

Terms of Reference

Stakeholder Consultations on Marine Litter Actions in Pakistan

Terms of Reference (TOR) for Hiring a National Consultant for Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (PLEASE) Project Implementation Unit

1. Background

1.1 Marine Litter Situation in South Asia Region (SAR)

Marine plastic litter is becoming a pressing environmental issue across the globe. Marine Plastic litter in South Asia is visible in the five coastal countries, Pakistan, India, Maldives, Pakistan, and Pakistan comprising the Northern part of the Indian oceans, along with parts of the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. Escalating mismanaged land based plastic waste is to be mainly attributed to such transboundary movement of plastics into Oceans through the shared transboundary river systems. The region's transboundary river systems - Indus River System (Afghanistan, India, Pakistan), the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna River (Pakistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal), act like highways to transport mismanaged plastic to oceans.

Marine plastic pollution in the region affects its pristine and rich marine biodiversity like the Gulf of Mannar, coral atolls of the Maldives, coastal lagoons like Chilika in India and Puttalam in Pakistan, vast mudflats of the Gulf of Kutch and Sundarbans, large sea grass beds in the Gulf of Manner, the mangroves of the Sundarbans, and Pakistani coastal belts, marine mammals like dolphin, Dugong, and whales in the Indian Ocean. Additionally, economies relying on fishing or tourism are badly affected, with livelihoods of coastal communities are at direct risk of increasing marine litter.

Despite risks of marine litter, individually, no South Asia country has specific legislation or legal frameworks governing marine litter. Some countries do have waste management such as ban or phase out of single use plastics and coastal zone policies and strategies that are indirectly related to marine litter; however, these too are very weak in enforcement and are disjointed.

Regionally, to address the complex and transboundary plastic pollution, the South Asian Region (SAR) came together under the South Asian Seas Programme (SASP), one of 18 regional seas programmes of UNEP. The South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) serves as the secretariat of SASP. The SASP Action Plan was adopted by the region's five maritime countries Pakistan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Pakistan on 24 March 1995, New Delhi, India, with each country designating a National Focal Point for coordinating SASP activities. With the establishing of a Regional Seas Programme, and recognizing the importance of a Regional Marine Litter Action Plan, the Regional Marine Litter Action Plan for South Asian Seas Region was developed for South

Asian Seas Region and adopted on 6th November 2019 at the Sixth Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers of the SASP. This Regional Marine Litter Action Plan for South Asia Seas Region lays out the regional strategy and recommended plan of action with activities to support litter free seas. It, however, underlines challenges in managing marine litter in the region due to lack of a consolidated marine litter database, poor Institutional system for management of Marine litter, non-availability of legal framework for marine litter management and insufficient enforcement of international Conventions, Agreements, laws, regulations and treaties. It thus emphasizes the necessity for coordinated efforts and improved research and data collection and policy implementation to effectively reduce plastic consumption, manage plastic waste, and mitigate marine pollution across South Asia. Some key objectives identified in the Regional Marine Litter Action Plan have been integrated into the scope of the Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (PLEASE) project, ensuring alignment with regional priorities and enhancing the project's overall impact on marine plastic waste management. This alignment strengthens regional cooperation and reflects a cohesive approach to tackling plastic pollution across South Asia.

1.2 Marine Litter Situation in Pakistan

Pakistan is grappling with a significant plastic waste crisis, generating approximately 3.9 million tons annually. Alarming, a substantial portion of this waste is mismanaged, leading to severe environmental repercussions.

The country's urban areas are primary contributors to plastic waste, with Punjab generating about 60%, Sindh 30%, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 7%, and Baluchistan 3%. Despite the vast quantities produced, less than 10% of plastic waste is effectively recycled. This inefficiency is largely due to inadequate waste management infrastructure and public awareness.

The mismanagement of plastic waste has dire consequences for Pakistan's marine ecosystems. Coastal regions, particularly Karachi and Gwadar, are heavily polluted with plastic debris, which threatens marine biodiversity and the livelihoods of coastal communities. Marine animals often ingest or become entangled in plastic waste, leading to injury or death. Additionally, the accumulation of plastic along the coastline degrades natural habitats and poses risks to human health.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the Pakistani government has initiated measures such as the Single-Use Plastics (Prohibition) Regulations, 2023, aimed at reducing plastic consumption. Organizations like WWF-Pakistan are actively working to combat plastic pollution by promoting sustainable practices and raising public awareness. Despite these efforts, challenges persist due to the complexity of the issue and the need for comprehensive waste management systems.

2. Project Context

The Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (PLEASE) Project, funded by the World Bank, and implemented by the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), with technical support from the United Nations Office for Project Support (UNOPS), aims to catalyze actions that

reduce the flow of plastic pollution into South Asian Seas creates a platform for steering the discussions and actions against marine plastic pollution.

The PLEASE Project provides a platform to take forward actions on preventing and controlling marine plastic pollution through conducting stakeholder consultations, and supporting and promoting circular economy approaches that are restorative and regenerative by design, which will ultimately reduce the leakage of plastics into rivers and seas. The Project consists of the following components:

Component 1. Supporting Competitive Block Grant Investments to Reduce Plastic Waste

Component 2. Leveraging Public and Private Sector Engagement and Solutions

Component 3. Strengthening Regional Integration Institutions

The intermediate Results (IR) Indicator 2.4 of the Component 2 of the PLEASE Project is dedicated to conducting consultations on marine litter actions with the targeted people and/or organizations in participating South Asia Region (SAR) Member States. These marine litter action consultations aim to contribute to citizen engagements, as well as complement the SACEP-led convening of SAR member states around the need for action on marine debris and marine plastic pollution.

Table: 02 Project Activities are being implemented in Pakistan

	Title	Objective / key activities	Grantee / Consulting Firm
RBG #1	From Waste to Credits; Circularity in Plastic Waste Management [15 March 2024 - 31 July 2025]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Set up a plastic sorting and pilot upcycling facility where the plastic waste will be converted to plastic fences ✓ Plastic waste reduction credits system ✓ Awareness on awareness regarding waste collection and segregation ✓ Develop educational modules covering educating the general public on the global plastic waste crisis, 	AltasPak Waste Management Pvt. Ltd.

		recycling and recovery, project development and action plans	
RBG #2	<p>Trash has Value – Recycling plastic waste to Eco green Tiles/Bricks</p> <p>[18 March 2024 - 31 July 2025]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raise waste management awareness at Lahore universities via social media, workshops, and clean-up drives with local partners. ✓ Install reverse vending machines, launch app, and engage influencers ✓ Monitor system, collaborate for waste collection, and promote plastic waste incentives. ✓ Support women-owned recycling initiative ✓ Secure approval, build the plant, and procure machinery for eco-brick production, analyze data, ensure quality, and refine processes. Identify markets, enhance eco-bricks, monitor performance 	ISP Environmental Solutions (Private) Limited
IG #1	<p>Davaam Life Refill Stations</p> <p>[28 June 2024 - 31 Mar 2025]</p>	<p>Install 90 machines (60 refill stations, 30 sanitary napkin stations) for Consumer Products to Inculcate Consumer Behavior Change Towards Reuse in Karachi</p>	Davaam Life Private Limited

IG #2	PlasteTech-PK: Revolutionizing Plastic Waste Management [26 June 2024 - 31 Mar 2025]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Collection of plastic waste from various sources ✓ Sale of plastic waste to plastic waste buyers through the digital platform ✓ Awareness-raising campaigns to promote the importance of proper waste management practices 	OTIUM Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd.
TA	Development of a National Plastic Waste Management Plan and Establishment of IT- based Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism for Pakistan [23 Oct 2023 – 30 September 2025]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Diagnostic of the current state of plastic pollution and waste management based on primary data collection and desk research ✓ Develop an IT-based Database system to record, monitor and disseminate and control on plastic circular economy ✓ Analysis of the plastic landscape (stakeholder consultations and desk research) ✓ Development of national waste management strategy and awareness campaign 	Project Procurement International & Techlogix

3. Objective & Scope of the Marine Litter Consultation

The objective of the marine litter consultation is two-folds. The consultation with community stakeholders is to acquire valuable insights on marine litter issues and solutions from coastal communities who have first-hand experience and knowledge of marine litter and its impacts on their lives and livelihoods. By organizing a national level consultation, it is to address the complex and prevailing challenges posed by marine plastic litter in the country and explore solutions through a truly multifaceted strategy involving dialogue and collaboration with relevant parties

including government, private sector and civil society. The consultations are expected to demonstrate an increased awareness for marine litter issues across relevant stakeholder groups. Such consultations aim to help ensure that the PLEASE Project continues to align with national and regional priorities, maximizes its impact, and contributes effectively to the shared goal of reducing marine litter in the South Asia Region.

Both the community and national-level consultations are to be designed and planned in alignment with the PLEASE Project Grants and technical assistance activities, as applicable.

4. Scope of the Marine Litter Consultation

This Terms of Reference (TOR) outlines the responsibilities of a national consultant who will lead the planning, organization, facilitation, and documenting and reporting of two major stakeholder consultations on marine litter actions in Pakistan: one at the community level and another at the high-level policy and decision-making level.

Community Consultation: Acknowledging the disproportionate burden borne by coastal communities and vulnerable populations due to plastic pollution, consultation will be conducted by engaging local stakeholders, including community leaders, fishermen, local CBOs/NGOs, and marginalized groups to gather their perspectives, identify local issues, concerns and challenges regarding marine litter, and examine existing initiatives and discuss opportunities and solutions on marine litter in their communities. These community consultations, wherever applicable, will engage beneficiaries of PLEASE Grantee projects as part of the beneficiary feedback mechanisms adding community's lived experiences and perspectives as the evidence base for the PLEASE Project's impact on the country's marine plastic pollution actions. ***Tentative Location(s): Karachi***

National high-level Consultation: A high-level national stakeholder consultation engaging diverse stakeholders from national, sub-national and local government agencies, policy makers, international organizations, academia, research and think-tank institutions, and private sector representatives to bring country's perspective and highlights of the existing policy and regulatory background on marine litter, and assess, review and evaluate the country's progress in implementing marine litter management actions, while identifying areas for further development to effectively address this critical issue of marine litter. ***Tentative Location(s): Islamabad***

5. Key Tasks

The key task of the national consultant is to design and facilitate two consultations in Pakistan and document and report the findings of the consultations. Some specific tasks include

i) **Marine Litter Assessment:** Review country's marine litter status, provide an overview of institutional, regulatory and policy frameworks regarding marine litter, and assess policy responses to marine litter reduction, control and management.

ii) **Design and develop an approach for the community consultation, and high-level stakeholder consultations** by ensuring it is inclusive and participatory. The consultant should:

- Identify and engage Stakeholders: Identify the target communities (inclusive of women, indigenous groups) and key stakeholders (from government, private, academia, civil society, bi/multilateral organizations etc.), for the community and high-level consultations respectively
- Develop a tailored consultation methodology: Draft Consultation agenda (addressing the consultation themes and priority topics, including policy frameworks, legislative tools, industry contributions, and regional cooperation); Participant list; invitation letter, and develop key discussion materials (such as background documents, presentations, guiding questions etc.)
- Support planning of the logistics: including venue selection for both consultations, transportation and equipment and materials

iii) **Facilitate the Consultations**

- Facilitate /moderate discussions and feedback sessions on the causes, impacts, and possible solutions to marine litter - Ensuring clear communication with participants and providing opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute their perspectives and concerns
- Gather data and feedback on local needs, challenges, and opportunities related to marine litter

iv) **Documentation and Reporting**

- Provide comprehensive reports summarizing key discussions, agreements, and actionable recommendations for stakeholders at different levels (government, private sector, international/national/civil society organizations. community) and PLEASE Project Implementation Unit, and SACEP
- Highlight specific recommendations and actions required for the regional cooperation for effective marine litter mitigation in South Asia from the experience of Pakistan.

6. Duration of the Consultancy

The consultancy is expected to last for approximately 30 days spread, starting from the signing of the contract. The estimated timeline is August 2025 – February 2026.

The 30 days consultancy services are for

- Inception report and logistics planning
- Conducting Community-level consultation, and High-level stakeholder consultation
- Final report submission.

7. Deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Description of the Deliverable
Report on Marine litter in Pakistan	A snapshot report with data on marine litter, institutional, policy, regulatory details on marine litter, challenges and solutions
Consultations planning and design	Design outline and itinerary, modality, of the Consultations, list of participants, invitation letter, logistics planning, consultation documents, consultation feedback form
Community Consultation	Convene the communities to discuss the marine litter issues - with signed attendance sheet, photographs and evidence of the event
National high-level Consultation	National consultation organized - with signed attendance sheet, photographs and evidence of the event
Submission of the <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Community Consultation report2. National high-level consultation report3. Combined (recommendation) report incorporating findings from both consultations	Comprehensive reports summarizing key discussions, agreements, and actionable recommendations for stakeholders at different levels
Final report submission & Consultancy Closeout Meeting with PLEASE Project Team	Incorporating feedback from SACEP, PIU, and WB

8. Consultant's Profile: Qualification and Skills Requirements

This is a national call for an expert of Pakistan nationality. The consultant should possess the following qualifications:

- A postgraduate degree in environmental science, environmental policy, marine biology, or a related field.

- A minimum of 7 years of experience with a focus on marine plastics and circular economy, policy and regulatory frameworks, standards, methodologies, and tools, technical solutions and business models for marine litter management
- Demonstrated experience in facilitating both community as well as high-level consultations, workshops, and stakeholder engagement, especially in the field of environmental or marine issues.
- Proven experience in coordinating with national governments and/or enforcement authorities, managing stakeholder relations with other key players, including academic, civil society, business, and international organizations, government agencies, NGOs, and local communities in Pakistan, particularly on marine and coastal issues.
- Strong knowledge of marine litter issues, environmental policies, and the local context of Pakistan, and South Asia Region.
- Excellent communication and facilitation skills, with the ability to engage a diverse range of stakeholders
- Proficiency in English and Urdu /Other local languages, both spoken and written.
- Prior experience in report writing and documentation.

The successful Consultant with the highest rank will be requested to enter into a Contract to compete for scope activities in the TOR.