



USAID OCEAN PLASTICS REDUCTION ACTIVITY (OPRA)
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Reference:	EOI/USAID OPRA Activity 2024-001
Issue Date:	Monday, April 1, 2024
Deadline for Submission of Questions on Application	Thursday, April 18, 2024, 5.00PM (IST)
Deadline of Submission of Concept papers:	Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 5.00PM (IST)
Submit Concept papers to:	grants_sl@rti.org

This request outlines the information required by applicants for the development and submission of concept papers for consideration. Applicants are expected to review, understand, and conform with specifications as per the call. Successful applicants will participate in a co-creation workshop and thereafter submit a full proposal.

SECTION 1: PROJECT DISCRIPTION

A. Overview

The USAID Ocean Plastics Reduction Activity (Ocean Plastics Reduction) is a five-year project to reduce environmental plastics by decreasing plastic inputs and improving integrated solid waste management (SWM) practices in Sri Lanka and Maldives. With a focus on ocean plastics pollution, USAID Ocean Plastics Reduction will mobilize funding for SWM and 3R (reduce, reuse, and recycle) activities and improve government capacity to manage the industry. The project's diverse consortium, led by RTI International, will use a system strengthening approach, working alongside local partners to target system inefficiencies and areas of reliance on virgin plastics, with the goal of increasing participation in SWM/3R programs and preventing thousands of tons of plastic from leaking into the environment.

As the second bilateral project of its kind funded by USAID, the Ocean Plastic Reduction Activity assumes a pioneering role in communicating successes not only within Sri Lanka and the Maldives but also regionally and globally. Beyond its immediate impact, the project is intricately linked to the U.S. government's broader efforts to combat climate change, recognizing plastic pollution as one of the most urgent environmental challenges of our time. Through collaborative efforts and innovative strategies, the Ocean Plastic Reduction Activity



seeks to contribute meaningfully to a sustainable and resilient future, underscoring the shared responsibility of addressing global environmental issues.

B. Scope:

The USAID Ocean Plastic Reduction Activity through its grant facility titled “Establishing Locally-led, Sustainable Business Solutions for Inclusive Circular Economy” seeks applications to fund, in the form of grants, qualified organizations/companies that can support the Ocean Plastic Reduction Activity’s objective of reducing reliance on virgin plastic inputs and products and professionalizing, improving and expanding Solid Waste Management services. This call for grant applications aims to champion refillable business models in Sri Lanka, representing a progressive initiative poised to embed sustainability at the core of both commerce and consumer practices. The grant's objectives for this forward-thinking endeavor are designed to be multifaceted, addressing a spectrum of environmental, economic, and social goals. By fostering the adoption of refillable business models, this initiative will play a pivotal role in advancing the Ocean Plastics Reduction Activity's overarching mission—to diminish dependence on virgin plastic inputs and products, thereby augmenting environmental sustainability.

The grant call also aims to elevate recyclable waste collection rates in the country, with specific emphasis on establishing self-sustainable, community-led business models for recyclable waste collection in underserved, high potential locations in the Northern and Central Provinces. Among recyclable waste, the focus should mainly be on plastics waste. By extending grants within the broader framework of enhancing solid waste management services, the initiative seeks to bolster community efforts in the design and implementation of effective recyclable waste collection programs in identified geographic locations. This strategic focus is geared towards not only supporting but also fortifying community-led initiatives for sustainable and improved waste management practices. The issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award, a commitment on the part of RTI or USAID, nor does it commit to pay for costs incurred in the submission of an application. In addition, this RFA is not intended to replace any current or future funding agreements organizations may have with any government agency.

Locally-led, Sustainable Business Solutions for Inclusive Circular Economy - Grant Objectives

This Request for Applications carries multiple specific aims all of which are explained below and are directly linked to overall objectives and results framework of USAID Ocean Plastics Reduction

Activity. These specific aims are mainly aligned with two streams of work – **Promoting refillable business models as a means of reducing virgin plastics input and products and establishing recyclable waste collection models in underserved areas.**

Promoting refillable business models

- a. Reducing Plastics Products and Packaging** The grant activities must focus on the pivotal objective of mitigating the pressing issue of single-use plastic waste, a significant environmental concern. The activities must strategically promote the adoption of refillable products among businesses and consumers, with the overarching goal of making substantial strides in reducing plastic pollution. The collective effort must speak to minimizing single-use plastics as it is not only integral to preserving Sri Lanka's ecological integrity but also contributes significantly to the worldwide endeavor of environmental conservation.
- b. Supporting Local Economies.** The proposed activities towards promoting refillable systems should not just be environmentally sound but also economically beneficial and financially sustainable beyond the proposed duration. By empowering local manufacturers and retailers to adopt and promote refillable systems, the initiative seeks to boost local economies. It emphasizes the importance of supporting local businesses, which in turn can lead to job creation and community development.
- c. Consumer engagement** A vital part of this initiative should include strategies to promote refillable business models among targeted groups. To this effect, it is encouraged to use innovative digital approaches and methods. The goal is to foster a more environmentally conscious consumer base that makes responsible choices.
- d. Developing Sustainable Supply Chains.** Proposed activities must focus on establishing a sustainable supply chain, which is critical for the success and long-term sustainability of the refillable business models. This objective focuses on ensuring that the supply chain for refillable products is both economically viable and environmentally friendly. It involves collaboration with suppliers, manufacturers, and retailers to create a seamless and efficient process for refillable products.
- e. Promoting Innovation.** To support refillable business models, there is a need for innovation in both product design and business processes including product delivery models. Therefore, the applicants are encouraged to focus on the development of new technologies and innovative business models that will lead to a reduction of virgin plastics usage. It's about fostering a culture of innovation that prioritizes sustainability.

Establishing recyclable waste collection models in the underserved areas

- a. **Improve the recovery rate of post-consumer plastic waste materials in the region.** Grant applications must include strong demonstration on how the proposed solution will have its impact on improving the plastic waste material recovery rate in the region and that would otherwise have ended up in polluting the soil, water and air without the support of this RFA. Furthermore, applicants must include the proposed strategies, methods and techniques they wish to carry out during the specified period, indicating clear and specific targets for each material involved. Applicants are highly encouraged to develop self-sustainable business models focusing on increasing the value addition to the materials considered as waste (or plastic waste) and diverting such into a traceable and proper recycled product/s.
- b. **Establishing or strengthening partnerships in waste management.** Applicants are welcome to initiate, establish or/and improve the partnerships in the proposed waste management activities (but not necessarily required) through the proposal and are expected to showcase the linkage and the willingness of the partners if there is any. Such partnerships may include private entities, government institutions, non-governmental organizations, social enterprises, community-based organizations, etc actively engaged in regionally, nationally or internationally. Providing downstream recycling solutions for recyclable waste at the local level through partnerships or other approaches is encouraged.
- c. **Improve livelihood through engaging marginalized communities for waste management activities.** The applicants are highly encouraged to demonstrate the inclusivity of marginalized communities, their contribution and benefits to them in successful implementation of the proposed business solution.

The Applicant should take into account the challenges as well as opportunities posed by changing external circumstances such as high inflations, and changes in local and national administrations. USAID Ocean Plastic Reduction Activity will closely work with the grantees to provide administrative and technical support when needed as part of capacity building of the grantee.

SECTION 2: AWARD INFORMATION

This is a call inviting international and national non-governmental organizations, private sectors as well as community-based organizations to submit concept papers falling within the scope mentioned in **section B**. The concept papers must meet the following requirements.

- The geographical focus of the proposed activities must be within one of the following provinces in Sri Lanka, **Sothern, Western, Eastern, Northern, or Northwestern**.
- Demonstrated experience working in environment sectors in Sri Lanka.
- Applications meet minimum evaluation criteria for
 - a. Soundness of technical approach
 - b. Understanding of local context, and
 - c. qualifications of proposed personnel
- Demonstrated financial capacity to manage USAID grants portfolio.
- The proposed budget must not exceed the maximum of **USD 30,000**.
- Cost realism of the budget
- Proposed activities should be completed within a maximum timeframe of **18 months**.
- Past performance

SECTION 3: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

I. Types of eligible organizations

The expression of interest is open to the following eligible organization with a **legal registration in Sri Lanka**.

- Community Based Organizations
- Civil Society Organizations
- Non-governmental (International/national) Organizations
- Research or learning institutes, designers, manufacturers, technology firms, social enterprises, and service providers.
- Private sector companies/entities.

II. Types of ineligible Organization

The Ocean Plastics Reduction Activity GUCs support may not be extended to the following:



- Organizations that are not legally registered in Sri Lanka.
- Any entity that has been found to have misused USAID funds in the past (unless specifically approved by USAID contracting officer)
- Any entity that will have conflict of interest by participating in the call for grants
- Political parties, groupings, or institutions or their subsidiaries and affiliates
- Any entity whose name appears on the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-procurement Programs (<http://www.sam.gov/>)
- Any entity with a member that appears on the U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons list.
- Any entity with members directly or indirectly involved in money laundering, acts of terrorism, gambling, prostitution and child trafficking, drugs.

III. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):

Although not required at the Concept Paper submission stage, applicants are encouraged to obtain their UEI number through registration in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov>) further guidance is provided in the annex section on how to obtain UEI number. Ocean Plastics Reduction Activity may not make a grant award to any applicant until the applicant has provided their UEI number.

SECTION 4: SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Format and Submission process

Interested applicants should submit a concept paper using the provided template in Annex 1 electronically in PDF format maximum 4 pages excluding cover page in English to grants_sl@rti.org on or before **April 30, 2024 at 05.00PM IST**. The subject of the email as **Expression of Interest /USAID OPRA Activity 2024-001/applicants name**.

B. Questions and clarifications

Questions and clarifications regarding this solicitation should be submitted in writing to grants_sl@rti.org not later than **Thursday, April 18, 2024 by 5:00PM IST**. Verbal information received from employees of USAID Ocean Plastics Reduction Activity, or any other entity should not be considered official response.

SECTION 5: REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Overview

All the applications under this EOI will be evaluated by Ocean Plastics Reduction Activity's technical evaluation committee (TEC) in accordance with the stipulated evaluation criterion below. Organizations and institutions with successful Concept Notes that demonstrate an alignment with program objectives and satisfy the minimum requirements, will be invited to submit a full proposal.

B. Evaluation Criteria

All the concept papers will be evaluated based on the following standard criteria.

Evaluation Category	Points
Feasibility of technical approach	45
Monitoring and Evaluation	10
Organizational Capacity and Performance	30
Cost efficiency/effectiveness	15
Overall Rating (out of 100 points)	100

Using the above evaluation criteria, the technical evaluation committee will score and rank each application and recommend the successful applicants to submit full application. The selected applications will undergo a pre-award risk assessment to adequately evaluate these organization's systems to determine their ability to receive and manage USAID funds.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 : Concept Note Template

Annex 2 : Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

ANNEX 1: Concept Note Template

Instructions: Please submit the Concept note as per the attached structured template provided (Maximum of 4 pages). This should address the following key headings:

- a) Organization Particulars
 - Address, Locations, and point of contact information
 - Ownership/Type of entity
 - Description of the organization and its main activities (past performance).
 - Describe the organization's presence in the provinces mentioned.
 - Management Team – Brief narrative of the Key personnel
- b) Project title
- c) Problem statement
- d) Intended results and theory of change
- e) Beneficiaries, and proposed activities
- f) Sustainability plan
- g) Risks and assumptions
- h) Timeline: The anticipated start date and period of project performance
- i) Proposed grant value (USD): Indicate the estimated grant value to carry out grant activities

ANNEX 2: Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

Grantees that receive more than \$30,000 from RTI are required to have a UEI number before receiving a grant award. The federal government has adopted the use of UEI numbers to track how federal grant money is allocated. The UEI number identifies your organization.

What is UEI & Why do organization I need one?

The US government has decided to stop using the DUNS number to uniquely identify organizational entities. **Effective April 4, 2022**, all entities doing business with the US government will be required to use a new 12-digit Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) which is created in **SAM.gov**.

How will I know if an organization has a UEI?



- If an organization is already registered in **SAM.gov** they have already been assigned a UEI (SAM). It's viewable on their entity registration record in SAM.gov.
- If an organization is not a registered entity in SAM.gov, they will have to request a UEI (SAM).

What are the ways for organizations to request a UEI?

Organizations have 2 options to request a UEI if they do not already have one:

- By completing a full registration in SAM.gov
- . If an organization does not want to complete a full entity registration in **SAM.gov**, they can read the *Quick Start Guide for Getting a UEI* for additional guidance and instructions.