



Brief Progress Update (November 2020)

Ocean Innovation Challenge



https://www.oceaninnovationchallenge.org/

SIDA REFERENCE 61050352, COST-SHARING AGREEMENT SIGNED 2 JAN-2019

INITIAL SET-UP: COMPONENT 4 OF UNDP GLOBAL WATER AND OCEAN GOVERNANCE SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ATLAS OUTPUT 00117778- ACTIVITY 4, PROJECT 00115482)

TRANSITIONING INTO: AREA B2 (OCEAN GOVERNANCE) OF SIDA-UNDP STRATEGIC COLLABORATION PROGRAMME ON ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (ATLAS OUTPUT 00120004- ACTIVITY 2, PROJECT 00124739)

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Introduction and Background

Building on the successful 2017 Ocean Conference including its 1,400 voluntary commitments, UNDP has established an **Ocean Innovation Challenge** (OIC) dedicated to spur action by identifying, financing and mentoring a suite of pilot initiatives that demonstrate highly innovative approaches to ocean sustainability, cutting across SDG14 targets and associated sustainability challenges.

By providing seed financing, advice and guidance, technical, knowledge and networking support, the Challenge will help to remove key barriers by demonstrating approaches that can deliver transformational changes in ocean and ocean-relevant land-based resource management. The OIC's resources and support are targeted to the private sector, NGOs, local communities, national and sub-national government agencies, UN system organizations and development banks, intergovernmental organizations, and others positioned to pilot replicable and scalable innovations for ocean transformation.

The OIC was officially launched in December 2019, and the first challenge call – addressing SDG 14.1 marine pollution – was announced in January 2020, ahead of the Preparatory Meeting for the 2nd UN Ocean Conference. The process towards awarding the local innovations, along with plans for the second call Challenge call – addressing the sustainability of fisheries – are outlined below. Details are provided on expenditures to-date, along with budget projections and administrative plans for combining funding sources.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) provided the initial 'proof-of-concept' funding for the OIC. This funding, aided by a one-million-dollar contribution by Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) directed to innovations addressing the challenge of plastics pollution, will cover the innovation projects being awarded under the first call on SDG 14.1 challenges.

Ocean Innovation Challenge - Request for Proposals # 1

The first Call, which opened in January 2020, focused on reducing marine pollution, i.e. SDG target 14.1: "By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution". The Call received a huge amount of interest, with more than 10,000 users from 199 countries and

territories¹ visiting the website during the period of the Call, and more than 180 enquiries and requests for support assisted.

609 proposals (concept notes) were received at the time of closing of the first call in March this year. The concept notes have since been internally reviewed, and after this first screening against the OIC selection criteria, the 13 most promising proposals were shortlisted and have been invited to submit full proposals which will be subject to both external expert peer review and further internal review towards final selection of 2020 awards.

Notably, four of the finalist proposals were for innovations in Small Island Developing States (Cape Verde, Mauritius, Maldives, Comoros). 12 full proposals were received, and these were matched against the profiles of expert reviewers for technical peer reviews. The peer review process is now being concluded, preparing for the more administrative due diligence, partner capacity assessments and social and environmental safeguards reviews prior to final awarding of funds to successful innovators. Decisions are expected to be taken in December this year, with contracting and initial disbursements envisaged to take place in the first months of 2021.

The 12 shortlisted projects for which full proposals have been received are listed in Table 1. Together they amounted to a request for nearly USD 2.8 million.²

Table 1 – Full Proposals Received from 1st OIC Call – Addressing SDG target 14.1

#	Project (concept note) Title	Country / Region	Project time frame	Budget Request	Proponent type / location
19	Blix (tracking fishing equipment)	Kenya	24 months	100,000	Private, Kenya
25	cirplus - the global marketplace for circular plastics	Global	24 months	250,000	Private, Germany
71	Mitigating Threats to Marine Environment Thru Promotion of Expanded Producers Responsibility	Philippines	24 months	240,000	NGO, Philippines
161	NUTRIALGAE - novel sustainable algae- based fertilizers	Mexico	18 months	250,000	Private, Spain
270	Co-construction d'un éco-organisme pour la gestion des déchets à l'île Maurice.	Mauritius	24 months	250,000	Private, Mauritius
372	Fortuna Coconut Coolers	Indonesia, Philippines	24 months	250,000	Private, United States
386	Promoviendo leyes de protección de nuestros océanos, con el apoyo de la sociedad civil y las comunidades costeras.	Costa Rica	24 months	238,000	NGO, Costa Rica
410	Developing an EPR scheme for plastic and packaging waste in the Maldives (EPR Maldives)	Maldives	18 months	233,744	Private, Germany

¹ Source: Google Analytics.

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² After one proposal (#554) has been withdrawn, the 'full request' amount of USD 2,611,744 is being used for the budget. Yet, it is unlikely that every single proposal will make it through the full technical peer review and due diligence process.

#	Project (concept note) Title	Country / Region	Project time frame	Budget Request	Proponent type / location
479	Comoros sustainable financing mechanism setting for PET bottles and aluminum cans recycling to reduce waste pollution in the ocean	Comoros	18 months	250,000	UNDP, Comoros
522	Phos-Value - Sustainable solutions for recycling Nutrients	Cape Verde	24 months	250,000	Private, Portugal
530	Tracking government responses: the Global Plastics Policy Inventory	Global	12 Months	50,000	NGO, United States
554	Hula — A Circular Solution for Food Delivery and Takeaway (withdrawn)	Chile	12 Months	185,000	Private, Chile
603	Tackling the global problem of marine pollution from microplastics through apparel design and manufacturing innovations that reduce microfibre shedding.	Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia	20 months	250,000	NGO

The OIC website, social media and other outreach methods will be used to disseminate the results of the final selection process for this first call for proposals.

In selected cases, based on request from proponents, expert reviewers will also remain in contact with the project to offer 'mentoring' support to the innovators, as appropriate. Management of contracts and disbursements are planned to be done from headquarters (administered by OIC team largely based in Istanbul), UNDP COs will also be there to support, to be agreed on a case-by-case basis. The current in-depth review of these innovation projects demonstrates that there is strong potential for exciting developments that have the potential for building multiple social and environmental positive benefits which will be closely tracked and supported throughout the implementation period, in support of additional upscaling.

Ocean Innovation Challenge – Request for Proposals # 2

The second OIC Call will focus on sustainable and equitable fisheries, SDG targets 14.4, 14.7 and 14.B, which will also contribute significantly to increasing benefits to Small Island Developing States. This second Challenge is envisaged to be launched in early 2021 once all administrative issues with call #1 have been resolved. Some reflections for learning from the first call have emerged, listed here to be considered in the crafting of call #2 are listed in Box 1.

Box 1 – Insights and experience identified to bring into 2nd Request for Proposals

- A. Process lessons learned noted from the 1st call have been compiled to help design the application and review process for the 2nd request for proposals. In terms of process, the huge level of response received to the first call suggests that the response to the second may be even larger.
- 1. DEADLINE: Specify on the website <u>the precise time and time zone</u> of the deadline in the last few days most of the deluge of inquiries were on this.
- 2. Specify that individuals are not eligible to apply lots of questions received on this.

- 3. Clarify the role of UNDP COs and whether eligible to apply in partnership clearly on the website.
- 4. Include a **'Frequently asked questions'** page where responses previously shared can be posted for all to see for transparency noting that many questions will be responded by way of having information on the outcome of the first call made available.
- 5. Include clear definitions of outputs, outcomes, etc.
- 6. Lots of questions received re. the date and topic of the next challenge, so good to share in advance to prompt enquiries.
- 7. Obtain an official translation of the static OIC site in French and Spanish prior to launch.
- 8. Main lesson learned is that, as anticipated, only a few, weaker, applications tend to be received early on the majority of applications are received in the final week/s. Approx. 200 received in the first 6 weeks and approx. 400 in the final 2 weeks.
- 9. Allocate more time period for the initial review and for development of full proposals (in the end this was possible due to the postponement of the Ocean Conference), as with the extremely high volume of submissions this was a very labour intensive exercise.

Technical lessons learned - for web developer:

- Applicants encountered some issues with submitting applications and registering to the Ocean Action Hub.
 This took up time supporting users, despite extensive testing prior to launch, so needs to be bulletproof prior to the next Challenge launch.
- 2. Lots of applicants said that they did not receive the confirmation email that their application had been successfully received this likely went to junk mail, but is critical, as creates additional work, and needs to be ensured for next time.
- 3. Need to ensure UNDP has ability to make minor, but urgent text edits to the static (non-CMS) OIC page, without requiring web intervention. (e.g. changes to dates, deadlines, etc.). Already discussed and agreed, and can be facilitated by granting UNDP ftp access to make minor edits, avoiding html (noting that many of the ideas for 'process' above assume this one to be fixed.)
- 4. Some applicants (approx. 5-10) had trouble uploading their proposals and website manager uploaded them on their behalf from Word again this was time-consuming, but ensured that there was no technical/connectivity barrier to applying.
- 5. The Excel download of all applications was a little unwieldy (particularly the country of implementation) which required cleaning each time this could be improved, ideally including some analytics e.g. number of applications from certain countries, with projects in certain countries, types of lead organization, etc.
- 6. Include more fields, e.g. sub-topics/focus, to enable easier division between reviewers particularly if similar numbers of applications are received. May also require reviewers to start reviewing earlier in the process (although the problem here is point 7 above the majority of submissions (even strong submissions) are submitted in the final days).
- 7. Some fields were a little tricky for users e.g. selecting multiple countries could be more user-friendly.
- 8. Facilitate online review and scoring, if desired by reviewers. (call #1 shortlisting relied upon emailing, webinars, and scoring in Excel.)
- 9. Additional functionality to bulk email all applicants with mass email messages e.g. thank you and update on new dates, next challenge, etc.

It is also important to note the many things that went extremely well in the first call: There were no language problems (users were able to submit in different UN languages without issues); there was a very successful outreach, testified to by over 600 submissions successfully received. Above all; the system never crashed, not even on the launch or last day of submission, when there was a peak of visitors.

Communications

The result of the communication effort around call #1 was very successful, as testified to by the overwhelming turnout – over 600 concepts received! Yet, continued emphasis needs to be given to ensure efficiency and consistency in the external outreach, including accurate and relevant updates and the upcoming awarding of the successful innovation proposals.

The communication plan is being further refined for the second OIC challenge call, ensuring synergy and co-branding with the first call and the related initiatives and platforms. The OIC will continue to coordinate and share information with related initiatives such as the World Bank's ProBlue, Sustainable Ocean Fund, Sustainable Ocean Alliance, as well as the related Ocean Action Hub.

UNDP's existing Ocean Action Hub (OAH), focuses specifically on promoting implementation of SDG 14: Life Below Water in UNDP's programme countries. It was launched in advance of the 1st UN Ocean Conference in 2017 with support from Sweden, and remains the OIC 'sister website' providing the platform to receive and manage applications, promote the Calls and form the basis of a 'Community of Practice' around the initiatives and wider community of practitioners identified through the Calls and wider outreach. Daily news and updates are shared via the Hub and its social media channels (reaching an audience of almost 300,000 users across all channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), as well as training events, webinars and conferences, awards, and funding opportunities, innovative developments in the field and other initiatives of interest to the global 'Ocean Action' community.

As a result of the launch of the 1st Ocean Innovation Challenge call, more than 800 new users registered to the Ocean Action Hub. In this way, the Hub has been able to stay in touch with all applicants, providing unsuccessful applicants with information on other funding opportunities related to marine pollution. The Hub continues to be used to promote future calls, using its large audience focused on SDG 14 to amplify the OIC's reach.

In terms of Knowledge Management, the Ocean Action Hub is available to the Awardees to communicate, discuss shared challenges, request peer support and advice from UNDP technical colleagues, post and share reports and lessons learned, both internally and publicly with the wider Ocean Action Hub community and visitors. In this way, awardees are supported to implement their initiatives, while at the same time contributing consolidated knowledge of their innovative approaches and lessons learned to the shared OAH knowledge base and providing inspiration for similar initiatives worldwide.

The 2nd call for proposals will be promoted widely via a large-scale announcement similar to the first call but greater in scale and more focused outreach. Given the current restrictions in many parts of the world, a webinar to launch the call is planned, providing the opportunity to present the challenge, explain the criteria and application modalities, respond to questions (chat box only) and share examples of the kinds of innovative sustainable and equitable fisheries initiatives sought. This will be particularly important to small-scale actors. The launch will be accompanied by a large social media 'splash' coordinated by UNDP's corporate communications team and amplified by the Ocean Action Hub and other networks. Following on from the success of the first call, a suite of communications assets including banners, videos and messages will be developed, translated and shared with partners for wide promotion.

An updated OIC website will feature Call #2 and archive Call #1, including a new application form and official translation into French and Spanish.

The communication plan to promote Call #2 provisionally includes the following:

- Preparation of comms assets package (BERA): Social media images, videos etc. see Call #1 assets in En, Fr, Sp here: https://trello.com/b/DLBpPsuN/undp-and-sida-ocean-innovation-challenge
- Additional expansion into Russian and Arabic languages to broaden accessibility
- Webinar and linked YouTube video to explain purpose and modalities of call.
- UNDP Press Release similar to Call #1: https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/news/2020/undp-launches-new-ocean-innovation-challenge.html
- Promote via UNDP corporate social media channels, particularly LinkedIn, and network of Comms officers globally
- Announcement via OAH website, newsletter, TW, FB, IG
- Request Partners, colleagues and other fisheries networks to promote and share widely (e.g. Sweden, Norway, UNDESA Community of Ocean Action on Sustainable Fisheries, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture, UN Ocean Conference, UNDP Accelerator Labs, etc.)
- Wide outreach to academia, research institutes, and others to invite applications to the call.

The communication plan to communicate the awarding of innovations from Call #1 provisionally includes the following:

- 1. Creation of OIC social media to compliment OAH, and to highlight the innovations and progress of the awarded innovations
- 2. Webinar to present innovation projects being awarded
- 3. UNDP Press Releases
- 4. Announcement on OIC and OAH websites, Newsletter, OIC and OAH social media channels
- 5. Request Partners, colleagues and other marine pollution networks to promote and share widely (e.g. Sweden, Norway, IISD, oceans-L, SDG Knowledge Platform, UN Ocean Conference, SDG networks (e.g. SDG Action Hub), etc.)
- 6. Share individual profiles/communications messages on each of the individual Awardees, including images, separately via all OIC/OAH channels (following examples of this approach from the Equator Initiative and WEF's Uplink), and via a UNDP Exposure story or similar format, and UNDP Country Office social media accounts.

Management and Administration

For continued success, the OIC needs deliberate hands-on administration, management and communication.

It was initially anticipated to have the UNDP Ocean Advisor on board from the start of the OIC activities. However, the recruitment was delayed for a number of reasons relating to wider institutional policies and requirements. Yet, by mid-November, the OIC Ocean Advisor has taken up her position, to be based in Istanbul where several administrative support capacities pertaining to the Sida-UNDP Strategic Collaboration Programme have been positioned.

In the meantime, the OIC operations have been successfully led by the head of the Water and Ocean Governance Programme, assisted by the respective GPN Policy Advisors on Inclusive Growth and Water Governance, as well as the Programme and Administrative Associates attached to the Global Water and Ocean Governance Support Programme.

The present 'brief progress update' or interim reporting constitutes the additional reporting requirements stipulated in the Cost-Sharing Agreement with Sida on the Ocean Innovation Facility /Challenge 'proof-of-concept' funding. This funding has subsequently come to be seen as an 'advance' payment of the broader Sida-UNDP Strategic Collaboration Programme on Environment and Climate Change.

Budget, Expenditures and Resource Mobilization

Efforts are underway to attract additional funding to the OIC. The ambition is to mobilize the necessary resources for the OIC to make additional awards beyond the first two rounds that are currently financed. Discussions are to be revived with potentially interested financial partners to enlarge call #2 and to secure funding for additional future calls.

The OIC success to-date in resource mobilization relates to the already granted continuation of the OIC through the above-mentioned Sida-UNDP Strategic Collaboration Programme on Environment and Climate Change. Further, a contribution has been secured from Norway (just over USD 1 million) to fund innovations and solutions related to plastics and marine litter under the first call for proposals. Efforts will be undertaken to explore Norwegian interest in providing finance also to the second call (fisheries) and possible future calls; Norway's strong presence and interest in sustainable fisheries suggests good potential.

Table 2 on the next page sums up expenditures to-date and draws a plan for future planned expenditures for coming months and years. The 2019 expenditures have already been reported to Sida (as part of Global Water and Ocean Governance Support Programme reporting). For 2020, the expenditures to-date (January-October) are summed up first, and then the remaining 2020 (November-December) expenditures and commitments are estimated, together presenting the estimated total expenditure for 2020. The 2021 figures are similarly divided up in a column for the first half of 2021 (January-June) and a second half (July-December).

As the awarding of call #1 is now being prepared, the budget estimates to contract all the winning innovation projects during the first half of 2021. The present budget depicts disbursements to come at the same time as the contracting. However, UNDP rules and regulations pose limitations for advance payments, depending on the type of institution of the receiver. Hence, a number of awardees – while contracted during the coming months – may receive their disbursements spread over a longer time span and tied to specific deliveries or milestones. Notwithstanding, the financing agreement needs to be active full the full duration of the dependent projects/innovation awards.

The initial 'advance' or 'proof-of-concept' funding for the Ocean Innovation was transferred from Sida to UNDP under a separate agreement before the broader Sida-UNDP Strategic Collaboration Programme on Environment and Climate Change was fully formulated. This separate Ocean Innovation agreement is set to expire 31 December 2020. Hence, remaining resources (for awarding the successful proposals pertaining to call #1) are to be transferred into the Strategic Collaboration Programme on Environment and Climate Change. The Ocean Innovation activities were already part of this broader Collaboration Agreement, as thematic area B2, but specific administrative action is warranted to transfer also the resources provided to UNDP under the initial/separate agreement.

A meeting between Sida and UNDP on 20 November agreed to explore this 'full transfer,' which would be much preferable than the alternative of prolonging the duration of the initial advance agreement. A memo and agreement amendment to effect the transfer of resources from one output to another;

- from Output #111778, project #00115482 Global Water and Ocean Governance Support Programme
- to Output#00120004-Activity #2, project #00124739 Sida-UNDP Strategic Collaboration Programme on Environment and Climate Change.

The memo and amendment text are currently being reviewed by Sida's legal expertise.

Call #2 on sustainable fisheries is estimated to contract/disburse the winning innovations in early 2022. Depending on whether all remaining full proposals successfully pass the technical reviews in the first call, some funds targeted for call #1 may roll over into call #2.

General management support / indirect costs relating to all contributions amounts to eight per cent of the total grant amount. The GMS is specified on separate rows.

The presentation in Table 2 is color-coded with cost items drawing on the OIC 'proof-of-concept' funding shaded in yellow, grants paid from Norad's contribution shaded in green, and parts drawing upon the 'Sida-UNDP Strategic Programme' budget (area B2 — ocean governance) shaded in blue.

Table 2 – Ocean Innovation Challenge Expenditures and Planned Budget, by year/part of year and funding source

Years/		2019		2020			2021		2022	2023	All years
Time periods Budget / Item		Spent & reported 2019	Jan-Oct 2020 (spent)	Nov-Dec 2020 estimate	Jan-Dec 2020 total	Jan-June 2021 plan	July-Dec 2021 plan	Jan-Dec 2021 total	Jan-Dec 2022 total	Jan-Dec 2023 total	2019-2023
Budget Account	Cost Item					All amo	unts in US Dol	lars			
72600 Grants	RFP # 1 (SDG 14.1)	-			-	1,639,360		1,639,360	65,147		1,704,507
72600 Grants	RFP # 1 - (SDG 14.1)	i			-	972,384		972,384			972,384
72600 Grants	RFP # 2 – (Fisheries)	ı			-			-	1,756,908		1,756,908
61300 Salary	International	-	52,974	9,986	62,960			-			62,960
& Post Adj Cst- IP Staff	Professional Staff	-	15,499	0	15,499			-			15,499
61300 Salary & Post Adj Cst-	International Professional	ı		32,568	32,568	50,060	50,060	100,120	76,967	-	209,655
IP Staff	Staff	-		76,700	76,700	112,200	112,200	224,400	226,600	228,800	756,500
61200 Salaries		•	40,735	8,050	48,785			-			48,785
Costs - GS Staff		-	83,486	О	83,486			-			83,486
61200 Salaries	General	-			-	35,618	35,618	71,237	72,305	73,390	216,931
Costs - GS Staff	Services Staff	-			-			-			-
71200 International	International	-		8,587	8,587						8,587
Consultants	Consultants	27,000	30,186	15,000	45,186						72,186
71200 International	International	-			-	5,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
Consultants	Consultants	-			-	20,000	20,000	40,000	30,000	30,000	100,000

	Years/	2019		2020			2021		2022	2023	All years
Budget / Item	Time periods	Spent & reported 2019	Jan-Oct 2020 (spent)	Nov-Dec 2020 estimate	Jan-Dec 2020 total	Jan-June 2021 plan	July-Dec 2021 plan	Jan-Dec 2021 total	Jan-Dec 2022 total	Jan-Dec 2023 total	2019-2023
72100 Contr. Services - Companies	Web-sites & comms	36,250		1,000	1,000			-			37,250
72400 Connectivity Charges	Web-sites & comms, etc.	-	320	1,000	1,320			-			1,320
74200 Dissemination and Outreach	Publications etc	5,042	2,013	1,000	3,013			-			8,055
72100 Contr. Services - Companies	Web-sites & comms	•			-	15,000	15,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	90,000
74200 Dissemination and Outreach	Publications etc				-	2,000	2,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	12,000
73100 Rental, Maintenance- Premises	- various: provision for JPO	•			-		4,113	4,113	8,225	4,113	16,450
75700 Training, Workshops	Learning events	•			-	1,000	1,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	6,000
Total Direct	Costs - OIF/OIC advance	68,292	225,213	44,623	269,835	1,639,360	0	1,639,360	65,147	-	2,042,634
	al Direct Costs - ramme Area B2		0	109,268	109,268	240,878	244,991	485,869	2,217,006	382,302	3,194,444
Total Direc	ct Costs - Norad		0	0	-	972,384	0	972,384	-	-	972,384
Total Di	rect Costs - OIC	68,292	225,213	153,890	379,103	2,852,622	244,991	3,097,613	2,282,153	382,302	6,209,463

	Years/	2019		2020			2021		2022	2023	All years
Time periods Budget / Item		Spent & reported 2019	Jan-Oct 2020 (spent)	Nov-Dec 2020 estimate	Jan-Dec 2020 total	Jan-June 2021 plan	July-Dec 2021 plan	Jan-Dec 2021 total	Jan-Dec 2022 total	Jan-Dec 2023 total	2019-2023
75105 Facilities & Administration	Gral Mgmt Support (GMS)	5,463	16,255	3,570	21,587	131,149	0	131,149	5,212	-	163,411
75105 Facilities & Administration	Gral Mgmt Support (GMS)	-	0	8,741	8,741	19,270	19,599	38,870	177,360	30,584	255,556
75105 Facilities & Administration	Gral Mgmt Support (GMS)	ı	0	0		77,791	0	77,791		ı	77,791
Total Indirect Costs - GMS		5,463	16,255	12,311	30,328	228,210	19,599	247,809	182,572	30,584	496,757
Total Project Budget / Expenditure		73,755	241,468	166,202	409,431	3,080,832	264,590	3,345,422	2,464,725	412,886	6,706,220

Project expenditures distributed by funding source											
Subtotal output 111778 ('OIF/OIC' advance)	73,755			291,422			1,770,508	70,359	-	2,206,045	
Subtotal output 0012004 ('FW' Area B2)	-			118,009			524,738	2,394,366	412,886	3,450,000	
Subtotal output 111778 (Norad OIC plastics)	-	-	-	-			1,050,175	-	-	1,050,175	
Grand Total:									6,706,220		