

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Finance Assistant (Project Implementation Unit)

Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia Project

Background

Plastic waste pollutes the land, flows into rivers, ends up in oceans, threatens development, and has far-reaching economic, ecological, and health impacts. South Asia is the third-largest contributor to global plastic waste, and unless action is taken, the region's waste is estimated to double by 2050.

The Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia project will help coordinate activities and facilitate the region's transition to a circular plastic economy by encouraging investments and greater collaboration between the public and private sectors and across countries. Since many of South Asia's rivers and seas span across national boundaries, a regional approach is necessary to address plastic pollution that leaches into waterways and ends up in the ocean.

The objective of the Project is to strengthen innovation and coordination of circular economy solutions to plastic pollution flowing into South Asian Seas.

The Project consists of the following parts:

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

- 1.1 Supporting circular plastic economy solutions to reduce plastic waste by implementing a program of regional competitive block grant investments, providing Regional Competitive Block Grants ("RBGs") to eligible organizations in South Asia ("Eligible RBG Beneficiaries") including innovation grants.
- 1.2 Facilitating the exchange of circular plastic economy knowledge between Eligible RBG Beneficiaries and selected South Asian countries and promoting awareness-raising activities.
Developing the short-term communication activities, Knowledge Management website for SACEP PLEASE project, Awareness raising and promoting knowledge exchange in the region, PLEASE Project knowledge sharing, advocacy, partnership building, and resource mobilization

Part 2. Leveraging Public and Private Sector Engagement and Solutions

- 2.1 (Enabling policies, standards & analytics in regional countries)
Supporting the development of strategies, action plans, policies, and standards to harmonize plastic pollution mitigation measures through (a) developing and implementing a multi-year plastic policy support program, working with leading universities and organizations; (b) developing a database for lifecycle analysis, data collection, and modeling related to plastic across selected industry value chains; and (c) supporting Monitoring and Evaluation activities.
Supporting on Public awareness campaign on 3R based plastic waste management -Sri Lanka and other communication campaigns, training programmes and technical visits
- 2.2 Discussion of national policies
Supporting circular use of plastic in the economy through regional public-private collaboration and engagement in South Asia, including designing and organizing annual or more frequent meetings of representatives from public and private sectors.
Supporting Discussion and review of national policies in relation to plastic waste management on trends and latest development (back-to-back with APFSD), Plastic declaration back-to-back with the GC meeting, regional workshop on the development of Extended Producer responsibility

(EPR) in the region including development of EPR in wider countries, focused group discussions on marine litter actions, one annual convening on circular plastic economy policy solutions

Part 3. Strengthening Regional Integration Institutions

3.1 (a) Carrying out works to support the construction of SACEP's new headquarters and providing technical assistance to, and building capacity of, SACEP to discharge its functions, including coordination with relevant regional organizations and uniform collection, analysis, and interpretation of pollution data.

(b) Supporting on Institutional Capacity Building Assessment

3.2 Supporting on project management activities

Supporting SACEP in the implementation and overall management of the Project, regarding the aspects related to social and environmental safeguards, monitoring, reporting and evaluation

SACEP is the responsible implementing agency for this project. SACEP is an inter-governmental organization established by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in 1982 to promote and support the protection, management, and enhancement of the environment in the region. In addition, SACEP serves as the secretariat of the South Asian Seas Programme (SASP), one of 18 such Regional Seas Programmes of the United Nations Environment Program. The regional project would strengthen SACEP to administer relevant project activities via the following insertional structure, which includes a Ministerial Level Governing Council (GC), Consultative Committee (CC), National Focal Points (NFPs), Subject Area Focal Points (SAFP), and a Colombo-based Secretariat.

The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) has been established by the SACEP Secretariat for the implementation of the project. The PIU is responsible for all aspects of the day-to-day management of the project, including planning, budgeting, technical coordination, implementation supervision, M&E, and ensuring compliance with the World Bank environmental and social (E&S) standards. In addition, PIU has the technical capabilities to advise the SACEP member states on national and regional planning and will hire (through the project) and second through partnership arrangements with member states and project partners [UNEP, UNDP, and PARLEY] the necessary skills required. The PIU is led by a Project Director and comprised of a team of specialized staff responsible for project management, financial management, procurement, environmental safeguards, social safeguards as well as support staff. The PIU will recruit specialized consultants necessary for specific technical assistance for the overall implementation of activities, as and when the need arises. The PIU liaises closely and also ensures the overall coordination of all project entities to ensure necessary data and information are shared and collated for reporting to the Project Steering Committee, the World Bank, and UNOPS who have been hired by SACEP/PIU to support the implementation of Component 1 and 3.1 of the PLEASE project. SACEP/PIU considers Monitoring and Evaluation to be critical factors to the success of this project.

Objectives of the Assignment

The objective of the assignment is to improve the institutional capacity of the SACEP-PIU unit through the development, enhancement, and upgrade of financial operations vital for better service delivery. The aim is to strengthen the Finance Division of SACEP - PIU unit's planning, coordination, and execution capacity.

Scope of the Assignment

The Project Finance Assistant will be responsible for financial issues relating to the Project. Specifically, The Finance Assistant shall perform the following functions:

- Prepare disbursement applications' and manage the Designated Account on the designated duties;
- Assist in preparing an annual/quarterly budget, corresponding with the proposed procurement and work plans;
- Liaise with Finance Management Specialist and Project Staff involved in the project on preparation of reports and budgets, as well as project forecasts to ensure timely implementation and completion of the project component activities;
- Receive and review all the invoices, bills, BOQ's and Estimates with supporting documentation, matching all invoices received and generating payment vouchers for preparation of cheques and bank transfers to suppliers, service providers and grantees.
- Create and maintain comprehensive project documentation and filing accessible to the Finance Management Specialist and other stakeholders of the of the PLEASE Project;
- Assisting the Finance Management Specialist in preparation of the project's quarterly Interim Unaudited Financial Reports (IUFR) and providing inputs into the Monthly/Quarterly Progress Report and Annual Progress Reports (progress against planned activities, update on risks and issues, expenditures) for submission to the World Bank in line with project reporting requirements;
- Tracking and reconciliation of budgets to ensure that the project has an accurate account of available resources considering exchange rate fluctuations between the currency of the Designated Account and the Local Currency Account.
- Provide supporting documentation for external audits regarding payments, banking, and reporting.
- Data entry in to the accounting system, reconciliation of control accounts, bank accounts and advance accounts on periodical manner.
- Maintain vendor/suppliers' files clearly indicating the serialization or other form of filing;
- Communicating with suppliers on various issues relating to payments, payment confirmations and receipts for payments;
- Maintenance of the assets register for the SACEP – PIU unit through, data input in the asset register, reconciling Assets Register with Ledger, assets verification, running asset register and ledger reports;
- Perform any other project-related activities as may be requested by the Finance Management Specialist from time to time.

Qualifications Requirements and Experience for the Consultant

The ideal candidate should have:

- Bachelor's degree in Accounting, Business or other relevant/equivalent academic discipline;
- Part qualification of recognized professional accounting qualifications (CA/CIMA/ACCA)
- At least 3 years of work experience in project related field;
- Proven work experience within international development agencies or related organizations;
- Financial analysis skills and experience

- Proficiency in Sinhala/Tamil and English, is a must (oral and written);
- Teamwork: Demonstrated ability to work in a multicultural environment, good interpersonal skills and ability to work with minimal supervision;
- Adequate experience in the relevant accounting software is a requirement;
- Proficiency in using the Microsoft Office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint); Skills in Timberline will be appreciated.

Duration

The estimated duration of the assignment is one (01) year and Four (04) months based on the satisfactory performance.

Duty Station

The Finance Assistant will be based in the SACEP – PIU office located in Colombo

Remuneration

Remuneration shall be on a monthly basis. The SACEP – PIU shall pay the Finance Assistant for services rendered at the rate(s) per man/month spent, subject to a maximum of eight hours per day in accordance with the rates agreed during contract negotiations.

Institutional Arrangement

The Finance Assistant will be under the functional supervision of the Finance Management Specialist and report administratively to the Project Director.