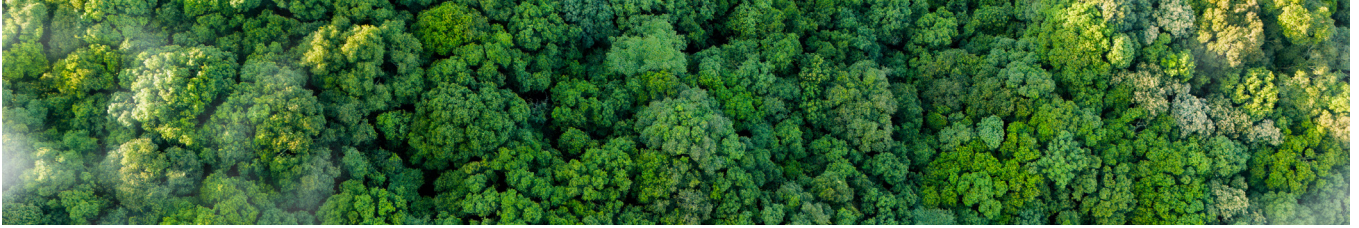
€17,085,334 TO 23 APPROVED PROPOSALS

To date, the TFCA FF has managed to allocate €17,085,334 to 23 approved proposals and a total of 20 grant contracts were signed, which includes the following:

- Covid-19 Emergency Response Grants (11)
- First Open Call (7),
- Second Open Call (1)
- Direct Award to the Gonarezhou National Park (1)

The EU through NaturAfrica, have committed a total of €10 million to the SADC TFCA FF. NaturAfrica is an EU Flagship program in support of biodiversity conservation in Sub-Saharan Africa, implemented through both national and regional projects. The overall objective of the NaturAfrica initiative is to tackle biodiversity loss through restoring and protecting a network of protected areas and high value ecosystems and promoting the sustainable management of surrounding landscapes whilst creating decent incomes and jobs in green sectors for local populations.

The NaturAfrica initiative focuses on Key Landscapes for Conservation and Development (KLCD) through a "three-pillar" approach aiming at (i) increasing the conservation of areas with high biodiversity value and high carbon content/capture, (ii) developing green economy activities by and for the neighbouring local communities and (iii) improving the inclusive governance of these landscapes to promote/improve territorial planning, reduce conflicts and mobilize payments for ecosystem services (such as results-based climate finance schemes, carbon finance, nature-based financing schemes, etc.).

NaturAfrica draws on various sources of funding, through bilateral initiatives financed by the EU or one of its Member States, as well as through a dedicated regional programme focused on cross-border KLCDs in order to consolidate the challenges of joint coordination and management of these areas, which are precious for biodiversity. To date, 13 programmes totalling €250 million are contributing to the implementation of this approach in Southern Africa.

Within the regional programme, which totals €33 million, six (6) TFCAs are targeted, namely: ZIMOZA/LOZAMAP, KAZA, Chimanimani, GLTFCA, Kgalagadi, and MAZA. EU funding also includes institutional support to SADC (channelled through GIZ).

Third Open Call for Proposals

For the first time, the SADC TFCA Financing Facility launches a joint funded approach, under the Third Open Call - a unique approach that has two funding envelopes co-funded by EU NaturAfrica and German Government. This joint initiative aims to fast-track and scale solutions that address pressing conservation and development challenges in SADC TFCAs.

Under this call, the (prerequisite) main grants should aim to scale up green economy solutions that generate sustainable livelihoods while strengthening conservation outcomes in SADC TFCAs, as envisioned in the pillar 2 of NaturAfrica.

Successful applicants will have the opportunity to be considered for up to 100% of match-funding contribution of German Government to scale up the impact.

The complementary package of German Government should consist of actions that are ready for immediate investment that quickly brings scale and adds value to work package one (EU NaturAfrica). The theory of change must be linked to conservation and development in TFCAs. Approval of the German Government package is reliant on the successful EU package.

i. EU NaturAfrica Programme Funding Envelope

A total of EUR 5 700 000 is allocated to the present open Call for Proposals (CfP) under NaturAfrica funding, for the following six KLCDs: ZIMOZA/LOZAMAP, KAZA, Chimanimani, GLTFCA, Kgalagadi, and MAZA.

The grants will range from a minimum of EUR 300 000 to a maximum of EUR 950 000, with at least 10% co-financing required.

A maximum of two (2) grants per TFCA is permitted with an indicative average budget ceiling of EUR 950 000 allocated to each TFCA.

There will be flexibility in allocating funding to the six (6) eligible TFCAs. If no applications are submitted, relating to a given TFCA or if submitted are not approved, the funding will be re-allocated to TFCAs that demonstrate a greater need through the proposals submitted. Applicants are requested to ensure that each application focuses on a single TFCA.

The SADC TFCA FF aims to fund between 6 to 12 EU NaturAfrica grants. The total number of projects will be determined by the responses to the call and implementation arrangements proposed by applicants.

ii. German Government Funding Envelope

Applications selected for a NaturAfrica grant will be given an opportunity to access an additional 100% of match funding from the German Government funding under the SADC TFCA FF.

This additional funding will be provided to scale up the Green Economy projects or support conservation actions that complement the Green Economy package in the same TFCA.

Applicants that seek access to these additional funds will be required to include the respective activities in the concept note and budget, as a clear distinct package.

Objective

This call for proposals aims to boost sustainable green economic activities within African landscapes.

The primary objective is to achieve sustainable economic benefits that contribute to landscape sustainability while enabling the achievement of conservation goals, in alignment with the NaturAfrica approach.

The NaturAfrica funding will focus on developing well-structured value chains and realistic, tested business models that harness the full potential present in African landscapes, creating meaningful economic opportunities that directly support conservation outcomes.

Eligible activities

Selected applications will be those showing the best potential to deliver impact, with an emphasis on market linkages and economic value chains. These activities can be implemented through NGOs and CBOs or incentives to private operators.

The main concerned sectors are expected to be:

Sustainable added value in agriculture
Creating economic opportunities for farmers, workers and communities across the supply chain.

Activities may include:

- Support to agricultural production. Capacity building for smallholder farmers, promotion of best agricultural practices (agroforestry, climate smart agriculture, soil conservation practices to enhance agricultural productivity while preserving the environment),

- Building resilient local food systems that can withstand environmental and economic shocks, e.g., adoption of climate-smart technologies, water efficient irrigation systems, preventing soil erosion and improving watershed management; techniques such as contour ploughing, cover cropping and the construction of check dams can be promoted to enhance water retention and reduce soil degradation.

- Sustainable fisheries, development of sustainable aquaculture, establishment of riparian buffer zones and freshwater protected areas, strengthening of community-based fisheries management for local water bodies, and improvement of fish processing and value addition techniques.

- Non-timber forest and agroforestry products, organic farming and specialty crops, honey and beekeeping, indigenous medicinal plants, etc.

- Market access and value addition: development of market linkages, implementation of post-harvest practices, assistance with certification processes, linking farmers to certified markets for high-value products (timber, fruits, nuts, medicinal plants);

- Specialty crops value chains, e.g., through the development of value chains for indigenous crops, spices, and medicinal plants;

- by providing support for market access, post-harvest handling and the development of sustainable and fair-trade certifications.

Eco-tourism development

Develop nature-based tourism that contributes to conservation and benefits communities.

- In the case of well justified business cases, develop and upgrade eco-friendly tourism facilities, support for the renovation of lodges, campsites and other tourism infrastructure.

- Support the development of nature-based initiatives such as agri-ecotourism (organics farm tours, culinary tours, farm stays, beekeeping/honey tours, agroforestry walks, permaculture workshops, etc.) that integrate agriculture with tourism, creating diversified income sources for local communities.

- Other nature-based tourism activities may involve adventure tourism (hiking trails, wildlife viewing platforms, canopy sightseeing) or cultural tourism (community managed centres, traditional knowledge programmes).

- Support off-grid solutions for local communities and eco-friendly lodges and economic development (agro-processing of raw materials for MSMEs, etc)

- Encourage the adoption of eco-certification standards to promote responsible tourism practices, etc.

- Provide training, mentorship, for entrepreneurs in the region; implement capacity building programmes with international specialised tour operators or international conservation NGOs, for local private operators in ecotourism to leverage private investments and ensure access to the market, promoting an inclusive approach and a diversification of recreational activities involving local communities;

- Support to community-based conservation enterprises and benefit-sharing mechanisms (e.g. CAMPFIRE, conservancies, community-managed tourism ventures).

Sustainable energy

Clean energy solutions that reduce pressure on natural resources and with the aim to create economic opportunities.

- Community-owned and operated sustainable energy systems;
- Maintenance and installation businesses for renewable energy systems;
- Energy solutions for businesses e.g., solar-powered refrigeration for perishable agricultural products;
- Measures to reduce the demand for fuelwood (efficient cookstoves, small biogas digesters, …).

Additional financial resources

Applicants also have the opportunity to propose measures to identify, develop, and mobilise innovative financing mechanisms that support landscape sustainability and economic development.

- Ecosystem services financing, including Payment for Ecosystem Services (e.g., Including biodiversity credits, watershed service payments, and community-level PES schemes); applications to Carbon Credits mechanisms;

- Impact Investment and Blended Finance, to scale proven green economy models;

- Other Financial Innovation mechanisms.

Horizontal measures

Measures needed for an inclusive, conservation compatible and human rights based implementation of the productive activities are also eligible. These may include Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) response and mitigation. Activities can be proposed to prevent and mitigate HWC in the context of agricultural and livestock value chains (e.g., contributions to early warning systems, community education and awareness programmes, fencing and barriers, etc). Support to participatory land-use and resource planning processes strengthening landscape governance are also encouraged.

All proposals shall also ensure community participation and consultation, ensuring meaningful community involvement in all project phases; gender equality and women's empowerment; implement a rights based approach notably in relation to Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Traditional Knowledge, and when applicable, environmental safeguards.
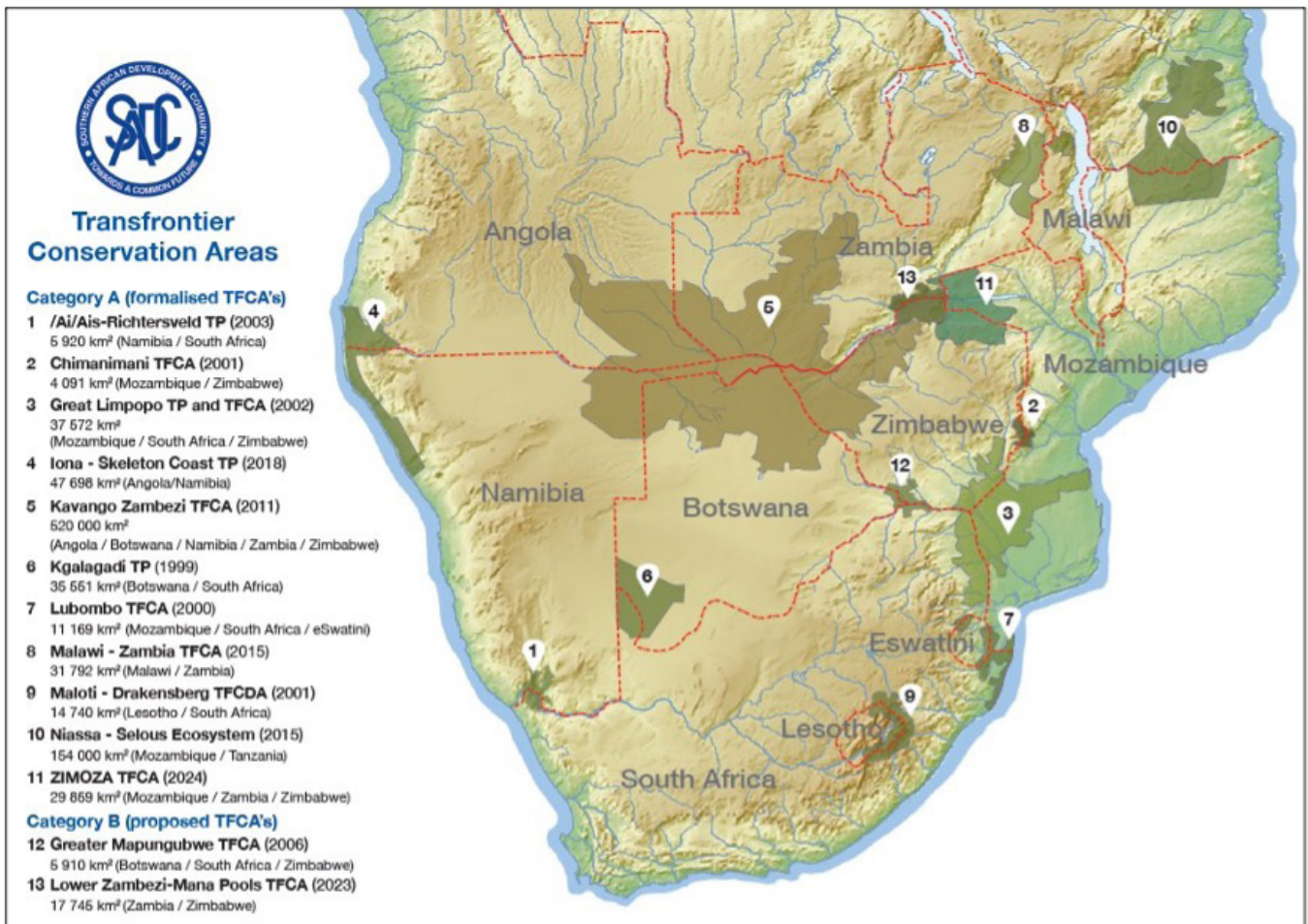
Geographical Scope

According to the SADC TFCAs Programme of 2023-2033, there are now 13 recognised TFCAs in Southern Africa. The present Call for Proposals will support the following 6 TFCAs, as it is primarily based on the EU-NaturAfrica 6 landscapes/TFCAs:

1. Chimanimani TFCA (Mozambique/Zimbabwe)
2. Great Limpopo TP and TFCA (Mozambique/South Africa/Zimbabwe)
3. Kgalagadi TP (Botswana/South Africa)
4. Kavango Zambezi TFCA (Angola/Botswana/Namibia/Zambia/Zimbabwe)
5. Malawi-Zambia TFCA (Malawi-Zambia)
6. ZIMOZA & LOZAMAP TFCAs (Mozambique/Zambia/Zimbabwe)

Guidance for applicants

We are seeking concept notes that demonstrate:

- A clear problem statement, goal, objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities to be undertaken, target area, beneficiaries, institutions involved.

- Prior consultation and endorsement by respective government authority and or local authority where applicable, through a signed letter of endorsement

- Proof of valid registration to operate in respective SADC Member States, and proven experience managing similar projects in the region

- Contribution to the overall goal, outcomes, indicators of the SADC TFCA FF

- Building on existing initiatives / Coordination with landscape grants: applicants are requested to assess and understand the current activities being implemented under ongoing projects in the selected TFCAs. The need for this is to encourage the building of synergies and complementarities where possible, and to avoid duplication of effort and resources. Priority will be given to proposed actions that effectively complement current/foreseen projects in TFCAs including the NaturAfrica landscape actions. The aforementioned will be included in the selection criteria for proposals.

- An analysis of potential environmental and social risks triggered by the project.

- Cost-efficiency of project budget and planned activities

- Applicants to provide co-finance contribution of at least 10%

- All proposals must demonstrate clear value chain development with multiple stakeholders, with a clear need and sufficient market to drive scale; proposed business models must be tested and show clear market potential; provide a clear scaling strategy identifying potential for scaling-up, they should be commercially viable with potential to sustain operations beyond the life of the SADC TFCA FF funding.

- Include CBOs as partners to build their capacities and access to the benefits

- Strong complementarity across the two work packages/envelopes

Duration of Projects

The indicative duration of the proposed actions under the CfP should range from 24 to 36 months.

Eligible entities

SMEs, cooperatives, social enterprises, NGOs, and public or private sector entities that are based or have active operations in the six target TFCAs, with projects that enhance smallholder livelihoods and drive inclusive local development. Projects proposed should be viable, and applicants must have a minimum of 3 years of operational history demonstrating relevant experience and capacity. Private companies are eligible only in cases where they are working in partnership with local communities to enhance community livelihoods in the eligible TFCAs. Experience in implementing similar projects in the proposed sector is highly recommended. Where necessary, partnerships between NGOs, CBOs, private companies and government entities are encouraged.

Ineligible and excluded activities

- Pure academic research for purpose of earning an academic qualification;

- Any physical relocation, resettlement, or displacement of people from their households, communities, territories, customary and ancestral domains;

- Actions/activities that impinge on the lands owned, or claimed under adjudication, by indigenous peoples, without full documented consent of such peoples;

- Any action/activity which could be associated with the destruction or significant impairment of areas particularly worthy of protection such as critical habitat or any forestry project;

- Measures for the promotion of private sector commercial gain without links to community benefits, conservation, and development in a TFCA context;

- Weapons, arms, ammunition and military equipment under support to Human Wildlife Conflict or Law Enforcement activities;

- Procurement or use of any product or activity deemed illegal under host country laws or regulations or international conventions and agreements, or subject to international bans;

- Actions/activities involving harmful or exploitative forms of forced labour/harmful child labour;

- Procurement or use of wood or other forestry products other than from sustainably managed forests.

Logframe guidelines

A logical framework is a planning tool that helps structure a project logically, sets out the objectives of your project, and how they will be measured. It should be clear and concise.

Find below the list of main head fields, definitions and expected content.

OUTCOMES:
the primary results that a project aims to achieve. What will change as a direct result of your project? Example: Enhanced capacity of local communities to manage natural resources sustainably.

OUTPUTS:
Tangible deliverables produced by your activities. The tangible products, goods or services that lead to the achievement of outcomes. Example: 100 ha of land under irrigation; number of land use plans developed.

ACTIVITIES:
Collection of tasks/actions to be carried out to achieve the outputs. Example: Procurement and installation of irrigation equipment; land-use planning workshops.

PROJECT INDICATORS:
Criteria to assess the project's progress at different stages of its lifetime. They are the measures to show that a change has taken place since the baseline data was established.

Indicators should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

Example: Number of community members trained on Problem Animal Control.

SOURCE OF VERIFICATION:
Identify sources of data for each indicator. This refers to the data source that will be used to check that the project has brought about changes. It is usually linked to indicators and specifies where and how the information about the indicator can be obtained.

Example: Training attendance records, project reports, surveys.

How to complete a logical framework?

Applicants will need to review the Logical framework for the 3rd Call (Green Economy), and select indicators that are applicable to their proposed projects. Refer to the grants portal for the Green Economy Logframe.

Applicants can use the template below as a reference:

	Indicator	Baseline (value & reference year)	Target (value & reference year)	Current value* (reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact						
Outcome						
Outputs						
Activities						

If you need to add outcome, insert a new row after the first outcome, provide a well-articulated outcome, and complete the associated fields for this outcome (i.e. output, activity, indicator, etc.).

Please complete the Logframe and submit it as an annexure to your application.

The project indicators are the indicators specific to the project that will be used to evaluate the project's progress over time.

Environmental and Social management System (ESMS)

The SADC TFCA FF aims to integrate environmental and social safeguards throughout the grants management cycle - from project design to implementation and closure. IUCN will screen proposed projects for potential environmental and social risks and make recommendations for mitigation measures. This process is guided by the SADC TFCA FF Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) which provides a systematic procedure to screen projects for potential adverse environmental and social impacts, determination of environmental and social safeguards requirements and implementation of mitigation measures. Its purpose is to ensure that negative impacts are avoided or minimised to the extent possible while positive impacts are promoted, with a strong emphasis on promoting rights-based approaches to conservation and development. The ESMS has four broad Thematic Risk Areas namely:

a) Law enforcement and Human Rights

b) Access restrictions and enforcement of access restrictions

c) Human wildlife conflict/coexistence

d) Construction of infrastructure and other physical interventions

Applicants are required to complete the E&S General Risk Screening Questionnaire and will be required to complete the specific Thematic Risk Area Questionnaires as may be triggered by their specific projects. The grants portal provides access to the ESMS manual for further reference.

How to Apply

Applications to the SADC TFCA FF follow a two-stage process. Applications should be submitted through the SADC TFCA FF Grants Management Portal https://sadctfcaff.praxisgms.co.za. All application templates (i.e. project budget, Logframe, and E&S Risk Questionnaires) are available on the portal. On the grants portal applicants are requested to submit one concept with two work packages; Work Package One – (EU) and Work Package Two (German Government), one budget with two tabs for the different work packages.

Upon approval of the concept notes, successful applicants will be invited to submit full project proposals. Applicants are advised to note that approval of a concept note is only the first step in a two-step application process; and does not automatically lead to the awarding of the grant. Funding will only be awarded once a grant agreement has been signed between IUCN and the grantee. Only applicants with approved concept notes will be invited to submit full project proposals.

IUCN will host a webinar to provide further guidance to applicants on the 16th of January 2026.

Deadline

The deadline for submission of Concept Notes is no later than:

5PM SAST on 31st March 2026.

The grants portal will not receive applications submitted after the set timeline.

Indicative timelines

Launch Call for Concept Notes

28 November 2025

Deadline for Applications

31 March 2026

Concept Notes Reviewed by

30 April 2026

Deadline for Submission of Proposals

14 August 2026

Proposal Development (8 Weeks)

June-August 2026

PSC Approval of Shortlisted Concept Notes

May 2026

Review of Proposals by

30 October 2026

PSC Approval of Proposals

November 2026

Contracting

December 2026

Closure of all 3rd Call Grants

2029

Project Implementation

2027 - 2029