Frequently Asked Questions:
Country Investment Fund (CIF)
Questions received via email and informational webinar

General

1. **Why have you chosen these countries in Africa and not others?**
   All the countries that are eligible to receive grants through this fund have all completed a CCA, which has resulted in national AT priorities being identified. This fund's goal is to continue work in countries where these AT priorities have been identified and help them to progress.

2. **Why have you only chosen countries in Africa and excluded others that have a CCA completed?**
   This fund was supported through a phase 2 DFID bid (more information here - https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300815), which focused on Africa, and, more specifically, DFID priority countries in Africa. The Business Case is called Africa 2030 indicating the African Focus.

3. **Why do we need to have Ministry buy-in?**
   All the CCAs that have been completed have worked with relevant Ministries in countries to ensure their success and develop ownership at a Government level. This has resulted in national AT priorities being identified and therefore, owned, at a Government level. The CCA process has created momentum and a desire for continued action in countries, it's therefore necessary to ensure that whichever bids are successful, they have adequate support for their plans so that future work can continue with the same rigor. Taking this into account and given the bounds of this funding, we feel strongly that Ministries should have the opportunity to give a view. Match funding (in cash or kind) is also required which may come from Ministry time.

4. **Can I still apply if our organisation is not based in the country but has a technology that could be applicable there?**
   Bidders are expected to be operational in the country. If you have a technology that could work we suggest you partner locally. This fund has relatively short

timeframes, we imagine, therefore, that creating the necessary stakeholder relationships would be extremely difficult for any bidder without prior operation in country. Before bidding, please ensure that you meet all the eligibility criteria within the CIF guidance document.

5. **Can you recommend any pathway to request the country capacity assessments from the respective government(s)?**
   We have deliberately not specified which Ministry bidders should contact. It is the bidder's responsibility to define the relevant agency as they differ in each country. If we receive 'rival' bids from ministries (eg health and welfare) which are of equal quality, we will seek 'adjudication' input from a 'neutral' agency, as advised by the DFID local team.

6. **Will this be an annual funding opportunity?**
   This is a one off opportunity, but we hope to feed the findings into the funder, for future thinking and to the Global partnership on assistive technology, ATscale.

7. **Will there be a second investment fund (for non-CCA countries or the remaining CCA countries)?**
   At the present time, there is no plan for a second investment fund.

8. **Is it possible for the CIF team to hold individual calls with bidders prior to the deadline to answer questions?**
   Unfortunately, not. We endeavour to be as fair as possible with all potential bidders. As the guidance states, please send additional questions to at2030@ucl.ac.uk

9. **Is it possible for applicants to have access to CCA data and reports?**
   All available materials can be found on the Country Investment Fund website - https://at2030.org/countryinvestmentfund/
   Country reports are owned by countries and are therefore not publicly available.

10. **I still have questions. How do I contact the team?**
    As the guidance states, please send additional questions to at2030@ucl.ac.uk

Research

11. Is it possible to opt out of having research work alongside our bidding plans?

No. The AT2030 programme is specifically designed to test for “what work’s” in relation to access to assistive technology. In this fund, we combine practical implementation of national AT priorities against a robust research component, which will go on to inform future activities in this space.

12. What are the primary aims of the research component?

Answer the overarching research question of “what works” in relation to access to AT. This research will be a mixture of processes (what works to implement) and outcomes (does the intervention result in access to AT).

13. What are the expected research methods?

Mixed methods, to be developed co-designed. Stage 3 of the application process will result in a co-design seminar with the research team where these methods can be explored and tailored per proposal. For more information on the application process, please see the guidance document.

14. How will the research co-design process work?

This will likely be an online seminar, led by Maynooth University. More information will be released about this process over the coming period.

a) **Are bidders expected to propose research questions (based on government priorities or aligned with government partners)?**

No. It is expected that the research will align with priorities and overarching project aims. Bidders can propose research questions and the co-design process will help to define but this is not a requirement.

b) Is the research’s aim solely around “testing what works” related to the operations and implementation of an AT investment project, or does GDI Hub envision this research component as an opportunity to build local capacity and fulfil country priorities for evidence?

We don’t envision this to be mutually exclusive but the budget for the research component is tight. The focus will be more on whether intervention is doable and produces results. There may be opportunities within to build additional research in but that will depend on the project.

c) **Will the grant provide funding/assistance to government-initiated research questions?**

No. Funding will not be provided separately unless they are to be supported under the awarded funding of the grant and aligned with project aims.

d) **What is the approval process for the research agenda and questions?**

As stated in the guidance, research will be tailored to each investment and will therefore be co-designed with bidders. Once agreed by both Maynooth University and bidders, a brief summary can be added to the eventual grant agreement.

15. **What is the proportion of the research component in the total project?**

It is separately funded so 0% value of these investments.

16. **Does a budget to meet research aims need to be included in the £250K of each individual bid?**

No. The research component is being funded from a different funding stream.

Eligibility Criteria and Bid Evaluation

Country selection

17. **What will inform the decision when selecting investment in one country over another?**

The quality of the bids will be the primary determining factor. No eligible country will be more highly weighed over the other but no country will receive two grants.

18. **Are there any criteria or scoring that guide the selection process?**

Yes, please see the guidance document.

Match funding

19. **Why is match-funding necessary?**
Match funding is a target for the AT2030 programme. This fund is about building capacity to make strategic change. That means Government momentum and buy-in should be privileged in the bidding process as it builds sustainability. We know resources are tight so proposals 50% and in-kind funding.

20. **How does GDI Hub define match funding**?
Match-funding includes all aspects of Partner contributions in cash or kind, additional funding provided by a third donor (i.e. not DFID) into programme delivery, and investments catalysed through innovation programmes. There are two types of match funding: “cash” and “in-kind”. In-kind match funding is non-cash provision of goods or services, such as staff time not covered in the project grant. ‘Cash’ match-funding can be demonstrated in the form of a letter from the organisation or company providing the additional funding. ‘In-kind’ match contributions need to be detailed as part of formal reporting, with clear allocation to grant delivery.

21. **What can be included as match-funding?**
There’s no fixed answer to this, and this depends on the type of delivery undertaken and the kind of support offered by partner organisations (staff time, operational infrastructure, venues etc.). Some items we have recognised previously as in-kind match-contributions include for example: provision of additional expert inputs, provision of office space and venues for meetings, additional complimentary training provided alongside investment delivery.

22. **Will a bidder be disqualified if they cannot meet the 50% match-funding requirement**?
The guidance asks for approximately 50% match. It is an advantage to bids if they can get as close to 50% match funding as possible. Bids with a low level of match funding would be weaker against those that have achieved close to 50% match.

23. **How should the match-funding be calculated?**
The match-funding target is approximately 50% of grant value, so for example a £100k grant would equate to a £50k match-funding expectation.

24. **Can the calculation of match funding include funding obtained or implemented beyond the grant period, or is the expectation that all match funding be spent or allocated within the grant period?**
    Yes, but it needs to be clear how this is guaranteed and how it will be reported, the same is true for outputs and impact too. Please note that we will not be able to count anything beyond October 2024.

25. **Could in-kind funding be covered by technology input or technology assistance from a partner within the CIF consortium?**
    If a CIF partner provides specific technical expertise to support grant delivery, who's costs are not covered by the grant and whose inputs are clearly identified and costed (in time and money), then this can be counted as an in-kind contribution. Similarly, specific and attributable equipment or tech used in grant delivery, and which is clearly costed, can also be counted as in-kind contributions. We still require government buy-in and a bid with match funding from the government would be considered a stronger bid.

26. **Can DFID £ matched for DFID £? Or with other AT2030 match already claimed?**
    No, DFID £ can't 'match' for DFID £. We also can't match with other AT2030 match already claimed.

Ministry Support

27. **What counts as Ministry support?**
    A letter from a relevant Ministry in the country concerned must be attached to bids. The relevant Ministry(s) is determined by each country but there may be more than one. In this case, bidders should decide which Ministry aligns to their proposal. In the rare case of any need for arbitration between Ministries. For example, rival bids of similar quality, with support from two Ministries, in one country e.g. Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Welfare. In this case, we will reach out to a 'neutral' Ministry for input, probably via the local DFID office.

28. **What should the Ministry support letter include?**
    The letter should generally state their support for the proposal and relevance they feel the project will bring to the AT country.

29. **Are bidders allowed to apply to the CIF in partnership with other organisations?**

The fund is designed to allow for flexibility in this regard. Applications will be accepted if two or more organisations are working together to bid for grants but one organisation must lead. That organisation must be operational in the country and have Ministry backing - the organisation but must not be the Government.

30. How can we predict what the reach of our work will be?

Bids should make best efforts to estimate the reach of their proposal. The definition of 'reach or impact' can be found in the logframe. How your organisation decides to estimate this needs to be based on some kind of realistic method of impact evaluation and must be valid against definitions.

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES:

Any individual that benefits from the programme and/or their immediate family/community where direct impact is realised. Examples include:

• People given direct access to AT, and/or their families or community where this access is realised

• Innovators, entrepreneurs, & innovation activity participants

• The people who have access to new products / services developed through the programme

• People participating in and/or using programme research, digital resources & Information

• Partner organisation teams where capacity is built

• Target populations covered by country-level AT action plans as a result of programme support.

• Participants and/or recipients of stigma reduction activities e.g. through a schools programme, community intervention.

• Conduct of the I'mPOSSIBLE programme in schools to tackle discrimination and stigma, across Malawi, Zambia and Uganda (embedded target of reaching 1.3m beneficiaries).

INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES

Individuals who are not directly connected by the programme but could still derive benefit from it for example:

• Broader communities not directly impacted but benefiting from implementation activities (e.g. non-AT users in a community implementing inclusive design)

• People with access to the Paralympics being screened on TV

31. Are the project components - foundational/capacity building, getting AT in people's hand, and research- equally weighted?

They are contributory to each other not officially weighted against each other. The log frame does have calculations. Please see the annex to the guidance document.

a) **Is there guidance on how the impact of "getting AT in people's hand" will be measured?**

This is equivalent to 'direct beneficiaries' from service provision as per logframe definitions. Please see the guidance document.

b) **Do any differences exist in how GDI Hub will evaluate the type of AT delivered (*some AT are more challenging to deliver than others*)? Are there any numerical goals linked to the AT delivered?**

No. All relevant targets can be found in the annex of the guidance document.

32. Can multilaterals apply?

Yes, multilateral agencies are eligible to apply, probably as part of a consortia bid; it is not anticipated that they would lead. Bids will be judged against their ability to meet the assessment criteria, including ability to collaborate and drive sustainable change in the country.

NGO or private sector partners should not be discouraged if they don't have multilateral partners.

Writing Proposals and Operations

33. What are the specific reporting requirements? Is GDI Hub expecting reporting to be similar to the current AT2030 reporting?

Yes, there are specific reporting requirements which will be similar to reporting requirements already established for AT2030 partners. Please read the guidance document which outlines these requirements.

34. If a current AT2030 partner is successful in securing this funding, does GDI Hub expect it to be a grant amendment or rather a new contract?

This will be discussed with partners, should they be successful in their bid.

35. **To who/which address can the Ministry address the support letter?**
GDI Hub.

36. **If bidders officially partner with another organisation, would GDI Hub expect to see a support letter from the partnering organisation as evidence?**
As evidence of office support, yes.

37. **Description of proposal:**
    a) **Would it be wrong to highlight the methodology through which the project will deliver the invention and research?**
    No. The guidance states no exclusion criteria in relation to how you provide information, as long as the information you do provide satisfies requirements. Methodology is likely to be explored further at Stage 2.

    b) **Would a list of strategic areas/actions that the investment would focus on be sufficient without expanding into these due to the word count?**
    Yes, there is a subsequent Stage 2 application that will need to be completed, which will require bidders to expand on Stage 1 applications should your bid be successful at the first round.

    c) **Would a short summary to set the scene be okay within this section?**
    As long as your summary fits within word counts and is relevant to the section of the application you're filling out, yes.

    d) **Would a summary into how the project would align with wider policies and strategies by ministries and local authorities in the AT2030 be expected?**
    All concrete expectations are outlined in the guidance document. If you are able to make a link between your proposal and wider strategies, that would be great to see.

38. **Team structure and experience:**
    a) **Could you confirm if a short summary of each organisation then followed by a short bio of each person would be sufficient for this section given the word count**
    All expectations are outlined in the guidance document. It is up to the bidder as to how they arrange the information required within the application form.

b) **In terms of CVs I'm right in thinking there is no limit how many can be submitted?**
The guidance states that CVs are only required for key staff (i.e. people who will be working more than 60% of their time on delivery of the investment.) There is therefore no limit on the number of CVs but there are requirements regarding the length of CVs and the CVs we require.

c) **Would you expect to see CVs from the CEO/ Head or organisation as well as the project management team for each partner within the consortium?**
Please see the above answer.

39. Collaboration and partnership

a) **in terms of ministry support, if support is already developed through in-country partners, would it be wrong to suggest the consortium would look to develop additional links with ministries or regulatory bodies?**
No. There are no exclusion criteria concerning the kinds of links made with ministries or regulatory bodies held within the guidance.

b) **Is GDI Hub able to clarify if it's more important to reference the impact that potential coalitions will bring or is a list of partners to be involved in the project the thing that should be emphasised?**
All eligibility criteria for bids, including how the CIF board will be scoring bids, and areas that bidders should demonstrate/emphasise are outlined in the guidance.

40. Capacity to implement:

a) **Under this section, does GDI Hub expect to see methodology that will be used to implement the project?**
As the guidance states, we expect bidders to "demonstrate the ability to create project planning, taking into account risk and mitigation strategies and lessons learnt mechanisms". Methodologies could be outlined if it speaks to this requirement.

b) **Should more content be written in terms of how the lead will implement the project and the supporting role in-country partners will play?**

Again, how bidders choose to illustrate their capacity to implement their proposal is up to them. We would accept content outlined in your question as long as it satisfies the requirement expressed above.

c) **As the word count is limited, would you expect general comments relating to teams experience of delivering complex projects and managing risk or would you expect this to be detailed with some examples?**
Please see the answer above.

d) **Would it be wrong to structure this section based on the methodology used to deliver the project through and link this to strategic actions?**
No. The guidance states no exclusion criteria in relation to how you provide information, as long as the information you do provide satisfies requirements.

41. Budget

a) **For the justification summary, would it be okay to go into detail how the match funding will be covered by in-country running costs or estates linked to the delivery of the project?**
In-country running costs or estates can be counted as match-contributions, but (a) require very clear attribution to delivery of the project and (b) are mutually exclusive with respect to operational overhead.