

Request for Proposal

For Acceleration Fund

RFP-WI-WEECAP-2025-10-07

Issued: October 22, 2025

Women Economic Empowerment through
Cashew Processing (WEECAP) Program

Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire



Table of Contents

Confidentiality Statement.....	3
Introduction	3
Business Overview & Background	5
Submission Details	6
Submission Deadlines.....	6
Submission Delivery Address.....	6
Submission Questions and Clarifications	6
Electronic Submissions	6
Instructions to Bidders.....	6
Bid Documents to Include	7
Award.....	7
Detailed Specifications	8
Terms and Conditions	10
Evaluation Criteria.....	11
Selection Criteria.....	11
Certification of Independent Price Determination.....	13
Attachment A: General Provisions.....	14
Attachment B: RFP Application Form & Submission Checklist.....	15

Confidentiality Statement

This document, and any attachments thereto, regardless of form or medium, is intended only for use by the addressee(s) and may contain legally privileged and/or confidential, copyrighted, trademarked, patented or otherwise restricted information viewable by the intended recipient only. If you are not the intended recipient of this document (or the person responsible for delivering this document to the intended recipient), you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, printing or copying of this document, and any attachment thereto, is strictly prohibited and violation of this condition may infringe upon copyright, trademark, patent, or other laws protecting proprietary and, or, intellectual property. In no event shall this document be delivered to anyone other than the intended recipient or original sender and violation may be considered a breach of law fully punishable by various domestic and international courts. If you have received this document in error, please respond to the originator of this message or email him/her at the address below and permanently delete and/or shred the original and any copies and any electronic form this document, and any attachments thereto and do not disseminate further.

Thank you for your consideration, Winrock International – Women Economic Empowerment through Cashew Processing (WEECAP) Program.

Where no notice is given, all information contained herein is Copyright 2025 Winrock International.

Introduction

The WEECAP Consortium invites experienced and visionary accelerators to compete for the opportunity to design and manage the Acceleration Fund — a high-impact platform built to unleash the full potential of Africa's cashew sector.

The Fund is not a training project. It's a market-driven engine for growth — identifying and backing ventures with the talent, innovation, and ambition to redefine how cashew is processed, marketed, and financed across West Africa.

The selected partner will lead the entire acceleration lifecycle, from venture scouting and cohort design to tailored mentorship, investor matchmaking, and management of catalytic capital. Beyond program delivery, this role means helping shape the region's next wave of investable agribusinesses — driving measurable results in jobs, inclusion, and competitiveness.

WEECAP — implemented across Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation — is redefining how inclusive growth happens in Africa's cashew sector. The program's mission is simple but bold: to turn cashew processing into a powerful engine of job creation and private investment for young women and men.

Yet, one challenge continues to hold back transformation — the absence of tailored, timely capital and the ecosystem support that promising ventures need to break through. Many

entrepreneurs have proven ideas and growing demand, but lack access to the networks, technical expertise, and smart finance that would unlock their next stage of growth.

The Acceleration Fund was created to close that gap. By pairing high-quality acceleration services with catalytic financing, it helps the most dynamic ventures scale faster, hire more people, and compete more effectively. Over WEECAP's lifetime, the Fund will back up to 180 innovative ventures — each one contributing to a more competitive, inclusive, and sustainable cashew economy.

For a detailed overview of this fund, see the “Detailed Specification” section.

WEECAP is looking for accelerators, venture studios, and ecosystem builders ready to help shape the future of Africa's cashew economy. Applicants should bring both proven operational excellence and the creative edge needed to turn promising agribusinesses into scalable success stories.

Ideal applicants include firms, associations, or consortiums with experience in:

- Managing acceleration or incubation programs that deliver measurable growth for SMEs and start-ups
- Designing and running transparent, merit-based cohort selection processes
- Delivering hands-on workshops, mentoring, and investment-readiness training
- Building mentor and investor networks that connect entrepreneurs to real market opportunities
- Overseeing catalytic funds with strong financial management and compliance systems
- Providing post-investment support and tailored business development services
- Monitoring, evaluating, and learning from program performance to drive results
- Working in the cashew or broader agricultural value chain (strongly preferred)
- Enabling job creation and inclusive growth across youth- and women-led enterprises
- Operating effectively in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and/or Guinea-Bissau

WEECAP especially welcomes:

- Women- and youth-led organizations that bring fresh perspectives to enterprise growth
- Consortiums that combine complementary strengths across acceleration, finance, and value-chain expertise

- Partners with a strong track record of empowering women and young entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses

Business Overview & Background

Winrock International is a global nonprofit organization that provides sustainable solutions for an interconnected world. Working with partners in the United States and more than 55 countries, Winrock integrates deep expertise in agriculture, economic development, social science and the environment to offer scalable solutions that increase prosperity while protecting our planet.

The Women Economic Empowerment through Cashew Processing Program (WEECAP) aims at supporting young women and men in the cashew value chain to unravel job opportunities created by increased local processing specifically by women and young women. By unlocking the barriers in each component of the value chain, for the more financially vulnerable populations of women and young women, and with a focus on enhancing competitiveness, and inclusivity for young women processors, service providers and farmers, we plan to create dignified and rewarding jobs for 330,000 young women and men while integrating efforts throughout the value chain and the broader cashew ecosystem.

The program is articulated around 5 objectives, for a strong, resilient, competitive, and attractive cashew value chain for young women and men.

- Ensuring women especially young women are the one benefiting the most from the interventions while engaging young people and improving their environmental and social safeguarding.
- Innovative financial inclusion support through the young women and men owned processing units
- Supply ensured through young producers and producers' organizations.
- Strong competitiveness support and access to market especially for women processors,
- Policy, safeguarding, and systems that brings a sustainable systemic approach which supports local consumption.

This program will achieve the following results and impact in Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal:

- 330,000 Youth in Work.
- 70% young women, including 6% of people with disabilities
- Over 200 processors, micro enterprises, supply/production chain service providers and producer organizations benefit from improved upstream and downstream linkages.
- 200% increase in domestic processing capacity.

- \$150 million in new commitments and private sector investment leveraged by the program to support an inclusive, integrated, competitive cashew processing industry.
- Over 850,000 entrepreneurs, processors and farmers will benefit from capacity building, access to finance and systemic changes.

Submission Details

Submission Deadlines

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 PM GMT on Monday, November 17, 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted. All proposals are to be submitted following the guidelines listed below. Telephone requests will not be honored.

Winrock International may request additional documentation after the bid deadline.

Submission Delivery Address

The delivery address to be used for all submissions is:

Khar Dakono

Email: weecap.procurement@winrock.org

Submission Questions and Clarifications

Inquiries/questions must be received no later than Monday, November 3, 2025, (GMT) and must be submitted via e-mail to weecap.procurement@winrock.org Winrock will review and respond to all potential offers by Monday, November 10, 2025

Winrock will evaluate complete vendor proposals to determine which proposal represents the best value to Winrock. This is an unsealed solicitation request. Winrock reserves the right to negotiate with the bidders with or without discussion.

Electronic Submissions

Electronic submissions in response to this Request for Proposal will be accepted as long as they meet the following criteria:

- Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format
- The subject line of the email should be: "RFP – Acceleration Fund Manager – [Your Organization Name]"

Instructions to Bidders

All Organizations applying must complete the RFP Application Form (Annex B) and submit the required attachments listed in the checklist. This includes:

- Technical Proposal narrative describing the proposed acceleration program design, organizational experience, and team

- CVs of key personnel or team leads
- Organizational profile and operational footprint
- Examples of past work managing acceleration programs or funds, especially with women/youth-led firms
- Client references
- Detailed cost proposal and budget breakdown
- (Optional) Anticipated key performance indicators (KPIs) and outcome metrics
- Validity of bid: 60 days starting from the submission date.
- Cost quoted must include unit price and total price in XOF
- Include VAT if applicable
- Payment terms and complete banking information

All materials may be submitted in English or French.

Bid Documents to Include

- Legal Business Name
- Authorized contact including address, phone number and email
- Proof of business registration and nationality
- Technical Proposal including detailed approach and work plan
- Financial Proposal including a detailed budget breakdown, including professional fees, travel costs, and other expenses, and cost justification
- CVs of key personnel or team leads
- A list of previous similar contracts completed successfully with the names and contact information of clients.

Award

Winrock anticipates to notify successful bidder and provide agreement for signature the week of December 15, 2025.

- Winrock will run an open and fair competitive bidding process.
- As warranted, Winrock may increase or decrease the quantities.

Detailed Specifications

Overview

The **Acceleration Fund** is WEECAP's flagship instrument to unlock rapid, inclusive growth in the cashew economy. Designed as a **platform for innovation and scale**, it brings together smart capital, deep technical support, and entrepreneurial talent to move promising ventures from potential to performance.

The Fund target ventures that can reshape the cashew sector — from processors and service providers to tech and finance innovators — and gives them the tools, networks, and catalytic financing to grow fast, hire at scale, and compete globally.

Objective

The Acceleration Fund exists to **turn high-potential ventures into engines of jobs and competitiveness**. It will:

- Deliver structured, high-impact acceleration combining mentorship, market access, and business fundamentals — tailored to the needs of young women and men, including displaced youth, refugees, and persons with disabilities.
- Provide **catalytic funding** to remove growth barriers and spark investment.
- Offer **post-financing support** to help businesses sustain expansion and build long-term resilience.
- Generate measurable results in **employment, inclusion, and sector transformation**.

Target Ventures

The fund will serve:

- **Established enterprises** with revenues under USD 100,000 and clear market traction.
- **Cashew processors** (kernel and apple), producer organizations, and supply-chain service providers upgrading quality, efficiency, or sustainability.
- **Innovators in fintech, digital platforms, smart monitoring, or equipment manufacturing** that boost productivity and traceability.
- **Women- and youth-led enterprises** with strong leadership and scaling potential.
- Businesses committed to **local ownership, workforce development, and inclusive hiring**.

Each selected venture must demonstrate not just a good idea, but the capacity and drive to turn that idea into market success.

How It Works

1. **Identification**

WEECAP and the selected Fund Manager will jointly identify ventures through an **open, transparent, and merit-based process**, leveraging WEECAP's pipeline of entrepreneurs ready for acceleration. The focus will be on **youth- and women-led enterprises** with proven potential for scale.

2. **Acceleration**

The Fund Manager will deliver a **customized acceleration program** — combining mentorship, expert coaching, and peer learning — to sharpen strategy, strengthen operations, and connect ventures to real market and investor opportunities.

3. **Funding**

After completing the acceleration program, qualified ventures will access **catalytic financing between USD 10,000 and 50,000** to fuel growth. The Fund expects to support **around 180 enterprises** over the program's duration, with roughly **10–12 ventures per country per six-month cycle**.

4. **Post-Funding Support**

Selected ventures will continue receiving tailored business development services, market linkages, and investment-readiness support to ensure **sustained performance and measurable impact**.

Why It Matters

The Acceleration Fund isn't a side program — it's where the next generation of African agribusiness leaders will emerge. Cashew is already one of West Africa's fastest-growing value chains, and the ventures supported through this Fund will define how far and how fast that growth goes.

For accelerators, this is a chance to **set the benchmark** for how inclusive, investment-ready agribusinesses are built — in real markets, with real capital, and real results. The selected partner will not just manage a fund. They'll help shape an ecosystem — proving that when innovation meets opportunity, the cashew sector can drive jobs, exports, and lasting prosperity across the region.

Timeline

Milestone	Date
RFP Release	October 22 nd , 2025
Submission Deadline	November 17 th , 2025
Notification of Shortlisting	November 28 th , 2025
Interviews	December 1 st to December 5 th , 2025
Final Award	December 15 th , 2025

Terms and Conditions

Each Bid must conform to the following requirements

1. Must agree to the general provisions outlined in Attachment A. Any variations must be requested in the bid submission and agreed to before a purchase order is issued.
2. Winrock International will not consider advance payment.
3. A Bidder may withdraw or change a bid before the deadline to receive bids if written notice of the withdrawal or change is received by Winrock for submission of bids. Any changes may be made only by substitution of another bid.
4. Proposals received after the time specified in the request for bid will not be considered and shall be returned to the respondent.
5. Payment will not be processed until the deliverable is reviewed and accepted by the Winrock review team.
6. Winrock reserves its rights to reject any goods and to cancel all or any part of this procurement if bidder fails to deliver all or any part of the services described in the request for proposal. Acceptance of any part of the goods covered by the request to bid shall not obligate Winrock to accept future shipments nor deprive it of its rights to revoke any acceptance given. If bidder ceases to conduct its operations in the ordinary course of business or are unable to meet its obligations, Winrock may cancel this order without liability except for services previously provided or for services received. The bidder must be able to demonstrate substantial experience in working on similar projects and, in particular, to demonstrate past experience in working with organizations similar to Winrock.
7. The bidder must have excellent communication skills and methods and be able to communicate very clearly at every step of development, both providing information to the Winrock team as well as requesting, understanding and closely following guidance from the Winrock team.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to review and select applicants. Each application will be reviewed by WEECAP technical and operational leads using the scoring ranges provided.

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Max Points
Technical Approach & Methodology	Relevance, innovation, and clarity of the proposed approach for delivering the full Scope of Work.	30
Organizational Capacity & Experience	Proven track record, team strength, operational presence, and ability to mobilize in target countries and in regions other than the capital.	30
Results & Impact	Past outcomes and credibility of references in managing similar programs and funds.	20
Inclusion Track Record	Experience working with youth- and women-led enterprises in the cashew value chain or the agriculture sector; inclusive methodologies in place.	10
Value for Money	Reasonableness, transparency, and cost-effectiveness of the detailed budget proposal.	10
TOTAL		100

Note: Applicants scoring below a minimum threshold (e.g., 70 points) may not be shortlisted for the interview stage. Final selection will also consider geographic coverage and the overall strategic fit with WEECAP's objectives.

Selection Criteria

This is a competitive selection designed to identify the most capable and visionary acceleration partner for WEECAP.

Phase 1: Evaluation

All proposals will be reviewed against the criteria outlined in Annex C, focusing on both technical rigor and the ability to deliver real impact. Evaluators will assess:

- Technical expertise and the strength of the proposed program design

- Organizational capacity and operational presence in target countries
- Proven results and measurable impact with SMEs and start-ups
- Inclusion experience and strategic alignment with WEECAP's goals
- Value for money demonstrated in the cost proposal
- Relevant experience in the cashew value chain or broader agriculture sector, and ability to drive job creation

Applications will be judged not only on quality and performance history but also on geographic reach and depth of sector knowledge, ensuring the Fund is led by a partner with both experience and vision.

Phase 2: Interview & Award

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interactive interview to present their approach and discuss implementation details. Final selection and contracting will follow successful negotiations with the highest-ranked organization.

Certification of Independent Price Determination

(a) The offeror certifies that—

(1) The prices in this offer have been arrived at independently, without, for the purpose of restricting competition, any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror, including but not limited to subsidiaries or other entities in which offeror has any ownership or other interests, or any competitor relating to (i) those prices, (ii) the intention to submit an offer, or (iii) the methods or factors used to calculate the prices offered;

(2) The prices in this offer have not been and will not be knowingly disclosed by the offeror, directly or indirectly, to any other offeror, including but not limited to subsidiaries or other entities in which offeror has any ownership or other interests, or any competitor before bid opening (in the case of a sealed bid solicitation) or contract award (in the case of a negotiated or competitive solicitation) unless otherwise required by law; and

(3) No attempt has been made or will be made by the offeror to induce any other concern or individual to submit or not to submit an offer for the purpose of restricting competition or influencing the competitive environment.

(b) Each signature on the offer is considered to be a certification by the signatory that the signatory—

(1) Is the person in the offerors organization responsible for determining the prices being offered in this bid or proposal, and that the signatory has not participated and will not participate in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above; or

(2) (i) Has been authorized, in writing, to act as agent for the principals of the offeror in certifying that those principals have not participated, and will not participate in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above; (ii) As an authorized agent, does certify that the principals of the offeror have not participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to subparagraphs

(a)(1) through (a)(3) above; and (iii) As an agent, has not personally participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through

(a)(3) above.

(c) Offeror understands and agrees that –

(1) violation of this certification will result in immediate disqualification from this solicitation without recourse and may result in disqualification from future solicitations; and

(2) Discovery of any violation after award to the offeror will result in the termination of the award for default.

Attachment A: General Provisions

The following general provisions apply to all bidders responding to this Request for Proposal (RFP).

Independent Contractor: The selected firm or individual will perform services as an independent contractor and not as an employee or representative of Winrock International.

Compliance with Laws: Bidders must comply with all applicable local and national laws and regulations, including those related to labor, taxation, and data protection.

Ethical Conduct: Winrock International expects the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and professionalism. Any form of fraud, bribery, or misrepresentation may result in disqualification.

Confidentiality: Information shared as part of this RFP or subsequent contract discussions must be treated as confidential and not shared with third parties without Winrock's consent.

Conflict of Interest: Bidders must disclose any potential conflicts of interest that could influence their proposal or performance under a resulting subcontract.

Right to Reject or Modify: Winrock International reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to make no award, or to issue modifications to this RFP at any time.

Costs of Proposal Preparation: All costs associated with preparing and submitting proposals are the sole responsibility of the bidder.

Governing Law: Any subcontract resulting will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Arkansas, USA.

Additional terms and conditions will be included in the final subcontract agreement based on the nature and scope of the work to be performed.

Attachment B: RFP Application Form & Submission Checklist

Request for Proposal – Acceleration Fund Manager

Program: WEECAP – Women’s Economic Empowerment through Cashew Processing

Submission Deadline: November 17th, 2025 at 05pm GMT

Section 1: Applicant Information

Organization/Consortium Name	
Country(ies) of Registration or Operation	
Primary Contact Name	
Primary Contact Email	
Phone / WhatsApp	
Website (if applicable)	
Country(ies) of Operation for this RFP	
Area(s) of Specialization (based on section 3 of RFP)	

Section 2: Submission Checklist

A. RFP Application Form

- ☐ Completed and signed application form (this document)

B. Technical Proposal

- ☐ Narrative (max 10 pages) describing :
 - Proposed methodology for program management, cohort selection, acceleration service delivery, and funding management.
 - A work plan for a 6-month acceleration program outlining key activities, deliverables, and timelines
 - Relevant past experience managing similar funds or programs.
 - Sample results achieved (e.g., ventures accelerated, funds disbursed, jobs created).

C. Organizational Capacity

- ☐ CVs of key personnel or team leaders including roles and responsibilities of each team member

- ☐ Description of operational presence and geographic focus in target countries
- ☐ Partnerships or affiliations (if part of a consortium)

D. Inclusion & Target Group Experience

- ☐ Description of experience working with women/youth-led enterprises and inclusive selection processes
- ☐ Any relevant policies, training approaches, or client profiles

E. Cost Proposal

- ☐ Detailed budget breakdown with all major cost categories
- ☐ Budget notes explaining key assumptions
- ☐ Currency clearly specified (USD or local)

F. References

- ☐ Three client references with name, organization, email, and phone number

G. (Optional) Outcome Orientation

- ☐ Anticipated KPIs for the program (e.g., jobs created, revenue growth of participants)
- ☐ Gender/youth share of past program participants

Declaration

By signing below, I confirm that the information provided in this application is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Name:

Title:

Date:

Signature: