

UNDP GEF-SGP 2022 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

For Plastics Innovation Programme

Background

Plastic pollution, if not curbed, will threaten the achievement of many Sustainable Development Goals. While none of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has plastic pollution as a main theme, it is clear that plastic pollution affects many of these goals, including SDG 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. Plastic pollution is a global challenge that requires international cooperation and global partnerships to collectively deal with (SDG 17). Specific explanations are drawn below on the impact of plastic pollution on health, marine and terrestrial ecosystems and climate change.

- **Plastics and human health risks (SDG 3).** Plastic poses distinct risks to human health (SDG 3) at every stage of its lifecycle from oil extraction, production, use, recycling to disposal.ⁱ Plastic production results in the release of many toxic substances, as many of the chemicals are integral to production plastics are hazardous air pollutants. Over 170 fracking chemicals that are used to produce the main feedstocks for plastic have known human health impacts, posing direct human risks and impairing human immune systems, and more. Over time, plastics fragment into microplastics and nanoplastics, contaminating food, water and soil. According to a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) report, every human is eating, swallowing or breathing in about 2,000 tiny pieces of plastic each week, an amount equal to the weight of one credit card.ⁱⁱ Through skin contact, inhalation, and ingestion, plastics can result in cancers, reproductive disorders, and eye and skin irritation and other health risks. A recent study published in the [journal Environment International](#), tested 22 anonymous blood samples and found plastic particles in 80% of people tested—indicating plastic particles may be able to travel around the body and lodge themselves in organs.
- **Impact on marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 14 and 15).** Every year, up to 13 million tonnes of plastic - the equivalent of one garbage truck per minute - leak into the ocean.ⁱⁱⁱ It is estimated that more than 100,000 marine animals are killed by plastics each year^{iv} and about 40 percent of cetaceans such as whales and dolphins have ingested plastics.^v Most plastic disintegrates into particles smaller than five millimeters, referred to as microplastics, and breaks down further into nanoparticles, which are less than 0.1 micrometer in size. Chemicals leaching from plastics can affect the hormone systems of vertebrates and invertebrates. Microplastics also interacts with soil fauna, affecting their health and soil functions.
- **Plastics and Climate Change (SDG 13).** Plastics originate from fossil fuel feedstocks and can emit greenhouse gases from cradle to grave. The 400 million tonnes of plastics produced each year consume approximately 6% of the world's oil: 3% as raw material and 3% as energy for their production, transportation and incineration, leading to huge emissions of CO₂. In 2019 alone, the production and incineration of plastic waste added an estimated 850 million metric tons of GHGs

to the atmosphere—equal to the emissions from 189 five-hundred-megawatt coal power plants.^{vi} By 2050, the GHG emissions from plastics could reach over 56 gigatons—10-13 percent of the entire remaining carbon budget.^{vii}

The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP) has received core funds under the GEF-7 to support countries to undertake initiatives towards the attainment of zero-plastic pollution. Due to the failure of previous interventions – which were predominantly downstream-focused – to substantially address the problem, GEF-SGP seeks to promote a multipronged strategy that combines pre-consumption and post-consumption measures to address the problem at source (upstream) and end-of-pipe (downstream). This is a drastic shift from the predominant focus on downstream measures.

Latest available evidence suggests that, leakage from coastal populations (within 50 kilometers of the coast) is between 4.8 to 12.7 million tons per year¹. Therefore, coastal countries, cities and communities will form the priority geographic areas. In addition to grant making, the GEF-SGP will provide strategic services to local governments, civil society, and community organizations by enhancing their institutional, logistical, and technical capacities; develop platforms and networks; and support project upscaling.

Call for Proposals

The GEF-SGP announces the 2022/23 "call for proposals" to award small grants of up to US\$50,000 to non-governmental organizations, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and community groups to undertake a systems analysis approach to the development and implementation of solutions that address upstream, midstream, and downstream management of plastic pollution, including baseline analysis, advocacy for policy development and implementation, development and implementation of waste management models, education and campaigns:

1) Systems baseline analysis and preparation of baseline report and national action plan

- Baseline: analyze who is producing/using what plastics, where, and how to dispose of the plastic waste.
- Stakeholders consultation and identification: what plastics are essential? How to minimize the use or import of plastics? What actions will be needed to achieve desired outcomes to eliminate non-essential plastics? What government policies are needed to implement the changes? What activities should be undertaken to shift human behaviors? (A series of stakeholders' workshops, meetings and focus group discussions to identify areas of reduction).
- Design and implementation of activities in the national action plans

2) Development and implementation of community-based zero waste management systems demonstration sites (waste intelligent communities and cities)

¹ Karasik, R., T. Vegh, Z. Diana, J. Bering, J. Caldas, A. Pickle, D. Rittschof, and J. Virdin. 2020. 20 Years of Government Responses to the Global Plastic Pollution Problem: The Plastics Policy Inventory. NI X 20-05. Durham, NC: Duke University.

- Prevent, reduce and eliminate unnecessary and non-essential plastic products to stop pollution at its source;
- Develop and implement actions to rethink, reuse, reduce, recycle and environmentally dispose of waste, following waste management hierarchy;
- Support the development of ecological alternatives and solutions;
- Incorporate informal waste sectors and enhance livelihoods for informal workers;
- Conduct regular clean-up for awareness raising, advocacy and behavioral change.

3) Policy development and implementation

- Support policy formulation and implementation (including plastic ban on single use plastics, extended producers' or importers' responsibility, and incentives for clean environment);
- Undertake awareness raising and advocacy for the ban of non-essential single use plastics;
- Conduct Government-civil society-private sector meetings/dialogues to formulate and implement policies and regulations.

4) Awareness raising, public participation and global campaigns

- Develop awareness-raising materials and outreach activities;
- Develop and implement intensive and regular awareness raising and public participation (such as weekly clean-up activities, radios/TVs programs, and social media campaigns);
- Organize the Annual Zero Single Use Plastic Week Campaign, June 8th World Ocean's Day and/or Clean-up Campaign on World Clean-up Day on the third Saturday of September with whole-of-society participation (high level government officials, businesses and civil society organizations);
- Participate in South-South cooperation and exchange.

Results & Measurement

Areas of Interventions	Indicators and Measurement of Results
Baseline analysis and National Action Plan	Report produced Number of consultation meetings (with number of participants) conducted
Development and implementation of zero plastic waste communities	Number of communities and people having benefited Tons of plastic waste avoided or reduced
Policy for elimination, innovation, circulation and waste management	Number of policies (plastics bans, fines and incentives etc) drafted, introduced and discussed Number of government-civil society-private sector dialogues and meetings conducted

Awareness-raising, campaigns and capacity development	Number of communications materials produced Number of community to Cabinet clean-up organized Tons of plastic waste removed from the environment
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Eligibility

- be non-governmental or non-profit organizations with legal mandate to operate; or
- be community groups/community-based organizations, and social enterprise organizations recognized by the relevant municipal authorities; and
- have relevant experience and proven records of working with communities and groups in environmental, forestry and/or agricultural related activities and should be based or already have a working presence in the respective countries;
- the lead organization should propose a plan of engaging governments, research institutes, communities, media and other key stakeholders. University/research institutes can be engaged for the baseline analysis.

Submitted project proposals should take a systems analysis to understand the plastic pollution. Submitted project proposals should:

- Include all of the above four components;
- succinctly describe the problems related to the country;
- explain how the proposed project objectives, outputs and activities would have a concrete impact and contribute towards the achievements of the identified problems;
- demonstrate how the project is aligned to the targets and objectives of the SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS);
- show that projects are innovative, impactful, and sustainable.
- Promote social inclusion, including gender equality and women's empowerment.

What will we support?

We want to support NGOs that are advocating Zero Plastics Waste model. We are moving away from supporting plastic waste recycling and pyrolysis (plastic to fuel) as we believe that this would be supporting the misperception that we can recycle out of this problem and contribute to overuse of plastics. This fails to address the problem of plastic use at source, not to mention the toxins in the plastics that will be released in the fuel and the greenhouse gases (CO₂) releases through pyrolysis.

- Focus must be placed on prevention, reduction and elimination of non-essential plastic use, particularly single plastic use.

- Identify producers, distributors and users' responsibilities, and develop policies on "extended producer responsibility" and "polluter pays" policies and instruments.
- Support women, youth, people with disability and offer livelihoods activities to develop and pilot ecological alternatives to single use plastic.
- Support formalization and empowerment of informal waste sector, and develop capacity for informal waste sector
- Support development of cost-effective alternatives to plastic
- For SIDS, import of non-essential plastic products should be limited through government import policy and regulations.
- Intensive awareness, education and civic engagement must be incorporated.
- Identify and develop good practices and scale up good practices through learning, sharing and policy adoption.
- Strong government support and policy development activities.
- Strong partnerships with local governments, businesses and civil society organizations.

What will not be supported?

- Pure clean-up activities will not be effective. Clean up could be part of awareness raising strategies, but no project should be funded only to clean up local trash.
- Recycling and remanufacturing of plastics are in most cases not economically viable, and should not be a priority of this program. Recycling can be funded as part of a temporary solution only if: 1) the country has existing recycling facility (e.g in Southeast Asian countries); 2) markets for products are available with demonstrated economic viability; and 3) environmental safeguards analysis is conducted. If recycling activity is included, empowering women in informal waste sector should be the focus. No funding should be invested in creating recycling facility, infrastructure and products.
- Plastic to fuel (pyrolysis)
- Pure awareness raising activities will not drive behavior changes. Awareness raising should be part of a comprehensive offer that includes reduction, demonstration and policy measures to address plastic pollution.

References

ⁱ David Azoulay et. al. 2019. *Plastic and Health: the Hidden Cost of a Plastic Planet*. Center for International Environmental Law.

ⁱⁱ World Wildlife Fund. 2019. *Assessing Plastic Ingestion from Nature to People*.

ⁱⁱⁱ United Nations Environment Programme, The State of Plastics: World Environment Day Outlook 2018, June 2018, available at <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/state-plastics-world-environment-day-outlook-2018>

^{iv} United Nations Environment Programme, World Environment Day 2018: Overview, June 2018, available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25398/WED%20Messaging%20Two-Page%2027April.pdf?sequence=12&isAllowed=y>

^v Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *Marine Debris: Understanding, Preventing and Mitigating the Significant Adverse Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity*, 2018, available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-83-en.pdf>

^{vi} Center for International Environmental Law. 2019. *Plastic and Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet* (<https://www.ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Plastic-and-Climate-FINAL-2019.pdf>).

^{vii} Center for International Environmental Law. 2019. *Plastic and Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet* (<https://www.ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Plastic-and-Climate-FINAL-2019.pdf>).