

Understanding Development grant makers and their funding cycles

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UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN

Who are Development Grant Makers and Why Do they matter?

Development grant makers

Often known as grant-making institutions, donors, development partners or funders, are organizations that provide financial resources to other organizations or individuals to support their development or initiatives

Types of donors

Include multilateral funds, bilateral donors, and regional development banks.

Sector focus

Fund projects in climate, health, infrastructure, governance, and more.

Critical role

- Fill financing gaps for developing countries
- Support innovation and risk-sharing
- Align funding with global goals (SDGs, Paris Agreement)



Understanding the funding cycle



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Key Development Grant Makers



Green Climate Fund

- Largest global climate fund: US\$12.8B pledged for GCF-2
- Funds climate mitigation & adaptation
- Current cycle: GCF-2 (2024–2027)
- Funding available year round



Global Environmental Facility

- US\$5.33B pledged
- Supports biodiversity, land use, climate, oceans
- Works through UN agencies and ministries
- Major approvals align with GEF Council meetings
- Current cycle: GEF-8 (2022–2026)



European Union

- Funds global development via NDICI–Global Europe and EFSD+
- Supports green/digital transitions, governance, private sector
- Calls for proposals are issued on a rolling basis with fixed deadlines
- Current cycle: 2021–2027 (MFF)



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What Do They Fund and How Can You Access It?

Funder	Key themes/sectors funded	How funding is accessed
GCF	<p>Climate Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable energy Energy efficiency Low-emission transport Forests and land use (REDD+) <p>Climate Adaptation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate-resilient agriculture Water security Ecosystem-based adaptation Resilient infrastructure and coastal protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding accessed via National Designated Authority (NDA) and Accredited Entity (AE) Submit concept note (optional) and full proposal with NDA endorsement Reviewed by GCF Secretariat and independent panel Approved by GCF Board and legal agreements signed Funds disbursed in tranches based on milestones Readiness (\$1 m per country per year) and project prep support (US1.5m per project) available, especially for direct access entities



What Do They Fund and How Can You Access It?

Funder	Key focal areas funded	How funding is accessed
GEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biodiversity• Climate change mitigation• Land degradation• Chemicals & waste• Oceans, sustainable cities• Circular economy initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access coordinated by national GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP)• Projects developed with support from GEF Agencies (e.g., UNDP, UNEP, FAO)• Funding allocated through STAR for biodiversity, climate change, land degradation• Project idea submitted via Project Identification Form (PIF) with OFP endorsement• Reviewed and approved by GEF Secretariat and CEO; full project document follows• Funds disbursed after CEO endorsement; GEF Agency oversees implementation• Includes support for enabling activities and small grants via UNDP-led Small Grants Programme (SGP)



What Do They Fund and How Can You Access It?

Funder	Key sectors funded	How funding is accessed
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green & digital transitions• Governance and migration• Sustainable infrastructure• MSME support via EFSD+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access via competitive calls under EU programs like Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)-Global Europe, Thematic Programs (e.g. education, climate, digital), Regional and country programs• Monitor calls on EU Funding & Tenders Portal or Delegation websites• Register in EU Participant Register to obtain a PIC (Participant Identification Code)• Submit proposal with concept note, full application, budget, and supporting documents• Proposals evaluated on relevance, design quality, and applicant capacity• Grants awarded through signed agreements; funds disbursed by performance milestones• Accessible by governments, CSOs, private sector



Why this matters for proposal writing and project implementation

Better Alignment

- Knowing funders' priorities helps you design proposals that fit for submission and are more likely to be approved.

Right Timing

- Proposals must be ready before funding windows close. Understanding cycles avoids missed opportunities.

Stronger Proposals

- Early understanding means better logic models, clearer budgets, and integration of funder requirements (e.g., safeguards, M&E).

Better Partnerships

- Knowing how to access funding helps identify who you need to engage. For example, NDA, AE, Ministry, CSO, or private sector.

More Impact

- Well-timed, well-aligned proposals are more likely to be funded and implemented successfully.



Thank you!

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