

SME LOOP

Call for Application



Information Pack

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About GRAPE 2 Project

Green Resilient Agricultural-Centred Private Sector Economic Development (GRAPE 2) works with the Government of Nepal to promote sustainable economic development. The project collaborates with Nepali and international partners to strengthen entrepreneurship, build climate resilience, and create new economic opportunities for women and youth. The project connects producer groups, entrepreneurs, cooperatives, traders, associations, policy makers, and other stakeholders. GRAPE 2 project is jointly financed by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It is implemented under the guidance of the Ministry of Land Management, Co-operatives, Federal Affairs & General Administration.

About SME Loop


GRAPE 2 aims to improve the quality of business development services for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), especially those led by women and youth. To achieve this, GRAPE 2 uses GIZ's standard SME Business Training and Coaching Loop (SME Loop), which has been successfully piloted in around 30 countries across East and West Africa. The SME Loop not only provides theoretical business management training but offers intensive coaching to help SMEs develop business strategies and improvement plans and facilitates connections with financial and other business development service providers. In Nepal, the business strategies will integrate gender and climate-related aspects to enhance competitiveness, create new market opportunities, and support long-term business growth. GFA Consulting Group is implementing the SME Loop for the GRAPE 2 project of GIZ.

SME Loop

Business Development Programme

The SME Loop is a business development programme designed to support SMEs at every stage of their business growth journey, combining:

- Practical training
 - The training is focused not only on classroom-based theoretical learning but also based on group discussions on practical problems faced by participating enterprises
- One-to-one coaching
 - Each participating entrepreneur should help herself/himself to apply the learning of the training in a practical way to her/his enterprise according to the state of their business under the coach's facilitation
- Business planning support
 - Assisting in the formulation of a business plan by analyzing the business through discussion with the entrepreneur
- Market & finance linkages
 - Facilitating the development of relationships with other entrepreneur and financial institutions related to one's enterprise
- Climate resilience
 - Supporting enterprises to build climate-resilient value chains, adopt green business practices, and integrate climate action into their business operations.
- Women economic empowerment
 - Promoting women's leadership and creating more equitable access to opportunities.

 You don't just learn, you apply directly to your enterprise.

Call for Applications from Agribusiness Small & Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs)

Grow your business. Build resilience. Connect with entrepreneurs.

The SME Loop business development programme supports selected SMEs to:

1. Improve business decision-making and management practices
2. Increase revenue and profitability
3. Strengthen resilience to climate and market risks
4. Improve market access and competitiveness
5. Foster inclusive leadership and equitable economic participation

1. Who Can Apply?

We are looking for:

- 1) Growth-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises in agriculture and value chains, including processing, trading, services, and commercially oriented farming businesses;
 - Women-led or youth-led enterprises.
 - Potential to improve and expand.
 - Operating in Koshi, Sudurpashchim, Karnali, Bagmati, & Lumbini provinces.
- 2) Enterprises willing to commit time and effort to the programme.

2. Enterprises that may not be suitable for this programme

⚠ Not suitable for:

- 1) Businesses not actively operating
- 2) Enterprises not ready to engage seriously
- 3) Farmers engaged in subsistence or non-commercial production activities.

<p>3. What Can You Achieve?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increased sales and business growth opportunities 2) Reduced business risks and stronger resilience 3) Better business decision-making and teamwork 4) More effective use of business resources and market opportunities
<p>4. Why Join?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Practical business support beyond classroom training 2) Coaching focused on real business improvements 3) Opportunities to strengthen business networks and ecosystem linkages 4) Exposure to climate-resilient and inclusive business practices 5) Preparation for future market and finance opportunities
<p>5. What Will You Receive?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Business Performance & Growth Analysis: Identify business opportunities, operational challenges, and growth priorities. 2) Market Access, Leadership, & Inclusive Business Practices: Strengthen market positioning, teamwork, leadership participation, and inclusive business practices. 3) Climate-Resilient & Sustainable Business Practices: Reduce business risks, improve resource efficiency, and strengthen resilience to climate and market shocks. 4) Business Development & Finance Readiness: Develop practical business improvement plans and prepare for market and finance opportunities. 5) Individual Coaching & Business Guidance: Receive regular coaching support to apply improvements directly within your business. 6) Final Business Pitching & Business Networking: Present your business ideas and connect with ecosystem actors and peers.

6. Course Structure

- 1) Three Practical Training Workshops (each three days)
- 2) Regular One-on-One Coaching Sessions over six to nine months
- 3) Business Improvement Planning
- 4) Market & Finance Preparation
- 5) Final Business Pitching & Business Networking

7. Programme Details

Programme will be conducted in two cohorts*:

- First Cohort: 6 to 9 months duration
- Second Cohort: 6 months

First Cohort:

📍 Locations: Koshi Province, Duhabi Municipality (Koshi Province), Bagmati Province (Kathmandu Valley), Sudurpaschim Province

📅 Duration: ~6–9 months

📋 Format: Training + Coaching + Pitching

💰 Cost: Free

Second Cohort:

📍 Locations: Duhabi Municipality (Koshi Province), Bagmati Province (Chitwan and Kathmandu Valley), Lumbini Province (Nawalparasi West, Rupandehi and Kapilbastu) and Karnali Province

📅 Duration: ~6 months

📋 Format: Training + Coaching + Pitching

💰 Cost: Free

* SMEs who participate in the first cohort will not participate in the second cohort. In the second cohort, new SMEs will be incorporated. You have to disclose at which stage you will be able to participate while filling e-application form. However, if needed, call for application for second cohort will be again published during the end of the first cohort.

8. How to Apply?

Please click in the following link or scan the QR code. This will take you to e-application form where you need to provide information related to your enterprise.

<https://ee-eu.kobotoolbox.org/x/dSQEj0RA>



9. Programme Partners



Duhabi Municipality,
Sunsari

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How long does the programme last? How much time does each participating SME need to provide?

The programme duration will be six to nine months. They must join classroom sessions, individual coaching and graduation events throughout the programme. Expected SME participation commitment: approximately 12 to 15 days over six to nine-months

Who can participate?

- Operational small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in agribusiness activities, including processing, trading, agro-dealer, transporter, service provider, and commercial production.
 - SMEs demonstrating active business operations, such as existing sales, customers, or ongoing market engagement.
 - SMEs with a clear commitment and willingness to invest time in training, coaching, and business development support.
 - FWEAN and NEFSCUN members.
-

I am a farmer engaged in crop production and selling few surplus crops in the local market. Am I eligible to apply for this programme?

No, this programme is not intended for agriculture production at subsistence level, but for the agri-enterprise with value addition elements and agriculture production being done in a commercial manner.

Should we pay fee for the training and coaching if we are selected?

No, you don't need to pay a fee for joining training and coaching sessions if you are selected. The programme will cover training, coaching, meals, transportation, and accommodation costs during official programme events. However, you should commit your quality time to the training.

What is the selection process?

Following steps will be followed as part of the selection of SMEs:

- The eligible and interested SMEs should fill up the e-application form in Kobo. They can get support through the respective project partners - FWEAN, Daayitwa, NEFSCUN and Duhabi Municipality - if they have difficulty in filling out the form. The e-application form can be accessed through the QR code available at the factsheet and brochure attached in this information package or [here](#):
- Eligibility screening: All applications are screened against minimum eligibility criteria using a standardized checklist.
- Technical assessment and scoring: Eligible SMEs are assessed using structured scoring criteria, including:
 - Business performance and operational maturity
 - Market orientation and growth potential
 - Leadership profile (women/ youth ownership and decision-making role)
 - Relevance for climate resilience and green practices
- Validation and data verification: Shortlisted SMEs undergo verification to ensure data reliability through:
 - Direct contact
 - Cross-checking of key business information submitted via e-form
- Cohort clustering: Verified and shortlisted SMEs are:
 - Clustered by geography and project intervention logistics
 - Balanced across target groups and regions
- Final selection: Final selection is confirmed based on:
 - Scoring results
 - Validation outcomes
 - Cohort composition requirements

The following flow chart summarizes above information

Step 1 Open Call for Applications	Step 2 Eligibility Screening (Level 1 Filter)	Step 3 Technical Assessment and Scoring (Level 2 Filter)	Step 4 Validation and Data Verification (Level 3 Control)	Step 5 Cohort Clustering and Final Selection
<p><u>Applications are solicited through:</u></p> <p>Partner outreach channels</p> <p>Digital platforms using a standardized e-form (Kobo-based)</p> <p>Project communication materials (Fact Sheet: Brochure).</p> <p>Advertised on GIZ Nepal social media page.</p> <p>(This ensures broad outreach beyond pre-existing partner networks.)</p>	<p><u>All applications are screened against minimum eligibility criteria using a standardized checklist.</u></p> <p>Conducted jointly by implementing partners and the GFA team</p> <p>(Non-eligible applications are documented and excluded)</p>	<p><u>Eligible SMEs are assessed using structured scoring criteria, including:</u></p> <p>Business performance and operational maturity</p> <p>Market orientation and growth potential</p> <p>Leadership profile (women/youth ownership and decision-making role)</p> <p>Relevance for climate resilience and green practices (Scoring results in a ranked shortlist of SMEs.)</p>	<p><u>Shortlisted SMEs undergo verification to ensure data reliability:</u></p> <p>Direct contact by the GFA team</p> <p>Cross-checking of key business information submitted via e-form</p> <p>(Identification and exclusion of inconsistent or unverifiable applications.)</p>	<p><u>Shortlisted SMEs are:</u></p> <p>Clustered by geography and project intervention logistics</p> <p>Balanced across target groups and regions</p> <p>Final selection is confirmed based on:</p> <p>Scoring results</p> <p>Validation outcomes</p> <p>Cohort composition requirements</p> <p>(All final decisions are documented.)</p>

Is there any selection priority?

Yes, following SMEs get priority in selection:

- Women-led/ owned enterprises
 - Youth-led enterprises
 - Enterprises with growth potential and relevance for women economic empowerment and climate resilience
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Which SMEs can't apply?

As mentioned in the brochure, the following SMEs cannot apply:

- Non-operational or inactive businesses
 - Enterprises without active market-oriented business operations
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Will I receive any cash benefits or technical equipment?

No, there will not be any cash benefits or distribution of technical equipment. However, the programme will cover training, coaching, meals, and accommodation costs (for the participation in the training) during official programme as mentioned above.

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