

Mentorship Program Guidelines

BRIDGE Project

Context

Conservation Trust Funds (CTFs) are uniquely positioned to provide long-term support to projects that combine economic recovery and biodiversity conservation. Based on their long-standing relationships with multiple stakeholders, CTFs can convene the private sector's economic segments to support the development of more comprehensive policy and investment choices. In turn, the private sector may contribute funding and has the potential to improve the supply chain sustainability towards more responsible practices that avoid harm and positively impact nature.

The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds (RedLAC) and the Consortium of African Funds for the Environment (CAFÉ) have demonstrated experience implementing joint actions to support the positioning of CTFs as a funding catalyst and strategically for conservation and enhancing the capabilities of their member Funds.

BRIDGE Project: In 2022, both networks launched the BRIDGE Project, an initiative administered by Forever Costa Rica Association (FCRA) with the financial support of the French Facility for the Global Environment (FFEM) and the MAVA Foundation. The BRIDGE Project seeks to move the needle of CTFs in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa towards the 2030 action targets by engaging the private sector in conservation finance and how CTFs can tap into private resources, from different economic sectors, through new partnerships and innovative financial mechanisms.

The BRIDGE Project has **three components**:

- 1. Private Sector Innovation Fund:** RedLAC and CAFÉ member CTFs receive support to study and test the feasibility of new financial mechanisms involving the private sector.
- 2. Exchange and Capacity Building on Private Finance:** to develop and strengthen the CTFs' capacities to engage with the private sector through exchanges and mentorships.
- 3. Building and Managing Knowledge in the Long-term:** to produce a learning system that systematizes best practices and network members' experiences.

Component 2 aims to strengthen CTFs' capacities by providing opportunities to exchange and learn from the experiences of other CTFs, tackling specific needs or demands, shortening the learning curve, and fostering operational excellence. One of the tools to achieve this goal is the **BRIDGE Mentorship Program**.

Mentorship Program

Mentoring is a powerful process of exchanging knowledge, guidance and growth, beneficial to both the Mentor and Mentee. The main objectives of this program are to (1) strengthen CTFs' capacities and practices, and (2) support CTFs in overcome specific issues, replicate best practices, and adapt solutions to their local context with the specialized support of a more experienced CTF.

In the Mentorship Program, the Mentor corresponds to a CTF that wishes to share their experiences, practical knowledge, and trajectory in a specific topic **related to working with the private sector** with one or more Mentees. The Mentee wishes to strengthen their organizational capabilities through lessons, experiences, and expertise offered by the Mentor, in a practical, tailored, and first-hand manner. Mentorship relationships are mutually beneficial and most effective when the Mentor and Mentee agree on the intent, objectives, and purpose of the exchange. Key characteristics of a successful mentorship experience include trust, commitment to partnership building, realistic expectations, and available time.

The Mentees

Being mentored offers a valuable and practical professional development opportunity for CTFs' staff. Having the guidance, encouragement, and support of a trusted and experienced Mentor CTF can provide a Mentee with tools that can result in organizational growth and hopefully improved performance.

Key benefits for Mentees include:

- To receive guidance and support from a trusted member of RedLAC or CAFÉ,
- Greater exposure to new ideas, projects, processes, and ways of thinking,
- Opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills,
- Advice on developing strengths and overcoming challenges,
- Building meaningful connections,
- Significant cost savings by avoiding external consultancies for institutional strengthening.

The Mentors

Mentoring is more than the transfer of advice, knowledge, and insights. The relationship offers reciprocal benefits for Mentor CTFs willing to invest their time in developing another CTF. There is great satisfaction in sharing skills, experiences, and best practices with a keen learner, and mentoring also provides benefits that reward Mentors.

Key benefits for Mentors include:

- Recognition as subject matter experts and coaches.
- Opportunity to reflect on own programs, processes, and practices.
- Enhancing professional development with an international experience.
- Exposure to fresh perspectives, ideas, and approaches.
- Facilitates the growth and development of less experienced, younger CTFs.
- Collaboration to systematize best practices and share within the whole RedLAC-

CAFÉ communities.

General Guidelines

The BRIDGE Mentorship Program has been assigned **160,000 euros**. This amount includes mentorship exchanges for both CAFÉ and RedLAC CTFs, related to private sector engagement, and will be carried out in the following manner:

- **How many:** due to the limited financial resources, BRIDGE will finance up to 8 mentorship experiences chosen by a Selection Committee.
- **Modality:** Mentorship experiences can be one-on-one or group mentorships (one Mentor with 2 or more Mentees).
- **Timing:** Each mentorship experience will last between 6 and 12 months, starting in early 2024.
- **Delivery:** The delivery can be in-person, online, or hybrid.
- **Topics:** mentorship experience topics must be related to biodiversity conservation with the private sector¹.
- **Resources:** Mentorship experiences will be granted 20,000 euros each.
- **Incentive for Mentors:** Up to 40% of the funds may be allocated to the Mentor as an economic incentive to cover staff time (preparing materials, organizing and receiving Mentees, carrying out virtual or in-person sessions, etc.). The participant CTFs in the mentorship experience will jointly define the use of the remaining resources, wherein expenses should be related directly to the mentorship activities (e.g., travel costs, consultancies, translation, etc.).
- **Language:** Mentorships can be conducted in Spanish, English, French, or Portuguese, but the proposal submitted to BRIDGE and the final deliverables must be prepared in English.
- **Mentorship lead:** Each mentorship experience will have one mentorship lead. The lead CTF will sign the contract with BRIDGE, receive the full grant, and will be responsible for presenting the deliverables. The Mentor or the Mentee may assume this role, depending on each pair/group agreement.

¹ Examples include financial mechanisms (blue bonds, carbon credits, carbon offsets, projects around nature-based solutions, CER, PES, etc.) financial sustainability, fundraising, communication, public relations, etc.

How to Apply:

I. STEP ONE- MENTORS:

CTFs interested in offering their services as Mentors must proceed as follows by September 30, 2023:

a) Mentor Form: Complete this form: <https://zfrmz.com/ASRtdbWucubrwarU6zN3>, wherein the Mentor CTFs will outline:

1. Topic(s) related to private sector engagement they consider to be knowledgeable in and to have staff with the available time for the mentorship²,
2. Preferred modality (in-person, online, hybrid), and
3. Language(s): the mentorship experience can be offered in Spanish, French, English, or Portuguese.

b) Video or One-Pager: Record a 3-minute video or draft a one-pager highlighting the reasons for wanting to be a Mentor and the possible topics related to private sector engagement they are willing to provide mentorship on.

Once BRIDGE receives these forms and videos/one-pagers, they will be shared virtually among all members of RedLAC and CAFÉ. Additionally, during the 2023 network congresses in Tanzania and Perú, each prospective Mentor may briefly present their offerings.

II. STEP TWO- MENTEES:

CTFs interested in being mentored in topics related to private sector engagement by other more experienced CTFS (these are Mentors) will contact one or several potential Mentors, according to their interests, needs, and objectives, and together, will decide whether to prepare and submit a mentorship proposal. The more specific and concise The Mentee is in defining what it wants to accomplish via a mentoring relationship, the more effectively the Mentor(s) will be able to help it.

The deadline to submit proposals is December 31, 2023.

Important information:

- **A CTF may submit a maximum of 2 proposals as a Mentor and 2 proposals as a Mentee, but only one of each type may be selected.**
- **All mentorship proposals will only be accepted in English to ensure all Selection Committee members can review all proposals.**

See Annex 1 for further details on the mentorship experience proposal.

² Topics must be related to private sector engagement: financial mechanisms, financial sustainability, fundraising, communication, public relations, etc.

Key dates in 2023 and 2024

August 15-September 30	Potential Mentors voluntarily manifest their interest in and possible topics to mentor in. A video or a one-pager is created. If a CTF submits this material by August 22, it will be shared at the CAFÉ congress in Tanzania.
October 1-31	Potential Mentors' videos and one-pagers are shared with other CTFs virtually and during the RedLAC congress in Cusco.
November 07-December 31	Interested Mentees reach out to Potential Mentors ³ and jointly prepare and submit a proposal.
January 01-February 15	The BRIDGE Selection Committee carefully reviews all proposals and chooses up to 8 mentorship experiences to receive implementation grants.
First quarter of 2024	Mentorships start implementation.

Annex 1. Mentorship Experience Proposal

Once Mentors and Mentees decide to submit a mentorship experience proposal, they must access the following form: <https://zfrmz.com/57Ek0ZnveBlG8pcfo9dr> and prepare the narrative proposal and a budget **in English**:

1) Proposal Narrative: in a maximum of 5 pages, Mentor and Mentee CTFs must explain why they want to work together in this mentorship experience, on what topics related to private sector engagement, and the participants and activities foreseen. The following section explains the components to strengthen the narrative section of the proposal:

- **Clear goals & objectives:** the proposal includes clear goals and objectives for the mentorship experience.
- **Topic Relevance:** the mentorship experience proposal supports CTF engagement with the private sector.
- **Mentorship Exchange design:** the proposal design explains the modality, language, topics to be reviewed, activities that will take place, and a brief timeline chart (for example a Gantt matrix to display proposed activities) and describes each CTF's roles and responsibilities.
- **Impact on participant CTFs:** ¿how is the idea transformational to both Mentor and Mentee(s)?
- **Staff involvement:** detail the participants from the Mentor and Mentee CTFs that would be part of the exchange, their position, a brief professional profile, and their time commitment.
- **Use of resources:** describe how BRIDGE resources will be invested.
- **Replicability and scalability:** ¿how could the mentorship, once carried out, be replicated and/or scaled up by other CTFs?

³ CTFs that did not announce their services as Mentors earlier can do so during this period.

2) Budget (in euros): Applicants must fill out a budget matrix to explain how resources will be used and what expenses will be covered (e.g., Mentor staff⁴, consultancies, meetings, domestic and international travel expenses). Altogether, budget lines must respond to and match all activities proposed in the narrative proposal and must not exceed 20,000 Euros. BRIDGE encourages CTFs to provide in-cash and in-kind matching resources during mentorships implementation.

⁴ As mentioned above, up to 40% of the funds may be allocated to the Mentor as an economic incentive to cover staff time