

## CALL FOR PROJECT CONCEPTS

### TA10262 REG: Enhancing Gender Equality Outcomes in the Pacific Developing Member Countries (DMCs)

#### *An invitation to Pacific CSOs to submit Project Concepts*

#### Background

1. Gender issues vary across the Pacific DMCs because of various intersecting factors such as levels of economic development; social, cultural, and gender norms; population size and migration trends; as well as policy and legal frameworks. While many Pacific DMCs are signatories to international and regional conventions on gender equality, there are disparities in terms of the extent to which governments have adopted complementary national policies. Some common gender issues cut across countries in the region, including low levels of women's political representation, limited participation in the formal economy, high rates of gender based violence and sexually transmitted diseases, declining access to customary land rights and low levels of legal literacy about rights to land and property, and culturally enforced discrimination against women.
2. The **regional technical assistance (TA) for Enhancing Gender Equality Outcomes in Pacific DMCs**<sup>1</sup> was approved in December 2023, and is being implemented from January 2024 to December 2029 in the 14 Pacific region developing member countries (DMCs)—the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu (participating Pacific DMCs).

#### Objectives

3. The TA focuses on developing and implementing new strategies that address priority areas in the region, as well as advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) transformative agenda<sup>2</sup>. The primary objective of this Call for Project Concepts is the identification and testing of innovative approaches to accelerate gender equality in the Pacific.
4. CSOs<sup>3</sup> possess a deep understanding of the pressing challenges faced by women and girls in their respective countries and are directly involved in addressing gender equality issues in their communities. By utilizing this knowledge, ADB seeks to harness the untapped potential of these organizations to advance their gender equality goals. To achieve these objectives, ADB invites CSOs, either individually, in consortiums, or in partnership with commercial firms, to submit proposals for projects or initiatives that support these goals. The proposals should align with ADB's broader objectives of promoting gender equality and socioeconomic development in the Pacific, as outlined in the paragraphs below.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.adb.org/projects/57021-001/main>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<sup>3</sup> See ADB definition of CSOs under Eligibility in para 10

## Scope and Focus

5. The proposed projects should be in line with ADB's focus areas for the **acceleration of progress in gender equality** identified under Operational Priority 2 of Strategy 2030<sup>4</sup> and with one or more of the overarching objectives contained in SDG 5 transformative gender agenda which includes:
  - eliminating violence against women and girls;
  - recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work;
  - emphasizing sexual and reproductive health and rights;
  - encouraging women's participation in decision making and leadership;
  - creating access to economic and productive resources, and ICT;
  - legal or institutional reforms for protecting women's rights; and
  - changing gendered social norms.

Proposed projects should also be compatible with **ADB's Pacific Approach**<sup>5</sup> where it is recognized that gender equality is critical for realizing socioeconomic development across the region.

6. **Scope of work.** Under the regional TA, a grant facility has been established to provide funding for projects ranging from **\$50,000 to \$200,000** to be awarded to successful applicants from across the Pacific region countries. Eligible applicants should be registered CSOs operating in one or several participating Pacific DMCs.
7. **Activities.** A proposed activity, initiative or intervention should address one or more of the above SDG5 transformative gender agenda priorities. Projects initiatives that employ digital-based solutions are encouraged. The outcome should make a contribution towards the acceleration of gender equality and demonstrate measurable results in the applicant's community or country.

Whilst aligning with ADB gender equality priorities, projects may focus on a particular sector, or be cross-sectoral. Implementation activities may take many forms, such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and training for women and girls' skills enhancement and capacity strengthening. Educational activities may relate to different modes and sectors, and may include digital-based approaches and solutions;
- Capacity building – this could be in the form of strengthening women's knowledge of their legal rights (e.g. property ownership); financial and digital literacy; strengthening knowledge of financial and other institutional requirements for the transition from informal to formal sector, or women and girls' knowledge and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Developing livelihood strategies – for example, establishing a community enterprise, by turning a community activity, such as recycling, into a commercial community business;
- Applying nature-based solutions developed by community-led groups in response to climate change challenges;
- Care models to enable women to partake in formal employment. This could take the shape of an independent initiative on the part of a CSO, or, in collaboration with a private sector provider or employer;
- Initiatives that address gender-based violence – this may include creating and/or enhancing the accessibility of safe spaces for women and girls; community campaigns that shape social norms and behavior, targeting men and youth, to name only a few; and,
- Developing innovative models in digital finance.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/495956/strategy-2030-op2-gender-equality.pdf>. Para 38.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.adb.org/documents/pacific-approach-2021-2025>

8. **Funding.** The grant facility is intended to support initiatives on a limited scale that may form a pilot basis for replication or adoption on a larger scale in the future. The initiatives included in the project concept must be workable and implementable solutions to the challenges to achieving gender equality in the local context along a specific dimension. The activities must involve, and be supported by, local or national gender equality machinery. Funding under the technical assistance program allows for the successful applicants to procure externally goods and services required for implementing the project.

## Applicant Requirements

9. **Eligibility.** Eligible applicants are CSOs registered and operating on a national or regional basis across the Pacific. By ADB definition, CSOs include non-government organizations (NGOs), umbrella organizations of CSO networks, community-based organizations (CBOs) and other organizations representing their member's interests at a local, national or regional level. This also includes academic and research institutes<sup>6</sup>. Applications from international NGOs will be considered if ties with a local partner in the target country are clearly established. A commercial firm, or a not-for-profit social enterprise, may submit a joint application in collaboration with a local CSO. Applicants may also form part of a consortium under a lead umbrella organization or alliance.
10. **Applicant qualifications:** Under the grant facility, applicants should be firmly established in their community, or country, in their respective area of activity with a demonstrated record that extends beyond advocacy efforts. They should also have demonstrated efforts to coordinate with the government's socioeconomic development objectives and gender equality priorities.

In particular, CSOs engaged in activities to reach women and girls from vulnerable communities (rural and remote communities, women-headed households, women with disabilities) will be encouraged to submit proposals introducing innovative approaches to known challenges.

Applicants will outline proposed projects initially in the form of a Project Concept. A template will be provided to interested CSOs on request.

## Call for Project Concepts

11. The present **Call for Project Concepts** represents the first step in a two stage selection process. The Call for Project Concepts invites CSOs meeting the eligibility criteria cited above (para 9) to submit an outline of their proposed project in the form of a **Project Concept**. In a second step, shortlisted applicants of the submitted Project Concepts will subsequently be invited to submit a detailed Project Technical and Financial Proposal.
12. **In this first step** – the **Call** for submitting a **Project Concept proposal** – *A Project Concept Note*, of up to six pages, should outline the objectives and activities of the project to be developed and implemented. The Project Concept Note should include:
- A rationale for the proposed project
  - A brief outline of the project's objective, outputs and key activities
  - An indicative budget
  - A capacity statement reflecting expertise in the relevant area and brief resumés of key personnel proposed for the project (may be as an attachment)

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<sup>6</sup> Non-profit organizations independent from the government, which operate around common interests. They vary in size, interests, and function, and include NGOs, youth groups, community-based organizations, independent academic and research institutes, professional associations, foundations, faith-based organizations, people's organizations, and labor unions. <https://www.adb.org/documents/highlights-adb-cooperation-civil-society-2021>. See Box 1

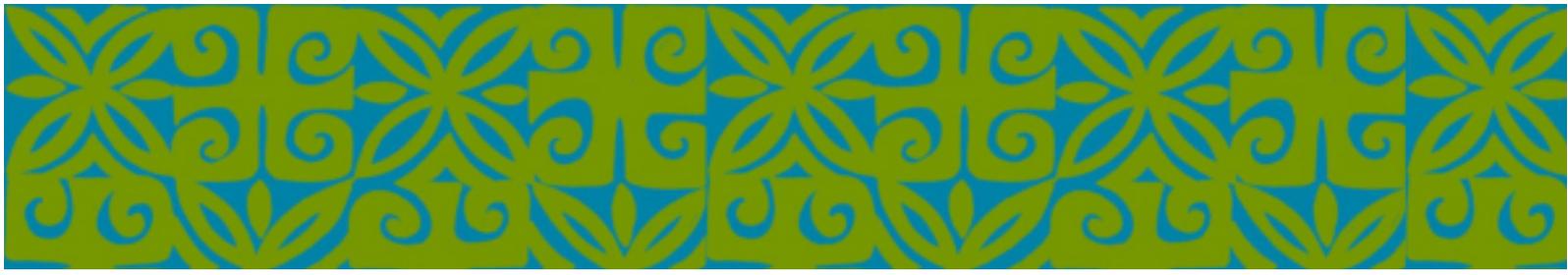
- One reference from a previous project funder or partner organization
- Identification of the target group of beneficiaries in the population or community
- Geographical coverage
- Timeline – The project may be designed to be completed over a short time period in a single phase or implemented over several phases. Overall implementation should be completed within 24 months. See para 19 for Timeline details.

13. **How to submit?** The Project Concept Note should be submitted via e-mail to: [pacific.sdg5.csogrants@adb.org](mailto:pacific.sdg5.csogrants@adb.org) with the subject line: “*INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SUPPORT SDG5 – A PROJECT CONCEPT.*” **The deadline for submission of Project Concepts is 7th October 2024 (COB Manila).**
14. **The Selection Process.** From the submissions received by ADB in the Call for Project Concepts, a Selection Committee will select and request successful Project Concepts to develop and submit a full technical and financial project proposal.
15. **Request for Full Project Proposals.** The CSOs who submitted the shortlisted Project Concepts will be invited to develop and submit full proposals in a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP). It is anticipated that the invitation to successful CSOs to submit a full project proposal will be made **in the second week of November 2024**. It should be noted however, that no financial disbursements from the grant facility will be made until the final selection is made after the Second Call.
16. Applicants selected from the initial Call for Project Concepts **may request guidance** on ADB requirements for preparing full project proposals for receiving funding from the grant facility. As a rule, a full project proposal **requires both a technical proposal and a financial proposal**. Guidance may be provided to the applicant as needed in order to conform to ADB requirements. At a minimum, it is important that a technical proposal provides details on the purpose and beneficiaries of the proposed project, the methodology to be employed to achieve the identified objectives and the skills and experience of key personnel, as well as the standing of the organization itself in the community to engage with the intended beneficiaries. In order to be able to submit a full proposal, if invited to do so, **CSOs will be required to register on ADB’s Consultant Management System (CMS)**<sup>7</sup>. ADB will provide guidance to selected eligible CSOs on how to complete registration formalities.

## Selection Criteria

17. In the **Call for Project Concepts**, an internal ADB Selection committee will assess the proposals based on the submitted Project Concept Note. A simplified screening and selection process will be applied assessing submitted proposals with regard to:
- Alignment with ADB gender equality priorities and with SDG 5 transformative gender agenda
  - Relevance to local context
  - Clear objectives, targeted beneficiaries and intended results
  - Cost effectiveness of budget estimate
  - Skills and experience of key personnel; standing of the organization within the sector
  - Innovation
  - Sustainability and Scalability

<sup>7</sup> Consultant Management System: [https://selfservice.adb.org/OA\\_HTML/adb/adbpos/jsp/ADBCMSHomepage.jsp](https://selfservice.adb.org/OA_HTML/adb/adbpos/jsp/ADBCMSHomepage.jsp)

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18. Detailed selection criteria for screening project proposals in the RFP will be provided to the short-listed applicants. ADB's procurement principles of economy, efficiency, fairness, transparency, quality and value for money will be applied.

### Timeline

19. **Closing date for submissions under the Call for Project Concept Proposals – 7th October 2024 (COB Manila)**

Shortlisted applicants to be informed by the second week of November 2024 and will be invited to submit a full Technical and Financial Proposal (RFP) with a submission date of mid- December 2024.

Advise successful applicants and conclude contracts – 1st quarter 2025. Implementation – to commence 2nd quarter 2025. The implementation of a selected project may last up to maximum 24 months.

### Information & Enquiries

20. The announcement of this **Call** to submit **Project Concepts** can be found on the ADB NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) Website, Events & Media Page Specific enquiries can be addressed [pacific.sdg5.csogrants@adb.org](mailto:pacific.sdg5.csogrants@adb.org)