



Building Back Blue – Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme (Fiji) - 2022

Issuance Date: 31 May 2022

Type of Solicitation: Funding Proposals

Closing Date and Time: 30 June 2022 at 5:00 PM, Fiji Time Zone

Submit Questions to: <u>blueacceleratorgrantscheme@gmail.com</u>

Submit Concept Papers to: <u>blueacceleratorgrantscheme@gmail.com</u>

Number of Awards Anticipated: Multiple

Supported by: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Managed and implemented by: Dura Incubator – Ministry of Economy in collaboration with UNDP



SECTION 1. DESCRIPTION OF THIS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

1.1 BACKGROUND

Fiji's Exclusive Economic Zone is 70% larger than its landmass and is ranked the 26th largest sovereign ocean space in the world. It is also home to 3.5% of the world's coral reefs and over 65,000 hectares of mangroves that make up some of the many features of its rich marine biodiversity. In this regard, Fiji is keen to operationalise its blue economy ambitions¹ and sustainably leverage its ocean-based resources to support its post-pandemic recovery and economic diversification.

The Fijian Government, with technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the UK Government, will be issuing Fiji's first sovereign blue bond in its 2022-2023 financial year. The issuance will focus on raising capital market finance to support projects in four priority sectors. These are 'Blue Shipping', 'Sustainable Fisheries', 'Blue Investments Fund' and 'Sustainable Waste Management'.

While projects for the Blue Bond issuance have been identified and are being developed, there is a need to curate a pipeline of additional economically viable blue economy projects that could leverage related financing opportunities. Such projects have transformative potential and promising business models but need grant-based support to unlock new and additional financing to operationalise and scale.

The Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme (BAGS), funded by UNDP, aims to support Statutory Organisations, Private Businesses (PBs), Cooperatives, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs), who have developed highly promising blue economy projects that are aligned to national development priorities and have a compelling business case to support either a pilot phase or a scale up phase. It is separate to the Blue Bond but is expected to create a pipeline of projects that could then be supported by the Blue Bond, such as through the Blue Investment Fund. This call for proposal seeks well developed funding proposals for projects that have already done substantial preparatory works and need financial support to rapidly operationalise or scale. Projects in conceptualization or concept stage are not being solicited by this call for proposal.

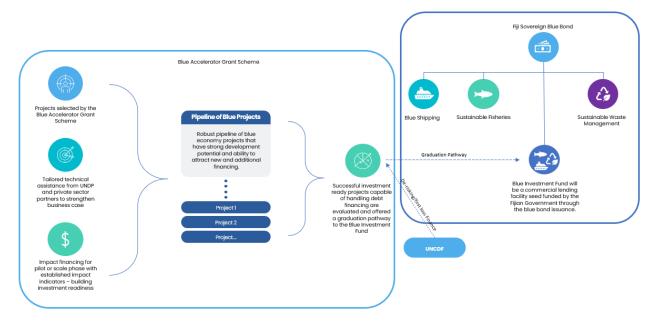
Projects that are selected through the grant scheme will be given tailored support from the Drua Incubator of the Fijian Government, UNDP's Inclusive Growth team, the Accelerator Lab in the Pacific, and established partners from the private sector. Apart from providing technical assistance, the grant scheme will also provide performance-based impact grants to respective project proponents and help attract private sector investor such as venture capitalists and angel investors. Each project will be required to work with the Drua Incubator to establish robust impact indicators. The grant scheme will evaluate projects relative to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with particular reference to SDG 14 targets².

If the projects are successful enough and ready to scale after receiving the impact grants, the projects will be put through a graduation process that will link them up to accessing commercial debt financing from the Blue Investment Fund that will be created by Fiji's Blue Bond Issuance. The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) will coordinate with these successful projects to provide first-loss de-risking finance where possible, thereby helping reduce lending interest rates. The illustration below shows the linkage of the BAGS to Fiji's upcoming Sovereign Blue Bond.

https://library.sprep.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Fiji-National-Ocean-policy-2020-2030.pdf

 $[\]frac{^2https://sdgtracker.org/oceans\#: \sim :text=Goal\%3A\%20By\%202020\%2C\%20effectively\%20regulate, can\%20produce\%20maximum\%20sustainable\%20yield\%20.}$

Kindly note that issuance of this call for funding proposals does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme, nor does it commit the BAGS to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of funding proposals.



1.2 PURPOSE OF THE GRANT SCHEME

The grant scheme is designed to address the challenge of developing and bringing to market new products, services, and business models that could ultimately catalyze commercially viable blue economy activities in Fiji. In doing so, the grant scheme will support projects that accelerate innovation in Fiji's blue economy space, demonstrate high potential in terms of business viability and growth underpinned by a strategic business plan, financial analysis and positive financial projections which seek to create and maintain jobs in the blue economy. The business will get mentorship in order to refine the business plan and the financial projections from BAGS.

Projects seeking funding from the grant scheme need to sustainably use marine resources for innovative and/or circular economic activities and contribute to healthy oceans and/or coastal communities in accordance with national development priorities set by the Fijian Government and aligned with UNEPs Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles. They may include deploying, demonstrating, or scaling-up new solutions for the blue economy including technologies and service applications or building on existing solutions with potential for demonstrable impact. Emphasis is placed on the need for projects to be financially sound, sustainable and scalable to other parts of Fiji and eventually to the region. Moreover, projects that support post-COVID recovery, community-based income generation, private sector led growth and sustainable economic diversification will be given priority.

The grant scheme is in line with UNDP's Low Value Grants modality, whereby grants provided will help strengthen institutional capacities, entice private sector engagement, support community-based initiatives as well as support Statutory organisations, PBs, CSOs, NGOs, and CBOs involved in the blue economy space and supporting gender sensitized national development.

The grant scheme will enable transformative blue economy projects to move beyond the conceptualization stage towards robust business development, preliminary market testing and feasibility, establishment of impact indicators, identification of co-investors, testing, piloting and finally scaling. The grant scheme will play a crucial de-risking role for the Blue Investment Facility helping to reduce lending risks.

[End of Section 1]

SECTION 2. SECTORAL AND TECHNICAL PRIORITIES

2.1 AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Funds will be allocated to funding proposals that seek to address one or more of the following non-exhaustive priorities explained below and meet quality criteria and other conditions:

- Sustainable Fisheries, Aquaculture/Mariculture: projects in this priority area can support initiatives
 such as integrated climate smart aquaculture/aquaponics, sustainable sourcing of non-endangered
 marine species, seaweed farming at commercial scale, and community-based fish sanctuaries and aquafarms. Projects can also support conservation of natural fish stocks using new and innovative sustainable
 fishing methods, sustainable value chain development for commercial fisheries, and installation of
 community solar freezers.
- 2. Marine Conservation and Protection: project in this priority area can support initiatives such as conservation and restoration of marine biodiversity including coral reef, blue carbon development (mangrove restoration initiatives), sustainable commercial activities in locally managed marine area networks, technology and training for enhanced maritime surveillance, and procurement of innovative drone technology for marmite surveillance.
- 3. **Blue Shipping and E-mobility:** projects in this priority area can support small scale/pilot decarbonization of the domestic shipping and fishing sector. Transition to low carbon outboard motor technologies, piloting electric charging stations, retrofitting of ships with low carbon technology, transition to green port technologies, and supporting land-based innovation/pilots with spillover potential in maritime sector are just some of the eligible initiatives that can be supported.
- 4. **Ocean Based Renewable Energy**: projects in this priority area can support initiatives such as technical support for assessing marine energy potential, pilot testing of portable ocean current energy generation, pilot testing of tidal energy generation, pilot testing of off-grid hydro turbines, and setup of community based solar desalination plants.
- 5. **Sustainable Waste Management**: projects in this priority area can support initiatives such as circular economy initiatives to recycle waste, pilot online monitoring and tracking/waste management systems in local municipalities, development of biodegradable fertilizers, innovative alternatives to single use plastics and polystyrene, sustainable collection and recycling of tires, and related waste materials.
- 6. **Sustainable and eco-tourism**: projects in this priority area can support initiatives such as designing innovative ecosystem payment schemes for marine conservation, supporting hotels with conservation activities, piloting biodegradable solutions for waste management, localization of production value chains supporting tourism-based micro, small and medium enterprises, sustainable vertical farms, and community-based aquaculture/mariculture, and eco-centric tourism packages.

The funding proposals should include a clearly articulated theory of change and a well-structured easy to understand business plan. Funding proposals should demonstrate how the lasting impact in each priority area is expected to be achieved. Particular attention will be paid to the financial and environmental sustainability of proposed actions. Central to all the submissions is the articulation of an inclusive and participatory process that is gender sensitive and socially inclusive. Where possible, applicants are urged to demonstrate opportunities for supporting the leadership of women, youth, people with disabilities leadership throughout the design and implementation process.

Applicants are to state their contributions (either in labour, materials, partnerships, or cash) to enhance the projects impacts to the community.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT SELECTION PROCESS

The BAGS will follow a **four-phase** application process.

Phase one: Applicants must submit funding proposals by the due date. The Drua Incubator, with assistance from UNDP, will screen all submitted funding proposals to check that eligibility criteria are met and that the proposed project fits with priorities of the Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme. Funding proposals will be further evaluated by a Grant Selection Committee (GSC) comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Economy, UNDP and other experts engaged in this process. Attention will be paid to ensure there is diverse representation on the committee. Organizations submitting unsuccessful funding proposals will be notified by email.

Phase two: Proponents of the successful funding proposals from phase one will be invited to meet and discuss their funding proposal in more detail with the Drua Incubator team and address any issues/clarifications highlighted by the GSC. The Drua Incubator Team will evaluate the funding proposals and scores based on different aspects of the proposal. The team will rank all project applications according to their overarching score as achieved during Phase one. Depending on funding available, number of projects/funding needed and their respective ranking, the Team will select the projects to advance to the next stage. If the available funding is too small to fund all proposals, some proposals may be put on a reserve list — of proposals that may be offered funding if a higher-scoring project does not go ahead or additional funds become available.

Phase three: Once the funding proposal are shortlisted in Phase one and funding proposals ranked according to the scoring matrix mentioned in Section 3.7 below, the shortlisted project proponents will present their project to the GSC for conditional approval. The GSC will give the final approval for projects they deem most appropriate to receive BAGS funding support.

Phase four: Successful funding proposals will proceed to the due diligence and grant contracting stages of the application process. After the grants are issued and before the first tranche is disbursed, there will be onboarding sessions held to discuss the workplan and monitoring plan and agree on ways of working. Implementation commences after the onboarding process is completed.

Note: Successful applications will be prioritised based on overall merits (scores) of the project concepts. If the total cost of awards for successful applications exceeds the overall budgeted amount, GSC will award small grants according to the total score for each application, starting with the highest scored application, until the available budget has been fully committed. However, if there will still be a number of eligible applications for which small grants cannot be awarded due to the insufficient funds available, these non-funded applications will, upon the consent of the GSC, be placed on a reserve list, in descending order of their scores. In the cases where applications awarded small grants have subsequently been withdrawn or found non-compliant, applications will be replaced from the reserve list in order of their respective scores for funding.

[End of Section 2]

SECTION 3. ELEGIBILITY, GRANT SIZE, AND PERIOD PERFORMANCE

3.1 WHO CAN APPLY?

- 1. Statutory organization, registered PBs, CSOs, NGOs, and CBOs in Fiji involved in the blue economy space and supporting gender sensitized national development or are either involved in community development in one or more of the priority areas for this grant scheme or are interested in integrating sustainable blue economy approaches into their existing programmes/projects/initiatives.
- 2. Community Based Organisations (for example: youth groups, women's groups, religious groups, as well as social enterprises) that are involved in community development, are encouraged to apply with a letter of support from local/subnational government partner or registered CSOs and NGOs.
- 3. Applicants are encouraged to submit their letters of partnership with local/subnational government stakeholders, CSO/NGO partners, government gender machinery and government agencies responsible for climate change and disaster risk management. Selected applicants might be required to submit support letters from partner public agencies. Land access/ title rights may also need to be submitted where applicable.

3.2 INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- 1. Support to individuals or families such as scholarships or individual or family assistance payments.
- 2. Religious or political activities, i.e., grantees must adopt non-religious³ and non-political⁴ neutral approach.
- 3. Fundraising, donations or prizes.
- 4. Repayments of loans or bank overdrafts.
- 5. Expenses which have already been paid for (retroactive funding).
- 6. Purchase of assets, unless specified in the call for project concepts or demonstrated to be an essential for the success of the activity.
- 7. Activities which are contrary to priorities of the Fijian Government and the UNDP.
- 8. Activities that have significant component of professional salaries.

3.3 PROCEDURES OF GRANT PROJECT CONCEPT SUBMISSION

- Fill out the Funding Proposal Template and relevant/supporting documents and attachments (see Annex A)
- 2. Include the CVs of lead implementing staff
- 3. Please send 1 & 2 above electronically in one file (pdf format) signed and scanned to the following email: blueacceleratorgrantscheme@gmail.com. If additional clarifications are required, questions can be sent to the same email address indicated above by 27 June 2022. Answers to questions will be provided within two working days and will be posted for the benefit of all applicants.

3.4 APPLICATION TIMELINE

Deadline for applications is **30 June 2022 5:00PM Fiji time**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Below please find the schedule and timelines for the application process.

Table 1: Application Process Timeline

Schedule	Timelines*		
Call for Funding Proposal Open	31 May 2022		

³ Religious activities include the non-development related outreach and/or subsidization of these activities

⁴ Political activities include direct or indirect interventions in electoral or party based political activities such as election campaigns, elections processes, supporting or opposing a political candidate during elections and contributions to a pollical party or individual candidate's fund (even if independent)

Online information session for potential project proponents	14 and 17 June 2022
Deadline for applications	30 June 2022
Shortlisted applicants reviewed by GSC for Phase One	11 – 14 July 2022
Detailed discussions with project proponents for Phase Two	18 – 21 July 2022
Presentation of Funding Proposal to GSC for Phase Three	25 – 29 July 2022
Screening and grant agreements finalised	1 – 5 August 2022
Implementation begins	August 2022

^{*} If there are any change in timelines, applicants will be notified accordingly.

3.5 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Implementation period for approved projects will be between eight (8) to twelve (20) months, depending on the size and scope of the project, this shall be, counted from the date of the contract signature to the date when all relevant activities have been successfully completed.

3.6 FUNDING AMOUNT

The Blue Investment Grant Scheme will determine the most appropriate type of grant agreement prior to award, as applicable. The two types of possible grants that may be awarded by the Grant Scheme are:

- 1. **Micro Grants:** ranging from US \$50,000 to US \$100,000. This grant type is for projects that can be implemented within 8 to 12 months.
- 2. **Small Grants:** ranging from US \$101,000 to US \$150,000. This grant type is for larger projects that can be implemented withing 12 to 20 months.

Grant type will also be determined based on the criteria of selection, management arrangements in place for the project and experience of applicants. <u>Project concepts with the project staff salary costs exceeding 20% of the total budget will be disqualified without further consideration.</u> Co-funding and in-kind contributions are <u>strongly encouraged</u>.

3.7 SELECTION CRITERIA AND SCORING

Proposed projects will be selected based on the criteria outlined in the table 2 below.

Table 2: Selection Criteria and Scoring

	Selection Criteria	Score
1	The funding proposal clearly demonstrates that the project supports sustainable economy objectives as outlined in Fiji's National Ocean Policy, SDG 14 indicators, and that that it is aligned and linked with sectorial or national development priorities of the Fijian Government.	Max. 15 points
2	The funding proposal is able to articulate a strong business case and financial viability of the project with clear financial projections and input costs included.	Max 25 points
3	The project is financially sustainable after receiving grant support from the Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme, builds on existing activities and partnerships, and has long term plan of existence. Project preparatory works have been done and can be rapidly mobilized	Max. 25 points

	within 8 months of receiving the grant.	
4	The project collaborates with national and/or subnational government partners and national CSO/NGO organisations working on development initiatives and/or blue economy projects.	Max 10 points
5	The project is replicable at the national and regional level should appropriate resources be provided.	Max 10 points
6	The project will support participation and advancement of gender equality and encourages inclusion and leadership of marginalized and vulnerable groups.	Max 10 points
7	The project budget is relevant (limit of maximum 20% of total budget to be allocated to human resource cost)	Max. 5 points
то	TAL	100 Points

Grants will be awarded in accordance with the nature and relevance of the project. The payment schedule will be agreed before signing the contract.

Applications will be disqualified and will not be further considered, if they:

- 1. Do not comply with priorities or instructions provided in this announcement.
- 2. Are not consistent with the relevant policy documents of UNDP.
- 3. Contradict principles of non-discrimination and gender equality.

IMPORTANT: You will be notified by email no later than three working days after we have successfully received your application. If you do not hear from us within this timeframe, please, contact us during the next two days and request a confirmation of receipt of email. Otherwise, UNDP will not be responsible for any potential problems in terms of considering the application.

3.8 POINT OF CONTACT

The point of contact for information about this Call for Concept Papers is:

Kushaal Raj Vineil Narayan

Officer-in-Charge Project Manager Building Back Blue and Investing in Coral

Climate Change Division Reef and Blue Economy
Ministry of Economy Inclusive Growth Team
Email: kushaal.raj@economy.gov.fj UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji

Email: vineil.narayan@undp.org

3.9 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Any questions or requests for clarifications concerning this Call for Concept Papers must be submitted in writing to blueacceleratorgrantscheme@gmail.com no later than 27 June, 2022 at 5:00 PM, Fiji Time Zone. Responses to questions and clarifications will be provided within 1 working day.

3.10 ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES

Grant applicants must meet the following additional requirements to remain eligible to apply for the Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme:

1. Applicants must provide proof that they can operate legally within Fiji where proposed grant activities will take place—through legal registration, through other approval (such as a memorandum of

- understanding or other agreement with the host country government providing permission to operate in the country), or demonstration that process of registering is underway.
- 2. Applicants must display sound management of written financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present a system of controls that safeguard assets, protect against fraud, waste, and abuse, and support the achievement of program goals and objectives.
- 3. Applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality and female empowerment, in part through integration of gender considerations into every aspect of their operations and approach to the proposed grant, including representation of women in leadership and decision-making; planning and implementation of project activities; use of performance indicators, methods, and outcomes; and information dissemination.
- 4. Applicants must be established organizations and in good standing within their community and the Fiji Revenue and Customs Services.

3.11 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARD COMPLIANCE

Grant applicants will be required to comply with environmental sustainability and social safeguarding standard of the Fijian Government (Environment Management Act⁵) and UNDP (Social and Environmental Safeguards⁶) to avoid any negative potential environmental and social impacts resulting from grant activities. All proposed grant budgets must include sufficient funds to comply with environmental sustainability and social safeguarding plans, if needed.

Note that the BAGS expects grant applicants to abide by Fiji's Environment Management Act and all national laws.

Attached documents:

Annex B. Project Budget Template

Annex A. Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme Funding Proposal Submission Form

[End of Section 3]

⁵ https://www.ffa.int/system/files/Environment Management Act 2005.pdf

⁶ https://www.undp.org/library/undp-social-and-environmental-standards#

Annex A: FUNDING PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Please use the template provided on the following pages to prepare your funding proposal. Instructions to complete each section of the Funding Proposal Template are provided in grey.

Where information is requested as shown in brackets [], please replace the text and the brackets with the requested text.

FUNDING PROPOSAL

[Organization Name]

[Proposed Project Title]

[Date of Submission]

1. General Information

Organization Name					
Organization Address					
Website					
Phone Number					
Date Established					
Brief Organizational Profile and Legal Status					
Organization Size (Annual Revenue, in USD)					
Board of Trustees or Board of	Please list no	ames, nationalities and position	ns of the Board of Trustees or similar		
Directors	governing body. Please insert more rows if required.				
Name		Contact Number and Email Address			
		Contact Numb	Dei and Linan Address		
Hame		Contact Numb	oer and Email Address		
- Name		Contact Numi	oer and Email Address		
- Name		Contact Numi	oer and Email Address		
Organization Contact Person/s	Name	Position in the organization	Email		
	Name				
	Name				
	On behalf of hereby certij	Position in the organization The Applicant to this Call for Co	Email oncept Papers identified above, I ledge, this application in its entirety		

2. Project Information

Proposed Project Title	
Geographic Coverage	
Target Beneficiaries	
Proposed Partners	
Project Timeframe	
Requested Budget (USD)	[please insert budget being requested from the Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme]
Proposed Cost Share (USD)	[please insert cash or in-kind contributions from other sources]

3. Technical Narrative

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Project Background Instructions: Please provide a brief description of the development needs to be addressed. The description should describe the main development challenges the project seeks to address in line with priority areas of the Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme. Please also describe the situation that led to the decisions or opportunities to propose this grant project.
A. Project Background
[begin narrative text here]
Problem/Opportunity statement
Project Goal Instructions : In view of your answers to the two questions above, state the goals of your project. The goals should include how your proposed project will achieve specific outcomes within the selected priority areas of the Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme.
B. Project Goal
[begin narrative text here]
Integrated Development Approach Instructions: Describe how the project will address the identified problems or needs through approaches that integrate broader blue economy ambitions of the Fijian Government.
C. Integrated Development Approach
[begin narrative text here]
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Instructions: Outline any steps the project will take to promote equal opportunities for beneficiaries, including groups of people considered most vulnerable or marginalized.
D. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Focus
[begin narrative text here]
Sustainability Instructions: Please provide a detailed description regarding how the project will ensure project outcomes will
be sustained in the long term.

Please provide detailed explanation of how the project will be financially sustainable after receiving grant support from the Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme, builds on existing activities and partnerships done by the project proponents, and long-term

IMPORTANT: Also highlight by when the project can be operationlised after receiving the grant.

plans of existence and continuity. Please elaborate on project preparatory works that have been done.

E. Sustainability
[begin narrative text here]
[segui narrative text here]
II. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES
Instructions: Insert as many spaces for additional activities as needed below. Briefly describe the major activities necessary to
achieve the anticipated project outcomes and impacts in the spaces below. Please provide details of what will be done, who will benefit? Who will participate? What are the beneficiaries' roles and responsibilities in delivering the project results?
will belieffe: who will participate: what are the beneficiaries foles and responsibilities in delivering the project results:
Proposed Activity 1:
[begin narrative text here]
Proposed Activity 2:
[begin narrative text here]
[add more activity rows as needed]
III. TARGETED OUTCOMES
Instructions: List the expected outcomes of the project in the space below. The outcomes reflect the changes the project will
affect or contribute to. Please describe each targeted outcome, and provide a brief description of what will constitute success of the project (what the results of the project would look like)
of the project (what the results of the project round look line)
IV. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE
Instructions: Briefly describe your organization's ability to successfully implement the proposed project and brief description of
the management of the proposed project. Highlight partnerships (if any) and similar projects undertaken in the past three years.

4. Summary Budget

Instructions: The table below is a broad guidance of how this funding proposal will need to elaborate its financial plans and cash projections. The project proponent is encouraged to add as many details as possible and descriptions to clearly articulate and addresses what the selection criteria and scoring matrix is looking for. Financial plans and cash projections will also need to include the estimated amount of necessary labor/salaries, travel, capacity building expenses (i.e., training and training related expenses for the applicant), and other direct costs, such as the cost of equipment, insurance, etc.).

All amounts must be presented in US dollars. Use the attached Excel file underneath the next table to provide detailed breakdown of outputs, activities, costs, duration, etc.

	ITEM	Total Amount	Annual Amount		nt	What this will cover
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Please provide as much details as possible under each of the items by adding more rows.
A.	Direct Project Cost					
В.	Administrative Cost					
C.	Applicant's own Contributions					
D.	Partners Contributions					
E.	Amount Requested from Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme					
то	TAL PROJECT COST					



Annex Workplan and Budget.xlsx