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An African G20 Opportunity: Making the case for the bioeconomy, green industrialisation, growth, jobs and skills development

Request for Proposals (RfP) and Terms of Reference

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1. Introduction and context setting

1.1 South Africa and the Bioeconomy

South Africa currently has a significant opportunity to influence a more equitable and sustainable international economic and financial architecture in its G20 leadership. This will be Africa's first G20 Presidency, the African Union's second year with a permanent seat, and the third and final back-to-back G20 Global South Presidency (India, Brazil and now South Africa).

An important part of this agenda is how nature — the economic engine and core vulnerability of so many low- and middle-income countries (LMICS) — is integrated into broader sustainable economic development and financing strategies. Recognising that nature — whether in the form of forest economies, agriculture, critical minerals, fisheries, biomass, genetic information or ecosystem services — represents a critical and increasingly vulnerable driver of economic growth, food security and international finance, the Brazilian government initiated a **global bioeconomy working group** under their G20 presidency last year.

As part of its G20 Global Initiative on the Bioeconomy (GIB) leadership, the Brazilian Government committed to advancing during an agreed set of [high-level principles on the bioeconomy](#) that could form the basis for national and regional action as well as international cooperation going forward. These principles, agreed in Rio on September 11, 2024, recognize

the remarkable potential of bioeconomy to contribute to building a sustainable future and fostering economic growth for all as a new productive paradigm. They outline the potential for the sustainable bioeconomy, if properly governed and financed, to help address food security and poverty, climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity loss, economic inclusion, sustainable production and consumption, and also spur technological innovation, jobs and local value creation. The bioeconomy likewise presents a means of investing in climate and nature-based remediation and resilience, something highlighted by President Ramaphosa as a critical investment areas for Global South, developing countries who are the most vulnerable to climate change.

South Africa has now committed through its Department of Science, Innovation and Technology to continuing the work of the Global Initiative on the Bioeconomy (GIB) during its G20 presidency, with a focus on measurement and data to ensure high integrity sustainable bioeconomy development and creating an international platform to support global south countries with strategy development, technology transfer and financing to scale bioeconomy efforts at the national, regional and international level. Starting with its National Bioeconomy strategy 2011-2021, South Africa's commitment to continue the work of the GIB is a critical part of advancing its core themes of **solidarity, equity** and **sustainable development**, where the bioeconomy is central to advancing a new economic paradigm that works for nature, climate and people. South Africa's leadership of the G20 bioeconomy agenda will commence on December 1, 2024, and will require substantial external support from local, regional and international actors to maximize opportunities to drive forward ambitious action during its presidency, particularly to advance the interests of global south countries.

Importantly, at the same time, Brazil has said it will continue to drive forward engagement around a sustainable bioeconomy through its COP30 Presidency this year and is working with regional development banks and external partners to explore the climate/bioeconomy nexus. South Africa's hosting of the Finance in Common Summit

What is the Bioeconomy?

Depending on the country, bioeconomy definitions vary widely, but generally can be described as the sustainable production and harnessing of biological resources and the conversion of these resources into new products, services and value streams. Examples include everything from eco-tourism and regenerative agriculture to natural material alternatives like seaweed, sisal and pineapple used to develop higher value products such as fertiliser, textiles, bioplastics or pharmaceutical products. It also includes biomass harvesting for biorefining and alternative fuel sources, more sustainable biomaterials like biocement and biosteel, new financial instruments like nature credits, and high tech "BioSolutions" in areas like alternative proteins, and new pharmaceutical drugs and diagnostics. Major economies including Brazil, China, the EU, India, South Africa, and the U.S. have ambitious bioeconomy plans, many with specific growth targets.

in February 2025, where 100s of public international development banks will come to Cape Town to discuss financing a just and sustainable economic transition, offers another key opportunity to demonstrate the role of the bioeconomy and nature in broader “green” industrial and economic transition strategies. This includes everything from sustainable biomass replacing fossil fuels, to regenerative agriculture and upcycling of bio-waste, to approaching investment in nature as investment in “infrastructure” to support adaptation and resilience.

2. Terms of Reference:

2.1 Background and rationale

A key ‘knowledge product’ input into the G20 South African presidency will be helping identify the benefits and links between the bioeconomy agenda and broader ambitions around a just and green economic transition that addresses poverty and inequality. Maximizing the benefits and minimizing disruption to existing jobs and livelihoods requires careful management of the associated challenges to ensure a just and equitable transition for all stakeholders involved. Little work has been done to date analysing the upside of jobs, skills development opportunities and other benefits of the sustainable bioeconomy, and how best to advance relevant enabling policies. In partnership with the Africa Climate Foundation (ACF), NatureFinance seeks a researcher to undertake this study looking at the job creation, economic implications, environmental and social considerations and challenges of the sustainable bioeconomy agenda for sub-Saharan African countries. Drawing on case studies from South Africa and other countries with burgeoning industries and innovation in this space, the researcher should draw on existing data and knowledge (through a combination of desk-based research/analysis and interviews) to identify the key jobs, livelihoods and equity dimensions of the bioeconomy agenda.

2.2 RESEARCH GUIDELINES

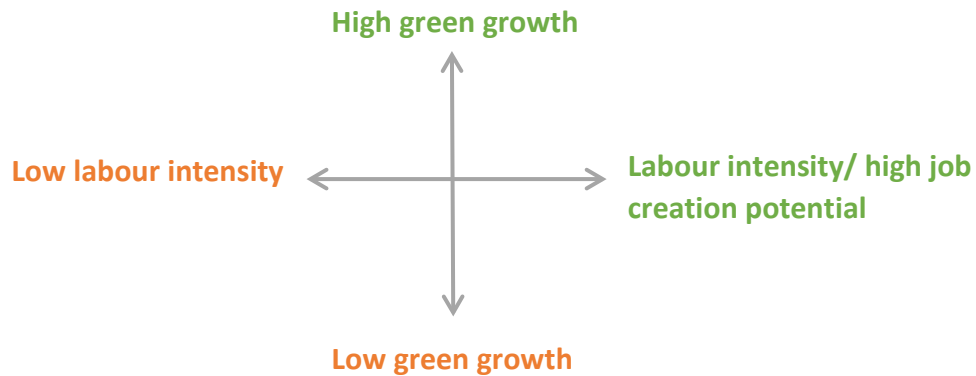
2.2.1 Research objectives and deliverables

We anticipate the research resulting in a 15-page paper and accompanying executive summary geared towards a policy audience in government, MDBs and finance sector stakeholders. The paper should ideally include four key components:

1. **Diagnostic and state of play of the bioeconomy in Southern Africa (as per SADC inclusion)** – both a policy landscape as well as investment landscape, highlighting flows to key sectors or sub-sectors. This section should make the case clear for how the bioeconomy serves the green industrialisation and growth development goals, serves the

just transition, aids in job and skills development, as well as supporting developing countries move up value chains sustainably.

2. **Prioritisation and consultation with key stakeholders** – outlining a matrix of key bioeconomy prioritisation areas for the bioeconomy in Southern Africa, along the key priority lines here and as per the high-level bioeconomy principles:



3. **A mapping the finance landscape** – a Southern African departure from a recently published report from NatureFinance on this topic, [Financing a Sustainable Bioeconomy](#), mapping the financial flows and mechanisms toward a nature positive bioeconomy and pointing toward an enabling environment which connects and scales these flows better.
4. **Designing an enabling environment and recommendations on specific financing mechanisms**

Key aspects of the sustainable bioeconomy that this study will explore include:

I. Job Creation and Transformation

Research will provide sub-sectoral and geographically specific analysis in the following areas:

1. *New/Nascent Industries:* The bioeconomy involves the emergence of new industries, particularly in biotechnology, bioplastics, biofuels, alternative textiles, circular bio-waste alternatives and sustainable agriculture, which have the potential to create new job opportunities in many of these areas.
2. *Reskilling:* Existing workers may need retraining to adapt to new technologies and processes. This transition requires investment in education and training programs to equip the workforce with necessary skills.
3. *Research and Development:* Significant increased investment in R&D related to bio-based products and processes is required to scale these industries, and can in turn drive demand for scientists, engineers, and technicians.

2. Economic Implications

Research will provide sub-sectoral and geographically specific analysis in the following areas:

1. *Economic Policy Incentives:* Industrial policies and incentives can help increase demand for bio-based materials, products and services, and disrupt incumbent industries that rely on unsustainable practices and inputs (e.g. fossil fuels, industrial agriculture)
2. *Rural Development:* The bioeconomy can potentially boost rural economies by promoting local regenerative agriculture and forestry practices, supporting farmers and small businesses.
3. *Supply Chain Changes:* Shifts in supply chains towards sustainable bio-based materials can create new jobs while also demanding adaptation from traditional industries, such as fossil fuel extraction.

3. Environmental and Social Considerations

Research will provide sub-sectoral and geographically specific analysis in the following areas:

1. *Sustainability Jobs:* The bioeconomy's focus on sustainability can lead to job creation in environmental management, conservation, and sustainable practices within various sectors.
2. *Equity and Access:* It's essential to ensure that the benefits of the bioeconomy are equitably distributed, both
3. *Risks:* Both the high-level transition risks, opportunity costs, as well as inherent risks in the bioeconomy being undertaken in a way that is not sustainable, both environmentally and socially; otherwise, it risks deepening existing problems. Innovation, standards, and oversight are critical to ensuring it is not only extractive, hence the key parameters outlined above.

The overall objective of the study is to better understand the economic potential and relative opportunity of the sustainable bioeconomy for Southern Africa as a regional hub, highlighting sectors and sub-sectors with high potential for both economic growth and value, as well as job creation and skills development. The study should then be able to point to a matrix of investment areas for scaling, as well as provide recommendation around how to build an enabling financing ecosystem as well as developing specific financing mechanisms.

2.2.2 Core Research questions

Research, Development and Innovation

- Gross Expenditure on R&D (GERD)

- Research infrastructure and technical capabilities to support bioeconomy development including areas such as (1) Indigenous Knowledge Valorisation (in sub-themes such as Nutraceuticals, Cosmeceuticals, Health Beverages and African medicines), (2) bioprocessing (production of bioproducts through fermentation or similar), and (3) biorefining (extracting value from raw materials, usually in association with an established biomass production value chain, for example biofuels).
- Innovation/commercialisation support mechanisms (including, for example, financial instruments; incubators; entrepreneur training; mentorship, market development, etc)
- Regulatory, Social and Innovation barriers or challenges that entrepreneurs face?

Policy Environment to support bioeconomy (or related) development

- Policy commitment to sustainable bioeconomy development (which may be identified as agro-processing; or food processing) but will cover areas ranging from inward technology transfer regulation; IP protection; policy support for job growth (eg through local valorisation of raw biomass).
- Policy commitment to SMME development.
- Biofuel targets or other policy underpinning bioeconomy development.

General

- What are the key challenges and barriers bioeconomy enterprises and opportunities ready for scale face in Southern Africa?
- How do we better connect key institutions, policies and strategies to create an enabling environment?
- What are regional and international priorities that speak to G20 financial and economic priorities?

2.2.3 Suggested research methods

- This study is envisioned as primarily qualitative in nature in terms of the literature review, conceptual framing as well as the stakeholder interviews. However, it will require quantitative evidence to demonstrate the sectors that require prioritisation and the landscaping of current financial flows and investments, where possible. The analysis of this study, will then require further analysis and presentation in a set of comprehensive and actionable recommendations.

2.3 Timeframe and relevant dates

The short window for this scoping and landscaping piece:

- 12 December 2024 – 13 January 2025: Proposal application period
- 27 January: Submission of work plan
- 20 February: Submission of first chapter
- 20 March: Key findings from stakeholder interviews
- 20 April: First draft submission
- 20 May: Incorporated feedback from GIB members, second draft submission
- 20 June: Final draft submission and presentation of findings to internal team

2.5 Supplier Compliance, Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest

All bidders taking part in the tender have equal opportunities and the contracting authority ensures that the contract will be awarded to the bidder that offer provides the best price-quality ratio. The following basic general principles shall govern the administration of this procurement.

1. Value for Money
2. Transparency and fair competition
3. Fairness & Equal Treatment
4. Integrity and Ethical Behaviour

NatureFinance is not bound in any way to enter into any contractual or other arrangement with any Proposer as a result of issuing this RfP. NatureFinance is under no obligation to accept the lowest priced Proposal or any Proposal and reserves the right to terminate the procurement process at any time prior to contract award. By participating in this RfP, Proposers accept the conditions set out in this RfP.

2.6 Required Documentation from Consultant

1. **Technical proposal** (including proposed approach and methodology, detailed CVs of experts as well as references of similar projects successfully completed in the past). All deviations including proposed timeline from the Terms of Reference should be clearly indicated in the proposal.
2. **Financial proposal** providing a detailed breakdown of the offered price and including all costs in USD. A detailed breakdown of the costs to perform the different activities and main category (e.g. personnel, travel and local costs, materials, printing and other related costs broken down by item). Please note that your financial proposal should be inclusive of all costs foreseen to perform the work.

2.7 Research Management: NatureFinance Management and Reporting



Any queries regarding this consultancy, the RfP content, or any other related matter should be directed to **Monique Atouguia** at monique.atouguia@naturefinance.net on copy.

3. Appendix

Summary of the Requirement

NatureFinance invites qualified bidders to submit a proposal for the provision of consultancy services for a landscaping and scoping assessment of the biocredits across Africa.

General Disclosure and Disclaimer

NatureFinance is not bound in any way to enter into any contractual or other arrangement with any Bidder as a result of issuing this RfP. NatureFinance is under no obligation to accept the lowest priced Proposal or any Proposal. NatureFinance reserves the right to terminate the procurement process at any time prior to the contract award. By participating in this RfP, Bidders accept the conditions set out in this RfP. Any response, including written documents and verbal communication, by any Bidder to this RFP, shall become the property of NatureFinance and may be subject to public disclosure. NatureFinance shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by Bidders in preparing and submitting proposals in response to this RFP or for any costs and expenses incurred in meeting with or making oral presentations to the procurement committee if so requested.

Questions to the RfP and Amendments to the RfP Documents

NatureFinance may amend the RfP documents by issuing notices to that effect to all Bidders and may extend the RfP closing date and time if deemed appropriate. Bidders are to direct any queries and questions regarding the RfP to the above NatureFinance Contact. Proposers may submit their queries no later than 30th September 2023. As far as possible, NatureFinance will issue the responses to any questions, suitably anonymised, to all Bidders. If you consider the content of your question confidential, you must state this at the time the question is posed.

Proposal Lodgment Methods and Requirements

Technical and financial proposals must be submitted via email in pdf format showing each the nature of the offer concerned (technical or financial offer), and the firm's name no later than 13th January 2024, 05:00 PM SAST to monique.atouguia@naturefinance.net with Indekhwa.Anangwe@naturefinance.net on copy. Proposals must be prepared in English.

Late and Incomplete Proposals

Any Proposal received later than the stipulated RfP closing date and time, and any Proposal that is incomplete, will not be considered. There will be no allowance made by NatureFinance



for any delays in submission of the Proposals. Where bidders are experiencing challenges with online submissions, the focal point listed on page one should be notified immediately. In such instances alternative submissions will be allowed and an official confirmation of the receipt of the bid shall be issued by the NatureFinance focal point.

Withdrawals and Changes to the Proposal

Proposals may be withdrawn or changed at any time prior to the RfP closing date and time by written notice to the NatureFinance contact. No changes or withdrawals will be accepted after the RfP closing date and time.

Validity of Proposals

Proposals submitted in response to this RfP are to remain valid for a period of 45 calendar days from the RfP closing date.

Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation of Proposals shall be carried out exclusively with regards to the evaluation criteria and their relative weights specified in part 3 of this RfP.