



Grant opportunity 2024: Collective action to combat forced labour and child labour in the sugarcane sector

Applicants Guide

Summary

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact grants: One grant of up to £150,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum length of grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact grants: 18 - 36 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights and decent work are strengthened in sugarcane milling and farming through actions that eliminate and/or remediate child labour and forced labour.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable supply chain actors, workers and communities linked to sugarcane value chains.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility Criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead applicant must be a Bonsucro member in compliance with all membership requirements. • Consortium must include <i>at least</i> three partners (including lead), including multiple actors across the supply chain. Consortia must include both end-user (buyers, industrial end users) and producer (farmer/miller) members. At full proposal stage, consortium members must confirm their commitment to the project in writing. • Match funding of at least 50% of the total project budget. • If requesting funding for capital expenditure (purchase of equipment), the rationale must be clear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing date for concept notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26th June 2024



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligible countries¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Americas: Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay.• Africa: Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe.• Asia-Pacific: Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam.
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1. The Bonsucro Impact Fund

The [Bonsucro Impact Fund \(BIF\)](#) was launched in early 2022. This grant-making fund leverages the income made from sales of Bonsucro Credits through its [Credit Trading Platform](#), to co-invest in impact projects which support sustainable sugarcane production, in line with the [Bonsucro 2021-26 Strategic Plan](#). These projects typically involve multiple supply chain actors and partners working together to address critical challenges facing the sugarcane sector and to develop shared solutions that can be replicated by others.

The fund works by publishing “Calls for Proposals” focused on specific themes and invites members and their partners to apply for grants through a competitive selection process. These themes connect to key areas of Bonsucro’s Strategic Plan and contribute to the achievement of Bonsucro’s strategic aims.

This specific call for proposals is aimed at supporting projects that develop and test innovative tools, technologies, approaches and partnerships that strengthen human rights in the sugarcane sector by identifying and mitigating the risks of forced labour and child labour or by remediating negative human rights impacts. Bonsucro is looking to award one grant of £150,000 to support one impact project. In this instance we are also looking for significant additional investment from project partners.

2. Why focus on forced labour and child labour?

Sugarcane is grown in more than 100 countries around the world. Regardless of where it is produced, it is considered a “high impact” crop - it generates significant positive and negative environmental and socio-economic impacts. It is estimated that over 100 million people across the globe make their living from sugarcane cultivation and processing. For some workers and growers, sugarcane production offers a pathway to prosperity – however this is not the case for many. Since much of the world’s sugarcane is grown in countries with significant social and labour challenges,

¹ https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods?tid=All&field_exp_good_target_id=5859&field_exp_exploitation_type_target_id_1=All&items_per_page=10&page=1 The Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) maintains a list of goods and their source countries which it has reason to believe are produced by child labor or forced labor in violation of international standards, as required under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) of 2005 and subsequent reauthorizations. The List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor comprises 159 goods from 78 countries and areas, as of September 28, 2022.



issues around adequate pay, basic rights, gender equality and working conditions are present in many farms and mills.

The employment of seasonal and migrant workers for the planting and harvesting of sugarcane creates opportunities for unethical recruitment practices to go unchecked, which can lead to debt bondage and human trafficking. For example, sugarcane has been identified by the US Department of Labor² as a commodity associated with forced labour in Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Myanmar and Pakistan.

Child labour is a challenge in all major sugarcane producing countries of the world including Brazil, India, Mexico, Pakistan and Thailand. While the national laws of these countries often prohibit the employment of children, research studies indicate children between the ages of five and 17 often work in the sector. The socio-economic dynamics that allow for this to persist are complex: children can work as unpaid family “helpers” on their parents’ farm; they can migrate with their parents and work alongside them on commercial farms as part of a family “team”; or they can be pushed into the sector due to families needing to rely on children’s incomes. Often child labour is driven by poverty and by the absence of public or affordable services on education, healthcare, and transportation in remote agricultural areas. The hazardous nature of work in the sugarcane sector compounds the problem of child labour: there are reports of children being responsible for fumigating fields, cutting sugarcane and carrying heavy loads³.

There are various forms of gender discrimination in the sugarcane industry which contributes to forced labour and child labour. The sector is male-dominated, and women workers are mostly found in specific, lower-paid, gendered roles. Gender-based violence is also an issue for the sugarcane sector. Reports of sexual harassment from labour brokers and requests for sexual favours in exchange for job opportunities or lighter work have been reported in Malawi and Guatemala⁴. In India, there have been reports of young girls being forced into marriage so that they can be employed as a family unit and as the Global March Against Child Labour notes: “*traditional gender-based norms contributed significantly to child labour by normalising unequal wages and unpaid family work.*”⁵

Bonsucro, through its strategy and through the Bonsucro Impact Fund, is committed to continuing to drive decent work and safer working conditions for farmers, farm workers and mill workers – including zero tolerance for forced labour and child labour, and safe recruitment for migrant workers, reducing discrimination in all its forms and promoting gender equality. While the root cause of forced labour and child labour is systemically linked to poverty, inequality and discrimination, we can improve the lives of all sugarcane workers through requiring our members to carry human rights due diligence and by providing tools, training, grievance mechanisms and monitoring systems to prevent and remediate these violations.

² [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

³ [wcms_ipecc_pub_29635.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#); [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

⁴ International Labour Organisation, 2017. Child labour in the primary production of sugarcane.

⁵ [Child marriage and child labour: Slavery is not dead in sugarcane – Global March](#)



Increasingly, governments across the world are taking a similar approach to Bonsucro with respect to our zero-tolerance stance on forced labour and child labour. For example, the EU recently approved a regulation banning all products made from forced labour from entering the EU market. To be able to comply with this regulation, businesses will need to have clear policies and processes in place to identify, monitor and address any instances of forced labour or child labour in their operations or supply chains. In the United States, the US Customs and Border Agency oversees the implementation of a similar regulation. Addressing the issue of forced labour and child labour in the sugarcane sector is thus not only an urgent moral imperative - it is also a major business risk for the whole sugarcane sector.

3. What types of forced labour and child labour impact projects is the Bonsucro Impacts Fund looking to support?

While there are already a number of initiatives to address and respond to the issue of forced labour and child labour in the sugarcane sector and these are often focused on specific countries and regions. Through this call for proposals, Bonsucro would like to support the development of innovative methodologies and tools focused on addressing the issue of forced labour and/or child labour and that have the potential to be adopted and championed by the whole sugarcane sector. These include the development and testing of:

- Forced labour and child labour risk identification methodologies;
- Sector-wide approach to responsible recruitment, particularly in relation to migrant workers;
- Worker empowerment tools and grievance mechanisms; and
- Innovative approaches to the remediation of forced labour and child labour.

Impact grants

The BIF will fund one larger grant (up to £150,000) for projects that will produce tangible results and impact for communities within the sugarcane sector while at the same time enhancing knowledge and learning for the sector. Projects that receive an impact grant will be expected to demonstrate the potential for change and large scalability. Projects will be for the duration of up to 36 months.

Assessment criteria for all grants:

- **Collaboration, convening:** all projects will be collaborative initiatives bringing together a diverse range of actors and will work across the supply chain. To bring about tangible change, the applicants will work with all key stakeholders to encourage ownership and leadership from the start.
- **Sound theory of change/methodology:** all projects will need to present a sound methodology through a robust logical framework (log frame) that presents how the activities will create the change you expect to see (your theory of change) and how they will contribute towards achieving the Bonsucro Strategic Plan as detailed in the [MEL framework](#)



[for the BIF](#). The justification for the project should be supported by a sound understanding of the local context and factors, as well as through any needs assessment data.

- **Participation and involvement of local stakeholders:** to undertake a successful project intervention, we would expect that all key and local stakeholders would be engaged in a meaningful manner from the start and would have the opportunity to help shape the design of the project. This engagement would also encourage their long-term ownership and commitment to the project.
- **Measurability and impact:** the projects need to be able to measure their impacts. We request log frames to present SMART⁶ outcome indicators. These indicators should be an appropriate mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators in line with the [MEL guidance for BIF grantees](#).
- **Vision of scalability:** as a global grant-making vehicle, the BIF aims to fund initiatives that can be relevant for more than one sugarcane origin country. We would like to see projects that can be scaled within the local, national, regional and global contexts.

Cross-cutting themes:

Gender: the BIF will prioritise any interventions that meaningfully address gender and gender-specific issues in their proposed project. We would especially like to see projects tackling equitable access to employment, opportunities and any gender-based violence⁷ risks associated with sugarcane production.

Projects need to take place in one of Bonsucro’s prioritised countries: While Bonsucro is a global organisation, it has small regional teams based in a handful of countries. Rather than spread its impact projects too thinly, grants awarded under this Call for Proposals can only be used to implement projects where the bulk of activities will be carried out in the following countries:

Americas	Americas: Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay.
Africa	Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe.
Asia-Pacific	Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam.

Projects need to be co-funded: All project applicants must also provide co-funding to support project implementation at a minimum of 50% of the overall project costs. So if a funding request of £150,000 is requested then the applicant will need to demonstrate that it will be matching this with a further £150,000 of co-funding. This co-funding can come from different sources including in-kind contributions (for example, some staff time) and/or funding provided by the organisation or partners or donors.

⁶ SMART indicators are those that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

⁷ UNHCR defines “Gender-Based violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender.”



At full proposal stage, we will require a letter of commitment from co-applicants and lead applicants demonstrating their commitment to the project and to providing match funding or in-kind contributions. We will also require a letter of commitment or MOU between the lead applicant and other partners to demonstrate their commitment to the project.

Notes on what the BIF will and will not fund:

The BIF is intended to support projects that can provide value for money through substantial innovation and catalysing interventions. Therefore we have some restrictions on what we will and will not fund:

We will fund:

- Testing of approaches which aim to scale up the roll out of proven solutions through innovative partnership arrangements, business models, leverage of funding to bring about impact.
- Projects which have applicability across a wide area of Bonsucro's membership base.
- Projects which leverage or build partnerships across the value chain.

We will not fund:

- Early-stage field trials to test unproven new technologies.
- Projects which do not have clearly articulated learning objectives and knowledge sharing plans.
- Projects which involve a high proportion of budget expenditure on technical assistance, consultancy support or capital expenditure.
- Projects which are not presented through a well-developed work plan and budget.

Note: this list is not exhaustive and is provided for guidance purposes.

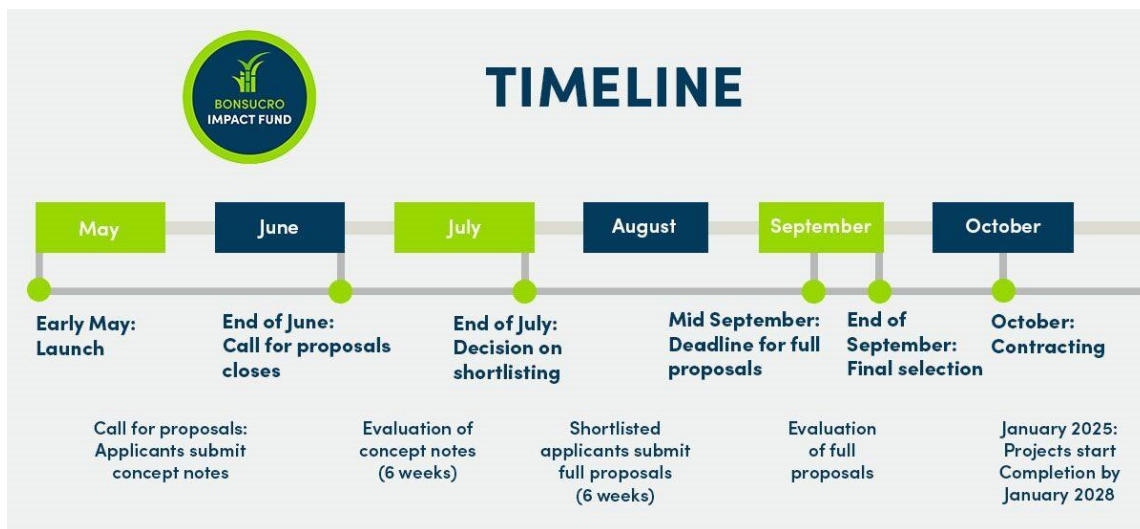
Follow-on grant funding may be available for grantees on successful completion of their grant, on an invitation-only basis.

4. How to apply?

Applying for grants can be a time-consuming process, especially if you are still finalising your project idea and confirming the partners involved, activities and budget. To make it easier for members to put forward impact projects, we follow a two-stage application process.

The **first stage** involves preparing a short concept note outlining your project idea. These concept notes are evaluated by the Project Selection Committee⁸ (PSC), and the most promising project ideas are invited to proceed to the **second stage** - submitting a full proposal. The steps involved in our grant-making project are shown in the graphic below.

⁸ <https://bonsucro.com/wp-content/uploads/Bonsucro-Impact-Fund-TOR-PSC-v1-March22.pdf>



Project concept notes

The project concept note template (offline template for reference only is available [here](#)) asks applicants to describe the need for the project, its envisaged impact, the activities planned, as well as who will be involved in the implementation. The online concept note form can be completed in English, Spanish or Portuguese via the [link](#) **before the closing date – 26 June 2024**.

If you are thinking of submitting a concept note, please contact your account manager or for queries on eligibility please contact us at fund@bonsucro.com. Bonsucro staff can help by sense-checking concepts, connecting you to potential partners, and highlighting synergies and overlaps with other projects. We will also be able to send you additional information on our contracting procedures and share our list of Frequently Asked Questions. Bonsucro will host a Q&A webinar on the Bonsucro Impact Fund for applicants. Please check our [Events web page](#) to register to join. Also look out for the opportunity to book a clinic appointment with our BIF team at Bonsucro Global Week in Mexico to ask any specific questions.

All the concept notes we receive are first screened for eligibility by our fund management team and then evaluated by the fund's PSC with the most promising applicants being invited to submit a full proposal. The criteria the PSC uses to evaluate the concept notes include:

- Collaboration, convening element
- Sound theory of change/methodology
- Participation and involvement of local stakeholders
- Measurability and impact
- Vision of scalability

Full project proposals

The Full Project Proposal template (offline template for reference is available [here](#)) builds on the concept note you submit but asks for more detailed information, with a narrative, log frame and workplan, and a project budget. Additionally, applicants must provide information on how they will approach monitoring and evaluation (M&E). If needed, Bonsucro can offer some limited technical



support to develop this approach to M&E, but only to farmer organisations and NGOs - and only on a first come, first served basis. Bonsucro recommends that applicants allocate a minimum of 10% of their budget to MEL activities. If you are invited to submit a full proposal, we will also let you know about any specific concerns or issues the PSC raised when they reviewed your concept note so that these can be addressed in the proposal. The Full Project Proposal template is only available in English and only submissions in English will be accepted. Bonsucro can support the funding of translation carried out ahead of the deadline. Arranging and quality assuring the translation will be the responsibility of the applicant.

The PSC will evaluate these full proposals against the criteria previously listed. In some instances, they will seek clarifications on specific aspects of the project and proposal. In other instances, award of the grant may be subject to specific conditions, which will be discussed and agreed with the BIF management team. Once these elements have been agreed, the BIF management team will make a recommendation to the Board of Bonsucro to approve the grants selected, subject to satisfactory due diligence.

5. What steps are involved in contracting?

Finalising the proposal and budget

Once a decision has been made to award a grant for a specific project, based on feedback from the PSC or the Board, we might ask the applicant to adjust their full proposal and budget. This final negotiated proposal and budget will be used as part of the Grant Agreement.

Due diligence

Before signing a Grant Agreement, lead applicants will be asked to complete Bonsucro's grant due diligence questionnaire and submit relevant supporting documentation. This questionnaire looks at whether the applicant who will receive our grant has sound management and financial systems in place and whether they are up to date with Bonsucro reporting requirements against the Code of Conduct. An example of this due diligence questionnaire can be found [here](#).

Signing the Grant Agreement

If you are considering applying for a grant, please review [our sample Grant Agreement](#). There are two clauses that are particularly important – Clause 4 that deals with Prohibited Uses of the grant and Clause 13 that deals with Intellectual Property Rights. When you submit a full proposal, please let us know whether you anticipate that any parts of our Grant Agreement will be problematic for your organisation and the reason for this. Failure to do so could result in delay in signing off a grant agreement or withdrawal of a grant offer made.

6. What do we ask of grant recipients?

Grantee conduct

Recipients of our grants are expected to follow both the terms and spirit of our Grant Agreement. They must always respect basic human rights in accordance with [Bonsucro Code of Conduct](#), and must comply with the employment laws in the countries where project activities are being carried



out. They must also carry out due diligence on all subcontractors to ensure they also meet these minimum standards.

Reporting requirements

Grantees must submit one narrative, logframe and financial report every six months and at the end of their project. Additionally, we will schedule two check-in calls every quarter to find out how the project implementation is going and whether we can offer support.

Grant payments

A first payment of 25% of the grant value is made upon signing of the Grant Agreement. The second payment of 25% will be made upon approval of the interim reports. The balance of the grant – the remaining 50% - is paid once the final project reports have been submitted and accepted.

Communications and visibility

To increase Bonsucro's visibility and make it easier for us to attract resources for the Bonsucro Impact Fund, grantees need to acknowledge our support by adding the Bonsucro Impact Fund logo to all publications, reports, banners, press materials and other products that the project develops. After signing a Grant Agreement with Bonsucro you will receive the BIF Communications Guidelines which details our requirements.

Project modifications

We know that in the real-world projects don't always go perfectly to plan. We recognise this and have procedures in place to manage this process.

Requests for budget modifications: Small transfers (less than 10% or GBP £1,000 per budget line – whichever is the largest) between approved budget lines don't need our approval. However, if you want to transfer more than 10% between budget lines we need to approve this change, and issue you with a grant amendment before the change happens.

Requests for project time extensions: If you need to extend the time period of your grant (the amount of the grant cannot be increased, but no-cost extensions are allowed if reasonably justified) you should let us know by sharing a brief description why you need the extension and how long this extension is needed for. You should let us know about this at least three months before your grant is expected to end.