

New Call for Proposals to fund Working Groups (WGs) to deliver solutions to the most critical challenges facing marine and coastal management in the Western Indian Ocean region.

Background

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) is a regional non-governmental organization dedicated to advancing educational, scientific, and technological aspects of marine science in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. The Association serves as a strategic platform for developing regional marine research foresight and products, initiating and supporting cutting-edge research, and translating these into clear policy recommendations for WIO institutions and governments (at the local, national, and regional levels).

WIOMSA recently launched a new programme “*Sustainable Blue Future in the Western Indian Ocean – Institutional Strengthening through Science, Capacity, and Assimilation for a Sustainable Blue Future – SCALABLE*” (2023-2026)” funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. SCALABLE focuses on the theme of “***Ocean Science and Policy for Sustainable Development***,” which aims to make the best science and policy available in its broadest sense, including social and economic aspects, to assist societies in the WIO in restoring and protecting biodiversity, ensuring food security in the face of climate change, and ultimately leading to a resilient, sustainable, productive and inclusive blue economy. It seeks to strengthen the science-policy interface and increase the impact of the WIOMSA's Marine Science for Management (MASMA) program. SCALABLE calls for inclusion of diverse perspectives, prioritizing blue economy issues, and co-creating solutions to WIO's most pressing marine and coastal management issues.

WIOMSA is pleased to announce the launch of a new competitive grant under SCALABLE to support trans-disciplinary Working Groups (WGs) in the WIO region in developing, implementing, and translating collective solutions to complex marine and coastal management challenges with a focus on the WIO region.

Deadline for Concept Notes: 9th February 2024

SCALABLE invites proposals from WGs to engage in the co-production of solutions that combine scientific, local, and indigenous knowledge, engage diverse stakeholders, and distribute benefits equitably across and within communities. WGs can be composed of research institutes, universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector, and community members with proven experience and track records in synthesizing existing knowledge about problems and delivering evidence-based, scalable solutions. WGs are expected to provide multiple perspectives and a wide range of expertise, synthesizing existing and emerging knowledge to generate unique and creative solutions to real WIO problems. The formation of WGs is vital to establishing new partnerships and strengthening existing relationships between researchers and stakeholders critical in piloting and taking up proposed solutions. WGs must effectively synthesize information from different sources, fill knowledge gaps, facilitate the development of better solutions, and consider different values, perspectives,

and realities within the group. When appropriate, data from previous WIOMSA research grants and other regional projects should be utilized.

SCALABLE will fund WGs of 5-15 people from diverse organizations to gather for collaborative sessions over 12-24 months. Working groups should include natural scientists, social scientists, and stakeholders to address an agreed issue/topic. Gender equality and inclusion are also central to SCALABLE's strategy. Between sessions, members of the WGs should collaborate remotely, work with long-term implementation partners, identify emerging opportunities for tangible, lasting change, develop and test tools and products, and publish their work.

Funding Information

Selected by the SCALABLE Programme Committee, WGs will receive up to **US\$150,000 in funds** to implement their project.

Funding Requirements

Funding conditions are as follows:

- SCALABLE funds may **not** be used to pay Investigators' salaries or to reimburse PIs for routine working and group meeting attendance.
- Overheads may be charged to SCALABLE funds but must not exceed 8% of the requested funds.
- Funds may be used to pay for technical analysis or specific analysis by a working group member that is beyond the engagement of most working group members and not part of their job.
- Funding may cover postdoctoral researchers, research assistants, facilitators, graphic designers, and other independent contractors.
- WIOMSA will execute all contracts, and WIOMSA grant regulations will apply.
- While individuals may apply, their organizations will receive and administer funds on their behalf.
- Funds exceeding US\$45000 will be subject to financial Audit

Eligibility Criteria

- Proposals can be submitted by scientists, experts and practitioners from academic, governmental, or nonprofit institutions from the WIO region.
- Individuals working independently can apply. Private sector actors can join working groups but not lead them as Principal Investigators (PIs, or team leads).
- Experts from outside the region may be part of a working group, and only their costs to participate in group meetings will be covered.
- Working groups may fund a postdoctoral researcher, but SCALABLE funds cannot pay the Principal Investigator(s); hence, postdocs should not submit proposals as PIs to fund their work.

Composition of Working Groups

Principal Investigators will lead Working Groups. The WG's focus will determine its composition, considering expertise, gender, geographical representation, and beneficiaries. Working Groups with experts from two or more WIO countries are encouraged.

Evaluation criteria for SCALABLE proposals

Importance and urgency: The proposal, through a summary of the state of knowledge, should justify the reason the challenge is prioritized, why policy direction for the WIO region is critical now, and how their proposed work will contribute to finding a solution, with emphasizing on its intended uptake and sustainability.

Interdisciplinarity/Transdisciplinarity: Project proposals must support transdisciplinary Working Groups to innovate solutions and/or synthesize positive and negative inter-linkages between the economy, technology, institutions and the environment, climate, biodiversity, and human well-being. The proposed project should integrate natural and social sciences, and the applicants will identify and include comprehensive and relevant datasets. Beneficiaries must be identified.

SMART: The proposal should include specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound terms of reference outlining the project's expected outcomes and deliverables beyond "hold a workshop," "publish a paper," and so on.

Continuity: The plan for ongoing implementation of the Working groups' activities/work after the SCALABLE project concludes must be well-articulated.

Diversity: The group must have confirmed members from various sectors and disciplines. No single organization should dominate the collaboration. Demographics and experiences must include WIO countries, other underrepresented groups, and geographical areas.

Efficiency and cost-effectiveness: The proposal must present a well-justified and cost-effective use of SCALABLE funding. Co-financing from other sources will be an added advantage.

Novelty: Innovative ways to improve national and local initiatives and policies should be highlighted.

Testable: The intended results should be testable through/by leveraging WI's existing data. Solutions must be backed up by empirical data to identify, quantify, and solve the identified challenges.

What SCALABLE Can and Cannot Fund

SCALABLE welcomes all proposals! This list of what we can and cannot fund is intended to help PI decide if SCALABLE funding is suitable for their project.

SCALABLE can fund:

- Expert working groups
- Direct costs of postdoctoral researchers and research assistants
- Actual time of technicians conducting analysis, graphic design and similar activities for the working group
- Virtual and in-person meetings, including third-party neutral facilitators
- Costs related to meetings, hotel, catering, meeting venue and technology, as well as individual attendee travel expenses

Things we cannot fund:

- Salary for Principal Investigators and members (this includes postdocs if they are listed as a PI)
- travel and living expenses of interns while on internship.
- Primary data collection or fieldwork
- Equipment, vehicles, building infrastructure
- Lobbying

How to Apply

With this notice, SCALABLE invites all eligible applicants to submit **Concept Notes** via online application portal [online portal-proposal central](#).

Concept notes that are recommended for full proposals will receive feedback from the WIOMSA Programme Committee on what aspects of their ideas may be the best fit for the SCALABLE scope and what aspects of their ideas may need to be strengthened or revised to make your proposal competitive. **Only concept notes submitted through the [online portal-proposal central](#) will receive feedback.**

In the concept note form, we ask that you provide the following information:

- Please summarise your project concept, focusing on the key challenges and why they are critical, what is known and not known on its potential solutions, and its terms of reference.
- Where will the work/project be conducted? Name the countries, identify the research or project sites within the countries, and offer a brief rationale.
- What are the research methods and data sources?
- Who will be a part of your proposed WG, and what will they bring to the team?
- What is your WG's proposed budget, and what activities are planned for the duration of the project?
- Who will benefit from the outcomes or products of this proposed project? What will success look like?

Approved projects should plan to begin their proposed work by April 30, 2024.

For enquiries, please contact SCALABLE at secretary@wiomsa.org