



CALL FOR BUSINESS PROPOSALS

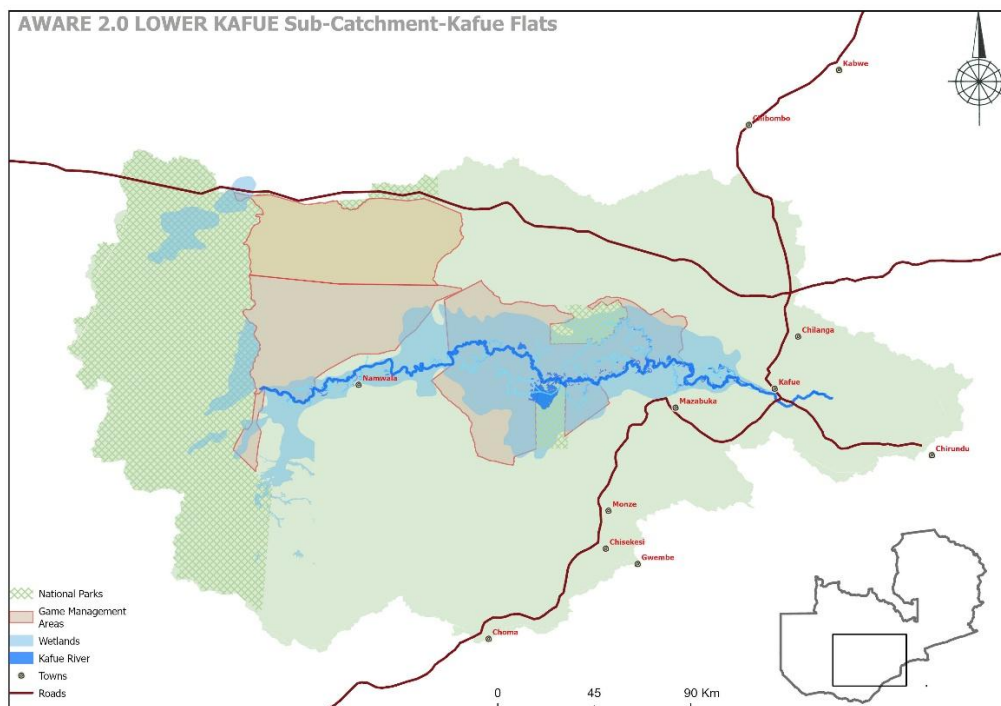
Invasive Species Clearing – Kafue Flats, Zambia

Issued by: International Crane Foundation (ICF) in partnership with
AWARE 2.0/ GIZ

Ceiling:	Max. EUR 90,000/project (ICF contribution)
Submission deadline:	31 July August – 23:59 CAT
Target species:	<i>Mimosa pigra</i> (primary); <i>Water hyacinth</i> (secondary)
Project start:	30 September 2026 (subject to successful selection)

Background

The Kafue Flats in the Lower Kafue Sub-Catchment in Zambia (see map below) is one of the most important wetland systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, an internationally recognized conservation site (RAMSAR status) and the only UNESCO recognized Man and Biosphere Reserve in Zambia. The Flats are integral to Zambia's agricultural sector, fisheries, domestic water used in Lusaka and hydropower generation. However, invasive plant species such as *Mimosa pigra* and *Eichhornia crassipes* (water hyacinth) are spreading rapidly across this ecosystem, threatening biodiversity, water quality, livelihoods of local communities, and the sustainability of conservation investments.



The clearing of invasive species is costly and currently largely donor-dependent, and thus, largely unsustainable. One promising avenue is to transform the cleared biomass into marketable products, creating a business incentive that reduces or offsets the net clearing costs and could provide an alternative income-generating avenue. The International Crane Foundation (ICF), in cooperation with AWARE 2.0 project, is therefore launching a competitive call for business proposals to identify and support the most promising private-sector solutions to test their feasibility and economic viability.

Objective of the Call

The call aims to identify the most promising ideas and/or technologies to create a financially viable business model around the clearing and removal of invasive species from the Kafue Flats. Selected applicant(s) will receive direct business support from ICF to test their proposed model for feasibility with the explicit goal of building a pathway to long-term, commercial-scale operation (max. 90,000 EUR).

Required documents for application

- Filled application form with company data
- Filled proposal form
- Proof of registration (i.e., Certificate of Incorporation from PACRA or Registrar of Societies for a Company or Co-operative, respectively)
- Valid ZRA Tax Clearance Certificate
- ZRA Tax Payer Identification Number (TPIN) Certificate

Key Questions to be addressed in proposals

Applicants are invited to address the following guiding questions in their proposal:

- What is the proposed product/ by-product/ business model to be developed from invasive species biomass to create a business incentive for clearing and removal of invasive plants, most notably, *Mimosa pigra*, from the Kafue Flats?
- Can the clearing potentially be coupled with the restoration of habitat?
- What are the potential markets, and possible diversification pathways of the biomass products?
- How feasible and implementable is the proposal, taking into account costs, logistical requirements, environmental impact, and associated risks?
- Can the value-added products be produced on site, or will the biomass need to be removed to an alternative site? How will contamination and seed spread be addressed?
- What is the foreseen volume of invasive species needed for the business to be operational?
- What resources, partnerships, and steps are required to test the business model in practice and establish a credible long-term scaling perspective?
- How will coppicing/ regeneration of the exotic plants be addressed? Are there potential uses for this?

Each application should present a self-contained, implementable business idea ready for feasibility testing. Specifically, a successful proposal will deliver:

Product & Technology Proposal

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A clearly described product or value-chain concept derived from *Mimosa pigra* (mandatory) and water hyacinth (optional). The proposal should cover:

- Description of the product(s) or service(s) to be developed from invasive species biomass
- Overview of the processing technology or methodology envisaged, if applicable with reference to carbon storage
- Identification of target markets, customers, and indicative price points
- Summary of environmental considerations and compliance requirements

Feasibility Testing Plan

A structured outline of the feasibility testing phase, including:

- Sequential steps and milestones for the feasibility test
- Key assumptions to be validated and corresponding success indicators
- Risk overview with mitigation measures

Resource & Funding Plan

A breakdown of resources required:

- Budget breakdown with justification
- Project team with concise description of the roles in project implementation
- Applicant's own co-funding contribution and proof of availability (min. 50% of total budget; i.e., 100% match funding). In-kind contribution is possible.
- Any anticipated third-party funding, in-kind contributions, or partnerships
- Roles and responsibilities of ICF, the applicant, and any third parties

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed through a two-stage evaluation process. **Stage 1 is a mandatory eligibility and administrative compliance evaluation**, under which Applicants must submit all required documents and meet all mandatory requirements in order to proceed to the next stage. Applications that are incomplete, non-compliant, or fail to meet any mandatory requirement will not advance. **Stage 2 is a technical evaluation** for Applicants that pass Stage 1; eligible proposals will be assessed using weighted scoring criteria to determine the adequacy, feasibility, and overall quality of the applications.

Criterion	Requirement
Mandatory Eligibility/Administrative Compliance: • Commercial entity or private business. • Applicant must be a legally registered entity	• Filled Application Form • Filled Proposal Form • Certificate of Incorporation issued by PACRA for a company and/or Certificate of Registration for a Co-operative. • Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) valid Tax Clearance Certificate. • Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) Tax Payer Identification Number (TPIN) Certificate
Technical Proposal	• The proposal directly addresses <i>Mimosa pigra</i> biomass as the primary target species. Water hyacinth may be included

	as a secondary species but cannot replace the primary focus.
	The requested ICF contribution does not exceed EUR 90,000 and the applicant demonstrates the required co-funding contribution with acceptable evidence.
	Clear outline of business cases and revenue streams with realistic market assumptions
	- Detailed budget for feasibility testing, including sources of funding and the amount requested from this call - Demonstrated 50% co-funding contribution with proof of funding (e.g. letter of intent) - Minimum funding requirement: 30,000 EUR (ZMW equivalent) - Maximum funding requirement: 90,000 EUR (ZMW equivalent)

Technical Proposal Evaluation Criteria for Compliance Review

Following confirmation of eligibility, compliant technical proposals will be assessed using the technical weighted criteria below. The evaluation will consider whether the proposal is complete, evidence-based, technically feasible, environmentally responsible, commercially credible, and aligned with the objective of creating a viable business incentive for clearing and removing invasive species from the Kafue Flats.

Technical Criterion	Weight	Assessment Considerations
1. Technical soundness and clarity	20	The proposed product, process, or service is clearly described; the technology or methodology is appropriate for <i>Mimosa pigra</i> biomass; assumptions are realistic; and the proposal demonstrates sufficient technical understanding to proceed to feasibility testing.
2. Feasibility and implementation approach	20	The workplan includes logical activities, milestones, staffing, equipment, logistics, and timelines; implementation requirements are practical for the Kafue Flats context; and the applicant identifies key assumptions to be tested.
3. Environmental and biosecurity risk management	20	The proposal includes credible measures for safe harvesting, handling, transport, storage, processing, and disposal or use of biomass; prevents seed dispersal and re-infestation; addresses coppicing or regeneration; and identifies relevant environmental permits or approvals.
4. Business viability and market potential	15	The proposal presents a credible value proposition, target customers, indicative demand, pricing assumptions, revenue streams, cost drivers, and a pathway toward commercial-scale operation beyond donor support.
5. Budget realism and value for money	10	Costs are reasonable, justified, linked to activities, and proportionate to expected outputs; co-funding is

		credible; and the budget demonstrates efficient use of ICF support.
6. Applicant capacity and partnerships	10	The applicant demonstrates relevant technical, commercial, operational, and financial capacity; roles and responsibilities are clear; and partnerships add practical value to delivery, market access, compliance, or scaling.
7. Monitoring, learning, and scalability	5	The proposal defines practical indicators, evidence to be collected during feasibility testing, decision points, and a realistic route to refinement, replication, or scale-up if the test is successful.
Total	100	Minimum recommended technical threshold: 70 points.

Selection Process

Stage 1 (Mandatory Eligibility and Administrative Compliance Evaluation): All applications will first be reviewed against the mandatory eligibility, administrative, and documentation requirements. Applicants must provide all required documents and evidence, including proof of legal registration, tax clearance, required application forms, budget information, and evidence of co-funding where applicable. Applications that do not meet all mandatory requirements, or that are incomplete or non-compliant, will be excluded from further consideration.

Stage 2 (Weighted Technical Evaluation): Only applications that pass the mandatory evaluation will be subjected to technical evaluation. Technical proposals will be assessed using the weighted scoring criteria set out above to determine the adequacy, feasibility, quality, value for money, environmental safeguards, business viability, and implementation capacity of each application. The highest-ranking technically adequate proposals may be shortlisted for further clarification, pitch presentation, and final selection by the selection committee.

Timeline (subject to changes)

- **Application Deadline:** 31 August 2026
- **Anticipated Assessment:** 31 August – 30 September July 2026
- **Pitch event for pre-selected companies:** around mid-September (around 20th September)
- **Anticipated Project Start:** 30th September 2026

Submission

- Applications can be submitted via email to ICF (icfzambia_procurement@savingcranes.org) (an application via the matchmaker platform is not possible)
- Submissions must be received by **31 August 2026, 23:59 Central Africa Time (CAT)**
- Shortlisted applicants will hear by 15th September 2026. Anyone who has not heard from us by then should consider their application unsuccessful. Late or incomplete applications cannot be considered

Notes

- This Call for Proposals is organized by the International Crane Foundation (ICF) with support from the AWARE 2.0 project, which is co-financed by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Supported by:



- Participation in this process does not constitute an entitlement to conclude and contract with ICF nor to receive any financial contributions from ICF.
- ICF reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to exclude any applicant from further consideration where the applicant submits false, misleading, incomplete, or non-compliant information, or otherwise fails to meet the requirements of this ICF shall not be required to assign any reason for such exclusion, nor shall ICF be obliged to explain or justify its decision to any excluded applicant.
- ICF reserves the right to react transparently to unforeseen circumstances by changing or cancelling the Call for Proposals, especially in the event of manipulation or if the execution of the project and Call for Proposals is endangered.
- Should any clause of these terms and conditions be invalid, the validity of the remaining terms and conditions remain unaffected. Recourse to the courts is not permitted.

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