

## Verde Ventures Fund

### *Request for proposals from Africa*

**Verde Ventures (VV)** builds sustainable green economies by investing in small and medium sized businesses that are strategically placed to contribute to conserving Earths biologically richest and most threatened areas

[www.conservation.org/explore/priority\\_areas](http://www.conservation.org/explore/priority_areas).

Verde Ventures seeks out those enterprises best suited to maintaining and valuing healthy, intact ecosystems and ecosystem services.

VV is launching a request for proposal to provide loans and technical assistance services to African SMEs.

Lack of access to financing is consistently cited by Small and Medium Enterprises as one of the main barriers to growth. With limited access to financing, SMEs struggle to make the investments they need to increase productivity, improve competitiveness, develop new markets, and hire more people. This is particularly true in African countries.

Verde Ventures is grateful to **Agence Française de Développement (AFD)** and **Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)** for their support of this important and exciting initiative.

#### **Pre-selection Criteria**

To be eligible for support from Verde Ventures, the enterprise must be an SME in Africa that benefits biodiversity conservation and human well-being.

#### **Enterprise Eligibility:**

All enterprises must adhere to the following minimum criteria to be eligible for Verde Ventures' financing:

- Make a direct contribution to our priorities, particularly in addressing climate,

freshwater and food security (see [conservation.org](http://www.conservation.org) for more information).

- Have a strong management team.
- Demonstrate commitment to and participation of a local community.
- Have less than \$5 million (US) in total business assets during the investment period.
- Demonstrate sufficient cash flow or growth potential to repay the investment within three to five years.
- Demonstrate capacity to repay the investment in U.S. dollars, despite local currency fluctuations.
- Be able to monitor changes in biodiversity throughout during the life of the investment period.
- Be located in CI's global priority areas. For more information on these areas, visit <http://www.conservation.org/explore/map/Pages/map.aspx>

**Any income generating SME directly benefiting people and biodiversity conservation is encouraged to apply.**

#### **Examples of eligible SMEs**

- **Agro forestry (including coffee and cocoa):** Shade-grown and sustainable agriculture that buffers biologically important protected areas.
- **Ecotourism:** Ecotourism products and services that protect biodiversity and provide conservation-oriented employment and income for communities living near protected areas.
- **Wild-harvest products:** Businesses that develop and promote oils, nuts, fruit, plants, fibers and other natural materials sustainably harvested near protected areas.

- **Energy:** Businesses that develop and promote high efficiency energy options and /or low-carbon energy options in rural Africa. We are particularly interested in SMEs that address charcoal and fossil fuel efficiency and/or substitution.

An enterprise can use the money to finance identified needs directly related to its growth, including:

- Working capital
- Purchase of inventories
- Improvement of infrastructure
- Replanting
- Purchasing seedlings and materials
- Purchase of land
- Training and capacity-building

The funds must be used according to the enterprise business plan. **Each applicant shall demonstrate how the financing would help the enterprise directly support biodiversity conservation and human well- being.**

### Use of the funds

To apply, please send your letter of inquiry to [verdeventures@conservation.org](mailto:verdeventures@conservation.org), or visit our web site at [www.conservation.org/verdeventures](http://www.conservation.org/verdeventures)

### Application deadline:

VV welcomes applications through 2011.

