1. The Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW) Programme

The Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW) programme is a new flagship programme funded by UK’s Department for International Development (DFID). The objective of WOW is that women have access to improved economic opportunities through business interventions in supply chains and economic development programmes.

The five year programme aims to enhance the economic empowerment of 300,000 women working in global value chains by September 2022. It will achieve this goal by supporting businesses, organisations and programmes that are ready and willing to act on women’s economic empowerment; enabling players across the supply chain ecosystem to drive change; and influencing the UK and global agenda on women’s economic empowerment.

WOW defines women’s economic empowerment as:

*The process whereby all women strengthen their voice and capacity to make and act on economic choices; expand their opportunities to fulfil their potential; and gain recognition for their contribution, paid and unpaid, in households, at work, and wider society.*

2. Purpose and scope of the WOW Fund

The WOW Fund is one of four components of the WOW programme. It is a £1.8 million fund, designed to strategically support long term change in women’s economic empowerment, by funding selected initiatives that drive forward the Action Agenda of UN High Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment (UNHLP), which was co-sponsored by DFID. Overall the objective is to take action to support WEE in the wider environment beyond activities directly targeting global supply chains (which are addressed in other parts of the WOW programme).

The Fund will support initiatives across a range of organisations, including civil society, women’s organisations and networks, public sector or international agencies. Initiatives that receive funding from the Fund will be expected to deliver and demonstrate catalytic impact and/or contribute to global knowledge on how to economically empower women, and ultimately to further the Action Agenda of the UNHLP in key areas.

The Fund will provide thematic grants to 3-6 initiatives over the lifetime of the WOW programme (2017-2022). Our indicative budget ceiling for grants is UK £500,000.

3. What will we fund?

To achieve catalytic impact on key drivers of WEE, the WOW Fund will focus its support on **three priority thematic areas:**
• Recognising, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work (related to driver 3 of UNHLP)
• Improving outcomes for women in informal work (one of the four UNHLP areas of work)
• What works for improving women’s land tenure security (related to driver 4 of the UNHLP)

These priorities respond to gaps in the current landscape, where more needs to be done to further women’s economic empowerment. On each of these issues, WOW has identified a set of points for grantees to consider and address in their Concept Notes and proposals to the WOW Fund.

3.1 Recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work

Globally, women carry out 2.6 times the unpaid work that men do\(^1\). Women’s unequal responsibility for unpaid care work is a key structural barrier which constrains women’s capacity to participate in, and benefit from, economic opportunities in labour and wider markets. Unpaid domestic care and work, for rural women especially, carries a burden of drudgery which impacts women’s health and well-being, as well as their economic choices.

The Fund will support the scale up of initiatives that have demonstrated success in recognising, reducing or redistributing unpaid care and domestic work (to the state, private sector, or men within households), with a particular focus on DFID priority countries. Submissions in this category will need to support UNHLP driver 3\(^2\) as well as SDG Target 5.4.

In supporting action and learning on unpaid work and care, the Fund is particularly interested in initiatives that:

• Test out new approaches, scale up proven models or generate new knowledge or evidence
• Further understand the link between reducing/redistributing the burden of unpaid care and enhanced economic opportunities and choices
• Ensure that policies and programmes focused on redistributing unpaid care do not shift the burden of unpaid care to low-paid, or more marginalised women.

3.2 Improving outcomes for women in informal work

Women are widely engaged in informal work across global supply chains and the wider economy, but their work is often hidden, undervalued and carried out in unsafe and precarious conditions. Women are over-represented overall in informal sector work and are concentrated in lower paid and more precarious segments of informal labour market. Some types of informal work have potential links to modern slavery, where women are at greater risk\(^3\).

The Fund will support the scale up of initiatives that have demonstrated impact towards enabling women in informal work to collectively improve their working conditions, enter new markets, or gain a greater share of benefits in global value chains, for example. Submissions under this priority thematic area will need to link their work directly to UNHLP “areas of work” and relevant SDG 8 targets. In supporting initiatives on women in informal work, the Fund is particularly interested in:

---

• Scaling up programmes targeting informal women workers that have successfully contributed to women’s economic empowerment (particularly women linked to global supply chains)

• Initiatives that focus on lower paid, less skilled women and/or mitigate risks of negative impacts of regulating informal work, on lower-paid, unskilled women in favour of men or more skilled women.

3.2 Enhancing women’s land tenure security

Land is a critical economic resource, and tenure security plays a central role in enabling rural women to improve their gains from agricultural markets and supply chains. Land tenure security also strengthens women’s overall livelihood security and capacity to negotiate better outcomes for themselves and their families. The Fund will support initiatives that have the potential to address women’s land tenure security at scale and include a focus on particularly marginalized groups (including indigenous women, refugee or displaced women, young, unmarried and older women). Submissions under this theme should link to UNHLP driver 4, building assets (digital, financial and property) as well as SDG 5.7, and consider the following issues:

• Effective ways of increasing women’s tenure security (beyond documentation of land rights)
• Pathways through which increasing women’s tenure security contributes to economic empowerment
• What else needs to happen for land tenure security to be translated into economic empowerment

4. Who can apply?

The WOW Fund will seek to fund any organisation able to deliver projects that address systemic barriers to women’s economic empowerment. A range of organisations are welcome to apply for funding from the WOW Fund. These can include civil society organisations, NGOs, networks, national or international NGOs, social enterprises or membership organisations, government and international agencies and research institutions.

Private companies will not be eligible for direct funding from the WOW Fund. However, organisations may partner with the private sector as part of a consortium, provided the private company is not the lead partner applying for a grant.

In line with the UNHLP approach, the WOW Fund will favour partnerships between different types of organisations.

To be eligible for funding from the WOW Fund, organisations must meet the following criteria:

Relevance
• Partnering organisation is capable of delivering projects that address systemic barriers to WEE
• The initiative proposed aligns with one or more of the Flexible Fund priority areas (Unpaid care and work, informal work and land tenure)

Geography
• The initiative proposed includes activity in a DFID priority country.

For example, changes banking sector rules and procedures to widen the accepted forms of collateral for credit to include different forms of land title.
Additionality
- The initiative would not occur without DFID support, at all, as fast or with as much benefit for poor or marginalised women. The initiative does not duplicate other programmes.

Complementarity
- The initiative proposed is consistent with any relevant DFID strategies. The WOW Fund team will also conduct due diligence on all potential grantees before approving grants. Organisations seeking funding will be required to demonstrate their capacity to manage funds effectively and transparently.

5. Application process and timeline

The WOW Fund will run a two-stage application process, including submission of a Concept Note (Stage 1) and a full proposal (Stage 2). Detailed guidance on submitting a concept note is available in the WOW Fund Concept Note Template and Guidance document, and FAQs document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WOW Fund launch webinar - Invitation for Concept Notes open</td>
<td>22 March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept Note submission deadline</td>
<td>30 April 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortlisted candidates invited to submit full Proposals</td>
<td>15 June 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal submission deadline</td>
<td>30 August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant agreements begin</td>
<td>December / January 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. More information

Following the WOW Fund launch webinar, you will be able to access more information including the launch materials, Concept Note template and guidance and FAQs on the WOW website:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/work-and-opportunities-for-women

For any questions about Concept Note submission, please email the WOW Fund Coordinator, Veronica Martinez Tamayo: veronica@sddirect.org.uk

This document is an output from a project funded by UK aid from the UK government. However, the views expressed and information contained in it are not necessarily those of or endorsed by the UK government who can accept no responsibility for such views or information or for any reliance placed on them. This publication has been prepared for general guidance on matters of interest only, and does not constitute professional advice. The information contained in this publication should not be acted upon without obtaining specific professional advice. No representation or warranty (express or implied) is given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this publication, and, to the extent permitted by law, no organisation or person involved in producing this document accepts or assumes any liability, responsibility or duty of care for any consequences of anyone acting, or refraining to act, in reliance on the information contained in this publication or for any decision based on it.

5 Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Burma; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ethiopia; Ghana; India; Kenya; Kyrgyzstan; Liberia; Malawi; Mozambique; Nepal; Nigeria; Occupied Palestinian Territories; Pakistan; Rwanda; Sierra Leone; Somalia; Sudan; South Africa; South Sudan; Tajikistan; Tanzania; Uganda; Yemen; Zambia; Zimbabwe