

THE
CARTER CENTER



Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope.

Request for Applications (RFA)

Zambia

Title: Women's Resilience in Environmental Stewardship and Empowerment (SheRise) – Women in Climate Action Awards, under the Women's Rights Initiative of The Carter Center's Human Rights Program.

Award ceiling: \$20,000

Number of awards: Up to 4

Issue date: November 12, 2025

Closing date: December 7, 2025

Contact information: hrpprocurement@cartercenter.org

Background:

The Carter Center, through the work of President and Mrs. Carter, has long upheld the belief that people can improve their lives when provided with the necessary skills, knowledge, and access to resources. In his seminal 2014 book on women's rights, "A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power," President Jimmy Carter proclaimed: *"the world's discrimination and violence against women and girls is the most serious, pervasive, and ignored violation of basic human rights."* The book continues to serve as an important wake-up call to the pervasive abuse of women and girls around the world, highlighting severe human rights violations, including strangulation, genital cutting, child marriage, and the deprivation of equal opportunity for women even in wealthier nations.

It is increasingly recognized that environmental degradation and climate change disproportionately affect women – killing more women than men, especially in regions with low levels of gender equality. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has stressed that women, especially those in poverty, face high risks and experience a greater impact of climate change. Lack of land ownership and limited access to financial resources makes them further vulnerable to negative changes in the environment. Additionally, climate change is seen as a risk multiplier,

resulting in more women being exposed to physical, sexual, and domestic abuse at higher rates following a natural disaster.

Given that women and girls are intricately linked to the climate crisis, The Carter Center's Human Rights Program, after completing a detailed scoping assessment is implementing the Women's Resilience in Environmental Stewardship and Empowerment (SheRise) pilot project in Zambia.

Project Goal: To **effectively engage existing women environmental rights defenders (WERDs)** in Zambia to **participate in climate action in their communities** through strengthening capacity, building resilience, and increasing access to resources and networks.

Based on a needs assessment in Zambia, the SheRise project was designed considering key principles such as impact, sustainability, localization, and complementarity. The project aims to guide WERDs through a self-fulfillment journey targeting the individual, community, and ecosystem levels. The following thematic areas have been identified with the objective of empowering Zambian women climate leaders by enhancing their skills to run and scale climate-friendly businesses.

Objective: To empower women environmental rights defenders (WERDs) with economic capacity in Zambia by enhancing their skills, expanding their knowledge, and improving their access to financial resources, equipping them to effectively sustain, implement, and scale their climate-smart initiatives within their communities.

For the purposes of this Request for Proposals, Climate Smart Initiatives are defined as projects, programs, or activities that integrate climate mitigation, adaptation, and sustainability objectives.

Thematic areas:

The SheRise – Women in Climate Action awards will scale or amplify existing work or projects that advance women-led climate solutions in Zambia. Eligible projects should align with the following thematic areas:

1. **Enterprise development:** Equip women with tools, trainings, networks and resources to grow climate-smart enterprises.
2. **Financial empowerment:** Improve women's financial management skills for more successful fundraising efforts and better resource allocation for their climate-smart enterprises.
3. **Grassroots funding:** Provide funding and technical assistance to grassroots initiatives to increase visibility of climate solutions led by women.

Illustrative activities:

- Develop and deliver comprehensive training sessions on business planning, marketing, financial literacy, budgeting, grant writing, and digital tools for women entrepreneurs with climate-smart enterprises.
- Establish mentorship or peer learning groups connecting rural women entrepreneurs with more seasoned leaders of successful climate initiatives.
- Create and implement an accelerator program tailored to the needs of women with climate-smart enterprises.
- Provide knowledge training on community-driven loan schemes.

- Disburse and manage microgrants for climate projects led by women.
- Provide technical assistance for project design, budget management, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning for micro-grant awardees.
- Build platforms where women can engage in policy dialogue and climate advocacy.
- Other activities that meet the project goal will be considered.

The Carter Center will be providing technical assistance and oversight throughout the engagement and implementation process.

Issue date: November 12, 2025

Application deadline: December 7, 2025

Duration: Limited duration. At most 7 months.

Start date: January 19, 2026 or later.

End date: No later than August 22, 2026.

Eligibility:

The RFA is open to organizations operating in Zambia, with the ability to carry out implementation activities in the following areas:

- Copperbelt Province: Chambishi and Ndola.
- Southern Province: Choma and Chirundu.
- Northern Province: Kasama.
- Eastern Province: Chipata.

Other eligibility considerations:

1. Organizations should be not-for-profit organizations/charities according to national laws. For-profit entities and cooperatives are not eligible.
2. They should qualify as civil society/non-governmental organizations. Governmental entities are not eligible.
3. Public and private educational institutions are eligible if they meet the above criteria.
4. Individuals are not eligible.
5. Priority will be given to organizations and initiatives led by women and projects that promote women's representation in underrepresented sectors such as sustainable agriculture, fisheries, forestry and land use, clean water and sanitation, mining, and energy.

Successful applicants must complete a pre-award survey from The Carter Center. The Carter Center will use the pre-award survey to exercise due diligence on prospective grant recipients. Organizations may submit applications individually or in partnership with other international or local organizations. Each applicant is limited to one application submission under this RFA as the prime applicant. There is no limitation on being included as a potential sub-recipient in multiple applications submitted by other prime applicants.

Submission and co-creation:

Applications should include:

- a) A cover page including:
 - i. Proposal title
 - ii. Organization name
 - iii. Address
 - iv. Phone number
 - v. Email address
 - vi. Point of contact
 - vii. Total amount of request
- b) A two (2) – three (3) page narrative proposal, including but not limited to:
 - i. Background of working with climate and environmental rights defenders, women entrepreneurs, and local communities;
 - ii. Opportunity to which the intervention is responding;
 - iii. A program design overview with activities, their impacts, beneficiary groups, implementation timeline, and MEAL plan;
 - iv. Thematic working areas for the activities;
*instead of a narrative proposal, applicants can prepare **five to seven slides** outlining the same information above.*
- c) A budget detailing line item and activity costs, including staff allocation, for the suggested time period. *See the attached budget and Gantt template.*
- d) Brief budget notes explaining calculation costs in the budget.
- e) A Gantt chart identifying activities and timeline. *See the attached budget and Gantt template.*
- f) Successful applicants will work with The Carter Center on a work plan and adaptive implementation.

Timeline:

November 12, 2025: RFA release

November 13 – 21, 2025: Window for potential applicants to email their questions to hrpprocurement@cartercenter.org.

December 7, 2025: Submission deadline

December 17, 2025: Completion of review of applications. The Carter Center reserves the right to ask clarifying questions. Questions do not indicate a successful application.

December 18, 2025 – December 29, 2025: Successful applicants will undergo a due diligence review.

January 12, 2026: Announcement of successful recipients.

January 2026: A kickoff call will be scheduled to identify roles, responsibilities, and expectations, including work plans, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting requirements.

Process

Full application packages should be submitted to hrpprocurement@cartercenter.org with the subject “SheRise – Women In Climate Action Award [NAME OF SUBMITTING ENTITY]”.

The Carter Center will acknowledge receipt of the proposal package within two business days.

Evaluation Criteria:

	Points
Technical Proposal (relevance to the program’s goals and objectives, sustainability, impact, monitoring, evaluation and learning plan)	40
Relevant Experience (relating to climate change, women’s rights, women environmental rights defenders, business development, management of microgrants)	25
Financial Proposal (cost reasonableness and allowability)	35
Grand Total	100

Instructions to applicants:

1. Basic Parameters

The Carter Center invites eligible organizations to submit technical and financial proposals to meet the specificities of the RFA above:

- a. Successful applications will align with the specificities described above.
- b. The Carter Center may, at its discretion, cancel the RFA in whole or in part.

2. Cost of proposal

The costs of preparing a proposal are the applicants’ responsibility, regardless of the outcome.

3. Eligibility

The Carter Center reserves the right to verify any information in the applicant’s proposal or request additional information after the proposal is received.

4. Questions related to RFA documents

A prospective applicant requiring clarification of the required RFA documents may contact The Carter Center in writing at hrpprocurement@cartercenter.org.

5. Language of proposal

The proposal and all related correspondence must be in English.

6. Clarification of proposals

To assist in the examination, evaluation, and comparison of proposals, The Carter Center may request further written clarification from an applicant after the proposal submission deadline. To ensure timely review, the applicant must answer any requests for further clarification or information within three business days.

7. Proposal currencies

All prices quoted in the financial proposal must only be in United States Dollars. Any agreements resulting from this RFA will be issued in United States Dollars.

8. Evaluation of technical and financial proposal

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Proposals must include the following sections:

- Background of working with women rights defenders, women entrepreneurs, women's economic empowerment, and climate justice.
- A program design overview with activities, their impacts, beneficiary groups, implementation timeline, and MEAL plan.
- Specify which thematic areas (enterprise development, financial empowerment, grassroots funding) the proposed activities will address.
- Clearly identify the proposed geographical location(s) and indicate the sector(s) of focus for implementation.

The following supporting materials are not required but may be submitted:

- CVs or descriptions of key project team members (no more than two pages)
- Brief summary of previous awards within the past five years (no more than two pages).

Applicants must demonstrate organizational experience and ability to plan and manage programming, progress reports, and financial compliance.

FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

Financial proposals will be evaluated following the completion of the technical proposal evaluation. Applicants are encouraged to develop a realistic budget that includes only a small portion of costs for overhead expenses. Budgets must be consistent with proposed activities. The applicant must have the ability to account for all costs and demonstrate an ability to reconcile expenses and maintain acceptable standards of compliance properly. The amount of funding per successful applicant depends on the number of awards.

9. Award

The award will be made to the most qualified applicant(s) who can successfully demonstrate their capacity to implement the activities outlined in their proposal with the greatest efficiency and best cost. The Carter Center reserves the right to negotiate with the selected applicant(s) to adjust their proposal to meet The Carter Center's program objectives. The award will only go into effect once all

components of an applicant's proposal are agreed upon and an agreement between the applicant and The Carter Center is signed.

The selected applicants are expected to commence implementing successful projects as of the date and time stipulated in this RFA.

The Carter Center

"Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope."

A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, The Carter Center has helped to improve life for people in over 80 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; and improving mental health care. The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide.

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