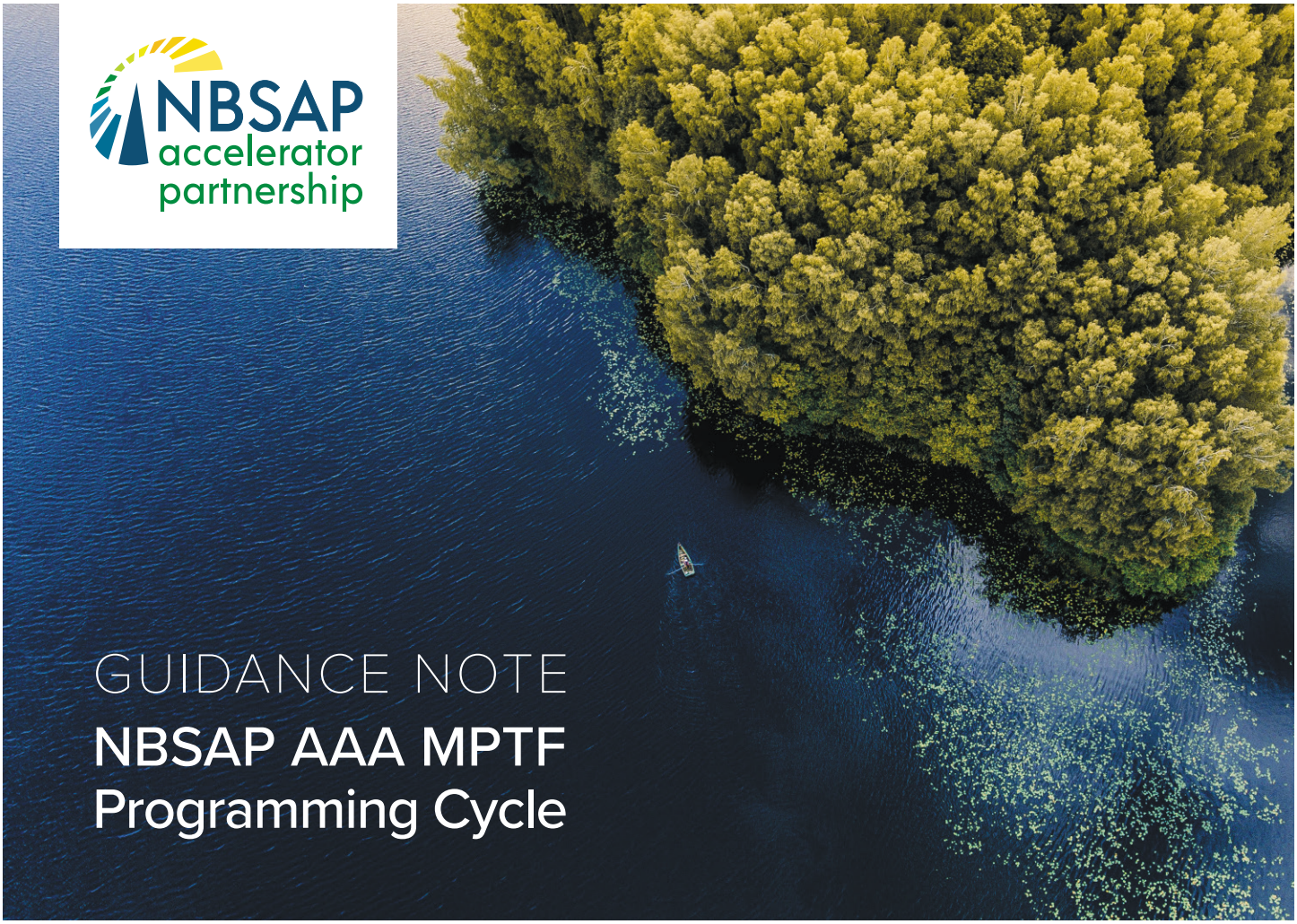

GUIDANCE NOTE
NBSAP AAA MPTF Programming Cycle

This note is intended as practical guidance to help countries and partners navigate the AAA process smoothly. It provides **step-by-step instructions for countries, Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs), and Non-UN Organizations (NUNOs) that are members of the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership (NBSAP AP)**. It explains the process that follows once a MatchMaking Mechanism (MMM) request has been recommended by the Global Coordination Unit (GCU) for consideration by the NBSAP Accelerator Action Account (AAA) Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). The AAA is designed to unlock the implementation of high-priority NBSAP actions when no other funding source is available, helping countries move from planning to delivery.

Templates are available at the following link: AAA Project Proposal Development

For further details, consult the NBSAP AAA MPTF Operations Manual.

WHEN DOES AN MMM-REQUEST BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR THE NBSAP AAA MPTF?

Countries, PUNOs and NUNOs **cannot submit proposals directly to the AAA**. Entry into the AAA occurs exclusively through the NBSAP AP's MMM.

An MMM request becomes eligible for AAA consideration **only when** it has been circulated in **two matchmaking cycles** and **no supplier match** has been found. When this condition is met, the GCU assesses whether the request meets the AAA's technical, strategic, and operational eligibility requirements. The GCU prioritizes eligible requests and submits them to the AAA Secretariat twice per year.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - STEP BY STEP GUIDE

STEP 1

GCU discussion with Countries and identification of PUNO/NUNO

Step 1.1 – Discussion with Countries

When a proposal is eligible and prioritized for the AAA, the GCU meets countries to confirm eligibility, clarify expectations, and prepare the country to adapt the MMM Request Form for the AAA. Only essential refinements and clarifications are expected at this stage, as the proposal should reflect the core MMM request already submitted by the country.

The GCU assesses whether the request meets the AAA's eligibility criteria. These include:

- Alignment with thematic, geographic, and KMGBF target gaps identified through the MMM gap analysis
- Endorsement by the national Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) focal point
- Confirmation by the country that no other funding source is available
- Designation as the country's single priority request for AAA consideration that year (where multiple requests exist)
- Funding envelope between USD 250,000 and 750,000
- Activities to be undertaken within a 24-month period
- Minimum gender marker of GEN 1 is required, while GEN 2 and GEN 3[1] are encouraged
- Delivered through a PUNO or NUNO that is a member of the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership
- Readiness of the country and PUNO/NUNO for timely preparation of the project document and delivery of resultss.

Before submission to the AAA, the MMM Request Form (with AAA additions) must be signed by the government representative and the PUNO/NUNO.

The complete eligibility criteria can be found in the Operations Manual in chapter 1.6.2.

Key Output: The MMM Request Form is adapted to the AAA requirements.

1 The UNDP Gender Marker is a monitoring tool assigned at the output and activity level, used for tracking investments to advance or contribute to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. GEN1 corresponds to "Some contribution to gender equality"; GEN2 to "Gender equality as a significant objective"; GEN3 to "Gender equality as a principal objective". For more information: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2025-10/undp-investing-in-gender-equality-gender-marker-undp-roadmap.pdf

Step 1.2 – Identification of a PUNO/NUNO

The identification of a PUNO or NUNO is a critical step, as this organization will be responsible for administering funds and implementing the project.

No PUNO or NUNO may be pre-identified before AAA eligibility is confirmed. Once the request is considered for the AAA, the country may propose a preferred implementing partner from the NBSAP AP's membership list. If no preference is indicated, the GCU and AAA Secretariat will support the identification process.

Costs for PUNO/NUNO support can be added for up to 7% to the original budget submitted to the MMM.

Key Output: A PUNO or NUNO is identified, and the adapted MMM Request Form is signed by all parties.

STEP 2
Board Endorsement and Solicitation of a Project Document

On behalf of the country and PUNO/NUNO, the GCU submits the prioritized MMM Requests to the AAA Secretariat for preparation ahead of a AAA Board Meeting.

When the AAA Board endorses a request, it authorizes the country and PUNO/NUNO to proceed to full project development, using the AAA templates. **The endorsement does not constitute project approval**. Approval follows only upon satisfactory development and review of the project document (PRODOC) by the AAA Secretariat.

After endorsement, the AAA Secretariat initiates eligibility assessments. For PUNO's, standard UN compliance measures apply. For NUNOs, a Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) assessment, Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) screening and Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP), and other requirements may apply.

These requirements should be met at the earliest possibility for both PUNOs (e.g. SESP) and NUNOs (e.g. SESP and collaborating with AAA Secretariat on HACT+SEAH) and submitted to the AAA Secretariat for approval.

If requested and as a part of step 1.2, the AAA Secretariat can provide the country with the full list of eligible NBSAP AP members, including those with completed eligibility assessments.

The project preparation package shared with the notified countries and PUNO/NUNO, and the endorsement notification, includes the following templates:[2]

- AAA Project Document
- AAA Project Revision Request Form
- Mid-Term Narrative Report
- AAA Project Update
- Self-Certification of Compliance with IKI Exclusionary Criteria
- Equivalence Assessment Social and Environmental Screening Tool (institutional level)[3]
- Social and Environmental Screening (project level)
- Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) Assessment Questionnaire[4]

Key Output: The country and PUNO/NUNO receive the Board endorsement notification and project preparation package. NUNO eligibility assessments begin, where relevant.

STEP 3
AAA-Project Document mid-term review

Countries and PUNO/NUNOs must submit a draft PRODOC within six weeks of receiving the project preparation notification. The draft should be as complete as possible at this stage. The AAA Secretariat conducts a first review of the documents and provides feedback within four weeks. This step is critical to confirm implementation readiness and identify any major gaps that must be addressed. Where needed, the AAA Board or TAG may be consulted.

To comply with the mid-term review requirements, the country and NUNO/PUNO must submit to the AAA Secretariat, by the specified deadline, at least the following documents:

- AAA Project Document
- Signed Self-Certification of Compliance with IKI Exclusionary Criteria
- SESP equivalence assessment[5]
- SESP template at project level[6]
- SEAH self-assessment questionnaire (if requested)[7]

Key Output: The draft Project Proposal Package is reviewed, and recommendations are provided.

2 Projects funded by IKI must submit an Exclusion Criteria Self Certification form.
3 Applicable just to NUNOs
4 Applicable just to NUNOs
5 Applicable just to NUNOs
6 This form is required only for PUNOs and for NUNOs applying UNDP SES Policy. NUNOs with institutional equivalence should apply their own SES policy and tools, aligned with UNDP SES principles.
7 Applicable just to NUNOs

STEP 4
Approval of AAA Project

The final PRODOC and attached documents (as listed in step 3) must be submitted to the AAA Secretariat within four weeks of receiving mid-term review feedback. Some flexibility may be applied for NUNOs undergoing required eligibility assessments.

The AAA Secretariat has delegated authority from the AAA Board to approve project documents.

If the project document is not approved, it may be resubmitted once within one month. If the resubmission is also unsuccessful, the AAA Board may reallocate the funding to another project.

Once the PRODOC has been approved by the AAA Secretariat it must be signed by the government representative, the NUNO/PUNO and the head of AAA Secretariat within 20 working days of approval.

Key Output: Project Approved and PRODOC signed.

STEP 5
Transfer and Receipt of Funds

Upon approval of an AAA-project the AAA Secretariat will request the Multi-Partner Trust Find Office (MPTFO) disbursement of the authorized amount, subject to the availability of funds.

The MPTFO prepares and finalizes all required legal documents together with the PUNO's and NUNO's, after which funds are transferred to the implementing organization, subject to availability of resources.

Key Output: Legal agreements completed and funds disbursed.

STEP 6
Project Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

Countries, PUNOs and NUNOs are responsible for continuous monitoring in accordance with the results framework, workplan, budget and risk management strategy included in the project document. The AAA Secretariat oversees the process and provides advice on proper performance indicators and methods of data collection and analysis.

Narrative progress reports must be submitted twice a year to the AAA Secretariat. Financial reports are due once a year for PUNOs and every quarter for NUNOs (see Chapter 5.2 of the Operations Manual).

For further information about project reporting, monitoring and evaluation, please refer to the Operations Manual.

At the request of the AAA Board, a final evaluation will be carried out for learning and impact assessment purposes. Results will be shared with the AAA Board, NBSAP AP Steering Committee, and donors.

Key Output: Narrative reports submitted twice per year, and financial reports once a year (PUNO) or quarterly (NUNO).

STEP 7
Project updates or changes

Any significant programmatic or budgetary changes during implementation must be requested through the AAA Revision Request Form and may require approval by the AAA Secretariat or AAA Board depending on the scope of the revision.

For further information about project updates, revisions, and changes, please refer to the Operations Manual.

Key Output (if applicable): Project updated

STEP 8
Project Closure

Projects are operationally closed by the MPTFO upon reception of the Project Final Narrative report and confirmation of closure through the AAA Secretariat. The Participating Organization then submits the final financial report as well as any balance of funds to be returned to the AAA account (and any audits due in case of a NUNO). The MPTFO closes the project financially following the steps above.

Key Output: Project operationally and financially closed

ANNEX 1: INDICATIVE TIMELINE OVERVIEW[8]

- **Stage 1:** Two rounds of MMM distribution and attempts at supplier matching, each distributed every 3 months (approx. 6 months total).
- **Stage 2:** GCU processing (approx. 2 months, excluding time allocated for supplier response). The GCU screens eligible requests, conducts gap and eligibility checks, supports identification of a PUNO/NUNO, and prepares the package for AAA submission.
- **Stage 3:** AAA Processing before potential endorsement (approx. 1.5-2 months from GCU submission to AAA Board endorsement). The AAA Secretariat reviews the GCU package, prepares materials for the AAA Board, and the Board issues endorsement decisions. Once endorsed, countries and PUNOs/NUNOs receive written notification to begin PRODOC development

After endorsement, the following schedule applies (with some variations across contexts):

Step	PUNO Timeline	NUNO Timeline	What Is Required	Responsible
First Stage PRODOC Development	6 weeks from notification	6–10 weeks from notification[9]	Draft PRODOC package, SES screening. NUNOs may undergo HACT/SEAH eligibility in parallel.	Country + PUNO/NUNO
Mid-Term Review by AAA Secretariat	4 weeks	4 weeks	Secretariat reviews and provides consolidated comments	AAA Secretariat
Finalization of PRODOC	4 weeks after mid-term comments	4 weeks after mid-term comments	Final PRODOC consolidated and submitted for approval. Late submission may lead to reallocation	Country + PUNO/NUNO
Final Review and Approval	Up to 4 weeks	Up to 4 weeks	Final approval by AAA Secretariat. Partners may receive a 1-week clarification request	AAA Secretariat
Required Signatures	Within 20 working days of approval	Within 20 working days of approval	Signatures from: Government, PUNO/NUNO, AAA Secretariat ++	Country + PUNO/ NUNO / AAA Secretariat
MPTF Processing & Disbursement	~4 weeks	~4 weeks	Preparation and signature of the Financing/ Framework Agreements between NUNO and MPTFO.[10] MPTFO processes Fund Transfer Request upon submission of relevant documents.	MPTFO, AAA Secretariat, Country + PUNO/NUNO

For any questions, countries and partners are encouraged to contact the GCU at any stage of the process.

8 Timelines are indicative and may vary depending on readiness and partner processes
9 NUNO PRODOC development process can take longer than PUNO's if HACT/SEAH assessments are not available and need to be conducted.
10 If a PUNO-led project, once PRODOC is signed and all required signatures are received, the AAA Secretariat may initiate the FTR immediately.

GLOSSARY

AAA	NBSAP Accelerator Action Account Multi-Partner Trust Fund
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
GBF / KMGBF	Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GCU	Global Coordination Unit
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
IKI	International Climate Initiative
MMM	MatchMaking Mechanism
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NBSAP AP	NBSAP Accelerator Partnership
NUNO	Non-UN Organization
PRODOC	Project Document
PUNO	Participating UN Organization
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
TAG	Technical Advisory Group