



# Call for Concepts under the Agriculture Women Business Fund

## 1. ABOUT PROSPERO

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Prospero is an independent not-for-profit organization implementing the second phase of the UKaid-funded Private Enterprise Programme Zambia (PEPZ II). The programme is designed to incentivise investment in innovation that changes the way that market systems work to create new growth opportunities for MSMEs. PEPZ II is focused on the following high-growth potential sectors:

- **Food and Agriculture:** To increase the competitiveness and value of Zambian food products in end consumer markets.
- **Manufacturing and Mining Services:** To increase the sustainable and inclusive economic impact of mining in Zambia.
- **Tourism and Biotrade:** To increase value creation and inclusive economic benefit from Zambia's non-extractive natural assets.
- **Investment Services:** To increase MSME access to appropriate financial services by strengthening the Zambian finance and investment ecosystem
- **Business Services:** To increase MSME access to appropriate non-financial business services to stimulate innovation, market access and growth.

We partner with private sector businesses, government agencies, business organisations and NGOs to support the design and implementation of initiatives that promote innovation (new products, services or business models), investment and job creation. We work at the intersection of market systems development and the impact investment ecosystem, recognising that enterprise growth at scale requires access to substantial and sustainable sources of commercial finance.

## 2. ABOUT THIS FACILITY

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Prospero's Food and Agriculture Sector aims to support Women Small and Medium Enterprises to scale up their business and innovate to be able to operate in formalised agricultural value chains to be competitive in domestic, regional, and international markets.

The Returnable Grant facility is open to the following companies:

- Small and Medium Enterprises that are women-led (majority women in senior management)
- Small and Medium Enterprises that are women-owned (50% or more shares owned by the female owner).

From Prospero's experience with working with SMEs, there are limited women owned or women-led agrobusinesses that are able to access finance which limits their potential to expand and grow their businesses.



We have seen that women owned or led businesses can contribute to the development of the food and agriculture sector through their unique innovations in the sector. We therefore have developed this facility to support more women to be able to be effectively compete in the agriculture sector and as a way to support women to prepare themselves to be able to access more commercial financing. It is from this background that Prospero has developed this **Returnable Grant Facility** below.

Facility	Facility Description
<p><b>Women Business Fund</b></p>	<p>A <b>Returnable Grant Facility</b> aims to provide SMEs a project grant that needs to be returned to Prospero within an agreed timeline between the two partners.</p> <p>Prospero is interested in receiving concepts that will scale up or innovate their businesses around the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative, scalable and inclusive business solutions <b>on improved nutrition</b> through nutritious food product development, technologies or services</li> <li>• Innovative, scalable and inclusive business solutions <b>in sustainable agriculture</b> including regenerative agriculture, climate smart agriculture, agroforestry, organic production, technologies or services.</li> <li>• Innovative, scalable, inclusive business solutions that address sector constraints in the <b>legumes, small livestock and fruits and vegetables sector</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key definitions</b></p> <p><b>Innovative solutions:</b> Private sector companies require to propose a new method, idea, or product that will improve the development of the food and agriculture sector in Zambia.</p> <p><b>Scalable solutions:</b> Private sector companies require to propose projects that can scale up and expand to attract further commercial investment.</p> <p><b>Inclusive business solutions:</b> Private sector companies require to propose business solutions that include and benefit rural populations, women, youth and/or disabled people</p>



The funding structure of this facility has two options:

1. 100% Returnable grant
2. Partial returnable grant, Partial reimbursable grant (up to 50% maximum of total project costs).

Facilities	Facility Structure	Prospero Contribution (Indicative range)
<b>Reimbursable grants</b>	<p>All grants awarded under this facility by Prospero are <b>reimbursable</b>. This means that a successful applicant will be able to receive funds after specific results are achieved throughout the project.</p> <p>For successful proposals, Prospero’s grant contribution to the overall project budget will be assessed according to the quality of the proposal, the organisations’ capacity, and ability to invest their own funds or resources.</p> <p>Prospero contributes to a partner’s costs of accessing specialist technical expertise during the design and/or implementation of the project; or costs to support private sector that have identified specific commercial opportunities for innovation, incentivize investment and offset some of the risks of business innovation.</p>	<b>Up to £ 10,000</b>
<b>Returnable grants</b>	<p>This is grant funding provided by Prospero with the expectation to be returned to Prospero under a mutually agreed structure, in maximum 1 year, after the investment project has been successfully implemented and is generating returns.</p>	<p><b>£5,000 up to £20,000</b></p> <p>For concepts outside of the indicative range, please contact Prospero <u>prior to submission</u>.</p>

### 3. PRINCIPLES FOR COMPETITIVE CONCEPTS

Project concepts should be developed within the following principles in mind:

- Concepts should introduce some level of innovation in terms of the business model, a new product or service, or a particularly convincing way that will address the relevant facility’s goals.



- Prospero is looking for innovative, high-impact projects that meaningfully benefit large numbers of Zambian individuals and/or MSMEs, proportional to the size of the investment. Be advised that only the best value-for-money and high-impact projects will be considered. Funding is not guaranteed.
- Concepts providing benefits to women, youth, or rural or populations are strongly encouraged.
- Concepts should be as commercially oriented as possible.
- Applicants should display sufficient capacity (technical, management and financial) to implement the proposed project successfully and account for funds provided.
- Applicants should display sufficient capacity to pay back the grant (evidence of cash flows).
- All other project aspects being equal, projects likely to deliver greater outcomes and in which the partner(s) contribute(s) a larger proportion of the total project budget will be more competitive for funding. This will be assessed and judged internally by the Prospero team.

#### 4. APPLICATION PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT

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Successful concept notes will proceed to a full proposal stage. When assessing which concepts notes are approved to proceed to a full proposal stage, Prospero is guided by the following factors:

- Private sector companies or organisations that can provide **innovative and scalable solutions** that address the issues named in the above table and that can attract commercial investment.
- Private sector companies or organisations that can provide innovative and scalable solutions for **climate change adaptation, resilience and/or mitigation** and **inclusive business models** (especially inclusion of women and youth) in the selected small livestock sectors.
- Private sector companies or organisations that are able and willing to collaborate with other value chain players to achieve scalable businesses and hence a competitive agriculture sector with significant development impact.
- Private sector companies that make investments that create or sustain, quality jobs, skills, income opportunities for low-income Zambians and/or marginalized populations (women, youth, disables and rural populations)

At the proposal stage, Prospero will request the applicant to develop a project. Eligible costs for grant funding include reasonable and actual costs related to project setup, capital assets, one-off project operations costs and other one-off costs related to project implementation. Vehicles are only eligible in very specific circumstances where need is clearly explained, and no other transportation option is appropriate.

Detailed guidance on this process will be provided at the proposal stage.



## 5. ELIGIBILITY AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR CONCEPTS

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### a) Who may apply:

Registered and tax-compliant **Women led and Women Owned for-profit companies** are eligible to apply. Individuals are not eligible.

### b) Submission guidelines:

- Applicants should visit the Prospero Limited website (<https://prospero.co.zm/>) to review available calls and submit their information, specifying their preferred sector and initiative. After you submit these details, you will receive a concept note template and a self-assessment form.
- Applicants should complete the relevant concept note template with as much succinct clarity as possible.
- Please email the following documents to [grants@prospero.co.zm](mailto:grants@prospero.co.zm) the subject line formatted as such: “[Name of submitting organisation] – Concept note for Agriculture Women Business Fund”.
- A fully completed concept note template.
- A budget estimate in Zambian kwacha (ZMW) or British Pounds (GBP) only (as accurate as possible)
- A fully completed self-assessment due diligence template.
- **Submission of cashflow statements from the last 12 months.**
- All applicants will receive feedback following Prospero's review of concept note documents. Submissions of concept notes that do not contain **ALL** of the relevant documents may be disregarded.
- Concepts will be accepted on a rolling basis until **12<sup>th</sup> August 2022 17.00hrs** (or sooner, at the discretion of Prospero).
- Concept notes will be evaluated in the order in which they are submitted. Prospero’s decisions on concept note applications are final.