

FAQ - technical assistance under the Natural Capital Finance Facility

1. For what type of activities can NCFF technical assistance be used?

Technical assistance under the NCFF can finance support and capacity building for the benefit of operations expected to be financed by the NCFF. Technical assistance under the NCFF can be applied to develop the capacity of the project promoter and stakeholders involved in the project, ascertain the overall feasibility of the project, and support monitoring and reporting over the projects' life time.

More specifically, technical assistance can be used, for example, but not exclusively for:

- Establishing baseline studies, carry out biodiversity and ecosystem monitoring;
- Climate vulnerability assessments, analysis of exposure to the impacts of climate change, recommendations for ecosystem-based adaptation solutions;
- Training and capacity building;
- Feasibility studies;
- Improving and strengthening individual components of a project/business plan;
- Further strengthening of financial analysis and/or the business case;
- Advice on legal structure of the project.

2. Is the technical assistance linked to a commitment to take a loan under the NCFF?

Technical assistance is only provided to projects which are expected to use financing from the NCFF, i.e. projects that are likely to contribute to the LIFE objectives and which the Bank considers to have a strong business case and where there is a strong commitment on the project developer's side to developing a viable project.

3. What is the process for getting technical assistance under the NCFF?

Before requesting technical assistance, interested project developer should first fill in and submit the NCFF Contact Form to be downloaded from the website. Following a preliminary assessment of the project's eligibility under the NCFF, and if it seems that the project has a strong business case, the Bank will ask the project developer to send a needs assessment requiring details, such as:

- Description and scope of technical assistance requested;
- Description of major elements of technical assistance;
- Estimated cost of technical assistance requested;
- Detailed cost breakdown of the technical assistance requested;
- Implementation timetable including forecast of payment dates for technical assistance;
- Information on other subsidies or grants received, if applicable;
- Description of the main expected impacts of the technical assistance.

Upon receipt of this information, the Bank will review the request and provide feedback on which components may be financed through technical assistance under the NCFF. The Bank will then send the project developer draft Terms of Reference to be filled in.

4. What happens if technical assistance has been awarded, but the project is finally not going ahead or will not use NCFF funding?

For any technical assistance that has been granted for project development prior to signature of a financing agreement, but that does not use NCFF financing, the EIB reserves the right to ask to be refunded up to 15% of the cost of the technical assistance provided. A refund may be required where the project is not taken any further despite being technically and financially viable and/or especially where the project developer decides to use alternative funding options. No refund will be requested in case of default of the project during the implementation phase, nor if the EIB considers that a refund would cause financial hardship to the project developer, nor if the EIB considers that a refund would be inappropriate for some other reason.

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6. What amount of technical assistance is available?

A maximum amount of EUR 1 million of technical assistance per project is available. However, technical assistance should in principle not exceed 10% of the NCFE's estimated total investment in the project. In exceptional cases and where the innovative nature of the project requires this, the Bank can allocate more than 10%, but never exceed EUR 1 million of TA per project.

7. Is the project promoter expected to make a contribution to the technical assistance needs?

The project developer may be asked to make a financial contribution to the overall technical assistance needs or contribute in kind, for example, through the provision of facilities and/or personnel.

8. As of what stage in the project development can technical assistance from the NCFE be brought in?

Technical assistance from the NCFE can be brought in during the entire project cycle where needed. For the process, please refer to point 3. A maximum of 30% of the total technical assistance available per project can be applied before signature of the loan. In exceptional cases and where the innovative nature of the project and the needs assessment show that a higher share of TA needs to be applied before signature, this is possible at the discretion of the Bank.

6. Who selects the providers of technical assistance?

Service providers in charge of delivering the technical assistance will be selected by the EIB in consultation with the project promoter and in line with EIB procurement rules.

7. How will the technical assistance be managed?

The EIB will manage the technical assistance service contract(s) and will monitor progress and reporting by the consultant(s).

9. Can NCFE technical assistance funding be combined with other EU/national or regional grants?

Yes, technical assistance under the NCFE can be complemented by other grant funding. For example, from the EU Rural Development Programmes (RDP) or EU Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Horizon 2020, national programs and others as appropriate.