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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA  
**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC**  
Global Programme Water

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**«Boosting collective action for improved water quality»**

Bern, Switzerland – 02.11.2018

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## Abbreviations

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GPW	Global Programme Water
LDC	Least developed country
LMIC	Low- and middle-income country
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise

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# 1. Background and Introduction

## Context

Good water quality is essential for human well-being, for use in households, agriculture, industry, and to support freshwater ecosystems and the services they provide. Improving water quality is a crucial element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, fulfilling an essential role in reducing poverty and diseases and promoting sustainable growth. It is estimated that at least half of the world's population suffers from polluted water – and the situation is set to worsen. Population growth and climate change are placing increasing pressure on the ability of water bodies to process wastewater, nutrients and contaminants. Increases in water pollution are projected throughout the world, but will have the greatest repercussions in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This will, in turn, increase the risks to human health, economic development and ecosystems.<sup>1</sup>

Water pollution disproportionately kills the poor, vulnerable and marginalized. It is estimated that, in 2015, 1.3 million deaths worldwide were attributable to unsafe water sources, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia being the most highly impacted.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, poor water quality has many economic costs including degradation of ecosystem services; water treatment and health-related costs; impacts on economic activities related to reduced productivity in agriculture, fisheries, industrial manufacturing and tourism; reduced property values; or opportunity costs of further development.

There is a growing risk to water quality in the next 15-30 years due to climate change, socio-economic development and population increase. It is estimated that today more than 80% of river basins have serious water quality issues, requiring urgent attention at the national, regional and global level. However, pollution is often a highly sensitive political topic. Although technical, legal and political advances to improve water quality have been made in many parts of the world, creating awareness on the severity of water pollution's impacts, as well as public and political pressure to prevent and mitigate pollution, are required more than ever.

## Focus on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Water pollution problems are intensified where industrial pollutants contaminate water systems. Some of the worst chemical pollution of drinking water is seen in rapidly urbanizing and industrializing LMICs.<sup>3</sup> In LMICs, most wastewater from industrial sources is discharged directly back into water bodies without treatment.

SMEs from both formal and informal sector industries play a fundamental role for economic development and poverty alleviation in LMICs. In emerging economies, SMEs contribute up to 45% of total employment and 33% of GDP. When taking the contribution of informal businesses into account, SMEs contribute to more than half of employment and GDP in most countries irrespective of income levels<sup>4</sup>. Their activities are often linked to complex production systems with interdependent production chains and interrelations between formal and informal sectors. However, SMEs are also often highly polluting and difficult to reach out to, due to a lack of regulatory framework and/or enforcement. Depending on the type of industry, pollution affects water, air and/or soil quality, but the main risk to human health is often the direct exposure of workers active in small-scale industries. Usually, poor population segments are most at risk, both because of the direct exposure in the work environment and from living in close proximity to discharge points. In addition, many SMEs in LMICs are owned by women who often operate in sectors requiring safer water resources for operation (e.g. food and beverage, agri-business, textile), and often employ more women than men.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD (2017): [Diffuse Pollution, Degraded Waters – Emerging Policy Solutions. Policy Highlights](#)

<sup>2</sup> [A Matter of Survival – Report of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace](#) (2017)

<sup>3</sup> [Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health](#) (2017)

<sup>4</sup> IFC (2010): [Scaling-Up SME Access to Financial Services in the Developing World](#)

## **Extending the concept of water stewardship**

Over the last decade, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has gained significant experience in the implementation of water stewardship initiatives in cooperation with the private sector. Water stewardship has proven effective for addressing certain water-related risks. Water stewardship is about businesses identifying and managing water-related risks, understanding and mitigating their adverse impacts on ecosystems and communities, and contributing to and help enable more sustainable management of water as a shared public resource. However, this still relatively new approach has mainly been focusing on water quantity/efficiency measures so far, and did not sufficiently reach out to SMEs along the supply chains of multi-national companies, in particular SMEs working in informal settings. Hence, current water stewardship approaches need to be complemented by tackling pollution issues more effectively.

Building on this knowledge and a sound analysis of existing experiences, SDC's Global Programme Water (GPW) intends/wishes to broaden the current scope of water stewardship interventions in order to tackle water quality-related challenges of SMEs by working towards reducing water pollution from industrial sources, with a special focus on reducing water pollution from informal sector industries. This new initiative aims to address a major cause of river pollution in LMICs in Sub-Saharan Africa by improving the water performance of industrial actors, in particular SMEs, and collectively addressing shared water risks at the river basin level with a focus on water pollution management. It strives to tackle water-related pollution from key polluting industry sectors, such as textile, construction, or food and beverage – from point / source of pollution to its spreading in downstream regions or countries. It should have a strong transboundary character, which will not only play out in terms of cooperation between countries, but rather with regards to upstream-downstream dynamics related to water pollution in river basins.

While the management priority in LMICs is often dominated by water quantity issues due to political priorities (hydropower, agriculture), water pollution issues that impact more the general population (with a less strong political voice) tend to be neglected. The present initiative aims to strengthen water cooperation focusing on basin-wide water quality problems stemming from the intrusion of chemical pollutants into the environment. This will increase the visibility of benefits of cooperation to the population and the potential for civil society and private sector involvement. It will also incentivize and motivate governments to manage and invest in river basins in a sustainable way.

## **2. Guiding principles**

**Thematic focus:** Water pollution

**Targeted stakeholders:** SMEs, in particular along the supply-chain of international buyers/multi-national companies; specific focus on the informal sector

**Geographical focus:** Sub-Saharan Africa

**Line of intervention:** Water stewardship; working for impact at regional, national and local level

**Type of funding:** contribution to an existing or new project or programme

### **2.1. Objectives**

The overall goal of the project should be to improve the overall health and environment of the target populations through sustainable management and monitoring of water-related pollution by industrial activities.

The private sector plays a key role in tackling river pollution and resource degradation through

improved water management, and to maintain or enhance water quality and quantity. The new initiative strives to work with local industries, including SMEs, along the supply chain of international buyers/multinational companies to increase their sense of shared responsibility and encourage them to act responsibly, sensitize them about the risks they are exposed to from declining water quality, improve their individual water practices, and create opportunities for collective actions to address shared water risks and take part in water governance. Moreover, working with SMEs on water stewardship can bring gender benefits by specifically targeting women-owned SMEs.

SDC is looking for project proposals that contribute to the achievement of the following outcomes:

- |   |
|---|
| 1. <b>At regional level</b> , sustainable water quality management of local industries has been strengthened by developing and applying tools and processes for effective water stewardship within river basins at the regional or transboundary level. |
|---|

Local industries should be supported to implement different stages of water stewardship in Sub-Saharan Africa, beginning with raising awareness in the target region. The regional component aims to achieve more effective river governance by adopting holistic water stewardship approaches with key industry sectors with high pollution impacts (e.g. textile, food and beverage, construction, mining, agri-business) to green their production and processes, and to bring the private sector closer to the planning and policy making fronts to ensure a more inclusive process is in place on key water-related decision making. Concurrently, lessons and knowledge will be transferred within the region for longer term scaling up.

By leveraging regional/national experience for global dialogue, advocacy and awareness raising, the practical outcomes (evidence-based results from the intervention) are expected to influence policies, in particular at the level of the various institutions and platforms at the regional/global level engaged in sustainable use and management of water resources.

- |   |
|---|
| 2. <b>At local level</b> , the hazardous ecosystem of SMEs (industry-people-environment ecosystem) has been improved by reducing business impacts on water and the environment. |
|---|

SMEs' water practices should be improved by implementing water stewardship measures, including promoting pro-poor and inclusive business models, and/or mitigating the risk exposure of workers to environmental impacts with negative socio-economic consequences (health and livelihood impacts). Water pollution management, sustainability training, and technical assistance will be provided to SMEs in key economic sectors, influencing an even greater number of SMEs in the target region. Additionally, the project should link with or target the local finance sector to facilitate SMEs access to financing to implement innovative technological and operational improvements for greener production.

**Targeted stakeholders**

Direct beneficiaries will mainly be SMEs in LMICs (including second or third tier suppliers of multinational companies) benefiting from technical and financial support and capacity building. The ultimate beneficiaries will be individuals and communities benefiting from improved water quality and reduced health impacts of polluted water sources, particularly women and children. To ensure addressing the needs/rights of the most vulnerable, the project should promote targeting of SMEs working in informal settings, with a particular focus women-owned SMEs.

**2.2. Strategic linkages**

The SDC is well known and appreciated for its long lasting support and its innovative and comprehensive approaches in water-related projects. For more than 40 years, the SDC has supported partner countries in developing their water and sanitation as well as water resources management programmes, strategies and policies. It has successfully explored new thematic fields such as water diplomacy & security and water economics, and it has been influential and functional in shaping global developments like the Blue Peace movement and advocating for a dedicated water

goal in the 2030 Agenda<sup>5</sup>. Water is today one of the priority themes of the SDC. The **Dispatch for International Cooperation 2017 – 2020**<sup>6</sup> highlights the importance of sustainable management of and access to natural resources, including water, as a means to reduce inequalities, improve living conditions and create better prospects for populations in developing countries.

The GPW allows developing solutions to global challenges through worldwide political dialogue paired with global projects fueling innovation and know-how sharing. Through this, it brings hands-on field experience to the international policy dialogue. Moreover, by linking dialogue and action, the GPW promotes the creation and exchange of knowledge on the multifaceted interplay between water and development. The programs, projects and contributions of the GPW respond to major global challenges related to the management of water resources. The initiatives in place are geared towards delivering responses in reducing global risks and ensuring water security worldwide focus with a clear focus on inequality and poverty. Through its expertise and networking, the GPW acts as a catalyst effective in promoting policy changes and fostering the implementation of innovative solutions.

The present initiative on “Boosting collective action for improved water quality” will have to be in line with the **Strategic Framework 2017-2020 of the SDC Global Programme Water**<sup>7</sup>: Strengthening water quality through pollution prevention and control is among the priority topics. The selected project will contribute to three of the four pillars of the GPW Strategic Framework:

- component 1 (**water governance**), by implementing water stewardship practices and providing SMEs with the opportunity, together with government and civil society, to collectively act on decisions regarding water resource management;
- component 2 (**water solutions**), by introducing preventive and mitigation measures through water stewardship to prevent and control water-related pollution and its impacts; and
- component 4 (**Young People & Gender Equality**), by empowering women to participate in decision-making around water, integrating them into markets, and providing access to technologies and training to boost their incomes.

The anticipated impacts (reduced health risks, better governance, greener investments and sustainable production) contribute to the realization of various **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, incl. direct contributions towards SDGs 3 (health and wellbeing for all at all ages), 6 (availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) and 12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns), as well as indirect impacts to SDGs 1 (end poverty in all its forms worldwide), 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and 10 (reduce inequality within and among countries).

### 2.3. Geographic focus

Sub-Saharan Africa. The project should focus on a (transboundary) river basin and/or work along the supply chain of a multinational company or a specific industry sector across different countries. The project shall be relevant at local level and have a clear link to policy frameworks at national, regional/transboundary and global levels.

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<sup>5</sup> A short overview of SDC’s work related to water is provided on this website: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/water.html>

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/sdc/strategy/legal-bases/message-international-cooperation-2017-2020.html>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/deza/en/documents/themen/wasser/gpw-strategy-final-EN.pdf>

## 3. Application details

### 3.1. Who can apply

The applying organizations should have the necessary expertise, capacity, network and experience and a strong track record in the field of water stewardship. Applications by consortiums, including different stakeholder groups<sup>8</sup> with experience in the above mentioned fields and able to demonstrate the capacity to develop and implement projects of similar volume and complexity are encouraged to apply. In case of a multi beneficiary contribution (consortium), the lead organization is the coordinator of a consortium established between several applicants, submitting a joint proposal. The lead applicant will be the intermediary for all communication between the co-beneficiaries and the SDC and responsible for supplying all documents and information to the SDC.

### 3.2. What kind of project can be funded

Public - Private - Development - Partnerships and multi-stakeholder approaches are requested. Exclusive research projects will not be considered.

### 3.3. Duration

The project includes three phases: analytical review and knowledge production, coupled with tangible water stewardship activities in a pilot river basin during phase I (2019-2022), followed by a consolidation and transfer of knowledge and experience to other river basins in the region during a possible phase II (2023-2025) and up-scaling with private sector partners during a possible phase III (2026-2028).

The technical and financial proposal shall mainly focus on the first phase (2019-2022) of the project, but include a long-term vision for the three phases including a cost estimation for the potential phases II and III.

### 3.4. Funding

SDC's contribution will indicatively range between CHF 1'500'000 – CHF 2'000'000 for the first phase of the project. The annual contribution will decrease in the potential subsequent phase(s).

SDC's contribution will cover a maximum of 50% (co-financing) of the total cost of each project phase. SDC's contribution will cover a maximum of 50% (co-financing) of the total cost for each project phase. A contribution of up to a maximum of 80% (co-financing) may be considered for applicants legally based (headquarter) in least developed countries (LDCs) or LMICs<sup>9</sup>. In case of a consortium, all members of the consortium must be legally based (headquarter) in LDCs or LMICs to possibly benefit from a contribution of up to 80% (co-financing).

The presented budget shall include the full cost of the project phase I and show all costs and all sources of finance. It shall also include a cost estimation for the potential subsequent phase(s).

There is no remuneration for the submission of the proposal.

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<sup>8</sup> For example relevant local and international partners (e.g. civil society organizations, conservation NGOs), local/regional/multinational private sector (e.g. global leading companies, chambers of commerce, SME and industry associations, financial sector partners), local and national governments, intergovernmental organizations or regional collaboration mechanisms

<sup>9</sup> according to the OECD DAC List of ODA Recipients ([http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC\\_List\\_ODA\\_Recipients2018to2020\\_flows\\_En.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC_List_ODA_Recipients2018to2020_flows_En.pdf))

### 3.5. Contractual aspects

The Subsidy Act and the conditions of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs regarding contributions are applicable.

By submitting a proposal, the applicant accepts without reservation the enclosed standard contracts (i.e. Federal contribution for project incl. GCB; Contribution outside Switzerland; see annex on the website).

## 4. Submission procedure

- All information about this call for proposals is publicly available on SDC's RésEAU network website: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Water>.
- Questions related to the call for proposals shall be submitted by email to the following address: [water@eda.admin.ch](mailto:water@eda.admin.ch) with the subject: Boosting collective action for improved water quality – Question until 30 November 2018. All questions and relative answers will be anonymously and openly available on the RésEAU website, and weekly updated.
- The proposals have to be submitted by 21 January 2019 08:00 CET latest to the following email address: [water@eda.admin.ch](mailto:water@eda.admin.ch) with the subject: Boosting collective action for improved water quality.
- Validity of proposals: 180 days after deadline for submission of proposals.

The proposal must fulfil the following criteria for a successful submission:

- The proposal is submitted in English or French.
- A minimum of point 10 font size and 1.5 line spacing must be used.
- The proposal must be submitted by email (deadline 21 January 2019 08:00 CET).

### 4.1. Guidelines for the writing of the proposal

Please respect the following structure for your proposal:

Chapter	Description	No. pages max
-	Cover letter with signature(s)	1
-	Table of contents	1
01	Filled form "Applicant information" given in Annex 1	-
02	Summary of the proposal (technical and financial)	0.5
03	Technical proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Description of approach, proposed strategy of intervention, impact hypothesis or theory of change, long-term vision</li><li>• Expected results to be achieved during phase I (2019-2022), and if applicable of the results achieved so far</li><li>• Sustainability of the project and scaling up</li><li>• Description of direct and indirect partners and beneficiaries</li></ul>	6

Chapter	Description	No. pages max
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment indicating opportunities and risks and the means identified for addressing them</li> <li>Set up of the project including composition of the consortium and organizational structure</li> </ul>	
04	Financial proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget including amount and source/share of co-financing according to form given in Annex 2 “Budget project contribution”, not exceeding the maximum budget indicated in chapter 3.4</li> </ul>	-
05	References and track records of similar projects in in the thematic fields of the project proposal	1
06	Annexes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abbreviations</li> <li>Acceptance GCB</li> </ul>	2

Additional annexes or links to further documents are not allowed.  
Language of proposals: English or French.

#### 4.2. Timetable

Date / Deadline	Activity
02.11.2018	Call for proposals opening
30.11.2018	Deadline submission of questions by email: <a href="mailto:water@eda.admin.ch">water@eda.admin.ch</a>
21.01.2019, 08:00 CET	Deadline for submission of complete proposals by email: <a href="mailto:water@eda.admin.ch">water@eda.admin.ch</a>
January 2019	Evaluation of submitted proposals
February – March 2019	Oral presentations and negotiations (remain reserved)
March 2019	Evaluation decision
March 2019	Communication on decision to all applicants and publication of award <sup>10</sup>
April – July 2019	Development of a full proposal to be considered for funding by SDC
August 2019	Signing of Contract between SDC and implementing organization, subject to approval by SDC
01.09.2019	Start of phase 1

<sup>10</sup> The award will be published at SDC's RésEAU network website: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Water>. All applicants will be informed in writing of the award decision.

## 5. Selection of projects; evaluation criteria

### 5.1. Eligibility check

An evaluation committee setup by the SDC will check whether the proposals meet the formal criteria as described in the chapters 4.1 and 4.2. Proposals that do not meet the formal criteria will not be evaluated.

The committee will then evaluate all the eligible proposals according to the criteria described in the chapter 5.2.

### 5.2. Evaluation

For the selection of the proposal, the following will be of importance (not listed in the order of priority):

- Thematic relevance and interest;
- Originality of the aims and objectives;
- Impact of outcomes on improving the quality of life, contributing to socio-economic development, and /or solving prevailing social and/or environmental issues;
- The comprehensiveness and consistency of the chosen modalities and approaches related to water stewardship;
- The way vulnerable and marginalized groups (women, informal sector workers) are engaged and empowered as key stakeholders of the project;
- The way youth are engaged and empowered;
- The way the private sector (SMEs, multinational companies) is engaged and integrated as a key stakeholder of the project;
- The way relevant regulatory institutions are being addressed and can be complemented;
- Experience and past performance of applicants (including a strong track record of advocacy and knowledge sharing efforts in bringing experience from the field to the regional and/or global level and in contributing to policy influencing);
- Feasibility of the project;
- Potential for the approach to be scaled up/scaled out;
- Strategy for sustainability and phasing out; and
- Composition of the applicants as consortia of different stakeholder groups. The different consortia partners should complement each other and ensure coherence and competence in all related fields, including the generation of public and private benefits.

Proposals will be reviewed according to international peer review standard procedures. The following table provides an overview of the evaluated criteria and the corresponding weighting:

<b>C</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
	<b>Technical Proposal</b>	
<b>C1</b>	Demonstrated thematic expertise/qualification/capacity/achieved results and institutional network	<b>20%</b>
<b>C2</b>	General approach, relevance and probability of success	<b>50%</b>
	<b>Financial Proposal</b>	
<b>C3</b>	Clarity of the proposition, full character of the cost structure (personnel, material, traveling and other costs) and allocation to various lines of action, realistic estimation of the costs	<b>10%</b>

<b>C4</b>	Relation of estimated costs to expected outcomes of the project proposal (Cost/Benefit ratio)	<b>10%</b>
<b>C5</b>	Reliable source of co-financing and % of co-financing	<b>10%</b>

Each criterion (C) will be evaluated according to the following score table:

Score	Fulfilment and quality of the criteria	
0	Cannot be established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information has no significance.</li> </ul>
1	Very bad fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information is insufficient.</li> <li>Data quality is very poor.</li> </ul>
2	Bad fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information relates inadequately to the requirements.</li> <li>Data quality is poor.</li> </ul>
3	Average fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information globally responds inadequately to the requirements.</li> <li>Data quality is adequate.</li> </ul>
4	Good fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information focuses well on requirements</li> <li>Data quality is good.</li> </ul>
5	Very good fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information clearly relates to the achievement of outputs</li> <li>Data quality is excellent.</li> </ul>

### 5.3. Oral presentation and negotiation (remain reserved)

In case of high quality proposals with similar scoring, SDC reserves the right to invite the concerned applicants (maximum of 5 proposals) for an oral presentation (phone or video conference) to a selection committee of SDC. The oral presentation will tentatively take place in February/March 2019.

## 6. Communication of SDC decision and next steps

### 6.1. SDC decision

The evaluation committee at the SDC decides about the projects based on the proposals. SDC reserves the right not to select a proposal. There is no right to appeal.

The evaluation results will be communicated to the applicants as soon as the final decision is taken (March 2019).

### 6.2. Full project proposal development

The selected project would be expected to start at 1 September 2019 and the winning consortium would in the meantime (April – July 2019) elaborate the full project proposal.

## 7. Further conditions for the submission of a proposal

### 7.1. Contractual aspects

By submitting a proposal, the applicant accepts without reservation the general conditions for contracts concerning federal contributions for projects (Annex 3). In addition the applicant agrees with the following:

#### a) Project progress reporting

Technical reporting: The contracted organizations are required to send technical reports to the SDC every 6 months on progress and at the end of the project on the overall project. These reports inform the SDC about the progress and milestones achieved in the project. Specific outputs from the project should be included (e.g. publications).

Financial reporting: The contracted organizations are required to send financial reports every 6 months and at the end of the project, justifying the use of the funds.

The SDC has to be informed about any changes affecting the grantees (e.g. moves, changes to employment terms).

#### b) Payments

Payments are made in several instalments including a first advance payment at the signing of the contract and following payments after the reception and acceptance of progress and final reports.

#### c) Publication and application of results

Acknowledgement of support: whenever results generated by SDC funded project are published (for example in journals, patents, presentations, etc.) the applicants should bring attention to the financial support provided by the SDC. This may imply a written acknowledgment and/or visible SDC logos:

'The research leading to these results was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation'.

The SDC may publish information on projects, which it supports financially. This could include the name and affiliation of the applicants and host institution, the project's objectives and the amount of funding awarded.

### 7.2. Contact persons and information

For questions concerning the submission and evaluation procedure, please contact the SDC Global Programme Water mentioning in the subject, the title of the call for proposal: [water@eda.admin.ch](mailto:water@eda.admin.ch).

## 8. List of annexes

No.	Annexes
1	Form «Applicant information»
2	Form «Budget Project contribution»
3	General conditions for contracts concerning federal contributions for projects