



African businesses seeking under £2 million of funding from the UK government

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Purpose and contents

This guidance explains the requirements and processes for African businesses to secure under £2 million in funding through investment organisations backed by the UK government.

This guidance is about sources of funding below £2 million. Growth Gateway has a separate guide for businesses looking to secure over £2 million.

About Growth Gateway: Growth Gateway is a business support programme that helps increase 2-way trade and investment between low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and the UK. Part of this programme is the Africa-UK business advisory service. This service supports African and UK businesses to identify and realise trade and investment opportunities.

Growth Gateway's joint public-private sector team connects businesses with UK government trade and investment initiatives, provides business advice and expert support, and includes dedicated online information tools. Growth Gateway also supports trade and investment in high potential sectors and markets. You can contact the team at GrowthGateway@fcdo.gov.uk and get more information at growthgateway.campaign.gov.uk.

Guidance

Many sources of UK government finance are only open to businesses seeking larger sums. This includes finance provided by institutions like [British International Investment](#), [Private Infrastructure Development Group](#), [UK Export Finance](#) and [AgDevCo](#). If you are a business seeking finance under £2 million, the UK government provides several country and sector-specific funding opportunities. These include:

- country-specific funding opportunities – for example, if you are a Zambian business in the manufacturing sector seeking grant funding you could explore [Prospero](#)
- sector-specific funding opportunities – for example, if you are an agriculture business in a Sub-Saharan African country seeking grant funding, you could explore the [Catalysing Agriculture by Scaling Energy Ecosystems \(CASEE\)](#) programme
- cross-cutting funding opportunities – for example, if you are an African business with a technology, data or finance focus seeking equity funding you could explore the CATALYST fund supported by [Financial Services Deepening Africa \(FSDA\)](#)

Eligibility for these funding opportunities will depend on:

- the country where you are based
- the sector you operate in
- business maturity

Funding opportunities within these categories can change as programmes start or end and funding application windows open or close.

When you contact UK government-backed organisations you should:

- clearly communicate basic information on your company, including name, purpose, sector, location, stage and duration of operations, size, challenges, opportunities, and funding needs
- prepare a pitch deck that explains your business plan and what you will achieve with the funding – contact Growth Gateway if you need advice on format and content
- decide whether you are seeking grant funding or another form of finance such as working capital or equity, and what you will use this money to achieve
- calculate the development impact (including environmental and social) that you would be able to achieve with the funding and the level of business growth you expect to achieve

Funds typically try to support sustainable development through business growth. This means funders will often favour opportunities that bring benefits like positive environmental impacts, or including more women in the workforce. Funders will also want to see that plans for growth have good evidence and are achievable.

Next steps: how you can find out more

You can contact the Growth Gateway team at GrowthGateway@fcdo.gov.uk for guidance on:

- sources of funding you may be eligible for
- how to approach funders
- documents you may need when seeking funding
- how to make the documents clear and effective

When contacting Growth Gateway, you should clearly summarise basic information on your company, including name, purpose, sector, location, stage and duration of operations, size, challenges, opportunities, and funding needs. The more information we have, the better able we will be to help you. All information you provide will remain confidential.