



PROGRAM FOR LOCAL AND URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental Defenders Working to Reduce Pollution and Waste in the Urban Space Annual Program Statement

March 22, 2024

Deloitte Consulting, LLP, prepared this document. Deloitte Consulting, LLP, is a contractor to the United States Agency for International Development (“USAID”) authorized to administer grants on behalf of USAID under Task Order No. 7200AA22M00005: Program for Local and Urban Sustainability, a task order under OASIS Unrestricted Contract (Pool I) Contract No. GS00QI4OADU113 for the Program for Local and Urban Sustainability (“PLUS”).

ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT

APS No. I

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I. ACTIVITY PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this Annual Program Statement (APS) is to disseminate information about the USAID Program for Local and Urban Sustainability (PLUS) Grant Under Contract (GUC) activity objectives and plans for the period ending September 30, 2024, in order to provide fair and equal opportunities to eligible U.S. and non-U.S. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to submit innovative concept papers and/or applications for grant support through the activity's grants program. This APS is issued under the authority of the United States Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

Through this APS, the PLUS activity, implemented by Deloitte and funded and managed by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Green Cities Division (Green Cities), is soliciting concept papers and/or applications from eligible U.S. and non-U.S. CSOs to support achieving the objectives of this PLUS activity.

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Pollution and Waste. Today the majority of the world's population lives in urban areas, and over 90% of future urban growth will occur in developing countries. As cities grow they often incur severe problems of pollution and waste. Pollution and waste are two of the greatest development challenges facing rapidly urbanizing cities in low and middle income countries (LMICs). The impacts of environmental pollution span ecosystem degradation, economic security of cities and countries, and global morbidity and mortality. In 2015, nine million premature deaths were attributed to pollution-related diseases, representing 16% of total global mortality.¹ The urban poor and marginalized communities (ethnic minorities, women, indigenous peoples, etc) often bear the greatest health and economic burdens.² USAID is working to reduce pollution (air, water and land) and plastic waste in cities with a particular emphasis on enhancing the health and livelihoods of the most vulnerable urban communities.

PLUS Focus Areas include:

- Air pollution is the largest global environmental health risk responsible for more than six million premature deaths each year. Air pollution is a complex problem because of the multitude of sources (e.g. vehicles, diesel generators, brick kilns, cookstoves, waste, etc) originating locally and regionally, which can vary across geographies and cities. Improving urban air quality is also critical for solving the global climate crisis since many clean air actions lead to greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions. Cities need to manage these dual crises in an integrated manner to maximize health outcomes now and in the future.
- Solid waste is a major source of both air and water pollution in cities. Each year cities produce over 2 billion tonnes of solid waste globally with over 33 percent being mismanaged through open

¹ Landrigan et al. (2018). "[The Lancet Commission on pollution and health.](#)" *Lancet*, 391:462-512.

² <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/17/world/asia/india-pollution-inequality.html>

dumping or burning.³ Open burning is one of the most toxic sources of air pollution, especially the burning of plastics, which releases fine particulate matter (i.e. PM2.5), carcinogens (e.g. dioxins and furans), and black carbon (i.e. soot). Open dumping exacerbates stormwater pollution and flooding in cities by clogging drains and burdening cities with multiple social and economic impacts.

Improper municipal waste management is causing over 11 million metric tons of plastics to leak into the ocean each year.

Civil Society Engagement. Civil society plays a crucial role in addressing environmental challenges. For example, local actions to advance a clean energy transition and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from coal plants, petrochemical plants and other industries, can help reduce air pollution and bring significant health benefits to neighboring populations. Similarly, local actions to combat deforestation and biodiversity loss support carbon sequestration and the conservation of ecosystems and traditional livelihoods.

As the role, capabilities, and involvement of civil society organizations (CSO) increases, so has the need to enhance the engagement of these organizations on environmental issues. Civil society plays an important role in bringing emerging environmental issues to the attention of policy makers, raising public awareness, highlighting environmental injustices, promoting innovative ideas and approaches, promoting transparency as well as non-corrupt activities in environmental decision-making.⁴

Citizen participation is a priority for USAID to strengthen democracy for inclusive and sustainable development outcomes, and is important to a country's continued development. USAID recognizes that CSOs play a critical role in advocating for climate action, pollution reduction, and environmental protection at the local level. USAID also recognizes that people defending environmental, climate, land, and Indigenous rights are one of the most highly vulnerable and at-risk groups in the activist space.⁵ Worldwide, environmental defenders face growing assaults, intimidation, harassment, stigmatization, criminalization, and even murders- at least three people a week are killed protecting environmental rights.⁶

The US Government considers environmental defenders as citizens, activists, journalists, and members of groups who exercise their human rights to try peacefully to protect an area or its natural resources from negative environmental impact by ongoing or proposed activity. Environmental defenders, and the groups of which they are members, often encounter threats of violence, attacks, or criminalization as they exercise their human rights, such as the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. They may also be silenced or denied when they impart and receive information that should be provided under law, engage in public participation, and request access to justice on environmental matters.

GOAL

The overall goal of the PLUS 'Environmental defenders working to reduce pollution and waste in the urban space' activity is to to strengthen the capacity and improve the safety and effectiveness of environmental defenders working in-country to reduce toxic chemical, plastic, air and climate-related pollution in

³ World Bank (2018). "What a Waste 2.0: A Global Snapshot of Solid Waste Management to 2050."

⁴ [Union of International Associations](#)

⁵ [Freedom House](#) 2022

⁶ [UNEP](#)

peri-urban and urban areas. Funds will be used to support Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that advocate for climate action, waste and air pollution reduction and environmental protection at the local level.

These funds are intended for **grants to local environmental defenders** who, often at great personal risk, work to protect landscapes, rivers, wildlife, human health, biodiversity, and ecosystems that are imperiled by toxic and hazardous materials from formal and informal activities (e.g. energy production, manufacturing, waste burning, open dumping, etc) in peri-urban and urban areas. These funds could be used to support environmental defenders who address environmental injustices and unsafe living and working environments, and defend the rights of communities to live and work in environments not harmful to their health and well being.

Assistance will enable environmental defenders to better analyze, address and respond to actions that threaten harm to the environment and human health. Assistance may take the form of grants and technical assistance to Indigenous and local communities and associations; support to local non-governmental organizations and media outlets working to elevate the concerns of environmental defenders; and engagement with governments and companies to protect whistleblowers and implement policies that avoid and penalize harm to environmental defenders and natural resources.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this activity are to:

- Strengthen/build the capacity and protections of CSOs to effectively advocate for the prevention and reduction of waste and toxic pollution hazards in urban and peri-urban areas; and
- Support CSOs to implement community-based activities to prevent/reduce waste and pollution.

II. GRANTS PROGRAM

Through its Grant Under Contract (GUC) component, PLUS will award up to \$1.0 million in grants to catalyze and grow civil society's role to help reduce toxic chemical, plastic, air and climate-related pollution in peri-urban and urban areas. Grants will elevate local voices and enable community partnerships to advance tangible pollution mitigation. PLUS will use grants to support local CSOs and grassroots efforts to enhance citizen participation in government, promote transparency on pollution impacts, and conduct advocacy campaigns. More specifically, PLUS anticipates grants will help local CSOs scale up and sustain local social accountability initiatives to effectively reduce pollution and waste in their communities.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Geographies

PLUS CSO grant activities must be implemented in Thailand.

Eligible Organizations

Eligible organizations must be legally registered local, national, regional, or international organizations, including but not limited to:

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs);
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- Grassroots, local and community-based organizations (CBOs), including women, and youth-led organizations;
- Indigenous Peoples' Organisations (IPOs);
- Women-owned/women-led enterprises;
- Faith-based organizations (FBOs);
- International non-governmental organizations (INGOs);
- Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs);
- Universities and other academic institutions;
- Research institutes and think tanks

Requirement for partnerships and collaborations

Grants may be given to previously existing or new partnerships or consortiums that meet the following requirements:

- The partnership, joint venture, or consortium must be legally registered with an identified lead organization that is responsible for the project and sole signatory of a potential grant agreement;
- At least one of the member organizations must have a local presence in the proposed country of implementation (see next section below);
- The integration of a consortium or partnership must favor the technical and operational implementation of the project. Therefore, the applicant must include a narrative describing each partner, the specific role, relevant past experience and added value in its proposal;
- The collaboration or partnership must be supported by documents confirming and describing the collaboration which will be required before acceptance of the grant to confirm the partnership.

Locally-led Development

PLUS recognizes that local leadership and ownership are essential for fostering sustainable results across its development and humanitarian assistance work. As such, these funds seek to advance locally-led⁷ development.

The Applicant must have a **strong in-country presence** where the activities are proposed to be implemented, OR be a local organization, OR be a part of a duly registered local consortium or partnership. USAID prefers grassroots, locally-led organizations as partners; that is, local people and institutions who possess the capability, connectedness, and credibility to drive change in their own countries and communities. PLUS will require supporting documentation to demonstrate legal status to operate where the intervention is taking place.

Monetary grants will not be provided to governmental entities or officials (whether from national, regional, district, local, or municipal levels) or political organizations, but these organizations can be engaged as

⁷ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/What_is_Locally_Led_Development_Fact_Sheet.pdf

project stakeholders. Also ineligible will be organizations whose objectives are not consistent with the broad objectives of PLUS or who do not meet applicable requirements or specific eligibility criteria. Grantees must comply with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations in-country. Grantees must display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures that are in written format and present a system of controls that safeguard assets, protect against fraud, waste, and abuse, and support the achievements of PLUS goals and objectives.

Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI)

PLUS is committed to taking a sustainable, equitable, and inclusive approach to urbanization—including through its engagement with grantees and oversight of grant activities. In line with USAID’s 2023 Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy⁸ and USAID’s Climate Strategy 2022–2030, PLUS aims to improve urban livelihoods for women and other marginalized and underrepresented populations; enable and empower women and other marginalized and underrepresented populations to participate in urbanization decisions and lead climate action; and transform urban systems to be more resilient, equitable, and locally led.⁹

Eligible Activities

Through this APS, PLUS seeks qualified organizations to implement activities that fit with the objectives listed in Section I. Applicants are encouraged to submit ideas in concept paper format that will address one or more of the program objectives. Please note that special consideration will be given to concept papers that integrate various marginalized segments of the population (male, female, youth, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, minorities, among others). Through this APS, PLUS seeks to collaborate with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and Non-for-Profit Organizations or For-Profit Organizations¹⁰ to support environmental defenders working in-country to reduce toxic chemical, plastic, air and climate-related pollution in peri-urban and urban areas.

PLUS recognizes that some grantees may need technical assistance to carry out proposed activities effectively. Consequently, applicants are encouraged to specify their needs for technical assistance and/or training in their application.

Illustrative Activities that could be undertaken by environmental defender CSOs receiving funds under this APS include, but are not limited to:

Obj. I: Strengthen/build the capacity and protections of CSOs to effectively advocate for the prevention and reduction of waste and toxic pollution hazards in urban and peri-urban areas:

⁸ <https://www.usaid.gov/gender-policy>

⁹ “USAID Climate Strategy 2022-2030” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Agency for International Development, April 2022), <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USAID-Climate-Strategy-2022-2030.pdf>.

¹⁰ For-profit organizations must clearly demonstrate that the proposed activity pursues strictly non-profit objectives and does not generate any profit

- Facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues on climate action and environmental issues;
- Advocating for new laws and/or enforcement of existing human rights laws to advance the protection of environmental defenders;
- Providing legal support and/or strengthening the legal capabilities to affected communities and environmental defenders;
- Improving access to justice;
- Enabling reforms and interventions to protect CSOs;
- Safeguarding environmental activist spaces;
- Reporting on environmental violations;
- Promoting networking among local communities and civil society partners;
- Supporting impacted communities in communicating/ elevating their concerns to effectively call for action on waste and/or air quality matters, among others;
- Building the capacity of CSOs to advocate on topics that affect local communities, such as transparency, inclusion, and freedom of expression;
- Empowering affected communities to advocate for themselves

Obj. 2: Support CSOs to implement community-based activities to prevent/reduce waste and pollution:

- Galvanizing local action to spur government and private sector reforms on pollution;
- Advocating for new regulations and monitoring requirements for industries and illicit activities;
- Enabling environment reforms and interventions to reduce pollution;
- Facilitating access to sound and reliable data and information to the general public;
- Supporting new legislation/new protection that reduce exposure to waste and pollution;
- Supporting community-based implementation of activities that prevent and/or reduce the leakage of pollution and waste into the environment;
- Improving the health, safety, social inclusion and/or livelihoods of vulnerable populations associated with pollution and waste, such as informal waste collectors.

IV. GRANT CONCEPT PAPER / GRANT APPLICATION FORMAT

GRANT CONCEPT PAPER – The first step is for organizations to submit a short form, called a “Grant Concept Paper”, as a first screening step to ascertain whether the Applicant and proposed activity meet the minimum eligibility criteria listed below:

- a. Is the Applicant and each partner(s) an eligible organization?
- b. Are the proposed country(ies) of implementation within the eligible geography(ies)?
- c. Does the Applicant or its partner(s) have a local presence in the country of proposed implementation?;
- d. Is the concept note thematically responsive?
- e. Is the purpose of the proposal consistent with PLUS GUC activity objectives?
- f. Does the proposed Applicant have a proper accounting system in place?
- g. Does the proposed Applicant have the organizational capability to successfully implement the activity or activities specified in the concept paper within the timeframe?

The Grant Concept Paper form can be completed online through the Grants Portal (dgrants.fluxx.io).

First time Applicants will be required to register for an account and upon approval will receive an email notification with the necessary log-in credentials to access the portal. The portal includes submission instructions for completing a web based form, and contains all required attachments to be included with the concept.

Only those preliminary concept papers that are deemed to meet the minimum requirements will have the opportunity to be developed into a full grant application.

The Grant Manager will inform the Applicant of PLUS findings, and the application process will either end (for unsuccessful concept papers) or the Applicant will be directed to develop the concept paper into a full grant application (for successful concept papers).

FULL GRANT APPLICATION – For submitting a full grant application package the Applicant needs to return to the Grants Portal (dgrants.fluxx.io). The accepted Concept Paper form will now be automatically converted into the Grant Application Form template with additional questions and attachment requirements. The Applicant is expected to submit a full application which includes:

1. Grant application form (full technical proposal)
2. Budget form including financial plan summary
3. Documents to verify eligibility (organization's registration documents and by-laws)
4. Applicants financial and accounting system information
5. Certification regarding terrorist financing
6. Certification of compliance
7. Certification regarding lobbying
8. Survey on ensuring equal opportunities for applicants

Applicants must submit all forms for the application to be considered complete.

SIZE OF GRANT FUNDING – We anticipate award amounts to range from USD 100,000 to USD 400,000¹¹ (or equivalent of that amount in local currency). The final value of each grant will be dependent upon the types of programs proposed, grant activities, geographical/ regional distribution, and number of targeted beneficiaries, award type, and final negotiation and may be lower or higher than that range. The duration of any grant award is expected not-to-exceed **12 months**.

PLUS anticipates awarding Fixed Amount Awards (FAA), however ultimately the grant type (standard, simplified, FAA, or in-kind) will be determined prior to award.

OWNERSHIP OF PROPOSALS – All concept papers and applications received in response to the APS will not be returned.

SUBMISSION LANGUAGE – All concept papers and applications must be submitted in English.

¹¹ The approved amount of grants shall not exceed \$250k for U.S. organizations. For non-U.S. organizations, there is no ceiling.

V. REVIEW AND SELECTION CRITERIA

REVIEW OF CONCEPT PAPERS/APPLICATIONS – PLUS will accept concept papers and grant applications on a continued basis as long as there is availability of funds throughout the remaining period of the activity fiscal year (3/29/24-9/30/24). PLUS will review concept papers and grant applications every four weeks until funding is exhausted.

The first deadline for submission of concept papers is 16:00 EST, on April 26, 2024.

REVIEW CRITERIA – PLUS will use consistent criteria, weighted to reflect activity priorities, to evaluate concept papers. The key review criteria are:

1. Activity Objectives: Are proposed activities and target groups consistent with overall activity objectives? (30 points)
2. Anticipated Results: What are the anticipated results from proposed activity? What impact will the proposed activities have? What is the likelihood for sustainability of the results? (35 points)
3. Feasibility of design and approach: the quality and feasibility of the application in terms of the appropriateness of the proposed activities and innovativeness of concept? (35 points)

Any proposed activities that pose unacceptable environmental threats or threats to the wellbeing of minority groups, in particular women and children, will be deemed ineligible and will receive no further consideration.

VI. AWARD PROCESS

Concept papers received by PLUS will be evaluated for completeness, qualification of the organization and activities, and against the review criteria. If the concept paper is not approved, the Applicant will be formally notified. If it is approved, the organization will be notified and PLUS will request the Applicant to complete a grant application. Applicants may be invited to participate in co-creation with the PLUS team to refine the proposed activities of selected concept notes.

The actual number of awards under this APS is subject to the availability of funds and the viability of the applications received.

Concept papers and grant applications can be submitted online using the Grants Portal (dgrants.fluxx.io). Navigate to the PLUS Thailand Portal (<https://dgrants.fluxx.io/apply/PLUS%20Thailand>) to register. Any questions regarding this APS or its contents should be sent to (usaidplusguc@deloitte.com). Phone calls will not be accepted.

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of PLUS, nor does it commit PLUS to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, PLUS reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. All application preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's expense and risk.