



South Asia Co - operative Environment Programme

# Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (PLEASE)

## South Asia Regional Competitive Block Grants (RBG)

### to Reduce Plastic Waste - Window 1 (W1), Part 1

### Call for Concept Notes

(Funded by the International Development Association - IDA)

- **Ref no: W1P1**
- **Release date: 22nd September 2022**
- **Deadline: 5th November 2022**
- **Title:** South Asia Regional Competitive Block Grants (RBG) to Reduce Plastic Waste Window 1
- **Budget: Up to USD 1.5 M**
- **Duration:** Maximum 24 months, not starting later than July 2023
- **Eligibility:** Entities registered in Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal

#### 1. Background:

South Asia is now the third largest contributor to plastic waste globally, and the region's waste is estimated to double by 2050 unless urgent and drastic action is taken. The menace of plastic waste that pollutes land, flows into river systems and into the region's connecting seas poses national, regional, and global threats to development, including far-reaching economic, ecological and health impacts. A partnership formed by the World Bank, Parley and the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) will turn a global crisis into an opportunity, creating a blueprint for strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development.

The Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (PLEASE) Project is the first and largest project of its kind to combat plastic pollution ending up in South Asian rivers and seas. The Project includes all eight nations of South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The main objective is to strengthen innovation and coordination of circular economy solutions to plastic pollution flowing into South Asian Seas.



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**The World Bank Group**<sup>1</sup> is a unique global partnership of 189 member countries, staff from more than 170 countries, and offices in over 130 locations, made up of five institutions working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.

**The Parley Global Cleanup Network**<sup>2</sup> works to protect marine environments from plastic pollution and other threats. Their cleanup collaborations remove plastic waste from beaches, remote islands, rivers, mangroves and high seas, and intercept ocean-bound plastics in coastal communities around the world.

**The South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme**<sup>3</sup> (SACEP), is an intergovernmental regional organization established in 1982 with membership comprising all eight SAR nations - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – and based in Colombo, has sustained an active convening role across member-states on environmental issues, including most recently, on mitigating plastic pollution that flows into the region's seas.

The PLEASE Project is hosting a Regional Competitive Block Grant (RBG) to eligible organizations in South Asia (Eligible RBG Beneficiaries). The RBG competition has two windows. The first window, Window 1 (W1), provides investment support and will seek proposals up to US\$1.5 million from eligible, registered organizations in eligible SAR nations (private entities, social enterprises, nongovernmental organizations, community-based organizations) that can demonstrate that with the use of project grant proceeds the entity could accelerate toward a more circular plastic economy that would otherwise not be possible. W1 will support at least one eligible entity from each of the SACEP's eight member states, with the PARLEY Foundation providing W1 parallel investment of up to US\$2 million to at least one entity in both Sri Lanka and India and advising all SACEP member-states on the Avoid Intercept Redesign - AIR Strategy adopted and pioneered by Maldives. It is estimated that W1 will award 20-30 entities with project grant proceeds in two separate call for proposals.

The second window, Window 2, (W2), will seek innovative ideas and creative solutions from individuals and institutions on turning the tide on plastic pollution. W2 will provide technical assistance (TA) support for the most promising ideas and, like W1 recipients, an opportunity to showcase their ideas through the project's knowledge exchange platform and in doing so, to other investors (foundations, donor partners, private investment houses, SAR governments, and so on).

### 2. Objectives and scope:

This call for concept notes is seeking creative innovations that target change on ground and support for select innovative ideas, respectively at local, national and/or regional levels (within participating SAR nations), while being rooted in one of the following Parley AIR<sup>4</sup> thematic categories: Avoid (Reduce and Replace), Intercept (Retrieve and Recycle) and Redesign (Create New Materials; Create Smart Products;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.parley.tv/#fortheoceans>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sacep.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.parley.tv/oceanplastic#parley-air-strategy-1>



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Develop New Industry Standards), which includes and innovates beyond the 3R's framework (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) of the past several decades.

Selected concept notes will prioritize organizations that can demonstrate within 12-24 months, a meaningful and recurrent reduction in plastic waste that otherwise would have accumulated in South Asia's rivers and seas and that would not have been possible without support from the project. It would also prioritize organizations that with RBG support are able to establish meaningful business partnerships that enable 'end to end' solutions, from improved product design, alternative material use and product delivery systems, interception, collection, sorting, baling, washing, flaking, pelletizing, yarn spinning and/or product development – and thus significant reductions of plastic pollution that would have ended up in South Asian seas – that would not have been possible without project support. Other possible recipients of RBGs could be involved in (a) designing and creating alternatives to major single use plastic pollutants such as sachets, (b) education of fishers and enlisting them to intercept marine plastic pollution as an alternative or supplemental livelihood and selling that plastic waste to recyclers and up-cyclers for a guaranteed minimum price and until the market is better understood; (c) creating material innovations, including design of recyclable plastic resins that can replace non-recyclable resins in similar products, among other solutions to encourage innovations of all types.

Eligible entities interested in submitting concept notes are able to submit more than one concept note if they have several project concepts that will achieve the PLEASE priorities found in Annex 1.

### **3. Partnerships:**

SACEP encourages (but does not require) partnership and consortium projects that aim to achieve results across the objectives and expected outcomes of this call by proposing innovative and integrated approaches. Such Partnerships could include initiatives that engage eligible, registered organizations in eligible SAR nations (private entities, social enterprises, nongovernmental organizations, community-based organizations) working across sectors/components and geographies to benefit the results. Partnership quality will be a consideration during the evaluation of the proposals. Applicants should demonstrate that their organization and proposed partners have relevant expertise and a proven approach based on evidence from the field.

If submitting several concept notes, please note that partners can also be included in more than one concept note.

### **4. Budget allocation:**

The RBG competition has two windows. This first window, Window 1 (W1), will provide investment support and will seek proposals up to US\$1.5 million from eligible, registered organizations in eligible SAR nations. Part 1 of W1 is open to entities registered in Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal. Part 2 will include other remaining SAR nations and will be announced later.

### **5. Requirements for concept note submission:**

Key documents relevant for the preparation of submissions are:



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- a) Annex 1: PLEASE priorities that concept notes must address
- b) Annex 2: Format and requirements for concept note submission
- c) Annex 3: Selection criteria to be used by SACEP
- d) Annex 4: Guidelines on gender mainstreaming requirements

Please note the following requirements for submissions:

- Concept notes must be prepared in English language according to the format requirement presented in Annex 2.
- Concept notes must be received by filling out [this form](#) on or before 13:00 Sri Lanka time on November 5, 2022. Please do not submit your documents to any email address other than the secure email address provided above or your concept note will be considered disqualified.
- The size the concept note must not exceed 1 GB and must be in PDF or document format.
- Please note that the cost of preparing a concept note is not reimbursable nor can it be included as a direct cost of the assignment.
- If they are shortlisted following the evaluation of the concept notes, proponents have the opportunity to request a support of US\$ 5,000 to 10,000 depending on the size of project to support the elaboration of Full Proposals.
- Any requests for clarification should be referred to [this form](#) as per the schedule of events outlined in section 7 below. Clarifications will be provided on the [saceplease.org](http://saceplease.org) website.

### 6. Concept note selection and appraisal procedures:

The Regional Block Grant Investment Selection Committee (RBG-SC) appointed by SACEP will complete a technical and organizational capacity assessment of each concept note. As a part of its appraisal process, SACEP may elect to discuss technical, cost, or other aspects of the concept notes with applicants. The RBG-SC will proceed to the selection of the concept notes through two stages:

#### i. Short listing:

- After an initial screening by the SACEP Project Implementation Unit (PIU), the RBG-SC will appraise each concept note using all the criteria listed in Annex 3. Concept notes that do not align sufficiently with the PLEASE strategy set in the Project Operational Manual as well as requirements and components set out in this call or which have shortcomings regarding the criteria outlined in Annex 3, will not be shortlisted.
- Nominated representatives from the national authorities serve in the RBG-SC and therefore will be part of the evaluation process.
- The appraisal of the shortlisted concept notes will be submitted to the Project Steering Committee with a summary of recommendations.

#### ii. SACEP decision:

- The Project Steering Committee approves which selected concept notes are to be developed into full proposals and advises on the set of recommendations to be provided to the applicants by the RBG-SC.

#### iii. Full Proposal Development



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- If the number of concept notes selected to shortlist and advance to full proposal is high (and higher than the number of projects likely to be awarded) SACEP may launch a closed Call for Proposals for the final stage. If the number of shortlisted concept notes is small and all those shortlisted are likely to be awarded, then SACEP may decide to work with applicants to develop together (co-create) the final proposals.
- A representative from the SACEP PIU may meet with the selected applicants to discuss their concept note and the recommendations of SACEP. The endorsement of the concept note or proposal by the RBG-SC is not a guarantee to receive funding until the conditions attached to the approval have been fulfilled and the grant support agreement is signed. SACEP reserves the right to reject a proposal after the RBG-SC approval if it cannot reach an agreement with the applicant for contracting.
- SACEP will also consult with World Bank country offices and obtain a no-objection from them.
- SACEP will aim at constituting a SACEP Steering Committee as a sounding board, provide advice on key decisions, identify potential issues and risks before they arise and suggest appropriate courses of action to manage and mitigate risks.
- Successful proposals must be approved the PLEASE Project Steering Committee and will be implemented under a Grant Service Agreement.
- Unsuccessful applicants can request feedback from SACEP on their submission.

### 7. Schedule of events:

Except for the due date of concept note submission to SACEP, the dates provided below are only indicative and will be updated if necessary. It is provided here for the applicant's understanding of the overall contracting process.

EVENT	DATE
Call for Concept Notes release	<i>22nd September 2022</i>
Information session for applicants	<i>7th October 2022</i>
Deadline for receipt of written inquiries	<i>21st October 2022</i>
Last written responses to inquiries distributed	<i>28<sup>th</sup> October 2022</i>
Concept Note due	<i>5th November 2022</i>
Appraisal and Concept Note selection	<i>30th November 2022</i>
Launch of Closed Call for Proposals with selected applicants	<i>1st December 2022</i>
Full proposal submission TBC	<i>15th January 2023 (6 weeks after release)</i>



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Appraisal and final decision TBC	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2023 (2 weeks for selection)
Grant agreement negotiation	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 (2 weeks)

### 8. Annexes:

#### ● **Annex 1: PLEASE Priority Areas that Concept Notes Must Address**

Concept notes should be in alignment with the scope of PLEASE Project Strategy under Component 1 RBG W1. The priority is for direct on the ground change and support for select innovative ideas, respectively at local, national and/or regional levels (within participating SAR nations), while being rooted in one of the following Parley AIR<sup>5</sup> thematic categories: Avoid (Reduce and Replace), Intercept (Retrieve and Recycle) and Redesign (Create New Materials; Create Smart Products; Develop New Industry Standards), which includes and innovates beyond the 3R's framework (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) of the past several decades. The list below is illustrative of thematic solutions being sought out in this call for concept notes but is not exhaustive.

#### **Avoid (Reduce and Replace)**

- Reducing the consumption of single use plastic products;
- Replacing current SUPs with local, viable and sustainable alternatives;
- Reducing, recycling, reusing, and/or upcycling existing accumulated plastic waste;
- Testing new designs for manufacturing, supply chain and other innovations that serve to reduce plastics utilization and/or enhance plastics recovery, recycling and reuse;

#### **Intercept (Retrieve and Recycle)**

- Introduction of plastics waste collection, recycling and upcycling innovations, including mechanisms for full cost recovery and further reuse of recycled/upcycled plastic material (i.e. similar to container deposit schemes);
- Clean-up, collection and removal of plastic waste from rivers and seas, including before it enters (or reenters) the sea (i.e. beach and river bank clean ups), among other things (i.e. could be linked to the region's blue flag program initiated by SACEP and being rolled out by SACEP member-states);

#### **Redesign (Create New Materials, Smart Products, Better Industry Standards/Policies; Awareness)**

- Design and manufacturing of truly biodegradable substitutes for plastics, including SUP sachets;
- Introducing new materials fit for a circular economy or that offer sustainable alternatives to fossil fuel-based and non-recyclable plastics; Support for material innovations, including design of recyclable plastic resins that can replace non-recyclable resins in similar products;
- Innovations in financial, policy, regulatory or other incentives that minimize loss of fishing nets and optimize their recovery for re-use or recycling;

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.parley.tv/oceanplastic#parley-air-strategy-1>



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- Innovative economic, policy, regulatory and other measures/incentives to minimize or eliminate use of unnecessary single use plastic items and ensure better enforcement of such bans.

### **Special areas of emphasis of particular interest include:**

- Grant proposals that catalyze action along rivers (including transboundary hot spots) and hot spots at sea, including international waters;
- Grant proposals that explicitly support female-led social enterprises; NGOs and CSOs that working with bottom of the pyramid female waste pickers who would directly benefit from grant proceeds;
- Grant proposals by regional organizations that could accelerate and/or deepen regional cooperation and/or integration.

### **In addition, Concept Notes should:**

- Target the most vulnerable
- Be gender, youth and disability responsive and address women's empowerment
  - All recipients will have to demonstrate female participation of at least 30 percent by the end of project
- Explain how women are currently involved in their entity and how, with IDA proceeds, they will directly and indirectly incrementally benefit. Each recipient will be technically audited for gender inclusion to verify the same.
- Strengthen relations and joint efforts between government, civil society organizations, communities and the private sector
- Show innovation
- Demonstrate integration, complementarities and synergies across sectors and actors
- Build on a track record of establishing relationships of trust and confidence with key actors
- Indicate the roles of CSOs and/or private sector

### **The following activities will NOT be eligible for support through this call for concept notes:**

- Activities that will produce wastewater that will not be possible and viable for on-site treatment.
- Processes/technologies that will discharge highly polluted processed water, emit toxic fumes and noxious odor exceeding the national emission standards or the World Bank Group Environment, Health and Safety Guidelines (EHSG).
- Use of innovative and cutting-edge technologies in marine clean-up that would harm marine life.
- Technologies whose by-product will promote production of secondary micro-plastics.
- Will cause high negative impact on income/livelihood resources.
- Activities which will employ forced labor.
- Activities which will involve any kind of forceful evictions of people.
- Production of residues with no available safe disposal facilities duly approved by the government.
- Activities which will involve recovery of plastics from waste electronic and electrical equipment (WEEE) which will potentially release toxic restricted BFR.
- Activities/processes which will involve use of highly toxic and/or banned chemicals.
- Involve activities that cause or lead to child abuse, child labor exploitation or human trafficking; No child under the age of 14 should work on the construction, rehabilitation or maintenance of a subproject. Children between ages 14-18 will not be employed or engaged in connection with the





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project in a manner that is likely to be hazardous<sup>6</sup> or interfere with the child's education or be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

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<sup>6</sup> Work considered hazardous for children is work that, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to jeopardize the health, safety, or morals of children. Examples of hazardous work activities prohibited for children include work: (a) with exposure to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; (b) underground, underwater, working at heights or in confined spaces; (c) with dangerous machinery, equipment or tools, or involving handling or transport of heavy loads; (d) in unhealthy environments exposing children to hazardous substances, agents, or processes, or to temperatures, noise or vibration damaging to health; or (e) under difficult conditions such as work for long hours, during the night or in confinement on the premises of the employer.





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- **Annex 2: Format and structure of the Concept Note**

The concept note must be complete and conform to the format requirements presented below.

Submissions must be made electronically as outlined in the main part of this call for concept notes. The concept note must not exceed **14 pages** plus title page and preamble (12 point Times New Roman Font and a minimum of 1 inch margins all around). Pages should be numbered.

The concept note may include annexes with additional details regarding approach, methodologies, references, maps, etc. Annexes must not exceed 10 pages.

Electronic submissions must not exceed 1GB in size.

SACEP will consider only applications conforming to the above format and page limitations. Any other information submitted will not be evaluated.

Applicants should include all information that they consider necessary for SACEP to adequately understand and evaluate the project being proposed. The remainder of this section describes the information that SACEP considers essential for all applications.

**Concept notes must not exceed 14 pages in length and should be structured according to the following headings** (indicative page lengths are presented in parentheses):

### **1. Title page**

Project title, name and contact of the applicant, partners, geographical area, expected project duration, start and finish dates, selected country that the concept note responds to, and estimated total budget. Note that the title page is not counted in the concept note page limitation.

### **2. Brief description of the organization (1 page)**

Experience, organizational set up, necessary technical expertise and capacity to implement the project, etc.

### **3. Brief description of intervention focus and rationale. (5 pages)**

What will it achieve and for whom? Where will it be implemented and with which actors? How will it work?

This section should clearly describe the outcomes that the intervention expects to contribute to, in which target geographies (being as specific as possible) and for which specific target groups (including target numbers of beneficiaries reached). It should also clarify how these changes will be brought about, the key actors that the project seeks to influence/engage with and their roles and the key types of activities, intervention strategies, methodologies and technical approaches that will be used to achieve this. Be sure the activities address the priority areas in Annex 1 and evaluation criteria in Annex 3. While a detailed



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breakdown of activities is not required, this section should clearly justify how the proposed activities are a viable means of achieving the intended outcomes.

#### **4. Nature of existing presence and relationships in the area.** (1 page)

Applicants should demonstrate that they have the experience, capacity, and existing relationships required to implement their proposed project successfully. This section should provide a short background to the organization and its approach/focus and describe the history of involvement and activities in the target geographies, nature and extent of relationships with key local actors (including government, targeted communities, CSOs and the private sector).

#### **5. How will the project support the most vulnerable and support their empowerment?** (1 page)

This section should indicate the key vulnerable groups that the project is targeting, especially women and youth, and describe their key characteristics, highlighting the factors that drive their vulnerability, exclusion and/or disempowerment. It should also clarify how the project will ensure that these target groups are reached and that key barriers to their participation and attainment of desired outcomes will be addressed. Particular attention should be given to how empowerment of target vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth, will be addressed

#### **6. How will the project seek synergies and complementarities with past, ongoing and proposed initiatives in the region?** (1 page)

This section should outline how the project seeks to build on previous investments in the target geographies, leverage resources developed or made available through other ongoing or proposed projects, agencies and investments in the region and strengthen integration between different actors and sectors. This section should clearly demonstrate the applicant's knowledge of opportunities for integration and willingness to operate in a collaborative manner to enhance collective impact.

#### **7. What is innovative in the approach? What learning will be generated, or models and approaches demonstrated?** (1 page)

This section should highlight how the project will introduce innovative approaches to address issues and develop solutions. Innovations may be related to new ways of working (partnerships, involvement of private sector, institutional arrangements), new models or approaches to addressing persistent issues, or initiatives that are addressing new issues that have not received attention to date. The applicant should also indicate how the project will ensure a systematic approach to generating evidence on the proposed models and how this will be used.

#### **8. How will sustainability and/or scalability be addressed from the outset? What will the legacy be?** (1-2 pages)

Sustainability and scalability are key concerns for SACEP and PLEASE Project. Applicants should demonstrate how the sustainability and/or scalability of key outcomes and approaches will be addressed from the outset. Specific attention should be given to articulating how project dependency will be avoided by developing the required capacities, engaging with markets, and/or creating more enabling operating environments (policies, budgets, incentives, etc.).



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### 9. What are the key risks associated with the project and how will they be managed/mitigated? (1 page)

Strong risk management will be a central feature of successful projects. Applicants should provide an overview of the major risks related to their proposal and describe in brief how they intend to manage and mitigate these risks.

### 10. Estimated budget and VFM (1-2 pages)

The concept note budget should include best estimates and provide a provisional breakdown of costs at sub-heading level see the budget template below. Concept notes that demonstrate how SACEP funds will leverage other funds, as well as concept notes that demonstrate clear progress towards financial sustainability, are encouraged. The concept note should demonstrate good Value-for-Money or scaling, that strengthens the value for money of the intervention, and highlight any income generating activities.

Budget Headings	Budget Subheadings
Programme costs per output (direct cost)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Output 1</li> <li>● Output 2</li> <li>● .....</li> </ul>
Human resources (direct cost)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Salaries international staff</li> <li>● Salaries national staff</li> </ul>
Operational Costs (direct cost)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Office rental and running costs</li> <li>● Equipment and supplies</li> <li>● Travel / transportation costs</li> </ul>
Indirect costs <sup>7</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Up to 7%<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>

#### ● Annex 3: Selection criteria

The RBG-SC will appraise applications in accordance with the selection criteria identified below.

Applicants should note that these criteria serve to:

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<sup>7</sup> Direct costs are incurred costs that are directly attributable to the action as outlined in the 'description of intervention', specifically provided for in the approved budget, supported by original and verifiable vouchers for the incurred period. Indirect costs are incurred costs that may be overhead costs, do not require verifiable vouchers, and are calculated as a percentage against the total of incurred direct costs.

<sup>8</sup> The maximum percentage for indirect costs cannot exceed 7% of the total direct costs. In partnerships and consortiums, the 7% indirect costs should be shared among implementing partner organizations, including local civil society organizations, proportionate to their implementation budget (7% of their total budget)



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- a) identify the significant issues that applicants should address in their applications; and,
- b) to set standards against which all applications will be evaluated.

If there are ambiguities/unclear explanations, or further need for details, the SACEP RBG-SC will seek clarification from the submitting organization if the concept note otherwise meets the main criteria.

### Eligibility Criteria

The applicant must be registered in the country of project delivery as stated in the cover page of this document (eliminary).

### Evaluation criteria

The evaluation committee will have to answer the following questions to justify their final appraisal.

- Completeness: Is the information provided in the concept note complete and sufficient for the appraisal (10 points)
- Relevance: Is the problem definition and rationale for the project clear and does it address critical issues and target groups relevant to the SACEP strategy and the PLEASE Project scope under Component 1 (20 points)
- Approach and methods: Are the project approach and methodology innovative, feasible and appropriate? Are the methodologies based on previous experience and evidence-based knowledge? Is the idea technically feasible and likely to achieve the stated results? Does it embody good practice and lessons, is it innovative? (10 points)
- Stakeholder analysis: have the relevant stakeholders been identified and have clear and realistic roles been identified for them? Is it clear how the project will work with communities, government, civil society organizations, private sector and humanitarian actors & sectors? (10 points)
- Gender, inclusion and empowerment: Does the project include a clear explanation of how it will reach and support the most vulnerable? Is there a clear, ambitious yet realistic approach to women's empowerment? Are mechanisms for increasing citizen voice given due consideration? (10 points)
- Sustainability and/or scalability/ and or innovation: Does the project demonstrate a good case for sustainability and/or scalability of the proposed approaches, outcomes and impacts beyond the funding period? (10 points)
- Risk management: Does the proposal clearly identify possible risks that may adversely affect the activities and mitigation factors that will be taken to avoid them? (5 points)
- Capacity: Does the proposed implementing organization and its partners have the necessary technical expertise and capacity to implement the project? (10 points)
- Partnership: Are strong partnerships with local governments or civil society organizations necessary for success and if so, has the applicant demonstrated that needed partnerships have already been established and are built on long term trust? Is the governance and coordination system between stakeholders and partners appropriate? Is the role and involvement of the sub-partners clear and sound? (5 points)
- Budget: Does the budget demonstrate value for money for the project, in particular in relation to the expected results? (10 points)



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- **Annex 4: Guidelines on gender sensitivity etc.**

Gender equality is an important human right in itself, but it is also widely acknowledged as a basis for sustainable development, particularly in environmental protection. Given women's central role in entrepreneurship, resource management, waste disposal and unpaid household labour and informal sector work, policies that aim to support women's rights and livelihoods should naturally complement efforts to transition to a more sustainable and circular plastics economy.

The World Bank is committed to mainstreaming gender issues across its work in four key ways:

1. Improving human endowments - health, education, and social protection. Closing the remaining sticky "first-generation" gaps, while starting to tackle emerging issues, is fundamental to poverty reduction and shared prosperity. First-generation issues include further decreasing maternal mortality, improving women's access to health services, closing the remaining gender gaps in education, and expanding social safety nets. Among emerging, or "second-generation," issues are ensuring health care for an aging population and for noncommunicable diseases; improving early childhood development; breaking down gender stereotypes in teacher training and curriculum development; increasing girls' enrollment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); facilitating school-to-work transitions; and developing innovations to promote women's economic empowerment in social safety net interventions.
2. Removing constraints for more and better jobs. Increasing women's participation in the labor force, their income-earning opportunities, and their access to productive assets are central to the achievement of the World Bank Group's goals yet remain a frontier area. Partnerships with the private sector are critical to advancing economic opportunities for women-one such partnership, SheWorks, led by the International Finance Corporation, focuses on quality employment opportunities for all. The strategy will focus on the determinants for women to access more and better jobs, including developing policy frameworks for care services, reducing deficits in infrastructure that prevent women's participation in paid employment, promoting the conditions for women's entrepreneurship, and reducing skill gaps and occupational sex segregation.
3. Removing barriers to women's ownership of and control over assets. The strategy will focus on key productive assets such as land (individual ownership and female access to community owned lands), housing, and technology. Access to financial and insurance services are key enablers of asset ownership, and the World Bank Group has committed to push Universal Financial Inclusion to help close the persistent gap between women and men, notably in access to accounts. Another important prerequisite is access to identification, which still eludes the poorest women and children. To provide services at scale, technology can play an important role. The World Bank Group will assist clients in analyzing data on gender gaps in these areas, and using evidence to inform policy making, improve business practices, promote universal identification, and prioritize financial inclusion in ways that close gender gaps.
4. Enhancing women's voice and agency and engaging men and boys. The World Bank Group will promote and enhance women's participation and decision making in service delivery and support



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the reduction of gender-based violence and mitigate its impact in conflict situations. For example, increased attention can be paid to safety and sexual harassment in transport or sanitation projects or the promotion of positive parenting and peaceful conflict resolution among participants in social safety net projects. Psychosocial and economic support can be made available to survivors of gender-based violence in crisis environments. The World Bank Group will continue to support the collection of evidence about legal gender difference building the base for changing adverse masculinity norms and promoting positive behaviors and the effective representation, participation, and decision making of women in local service-delivery governance structures, notably water, energy, schools, health center management committees, and local development committees.

Grantees will commit to advancing these gender objectives and can explore the following guidelines for additional guidance on best practice approaches to mainstreaming gender into plastics and sanitation projects.

- World Bank Group Gender Strategy (FY16-23): Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth<sup>9</sup>
- World Bank Group, Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in Water Operations, 2016<sup>10</sup>
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization, “Guide on Gender Mainstreaming Environmental Management Projects”, 2015<sup>11</sup>
- Global Plastic Action Partnership, Guide to Ensure Gender-Responsive Action in Eliminating Plastic Pollution, 2021<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup><https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/820851467992505410/pdf/102114-REVISED-PUBLIC-WBG-Gender-Strategy.pdf>

<sup>10</sup><https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/922021536852796350/pdf/Toolkit-for-Mainstreaming-Gender-in-Water-Operations.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2015-02/Gender\\_Environmental\\_Management\\_Projects\\_0.pdf](https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2015-02/Gender_Environmental_Management_Projects_0.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <https://globalplasticaction.org/wp-content/uploads/GPAP-Global-Gender-Guidance-May-2021.pdf>