Access to finance is a key component in successfully implementing sustainable, transformative projects that drive climate change action in Africa. A project concept note is a vital step in this process.

A PROJECT CONCEPT NOTE

- outlines a proposed actionable project
- captures a proposed project’s essence, potential and rationale
- succinctly and convincingly presenting core objectives, anticipated outcomes, scope and critical needs
- generates interest and secures support
- guides stakeholders, partners, and decision-makers toward a shared understanding
- is crucial for funders to evaluate alignment with their goals and criteria
- simplifies complex early-stage ideas from a range of interested organisations, to provide a compelling glimpse of transformative impact
- suggests areas for further development or data collection
- distils innovation, strategy and vision, and informs further planning, resource allocation and implementation
- translates ideas and intentions into concrete actions, articulating objectives and benefits
- paves the way for positive change and invites stakeholders to collectively bring possibilities into reality
WHERE THE PROJECT CONCEPT NOTE FITS IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Projects mature over five phases - Idea, concept, feasibility and impact analysis, funding structuring and implementation - which are outlined below. Over this development process, one (or a subset) of the initial project ideas will continue to execution.

IDEA
- Identification of a problem, opportunity or need that the project aims to address.
- Initial brainstorming and generation of ideas for potential solutions.
- Preliminary discussions to refine the project scope and objectives.

CONCEPT
- Developing a clear and detailed concept for the project.
- Defining the project’s goals, scope, deliverables and stakeholders.
- Outlining the basic strategies and methods that will be used to achieve the project’s objectives.

FEASIBILITY AND IMPACT ANALYSIS
- Conducting a thorough feasibility analysis to assess the practicality of the project.
- Evaluating technical, operational, financial and legal aspects to identify potential challenges.
- Performing an impact analysis to understand the project’s potential effects on the environment, society and relevant industries.

FUNDING STRUCTURE
- Identifying and evaluating potential sources of funding for the project.
- Developing a comprehensive budget that outlines all the anticipated costs and expenses.
- Creating a funding strategy that may involve seeking investments, grants, loans or other financial arrangements.

IMPLEMENTATION
- Putting the project plan into action based on the defined concept and funding structure.
- Managing and coordinating various tasks, resources and stakeholders.
- Monitoring progress, identifying and addressing issues, and making necessary adjustments.
- Ensuring that the project is completed within the specified timeline and budget.
Gather information about the decision-making processes and criteria of the relevant funder.
Understand what the funder prioritises and how they evaluate projects for funding.

Review and analyse the primary impacts of climate change relevant to the project’s location.
Identify vulnerabilities that the project must address to enhance resilience.
Use information from local and national assessments to inform this analysis.

Identify relevant local, national and regional development and environmental plans.
Evaluate how the proposed project aligns with the objectives of these plans.
Assess the project’s contribution to fulfilling the broader development goals.

Clearly state the project’s objectives and outcomes.
Describe the activities that will be undertaken to achieve those objectives.
Outline a monitoring plan to track progress and measure success.

Justify the capacity of the implementing institution to carry out the proposed objectives.
Highlight the skills, resources and expertise available for successful implementation.
Identify any gaps in data, resources or capacity that need to be addressed.

Emphasise stability and good governance in the project’s investment climate.
Highlight measures taken to ensure a favourable environment for both public and private funders.
Consider seeking financial support from regional or national governments if your organisation’s financial standing is not strong.