

SouthSouthNorth IKI SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME:

Conserving Biological Diversity in South Africa Through Sustainable Management of Invasive Plants

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (CEI)

OVERVIEW

Funding Period: May 2025 – November 2028
Call Closing Date: 1 May 2026
Location: Cape Limestone Fynbos Ecosystem, Hessequa Municipal region, Western Cape, South Africa
Programme Focus: Innovating financially sustainable models to sustainable alien plant clearing and maintenance, biomass beneficiation and ecosystem restoration that enable local livelihood opportunities

Application Process:

- 1. Expression of Interest (EOI):** Applicants fill out an online form confirming eligibility, and providing organisational information, a brief description of their past/current activities, their proposed contribution under this grant and indicative funds requested. A Q&A session will be held to assist applicants.
- 2. Sandboxing & Co-Design:** Shortlisted applicants participate in a collaborative effort to refine ideas and co-develop full proposals before contracting.

Contact: ikisg@southsouthnorth.org

Grant Categories	Sub Grants	Micro Grants
Grantee Type	Local non-profit organisations (NPOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including Conservancies or community-based organisations (CBOs) (alone or in consortium). Selected organisations will serve as aggregators, that is, coordinating bodies delivering fynbos restoration activities, including invasive alien plant clearing and maintenance, in collaboration with landowners and clearing teams	Value adding registered Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), community-based organisations (CBOs), Cooperatives or Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs). Selected entities will serve as value adding entities undertaking biomass beneficiation or fynbos restoration/ rewilding activities within the project location.
Grants Available	Between 1 and 3 organisations may be selected as aggregators	Between 3 and 5 organisations may be selected as micro-grantees.
Grant Amount	In the region of €100,000 to €200,000 per grant , depending on the scale of ambition and proven institutional capacity	In the region of €50,000 per grant

For more information on the programme please see our [project page](#) and [factsheet](#).

BACKGROUND

SouthSouthNorth (SSN) is pleased to launch the **Call for Expressions of Interest** for the [IKI Small Grants programme](#) in the Hessequa Municipal region, Western Cape, South Africa.

This call invites organisations and enterprises to join a collaborative initiative aimed at improving the long-term sustainability of invasive alien plant management, strengthening local actors and value chains, and supporting the restoration of the Cape Limestone Fynbos ecosystem in the Hessequa Municipal region.

The programme responds to a long-standing challenge: invasive alien plant clearing often happens once-off, is rarely coordinated across landscapes, and is seldom financially viable in the long term. With increasing wildfire risk under a changing climate, sustained clearing, maintenance, and ecological restoration have become critical.

To address this, the programme will pilot an innovative small-grants mechanism that brings together civil society, SMME's, landowners, research institutions and other local actors to develop sustainable models, approaches and livelihood opportunities by building a coordinated ecosystem of actors working toward long-term biodiversity outcomes.

PROGRAMME AIMS

The programme aims to restore biodiversity and reduce wildfire risk by supporting financially sustainable and coordinated approaches to:

- The sustained removal and long-term maintenance (including biological control measures) of woody invasive alien plants such as Rooikraans, Wattle and Eucalyptus ect.
- The beneficiation and productive use of cleared biomass (e.g. fuelwood, chipping, composting, biochar)
- The recovery and rewilding of indigenous fynbos ecosystems (e.g. fynbos nurseries, beekeepers, and other nature/ ecosystem-based activities)

To achieve this, the programme will build a coordinated ecosystem of actors to collaboratively pilot, test and refine innovative models that: support local nature-based livelihoods, strengthen value chains and improve cost-recovery to enable long-term financial sustainability. The aim is to establish a viable revenue and financing model that enables and incentivises alien clearing and biodiversity restoration for landowners. This includes exploring finance and revenue-generating approaches, and various 'discounting' mechanisms (such as tax incentives, market mechanisms, and other income streams) to enhance the viability of alien clearing and biodiversity restoration.

The programme also aims to provide capacity development for grantees; supporting improvements in technical, operational, financial, organisational and institutional capability.

Finally, the programme includes a research and learning component that assesses the viability of approaches and models and produces knowledge products and practical tools to inform best-practice approaches for clearing, maintenance and biodiversity restoration in Cape Limestone Fynbos ecosystems.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDING?

SouthSouthNorth invites Expressions of Interest from locally led NPOs/NGOs (including Conservancies), CBOs and SMMEs in the Hessequa Municipal region that are actively involved in invasive alien plant clearing and maintenance, biomass beneficiation, biodiversity restoration, and ecosystem-based livelihoods in the Cape Limestone fynbos ecosystem.

Grants may be issued to:

- **Sub Grantees:** NPOs/ NGOs (including Conservancies), CBOs (working alone or in partnership with others) with strong local presence, landowner and clearing team relationships acting as “aggregators” (coordinating invasive clearing, maintenance, and ecosystem restoration actors/activities including contracting, collecting and making payments) in the project area.
- **Micro Grantees:** NPOs, NGOs, CBOs, SMME’s or other value adding institutions involved in biomass beneficiation (e.g. fuel wood, biochar, composting) or fynbos rewilding/ ecosystem-based restoration activities (fynbos nurseries, beekeepers etc)

The programme is committed to supporting equitable access to grant opportunities. We particularly welcome applications from locally rooted, women or youth-led organisations, as well as community-based organisations and enterprises led by (or directly benefitting) historically marginalised communities within the target landscape.

HOW THE GRANT PROCESS WORKS

This Call for Expressions of Interest is designed as a **low barrier entry point**; enabling SSN to identify eligible actors and complete an ideation phase before concluding definitive grant agreements. The process is collaborative and supportive, helping applicants refine their concepts with access to each other and to external technical, ecological, business and field expertise.

1. Expression of Interest (EOI)

Applicants fill in an online form, including:

- Basic **organisational information**
- Confirmation of **eligibility**, meeting **minimum due diligence** requirements and complying with **exclusion criteria**
- A brief **narrative description** of their **current and past work**
- A brief description of their envisaged **contribution to the programme aims**
- A brief description of **unique relationships, ways of working or experience** they bring to the programme

- A brief description of **innovative ideas** (including options for cost recovery) that they bring to the programme
- Applicants are required to submit an **indicative (rough) budget** at EOI stage via email, aligned with their proposed contribution to the programme aims and innovation ideas. This should include the estimated **total grant amount requested**, together with a high-level breakdown of **Internal Operational Expenses** (staff and other costs), **External Operational Expenses** (3rd party service contracts), and **Capital Expenditure** (equipment, tools, infrastructure). The high level budget can also include the value and description of any 'own resources' including any **Co-finance** (financial/cash contributions and in-kind contributions) you bring. The budget template can be downloaded [here](#).

A detailed line-item budget will only be developed with shortlisted applicants at the full proposal stage. The final budget agreed to and contracted after successful selection and full proposal development may be higher or lower than the indicative budget prepared and will take into account changes to activities and expenses during the proposal development phase.

The EOI stage is intentionally light. Applicants will be screened on:

- **Eligibility** and **exclusion criteria**
- **Organisational** and **financial readiness**
- An **evaluation of their contribution to the programme aims** (against that of other applicants)

Submission of this form and pre-selection into the Sandbox Phase does not constitute approval or guarantee funding. Funding will only be guaranteed following the sandbox process, due diligence checks, and once a definitive grant agreement has been concluded.

2. Shortlisting & Sandbox Phase

Selected applicants participate in a **mandatory, non-competitive ideation phase** to collaboratively strengthen project concepts before full proposal development.

This phase supports applicants to:

- Strengthen real-world and landscape-appropriate project design
- Identify organisational development and capacity-building needs
- Explore opportunities for collaboration, synergy and innovation to improve financial feasibility and long-term sustainability within the ecosystem of actors

This includes testing approaches to:

- Reducing clearing and maintenance costs
- Enhancing biomass beneficiation
- Incentivising landowners to participate in and pay for alien clearing and fynbos restoration

3. Final Proposal Development

After the sandbox phase, shortlisted applicants will be supported to prepare a **final proposal** that consolidates:

- A refined project design
- Business or cost recovery models
- Partnerships
- A detailed budget aligned with the outcomes of the sandbox phase
- Monitoring Evaluation and Learning expectations
- Organisational development priorities

Applicants completing this stage are **preselected in principle**, pending outcomes from the sandbox processes as well as due diligence compliance checks.

4. Onboarding & Contracting

Before concluding a grant contract:

- **Sub Grantees** complete a comprehensive due diligence (commercial and legal eligibility check), while **Micro Grantees** undergo proportionate due diligence
- Safeguarding, environmental, Health and Safety, and Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) gaps and commitments are confirmed
- Roles and budgets are finalised
- Grant agreements are issued

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

ALL applicants must have:

- **Valid legal status in South Africa** with verifiable supporting registration documents with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) or Department of Social Development (DSD).
- **Good standing:** has annual statements/ tax clearance, not blacklisted/sanctioned anywhere in the world; willing to sign anti-corruption declaration.
- **Basic governance:** clear roles, four eyes on key decisions, separation of functions (no one-person control).
- **Basic financial capability:** e.g. competent accounting and recordkeeping systems and staff in place; ability to keep receipts and report spend vs budget.
- **Procurement ability:** follow procurement protocols, obtain quotes, record decisions, and keep records.
- **Relevant experience or capacity:** prior delivery of similar activities or qualified people/ volunteers able to do so.
- **Landscape fit:** active in (or able to operate in) the target landscape and work with local stakeholders.
- **Programme fit:** activities align to invasive clearing coordination **or** biomass beneficiation/restoration and the “ecosystem of actors” model.
- Willingness to participate in **capacity building** (financial basics, procurement, safeguards, Health and Safety, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion).

- Basic **project data management and reporting** capacity.

Sub Grantee Applicants must have:

- **Non-profit legal status** appropriate for a coordination role.
- Ability to **coordinate clearing/ maintenance** across multiple sites and **manage landowner relationships**.
- Ability to **contract, support and supervise actors** undertaking clearing activities (independent contractors and SMMEs are paid for services; they are **not** grantees).
- Ability to **manage CAPEX** (equipment & assets) responsibly, including procurement, inventory, maintenance, insurance and safe use.
- **Organisational capacity**: recent audited/AFS **or** scale appropriate accounts; demonstrated project/financial management; ability to handle budgets 50% of the amount requested (or demonstrate sufficient management capacity through past delivery/qualified volunteers) and keep records.

Micro Grantee Applicants Must be:

- Registered **SMMEs / CBOs / Cooperatives / NPOs** delivering **fynbos restoration/ rewilding** or **biomass valorisation** (e.g. fynbos nurseries, beekeepers, fuel wood, biochar, compost or other value additions).
- **Practical delivery capacity** for the proposed work within the grant period (people, time, basic systems).
- Ability to **manage project assets/ equipment** and keep records.

WHAT CAN BE FUNDED:

Grants may only support **project-specific, pre-approved and evidenced costs** as determined by SSN and subject to grant agreement terms, including:

- **CAPEX** (Capital Expenses) including tools, equipment and infrastructure for clearing, maintenance, restoration and biomass beneficiation activities
- **OPEX** (Operational Expenditure) including staff, administration, labour, service providers, and consumables

WHAT CANNOT BE FUNDED:

- **Profit, income or working capital** (grants cannot be used as unrestricted income/revenue, for profit, or to subsidise general business operations)
- **Cash transfers** to other individuals or business other than for project-specific services rendered.
- **Financial liabilities** including debt repayments, interest, fines or penalties
- **Costs unrelated to the approved project budget** (overheads or activities outside the grant agreement).
- **Prohibited activities and products** as stipulated in the [exclusion criteria](#) (see below).
- Ineligible expenses, based on the grant agreement, such as invoices for items procured without following the **outlined procurement protocol**.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA:

Please click [here](#) for a list of activities and products which are not eligible for grant funding and are not permitted within the project scope. Please ensure that you review, understand and are compliant with activities and products that fall within the exclusion criteria.

BENEFITS

- Grantees may receive grant funding to cover eligible project costs including operational expenses, capital equipment and infrastructure.
- Grantees may also receive technical, operational, regulatory, institutional and business enterprise development training to support capacity development.
- Grantees may receive financial, technical and operational support designed to strengthen their role in the landscape and enable sustainable long-term impact.
- Grantees will also benefit from participation in an ecosystem of actors; gaining opportunities for learning, collaboration, innovation and value-chain development.
- The programme is intentionally structured to provide resources, as well as to help organisations grow their capabilities, strengthen their business or operational models, and position themselves to contribute collaboratively to long-term invasive species management and biodiversity restoration.

RESPONSIBILITIES

ALL contracted entities are required to comply with the responsibilities set out in the grant agreement, including, without limitation, to the sections outlined below.

Financial Management & Compliance

- Use grant funds **only for preapproved project activities**.
- Keep **financial records**, including receipts and time tracking where applicable.
- Keep relevant **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)** data.
- Follow the required **procurement protocol** when purchasing goods or services.
- Ensure **no use of prohibited substances** listed in the Exclusion Criteria.
- Ensure **no introduction of nonapproved biological agents**.
- Comply with all **local environmental, labour, and safety regulations**.

Safeguards: Environmental, Social, and Health & Safety

- Ensure **safe working practices**, including proper equipment use, field safety and fire safety.
- Treat workers fairly and ensure **safe, lawful labour conditions**.
- Ensure **no child or forced labour**.
- Respect **community access rights** and avoid conflict.
- Report **accidents, injuries, environmental incidents, or serious risks** promptly.
- Avoid activities that cause **environmental harm**, such as erosion, pollution, or poor waste disposal.
- Respect **protected areas and environmentally sensitive sites**.
- Ensure compliance with **environmental laws and biodiversity protections**.

Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI)

- Commit to **inclusive participation and equitable benefit sharing**.
- Ensure **safe and non-discriminatory working conditions** for staff, contractors, and participants.
- Support the **meaningful participation of historically marginalised groups**, including indigenous people, women, youth, and other vulnerable groups.

- Be willing to implement **practical GESI and safeguarding actions** with SSN guidance.

Operational Responsibilities & Collaboration

All:

- Set up a **separate bank account** to manage grant funds
- Participate actively in SSN support activities, including the Sandbox Phase and the **ecosystem of actors**, capacity development sessions, and regular check-ins.
- Contribute to a **collaborative landscape approach**, sharing lessons and insights openly.
- Support field coordination and information sharing across landowners, SMMEs, researchers and ecosystem partners as relevant.
- Manage finances transparently
- Ensure safe, compliant operations

Sub Grantees:

- Coordinate clearing and maintenance
- Contract and supervise SMME service providers
- Manage relationships with landowners and/or landowner groups such as Conservancies
- Manage CAPEX assets effectively
- Consolidate reports and MEL data

Micro Grantees:

- Deliver restoration, rewilding or biomass beneficiation
- Manage project-related equipment and assets responsibly
- Track and report on progress, outputs, and milestones

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, complete an online Expression of Interest (EOI) form and upload supporting documentation confirming basic eligibility and organisational readiness.

Click [here](#) to apply to be a Sub Grantee

The application form is available for download [here](#)

Click [here](#) to apply to be a Micro Grantee

The application form is available for download [here](#)

All Applicants must **send supporting documentation to ikisg@southsouthnorth.org** including:

- **Proof of legal registration and address** (documentation evidencing legal registration and registered address such as the CIPC/DSD registration certificate)
- **Proof of bank account** (bank confirmation letter is sufficient)
- **Proof of good standing** (e.g. Proof of active registration and compliant status from CIPC/DSD, Tax clearance certificate from SARS, latest audited financial statements (if available, otherwise unaudited annual financial statements or management accounts)

- **An indicative budget** as per the guidelines and template provided [here](#)
- **One simple proof of current activity**, such as:
 - Case study
 - Report
 - Photos of your work (nursery, restoration site, product line, workshop etc)
 - A social media or website link

Please be advised that:

- Submission of an EOI does not guarantee selection. If you do not receive any communication from us by 1 May, please consider your application unsuccessful;
- SSN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs at its sole discretion;
- incomplete or non-compliant submissions may be disqualified without further notice;
- All information submitted may be used solely for the purpose of evaluating this EOI and will remain confidential; and
- The submission of the EOI does not create any contractual obligation between the applicant and SSN.

This project is supported by the [IKI Small Grants programme](#) strengthening local solutions for effective climate and biodiversity action. IKI Small Grants is part of Germany's [International Climate Initiative \(IKI\)](#). It is funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and run by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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