

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**Development of a submission on
innovation and management
efforts for marine and coastal
ecosystems in the Seas of East
Asia**

CFP reference number: CFP/21192/2025/001

CFP document issue date: **Mar 13, 2025**

1. PARTICULARS

1.1. UNOPS project objective(s)

Background

The **UNOPS Water, Environment and Climate (WEC)** Portfolio supports the design and management of multi-stakeholder initiatives by providing services in financial and grant management, procurement, human resources, and project management. The Portfolio has supported projects in the areas of marine and freshwater resources management, climate change adaptation, mitigation and transparency, energy access and distribution, and environmental conservation. UNOPS is the executing agency for the UNEP GEF SCS-SAP Project.

UNEP/GEF SCS SAP Project

The South China Sea is a strategic body of water surrounded by nations that are currently at the helm of industrialization and rapid economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region. It supports a number of unique habitats and ecosystems that are amongst the most biologically diverse shallow water marine ecosystems globally. Recent findings of the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme identified coastal communities bordering the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand as being among the most at risk globally from coastal and marine environmental degradation, high population growth, pollution, overharvest and habitat modification, resulting in high rates of habitat loss and impairment of the regenerative capacities of living resources. The socio-economic impacts of environmental deterioration are significant for the economies of this region.

This issue has been acknowledged by the countries of the South China Seas and Gulf of Thailand, who have committed to a 20-year process of cooperation to reverse environmental degradation trends. This is evidenced by the intergovernmental endorsement of the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Seas by Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. This commitment was further reinforced in 2016 when the abovementioned countries signed a special Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) committing to cooperate with one another to implement the Strategic Action Programme (SAP).

This commitment provided a clear signal to the international community to support the financing of the SAP through various projects, including the project entitled "Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand". The project aims to address habitat degradation, land-based pollution and regional cooperation. The overall goals of the project include:

- Maintain an environment at the regional level, in which collaboration and partnership in addressing environmental problems of the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand, between all stakeholders, and at all levels is fostered and encouraged;
- Enhance the capacity of the participating governments to integrate environmental considerations into national development planning; and to strengthen and expand the network of scientists, government officials and civil society;
- Assist countries in the medium term in meeting the targets of the approved SAP for the South China Sea (SCS) through implementation of National Action Plans, and strengthening regional co-ordination.

As part, of the South China Sea Strategic Action Programme Project milestones, it's proposed to initiate the SEA PUFFER initiative to create the seeds to:

-Establish and operationalize a regional financing facility that would facilitate an accessible steady flow of funds for effective, equitable, and transparent allocation of resources for marine and coastal restoration and conservation, empowering stakeholders to address the triple planetary crisis in the East Asian Seas.

1.2. Background and objectives of the grant/funding

Support the identification and development of blue finance opportunities for investments and grants towards the sustainable management of the marine and coastal ecosystems of the East Asian Seas.

1.3. Targeted impact of the grant/funding

To scale conservation initiatives at the community level, the SCS-SAP Project is providing conservation grants to address growing environmental degradation, overexploitation of marine resources, and increasing threats from pollution and climate change that affect the region's biodiversity, livelihoods, and economic stability. Efforts in the management of the marine and coastal environment in the region are strong in different levels, from regional, national, and local, however, these efforts are limited to project cycles and sustainability can be hindered by lack of sustainable financing.

1.4. Scope of the grant/funding

The call will be for approximately 6 Grants across the 7 East Asian Seas countries (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, or Viet Nam), with proposals ranging from USD5-50k, duration of 12-18 months. The Total Budget is USD 300K.

The focus should be on marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems conservation. While projects can center on specific topics, integrated and multisectoral projects are valued highly across the following thematic areas:

- Blue Economy Solutions
- Conservation and Protection
- Marine Pollution, Plastic, Nutrients, Wastewater
- Climate Action related to Marine Ecosystems
- Coral Reefs
- Mangroves
- Seagrass
- Wetlands
- Marine Mammals
- Fisheries
- Tourism
- Livelihood and Community-based Businesses
- Co-management, Partnerships, Collaboration, including private sector engagement
- Participatory monitoring, citizen science, AI applications

At least 25% of the proposed budget must be towards sustainability or income generating system to ensure the continuity of the conservation effort at end of the grant.

1.5. Target beneficiaries

These projects must engage the community on community-based projects, facilitate training and capacity building, ensure sustainability, and have direct benefits for the marine and coastal environment. They should ensure engagement with local communities and entail elements of community-based conservation, incorporate training or capacity building on science and management of coastal habitats and resources for the communities.

1.6. Grant/funding available

Total amount of grant/funding available

The following table indicates the total amount of grant/funding available under this Call for Proposals.

Currency	Amount	Amount in words
USD	300,000	Three Hundred Thousand United States Dollar

Grant/funding amount limit per applicant

The following table indicates the limit of grant/funding allowable per applicant under this Call for Proposals.

Currency	Amount	Amount in words
USD	50,000	Fifty Thousand United States Dollar

1.7. Grant/funding duration

The expected duration of the grant/funding is:

YEAR(S)	0	MONTH(S)	18
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1.8. Applicant eligibility**Applicant category(ies)**

The following categories of applicants are eligible to apply under this Call for Proposals:

- ❖ Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- ❖ Community-based organizations
- ❖ Foundations
- ❖ Indigenous peoples organizations (IPOs)
- ❖ Civil society organizations (CSO)
- ❖ Grass-roots organizations
- ❖ Institutions or federations
- ❖ Ethnic organizations
- ❖ Academic and research institutions (researchers, students, students organizations)
- ❖ Local or regional branches of government, such as municipalities
- ❖ Non-UN intergovernmental organization
- ❖ Individuals

Applicant country of registration and nationality

Applicants that are included or excluded under this Call for Proposals with regard to country of registration and nationality (for individuals) are as follows:

Included countries ▾

Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, or Vietnam

Additional conditions of ineligibility

The applicant shall not fall under any of the conditions listed in the [Instructions to Applicants](#), Article 1, which makes the applicant ineligible for this grant/funding.

1.9. Content of proposal submissions

Applicants shall include the following:

- [Proposal \(Concept Note\)](#)
- [Financial Proposal](#)

Applicants must carefully read and understand the [Requirements](#) in this Call for Proposals and the [Instructions to Applicants](#) before completing the Proposal and Annexes.

1.10. Partial proposals

Partial proposals will not be permitted. Applicants shall submit a proposal for the total scope of the grant/funding and address all of the requirements in this Call for Proposals. Evaluation will be based on compliance with the total requirements.

1.11. Sub-granting¹ and contracting²

Sub-granting and contracting are only permitted under this Call for Proposals as follows:

Sub-granting	Permissible ▾
Contracting	Permissible ▾

1.12. Proposal currency

The proposal budget shall be prepared in the following currency(ies):

United States Dollars (USD)

1.13. Language of proposals

All proposals, information, documents and correspondence exchanged between UNOPS and the applicant shall be in:

English ▾

1.14. Proposal submission

The deadline for the submission of proposals is **Apr 30, 2025**. Proposals (Concept Note and Financial, in two separate files following the attached templates) shall be submitted using the following method:

e-Mail ▾

Proposals shall be sent to grants@scssap.com, with copy to margaritavi@unops.org

Refer to Article 10, "Proposal Submission", of the [Instructions to Applicants](#) for details on the specific requirements for proposal submission

1.15. Type of legal instrument

The applicable legal instrument(s) are identified hereunder.

- [Grant Support Agreement](#)

1.16. Contact information

All correspondence, notifications and requests for clarifications in relation to this Call for Proposals shall be sent to:

Name	Ivan PAVLETICH MEZA
Title	Senior Portfolio Officer
Email	ivanp@unops.org

¹ Sub-grant is when an entity is selected by the implementing partner to implement activities on behalf of the implementing partner and complies with the same principles as outlined in the UNOPS Operational Instruction on [Grant Support](#).

² Contracting is done when an implementing partner procures services, goods or works using the procurement procedures of the IP.

1.17. Important dates and deadlines

The following tables provide the key dates and deadlines pertaining to this Call for Proposals.

	Deadline	Time	Timezone
Request for clarification	Apr 21, 2025	23:59	COT
Submission of proposals	Apr 30, 2025	23:59	COT
Expected agreement start date	August 2025	00:00	COT

2. REQUIREMENTS

2.1. Approach and methodology

In the preparation of its proposal, the Applicant is invited to develop a proposed approach and methodology to carry-out the activities of the Grant. Consistent with the objectives and targeted outcomes explained in the CFP, the Applicant should also propose tangible outputs to be carried out under the project that clearly support the achievement of the expected outcomes, filling completely all the [Call of proposals Technical template](#) and [Call of proposals Budget template](#)

The grant should be geographically located in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, or Viet Nam in marine and coastal areas along the South China Seas and Gulf of Thailand, and have a duration of 12-18 months.

The focus should be on marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems conservation. While projects can center on specific topics, integrated and multisectoral projects are valued highly across the following thematic areas:

- Blue Economy Solutions
- Conservation and Protection
- Marine Pollution, Plastic, Nutrients, Wastewater
- Ocean-based Climate Action
- Coral Reefs
- Mangroves
- Seagrass
- Wetlands
- Marine Mammals
- Fisheries
- Tourism
- Livelihood and Community-based Businesses
- Co-management, Partnerships, Collaboration, including private sector engagement
- Participatory monitoring, citizen science, AI applications

At least 25% of the proposed budget must be towards sustainability or income generating system to ensure the continuity of the conservation effort at end of the grant.

The grant should ensure engagement with local communities and entail elements of community-based conservation, incorporating training or capacity building on science and management of coastal habitats and resources for the communities.

2.2. Budget requirements

- a. Budget Ceiling of USD5-50K: as indicated in the [Particulars](#).
- b. At a minimum, the budgets must include:
 - i. An estimate of direct costs, which include all of the expenses that are required for, and can be tracked directly to, the grant/funding accounts. Direct costs must be broken down by expense subcategory, by expense line item and by year.
 - ii. A description of assumptions or justifications underlying the estimates
- c. The costs will be eligible only if these are incurred for the purpose of this grant/funding and within the duration mentioned in the legal instrument (including any amendments)
- d. There are restrictions on funding government salaries detailed in Section 6.2 of the OI on Grant Support. These restrictions should be considered while budgeting government salaries, if applicable.

- e. Article II, Section 7, of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations provides, inter alia, that the United Nations, including UNOPS as a subsidiary organ, is exempt from all direct taxes, except charges for public utility services, and is exempt from customs restrictions, duties, and charges of a similar nature in respect of articles imported or exported for its official use. All proposals shall be submitted net of any direct taxes and any other taxes and duties
- f. Grant budgets may include indirect costs up to 10% of direct costs. In case of subgrants, indirect costs on the subgrant amount should be calculated and presented separately.

3. EVALUATION METHOD AND CRITERIA

Proposals submitted in response to this CFP document shall be evaluated following the cumulative analysis methodology, which consists of the following steps:

- a. **Preliminary screening:** This includes an assessment of whether proposals comply with the formal and eligibility criteria stated in [Table 1: Formal and eligibility criteria](#). All proposals which pass this stage will go through a subsequent evaluation as follows.
- b. **Technical evaluation:** This assesses the technical points achieved by each proposal, as per the maximum obtainable points assigned per criteria group in [Table 2.1: Parts of the technical proposal evaluation](#). Only proposals that meet the minimum threshold indicated in [Table 2: Technical criteria](#) shall be considered substantially compliant at this stage. Evaluation of the technical proposals shall be completed prior to opening the financial proposals.
- c. **Financial evaluation:** Financial proposals will only be opened for proposals that have achieved the minimum threshold in the technical evaluation. Financial proposals shall be checked for any mathematical errors in accordance with Article 15, "Minor Informalities, Errors or Omissions" in the [Instructions to Applicants](#). The total financial proposal points achieved for each proposal are determined in accordance with [Table 3: Financial criteria](#).
- d. **Combined analysis:** This evaluation will be conducted based on a combined analysis, analyzing all of the relevant costs, risks and benefits for each proposal. The combined analysis includes the scores from both the technical evaluation, including factors such as risks, sustainability, and others, and the financial evaluation, using a predefined weighting method.

The maximum number of points that an applicant may obtain for its proposal are as follows:

- Technical proposal: 80 points
- Financial proposal: 20 points

The maximum total number of points an applicant may obtain for both the technical and financial proposals is 100. The weighting of the technical and financial proposals will be 80:20.

UNOPS may request clarification or further information in writing from applicants at any point during the evaluation process. In this case, any response from an applicant shall not modify the substance of the proposal, including both the technical and financial aspects of the proposal. UNOPS may use such information to interpret and evaluate the relevant proposal.

The evaluation of a proposal by UNOPS shall be carried out against the evaluation criteria described in the following tables.

3.1. Preliminary screening

Table 1 FORMAL AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	
Criteria evaluated on a pass/fail basis during the preliminary screening	Documents to establish compliance with the criteria
1. The applicant is eligible as defined in Article 1, "Applicant Eligibility" in the Instructions to Applicants .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal
2. The proposal is complete and includes all completed forms and other documentation requested in the Particulars , 'Content of proposal submissions'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All documentation requested in the Particulars, 'Content of proposal submissions'
3. The applicant accepts the conditions in the template for agreement, as specified in the Particulars , 'Type of legal instrument'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 1: Declarations (for the awarded candidates)

3.2. Technical evaluation

Table 2 TECHNICAL CRITERIA	
Criteria evaluated based on scoring during the technical evaluation	Documents to establish compliance with the criteria
<p>The maximum number of technical points obtainable is detailed in Table 2.1: Parts of the technical proposal evaluation.</p> <p>To be technically compliant, applicants must obtain a minimum threshold of 70% of the total obtainable points.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal

Table 2.1 Parts of the technical proposal evaluation		Obtainable points
1.	Applicant's capacity and expertise	20
2.	Proposed project design, methodology, approach and implementation plan	60
Total technical proposal points		80

Table 2.1.1 Part 1: Applicant's capacity and expertise (25 points)

	Criteria to be evaluated	Documents to establish compliance with the criteria (not exhaustive)	Obtainable points
1.1	The applicant has the general capability and knowledge to support effective implementation according to the information presented in the Project proposal and during the evaluation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal 	20
Total points for Part 1			20

Table 2.1.2 Part 2: Proposed project design, methodology, approach and implementation plan

No.	Criteria to be evaluated	Documents to establish compliance with the criteria (not exhaustive)	Obtainable points
2.1	The proposal is substantially compliant and completed as stipulated in this CFP document, which indicates the applicant's understanding of the technical requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal 	15
2.2	The applicant's proposed approach and plan is consistent with the objectives and targeted beneficiaries of the grant/funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal 	15
2.3	The applicant's proposed approach and plan is sufficient to successfully carry-out the suggested activities and achieve the objectives of the SCS project activities under which this grant/funding opportunity is available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal 	30
Total points for Part 2			60

3.3. Financial evaluation

Table 3 FINANCIAL CRITERIA

Criteria evaluated based on a cumulative analysis methodology during the financial evaluation		Documents to establish compliance with the criteria	Obtainable points
1.	<p>Total Budget: A maximum of 5 points will be allocated to the lowest total budget. Total budgets of other substantially compliant applicants will be scored according to the following formula:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Points for budget amount =</p> $\frac{[\text{lowest total budget amount}] \times [\text{maximum points allocated for the total budget amount}]}{[\text{Total budget amount of proposal under evaluation}]}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial proposal 	5
2.	Applicant organizations comply with the conditions stipulated in the Budget requirements and template	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial proposal 	5
3.	The applicant's cost estimates and the assumptions made for such estimates are reasonable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial proposal 	10
Total financial proposal points			20