



# General Applicant Guidelines



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The Caribbean Development Bank is committed to helping borrowing member countries reduce inequality and halve the incidence of extreme poverty by the end of 2025, through supporting inclusive and sustainable growth and promoting good governance.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS**

**Borrowing Member Country (BMC)**

**Beneficiary**

**Counterpart Funding**

**Terms of Reference (ToR)**

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

**Innovation**

**Collaboration**

**Sustainability**

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

**Grant Award**

**Digitisation**

**Cultural Heritage**

**Regional Integration**

**Commercial Viability**

**Coordination within CIs**

**Knowledge Product**

**Community of Practice**

**Additionality Mechanism**

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# Introduction

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In 2016, the Caribbean Development Bank's (CDB) Board of Directors approved the establishment of the Cultural and Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF) with an initial capitalisation of 2.6 million United States dollars (USD2.6mn), which was launched in December 2018. CIIF was intended to be a multi-donor fund that will support the cultural/creative industries (CI) sector development, and encourage innovation, job creation, and improved enterprise sustainability by providing grant financing and Technical Assistance (TA) to Cultural/Creative Entrepreneurs, Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs), Business Support Organisations (BSOs) and academia, which support the CI sector in CDB's Borrowing Member Countries.

CIIF completed a pilot cycle of operations and grant funding during the period 2018-2023, awarding 30 grants resulting in directly serving over 500 stakeholders across our 19 Client Countries. CIIF also launched and piloted TA to CIs in Haiti from 2020-2023, through dedicated grant funding valued at USD198,000, directly serving 90 beneficiaries. In June 2023, CIIF was granted approval and additional resources for a further period of operations to 2027.

# SCOPE OF CIIF GRANT OPPORTUNITIES 2025–2027

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## Available Funding:

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CIIF will be awarding and disbursing grants of the following United States Dollar amounts throughout its current programme cycle via scheduled grant calls serving five (5) priority sub-sectors:

- Audio Visual Sector (Film, Animation and Gaming)
- Fashion and Contemporary Design
- Festivals and Carnivals
- Music
- Visual Arts

### Component I — Enabling Environment Grants

- 2 grants valued at USD25,000 each
- 2 grants valued at USD50,000 each
- 2 grants valued at USD100,000 each
- 1 grant valued at USD150,000

### Component II — Data Intelligence Grants

- 2 grants valued at USD25,000 each
- 2 grants valued at USD50,000 each
- 2 grants valued at USD100,000 each
- 1 grant valued at USD150,000

### Component III — Improving Competitiveness of MSMEs Grants

Grants will range between USD15,000 – 100,000 per project and a minimum of twelve (12) grants are scheduled to be awarded. **At least 25% of these grants are dedicated to be awarded to women-led MSMEs.**

\*1 Awarded entities must budget and account for CDB funds in USD currency for the duration of the project. CDB does not cover in-country bank fees or forex charges additional to our standard wire expenses for each contract disbursement.





# Types of Projects Supported

During this project cycle CIIF is awarding funding for projects that:

- Are designed to impact at least one (1) of CIIF's five (5) priority subsectors: Music, Audio Visual (Film, Animation, Gaming), Visual Arts, Fashion and Contemporary Design, Festivals and Carnivals
- Present concepts built around addressing core CIIF themes of Digitisation, Cultural Heritage, Regional Integration, Commercial Viability, Coordination w/in CIs
- Focus on:
  - (I) **Enhancing the Enabling Environment for CIs** through business climate reform for the CI sector including product development and testing, policy development, legislation, sector strategies and related activities
  - (II) **Strengthening CI data collection frameworks** through CI research (surveys, data collection, market intelligence interventions) and related training and knowledge products. We are particularly interested in data intelligence projects that:
    - can assist in harnessing gender differentiation data toward addressing the differentiated needs, barriers and other issues in the CI sector
    - Combine training and region-specific tools and data management approaches to ensure sustained knowledge transfer and impacts
    - Incorporate digital tools and trends
  - (III) **Directly providing support to CI MSMEs toward strengthening business models** in relation to development of new products/services, testing of new business models, access to new markets, improvement of management efficiencies and general capacity development activities.
- Are innovative and sustainable partnerships designed to bring together unique regional development collaborations (e.g. Heritage Preservation, Cultural Tourism and Technology)
- Are pre-existing ideas/approaches to CI industry needs that are being adapted for expansion to impact new regional beneficiaries (e.g. Project tested in Jamaica and ready for expansion to Guyana)
- Are existing ideas/approaches that are being adapted to digital tools and platforms to increase access to potential users
- Have strong potential to scale-up with future access to non-grant financing through business loans, equity investment, etc.



## COUNTERPART FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS

Applicants must be willing to evidence and contribute a minimum of 10% in counterpart funding toward the overall project budget presented to CIIF.

***(Sources of contributions can include cash and in-kind resources from other funding awards, sponsorships and or in-house capital. Example: in-house professional services contributed to the project/ use of event or training space at waived costs, etc.)***

## TIMESCALE FOR EXECUTION

Projects awarded CIIF grant funding are expected to be implemented across periods of no less than 3 months to no more than 12 months from execution of Grant Agreements. Project scale and scope is determined and detailed at application stage via an indicative implementation plan and further finalised during the design of the project Terms of Reference and the submission of a Workplan as part of the first set of project reporting tasks.



# STANDARD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CIIF GRANT APPLICANTS

## Who do we intend to fund?

CIIF aims to award technical assistance grants to beneficiaries for activities and expenditures in support of creative industries sector-development, and innovation, job creation and improved enterprise sustainability. Beneficiary targets include creative/cultural entrepreneurs, (MSMEs), public sector, academic institutions and business support organisations operating within, and in service of, the cultural and creative industries. Beneficiaries must be bona fide citizens, residents and/or formally registered entities operating in one or more of CDB's 19 BMCs.

## Indicative Classification of MSMEs

CDB uses the number of employees and or the volume of turn-over as the classification of MSMEs

**TABLE 1: CDB Indicative Classification of MSMEs**

CRITERIA	MICRO	SMALL	MEDIUM
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	Less than 5	5 to less than 25	20 - 50
CAPITAL / ASSET (USD)	Less than 25,000	25,000 to less than 350,00	350,000 to less than \$1 mn
SALES (USD)	Less than 50,000	50,000 - less than 750,000	750,000 - \$3mn

Source: Caribbean Technological Consultancy  
Services Network (CTCS), 2025

# CDB'S MEMBER COUNTRIES:

Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands.



# Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicants must demonstrate that their core work includes activities within and in support of the cultural and creative industries;
- At application stage, registered entities should evidence regional project collaboration with at least one (1) other creative/cultural entrepreneur, micro, small and medium enterprise, public sector, academic institution and business support organisation.  
*(Collaborations are not limited to the cultural and creative industries sector but must demonstrate clear intersectionality and benefits.)*
- Eligible projects must demonstrate alignment with at least one (1) of the following priority UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

<b>SDG1</b>	No Poverty
<b>SDG4</b>	Quality Education
<b>SDG5</b>	Gender Equality
<b>SDG8</b>	Decent work and Economic Growth
<b>SDG9</b>	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
<b>SDG10</b>	Reduced Inequality
<b>SDG11</b>	Sustainable Cities and Communities
<b>SDG12</b>	Responsible Consumption and Production
<b>SDG13</b>	Climate Action
<b>SDG17</b>	Partnership for the goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015, aimed at addressing the world's most pressing challenges by 2030. These goals are designed to promote peace, prosperity, equality, and sustainability, with a focus on ensuring no one is left behind. CIIF supports and facilitates project interventions that primarily address 10 of the 17 SDGs.



# Eligible Project Costs under CIIF's Grant Funding Opportunities

## **COMPONENT I – Enabling Environment**

- A) Equipment;
  - B) Research and development;
  - C) Advisory services;
  - D) Product and service development;
  - E) Marketing services and activities (e.g. trade fairs participation, trade mission and in-market activities);
  - F) Promotional material (e.g. brochures, catalogues and videos)
  - G) Training/capacity building programmes;
  - H) Implementation of information technology solutions (e.g. website, e-commerce and multimedia);
  - I) Market research and testing;
  - J) Packaging, design; and
  - K) IP activities (e.g. brand registration and patents)
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## **COMPONENT II — Data Intelligence**

- A) Stakeholder consultations, workshops and seminars;
  - B) Technical work including the drafting of legislation inclusive of national cultural/creative policies;
  - C) Research including development of knowledge products for Creative Industries (CIs);
  - D) Development of incubator programmes, community-level programmes, or new CIs products and services;
  - E) Institutional strengthening activities
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## **COMPONENT III — Improving Competitiveness of MSMEs**

- A) Stakeholder consultations, workshops and seminars;
- B) Technical work;
- C) Research including development of knowledge products for CIs;
- D) Development of incubator programmes, community-level programmes, or new CIs products and services;
- E) Institutional strengthening activities;
- F) Promotional material (e.g. brochures, catalogues and videos);
- G) Marketing services and activities (e.g. trade fairs participation, trade mission and in-market activities);
- H) Packaging, design.

# THE CIIF GRANT PROCESS TIMELINE

**1–3 Months**  
Application, Evaluation and  
Award of Grants per Call



**3–6 months after  
Offer of Grant Award**  
Contracting, Technical  
Assistance and Mandatory  
Pre-Implementation Grant  
Training



**6–12 months from  
Contract Execution**  
Grant Implementation



**12–15 months from  
Contract Execution**  
Final Closing Reporting/  
Diagnostics



**Up to 24 months  
Post– Grant Closure**  
Post-Award Monitoring  
and Evaluation by CDB



# GRANT APPLICATIONS & AWARDS

## **The Application Process**

This is a fully digital process requiring online completion of assigned application forms and submission of supporting items in electronic file formats. CIIF Grant Calls have corresponding closing dates and submissions are only deemed eligible for screening and evaluation if fully completed and submitted in entirety by the published closing date.

## **Assessment and Scoring of Applications**

Applications are screened for basic eligibility requirements and then advanced for additional shortlisting against established criteria utilising rubric scoring mechanisms. Final evaluations and adjudications toward offer of grant awards is led by an external grant jury of regional industry specialists, utilising rubric scoring mechanisms.

## **Grant Funding Award Notices and Agreements**

Once the evaluation and award processes are completed, CIIF will notify all applicants of the status of their applications in writing. Due to the volume of applications received and processed, individualised feedback is not facilitated for unsuccessful applications. Notices of awards are communicated to successful applicants, requiring a written response advising of interest in accepting the grant offer. This signals the start of the mandatory period of technical assistance including grant management training and design of collaborative Terms of Reference for the CIIF-funded project.

Upon finalisation of the project Terms of Reference, a Grant Agreement is provided for electronic execution toward the start of project implementation. The Grant Agreement is issued between CDB and the lead applicant for an awarded project and binds the grant awardee to established deliverables and reporting which corresponds to the disbursement of the grant funds.



## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Applicants must be willing to participate in and contribute to monitoring and evaluation activities pursuant to Caribbean Development Bank's standard procedures and guidelines, in collaboration with the Cultural and Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF) or their designated intermediaries for the period of the grant award and a further period of up to 24 months after the grant closure.

## **Management of Intellectual property**

Applicants are expected to establish adequate, legal mechanisms and agreements to manage intellectual property matters relevant to their projects prior to applying for CIIF grant funding. Evidence of same may be requested during the evaluation process. In accordance with CDB's standard procedures, CDB shall be entitled to make use of all reports, working papers, notes or materials compiled or prepared in carrying out the Activities for any purpose whatsoever whether or not connected with the Activities. CDB shall have the right to take photographs and make recordings of you and your authorised Project representatives by camera, including video camera, audio tape recorder or any other means while carrying out the Project activities and to make use of such photographs and recordings for any lawful purpose whatsoever, whether or not connected with the Activities.

CIIF's Community of Practice Guidelines is appended to all grant agreements and provides further guidance on general ethics, established and required practices for sharing and managing Intellectual Property assets in relation to your CIIF grant activities.

## **Policy on Disbursements**

CIIF Grants do not include mobilisation tranches at the start of the project. All disbursements correspond to deliverables and completion of activity reporting outlined in project Terms of Reference documentation. Deliverables and reporting must be submitted in an agreed upon format, in a timely manner, for CDB review and approval before disbursement requests are actioned.

## **Co-Branding and Marketing**

CIIF grant awardees are expected to co-brand their project promotional materials and activities using the CDB and CIIF logos. During grant onboarding, CIIF provides grantees with logo files and applicable logo use guidelines. All draft co-branded material must be submitted for review and approvals by CDB in a timely manner. All CIIF-funded projects become part of the overall CIIF visibility and promotional strategy once an offer of award is accepted.

Awardees must be willing to adhere to the guidelines and contribute to the CIIF Community of Practice archive. All funded projects are expected to produce a knowledge product that is co-branded and provided to the CIIF archive for resource sharing and capacity-strengthening beyond the life cycle of the award activities. Example: toolkits/ process demos/knowledge-sharing fora/ "How To" guides/ industry databases, etc.)



## **Procurement Guidelines**

All expenditure related to CIIF grants must adhere to standard procurement procedures and guidelines. All proposed expenditure must be evidenced by supporting procurement procedures with selection justifications in written form. CDB's written approval must be communicated before commitments to engaging services or purchases are made by grantees.

## **Information Sessions**

Virtual group information sessions will be scheduled to accompany each grant call opportunity. Access details and information will be publicised via the CIIF website: [www.caribank.org/ciif](http://www.caribank.org/ciif).

 **Access and download CIIF Grant Application FAQs at: [www.caribank.org/ciif](http://www.caribank.org/ciif)**



PUBLISHED  
**2025**



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