

## Call for Investment Proposals (CfPs) – 2022

### Gender Responsive Investment Projects: The Women's Empowerment for Inclusive Growth (WING) Program in Bangladesh

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) invites interested women-led SMEs and NGO led Social Enterprises (SEs) from Kurigram, Manikganj, Jashore, Thakurgaon, and Cox's Bazar Districts who are working on real economic empowerment of women's and girls. The interested women SMEs and NGO led SEs are requested to submit their gender-responsive business (manufacturing and service sector preferred) proposal application for funding under the WING program. The application is for receiving technical assistance and financial support such as development grants, credit enhancements, and guarantees that advances gender responsive investment for women's and girls' economic empowerment. The WING program plans to target women-led SMEs or SEs that have graduated from its "Start-up" phase into the Scale-up phase.

#### **About UNCDF**

The UNCDF is the UN's capital investment agency for the world's 47 least developed countries. With its capital mandate and instruments, UNCDF offers "last mile" finance models that unlock public and private financial resources, especially at the domestic level, to reduce poverty and support local economic development. In Bangladesh, UNCDF is supporting initiatives designed to unlock the flow of domestic and private sector capital to invest in medium-sized infrastructure and service projects needed to accelerate local economic development and private sector development. By strengthening access and flows of finance at the local level, UNCDF contributes to SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 11 (resilient cities), and SDG 17 (unlocking public & private finance for the poor at the local level) on the means of implementation by identifying those market segments where innovative financing models can have transformational impact in helping reach the last mile and address exclusion and gender inequalities of access.

#### **About WING**

The Women's Empowerment for Inclusive Growth (WING) program is a joint initiative of UNCDF, UNDP and UNWomen that builds on the foundation tested by the Inclusive and Equitable Local Development (IELD) program and enhanced to incorporate the lessons learned and results from IELD's piloting phase. The overall program outcome of WING is Women achieve sustainable improvements in income and economic security. The WING program will contribute to ensuring that women have sustainable improvements in income and economic security at a local level with more women having wider access to local economic opportunities, private and public financial services as well as income-generating activities. WING program aims to achieve the joint program outcome(s) are improved implementation and enforcement of policies supportive to women's economic empowerment, women's participation in local economic development activities is increased, women-led enterprises unlock and access larger volume of domestic capital to expand their economic space. The Investment Strategy of the WING program will use investment grants to de-risk and unlock public and private financing such as bank credit to finance scale-up of projects of women-led SMEs without collateral and NGOs. The program will invest in local businesses in the target areas focusing on gender-responsive investments or projects that primarily benefit women and girls.

## Call for Investment Proposals

With this Call for Investment Proposals (CfPs), UNCDF is inviting calls for investment project proposals in the following:

(A) Focus areas for women-led SMEs (As per Bangladesh Bank SMESMD CMSME circular, small and medium enterprise):

1. Fully operational for the past 3 years with viable business/investment project expansion plans
2. Constrained by lack of adequate capital or collateral for business/investment project expansion
3. Majority of women employees (greater than 60% of total employee count)
4. At least 30% of the project cost to be financed by the owner's equity
5. Feasible business plan with cash flow projections to repay any loan obligations
6. Clean and favorable CIB report (As and when required)
7. Proven track record of doing business and a primary focus on women's empowerment,
8. To have the initial legal documentation such as trade licenses, SME's registrations, bank accounts, and other institutional and formal establishments to graduate and grow their business, market, products, human resources, policies, and technologies towards industrialization and institutionalization

(B) Focus areas for NGO led Social Enterprises (SEs)

1. Successful track record of running social businesses
2. SEs fully operational for the past 3 years with viable business expansion plans
3. Constrained by lack of adequate capital or collateral for expansion
4. Majority of women employees (greater than 60% of total employee count)
5. At least 30% of the project cost to be financed by the owner's equity
6. Feasible social business plan with cash flow projections to repay any loan obligations
7. Clean and favorable CIB report (As and when required)
8. Proven track record of doing business and a primary focus on women's empowerment,
9. To have the initial legal documentation such as trade licenses, SE's registrations, bank accounts, and other institutional and formal establishments to graduate and grow their business, market, products, human resources, policies, and technologies towards industrialization and institutionalization
10. Engaging the majority of women to expand their skills and market and employment in the local economy.
11. A thorough assessment of SEs audit reports (for funding requirements)
12. SEs experience of the management team and governance structure
13. Legal assessment of their official Memorandum of Articles and Charters

## What UNCDF offers to women led SMEs and NGO led SEs

1. Grant financing up to 15-25% of the total expansion business/investment project cost
2. Guarantee/credit enhancement to financing institutions against the project up to 50% of total loan size
3. Project development and preparatory support
4. Link to financial institutions and investors
5. Gender-responsive investment project support services
6. Support management regarding gender equality benefits

7. Assist management to establish policies for a gender discrimination-free work environment

### Eligibility criteria

Gender-responsive business/investment project proposals must meet all of the following eligibility criteria(s):

1. Institutional profile: Significant number of women-engagement in organizational structure and workforce which includes women representation amongst the Board of Directors, Management team and full-time staff, The business has an explicit commitment to gender equality in employment, The business makes explicit spending and program commitments that increase gender equality and support women's advancement (i.e. conducted gender-related training will be considered as added value.
2. Commercial viability: Proposals that show the ability to generate revenue and make profits will be given priority
3. Business/investment Project status: Scale-up business that has passed a pre-feasibility stage beyond a concept note.
4. SME/SE size & Project size: Women-led SMEs or NGO-led SEs.
5. Supply chain procurement: The business provides price equality to male and female suppliers
6. Located districts: Kurigram, Manikganj, Jashore, Thakurgaon, and Cox's Bazar districts
7. Development impact: Project that will generate positive economic benefits e.g. job creation, income generation, empowerment of women and girls including trade and market access.
8. Qualified management: The proposal must show evidence that the proposed management team has the necessary technical and managerial skills to run the project
9. Compliance: Compliance with Bangladesh laws and regulations and UNDCF/UNDP Environmental & Social Performance Standards including industrial laws, human (labor & women) rights is a must. The social and environmental screening (SES) template is attached
10. A scoring of WEE Index (Women Economic Empowerment Index) tools, where eligible score is 0.50<  
The WEE Index template is attached with this CfPs for getting understanding about WEE Index tool of WING program

### Selection process

Gender-responsive investment platform (GRIP) will act as an investment screening authority which will be comprised of UNCDF representatives and related representatives from strategic partner agencies. Based on the preliminary proposal information and initial field visit information, the Gender-responsive investment platform (GRIP) will score the submitted proposals against the eligibility criteria mentioned above.

### Documentation

Shortlisted applicants will be requested to submit relevant documentation related to their businesses within 2 weeks after email notification.

## **Instructions for submitting proposals**

Only completed submissions as per the above guidelines will be reviewed. A complete submission consists of the submission of the following:

1. Completed and Signed Call for Proposal Submission Form (Word template)
2. Copies of updated Trade License or Commencement of Business certification and national ID

The submission form must be submitted in their original formats (Word) along with any supporting documentation to the following recipient: [asim.karmakar@uncdf.org](mailto:asim.karmakar@uncdf.org). The size of the email should be limited to 10 MB. Only one application per entity and per proposal will be accepted. Language of the proposal: Proposals must be submitted in English or Bangla. Deadline for submission: The deadline for submission of investment proposals is on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2022 at 5:00 PM (Bangladesh time).

## **Hardcopies should be submitted directly to the following address**

UN Capital Development Fund, E/8-A, IDB Bhaban, Level 7  
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka 1207

OR

**Softcopies emailed to: [asim.karmakar@uncdf.org](mailto:asim.karmakar@uncdf.org)**

## **For further information, please contact**

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