

## How does BCR make CIF decisions?

This document has been updated for Pool F

### Role of BCR

BCR was set up as an independent entity under the Alternative Remedies Package (ARP) agreed between the Treasury (HMT), the European Commission and Natwest Group plc.

The ARP sets the criteria for, and amounts of, any awards, along with the timelines within which activities such as opening and closing of bid periods, decision-making and disbursement of funds must take place.

BCR's primary role is to apply the terms of the ARP and, operating strictly within the ARP terms, to apply the given eligibility criteria and to then consider the applications of eligible bodies. Award decisions are made at BCR's sole discretion.

### Monitor

HMT has appointed Mazars as the monitor for the project. Their role is in part to assure HMT that the processes BCR has in place are robust and effective. They attend BCR board meetings and bid decision meetings.

The Monitor are involved in signing off on BCR compliance with the agreed processes and also in monitoring the award implementation and BCR monitoring of performance.

### The applicant journey

Potential applicants must be eligible against the criteria established in the ARP. These can be viewed [here](#).

Applicants use standard application forms and can engage in Q&A with BCR within published deadlines. The application form for Pool F can be found [here](#).

Successful applicants sign a contract with BCR.

### The CIF award process

As required in the project design, BCR will use Baringa Partners LLP as its external firm to deliver the pre-Board processes and act as a resource to the BCR Board. Baringa support BCR as follows:

- Eligibility and sanction checks are undertaken by the Baringa team upon receipt of applications.
- Applications are then assessed by the Baringa team against the [assessment criteria](#) to produce a longlist for each award which is then presented, together with financial health and reputational considerations, to the BCR Board which then decides how to proceed.
- All longlisted applications are then considered by an Expert Panel of Baringa's senior consultants (BCR attend as observers) to establish a proposed unranked shortlist for each award.
- The shortlist is then presented to BCR's Evaluation Committee which will review and finalise a shortlist for presentation to the BCR Board. Baringa supports the Board by providing additional information as required to support the Board decision making process.

- If at any stage BCR needs further information from applicants, it will seek to address these in the first instance via the Scout tool but, if necessary, may also use face-to-face meetings. These are likely to be virtual given the current situation and timing of this process.
- Each Board member (4 in total) has a single vote deciding which eligible organisations receive the CIF awards.

The Monitor attends to observe the decision-making process and decisions are not announced until Monitor confirmation of satisfactory processes has been received.

Applicants are informed of the outcome, subject to contract in the case of those offered awards. While BCR is required to release funds within 40 business days of contract signing, it is anticipated in this Pool that funds will be distributed promptly after contracts are signed.

### Confidentiality

In the course of receiving bids BCR becomes privy to commercially sensitive information and consequently BCR are not at liberty to expose in public or to third parties the details of bids or the discussion of them.

### Transparency pre and post award

Transparency is a core value of BCR.

*Applications:* Full details of the information required from applicants in their application form is viewable [here](#). This includes a requirement for senior level sign off for the statements and commitments made.

*Agreements:* The Alternative Remedies Package provides a CIF template agreement for successful bidders, and any application is made in the awareness and acceptance of the terms in the agreement template.

The agreement includes provision for a formal process for BCR monitoring of the use of funds by the successful applicants and the circumstances in which BCR can elect to audit and/or claw back funds, including where the applicant wants to make a change to its business case as submitted at application.

Full details of the CIF template agreement are viewable [here](#). The Agreement will terminate on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Where money remains unspent past this date and/or Public Commitments remain unfulfilled, awardees should expect some sort of monitoring to maintain transparency around their progress.

*Public commitments:* To maximise public transparency, BCR requires that every bidder provides us with a set of commitments in the knowledge that, should their bid be successful, these will be published and they will thereby be held publicly accountable for them both during and beyond the BCR monitoring period.

The commitments of those awarded can be found on our website ([here](#)) and, as part of contracting arrangements, BCR will be requiring that awardees produce regular and comparable updates available for public scrutiny along with their key achievements.