

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *¿What is the Circularity Challenge (CC)?*

The Circularity Challenge (CC) is implemented by the World Environment Center (WEC) and its partner, the Water & Environment Centre/Cleaner Production Unit at the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan (RSS), and supported by other local partners. The overall challenge is funded by The U.S. Department of State (Department of State), Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES), Office of Environmental Quality (ENV).

The project goal is to develop and manage a small grants program to promote active public participation in environmental issues, which can in turn lead to innovative solutions, stronger monitoring of environmental impacts, and better enforcement of environmental laws. Overall goals include to:

- a) Support civil society engagement in environmental protection through capacity building to address plastic pollution by advancing awareness, research, and projects that reduce, reuse, and/or recycle plastic, through formal and informal sectors; and
- b) Increase civil society engagement in reducing plastic pollution and improving management of plastic waste across the lifecycle of plastics.

To achieve the objectives of the CC, WEC will work in 3 countries (Jordan, Colombia, and El Salvador) and select 9 small grantees. Six small grantees from organizations based in the selected countries such as, civil society organizations (CSOs), small business development centers (SBDCs), cleaner production centers, and/or private sector Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) will receive \$30,000 per grant (Small Grantee), and 3 additional sub grantees from educational institutions will receive \$10,000 (Universities), for a total of 9 sub grants, to support innovative solutions to address plastic pollution.

### *¿What is the focus of the CC?*

If your organization is engaged with environmental protection and empowered awareness about plastic pollution and its management, then your organization may be eligible to apply for the CC starting April 5th, 2024.

It is important that these local solutions have a direct impact on the regions of interest: Colombia, El Salvador, and Jordan. Each country will receive at least two grants.

### *¿What is the prize for the winners of the CC?*

Awardees will each receive a comprehensive support package:

- \$30,000 (15 months in length per small grant) to promote innovative solutions in reducing plastic pollution and improving management of plastic waste across the lifecycle of plastics.
- \$10,000 in the case of educational institutions
- Training curriculum and capacity building plan in the thematic areas prioritized by the challenge and that contribute to the execution and success of their projects.



**Important note:**

- Expenses are reimbursed after expended by the organization.
- Investment and equipment expenses will not be financed by the CC (in the event that your proposal requires it, these expenses must be financed by the applicant organization and be included as expenses in the organization's contribution/cost-share column.

**¿Who can apply to the CC?**

CC is open to organizations, who have experience collaborating with the private sector, NGO, and/or government providing technical assistance to micro enterprises, and cooperative programs on environmental protection and/or plastic pollution and its management.

These organizations must fit into one of the following types: Private organizations, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Private non-profit universities and higher education institutions. More examples include: local non-profit Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), educational institutions, foundations, community organizations, small business development centers, cleaner production centers, associations.

Your organization should meet the following requirements:

**Mandatory**

1. Legally registered organization
2. Organization's budget: At least US \$75,000 year (University and companies).
3. No. staff 7 or more
4. Possess knowledge / experience of at least 2 years in one of the industry sectors to be assisted (demonstrate access to micro-enterprises or small producers through their work in the sector)
5. Have experience of more than 3 years on program execution in the areas being proposed
6. Have a permanent formal presence in the country to execute project activities (Jordan, Colombia, El Salvador)

**Preferred:**

- Have experience with international cooperation projects (USA or other countries). (include 3 last references).
- Experience improving micro enterprises' competitiveness.
- Activities that consider compliance with national rules and regulations for waste management.
- Have experience collaborating with the private sector, NGO, and/or government providing technical assistance to micro enterprises, and cooperative programs.

**¿How can I participate?**

To participate, first you must register through the following link:

<https://forms.gle/GVhDPaisipppeeu2A>

Additionally, it is necessary to download and complete the CC Application Forms shared here:

<https://tinyurl.com/29a6p8qk> in English and attach the following mandatory documents:

- ( ) Proposal / Scope of Work (SOW) in Microsoft Word
  - Cover Page
  - Executive Summary
  - Proposal Narrative
- ( ) Budget
- ( ) Budget Narrative
- ( ) Logic Model in Microsoft Word
- ( ) Performance Monitoring Evaluation and Narrative Plan (PMP) in Microsoft Excel
- ( ) Key Personnel
- ( ) Timeline
- ( ) Gender and Inclusion Analysis
- ( ) Attachments

Once you have completed all the mandatory documents above mentioned send it to [esamayoa@wec.org](mailto:esamayoa@wec.org) and [wecprojectdocs@gmail.com](mailto:wecprojectdocs@gmail.com) . Once the application process is completed, you will receive a confirmation email.

***¿Can I revise or change my application once it has been submitted?***

No. Sent applications are considered final and will be directed to the initial selection process

***¿Can I apply more than once?***

Yes, you can apply for each country/partnership you are operating in. Each application must be written to address the specific activities to that partnership in that country.

In the event that the same organization applies for two different regions or countries, only one application may be considered a winner.

***¿Can I apply if my organization is located outside of Latin America and the Caribbean?***

Yes. The CC is open to organization at a global level, as long as they have a local team officially formalized that is collaborating with the private sector, NGO, and/or government providing technical assistance to micro enterprises, and cooperative programs in at least one of the following countries:

- Colombia
- El Salvador
- Jordan



If your organization is located outside the country of interest, it is important that you demonstrate that your organization has presence/impact or has worked in at least one of the countries mentioned above through a local office with permanent or formal presence in that country to execute project activities.

***¿If selected as an CC awardee, what am I required to do?***

If selected as a finalist, you agree to:

- Fill out a Risk Self Assessment form
- Provide financial statements upon request
- In the event that the evaluation team or the Department of State suggests any modification to the documentation submitted, this must be adjusted within the period granted.

If awarded, you agree to:

- Attend the roundtables held in the region & Training.
- Submit timely quarterly progress reports in required formats. These reports will provide progress on your project and financial reports that comply with US government regulations.

***¿What is the deadline for the application of the CC?***

The application deadline is Friday, May 10th, 2024 at 11:59:59 p.m. EST/Colombia. Any application received after this time will not be considered as eligible.

***¿What criteria should I meet to be a winner?***

You can review the complete selection criteria in the “Goals and Eligibility Criteria” website section.

***¿How does the selection process work?***

The selection process considers the following main steps:

- Launch of CC (Contest Notification Period) - April 5
- Informative session 1 (CC explanation and eligibility criteria): Webinar - April 12
- Application period opening (reception of proposals) - April 8 – May 10
- Informative session 2 (CC proposal procedures and FQA) - April 19
- Internal notification / announcement of winners - Late may
- Signature of SG Agreements - June 3- 7

\*A committee of experts will review all applications. Please note that, during this process, applicants may be contacted for additional information that may be required for final evaluation and selection.

***¿Who has access to my idea once I submit?***

The CC team and expert judges will have full access to your submission. We do not further distribute information without your authorization. Your team reserves all intellectual property rights.

***¿Who can I contact if I am having problems with the website?***



Please send an email to [info@wec.org](mailto:info@wec.org) or [wecprojectdocs@gmail.com](mailto:wecprojectdocs@gmail.com) to report any issues with the forms. If you share your telephone number, our team is able to follow up via phone. Please include your country code.

### ¿Will there be a period for questions and answers?

You can send your questions by email. Questions will be answered and updated in this FAQ section. We recommend that you check this section periodically during your application.

### Is there a required counterpart percentage/cost share contribution to be included in the budget?

No, cost share / counterpart percentage is not required . However, when cost-sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the Recipient must provide the amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in its proposal and budget later included in the final Agreement. Voluntary cost-sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs, including third-party and in-kind contributions.

### ¿What is meant by the following key terms?

- **Circular Economy:** A circular economy keeps materials and products in circulation for as long possible. The Save Our Seas 2.0 Act refers to an economy that uses a systems-focused approach and involves industrial processes and economic activities that are restorative or regenerative by design, enables resources used in such processes and activities to maintain their highest value for as long as possible, and aims for the elimination of waste through the superior design of materials, products, and systems (including business models). It is a change to the model in which resources are mined, made into products, and then become waste. A circular economy reduces material use, redesigns materials and products to be less resource intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products. <https://www.epa.gov/circulareconomy/what-circular-economy>
- **Innovation:** Is defined as detecting a problem or opportunity, developing and implementing a solution to solve it, and being able to generate revenue from that solution (or generate cost savings). This may be a new business model, policy practice, technology or new ways of delivering products and services.
  - Efficiency: Seeks to reduce the manufacturing and distribution costs of existing products and services, mainly generating saving and process optimization.
  - Incremental: Seeks to replace an existing product with improved versions of it. It comes from listening to the needs of customers in the existing market and creating products that meet their needs. It does not create new markets, but develops existing ones.
  - Disruptive: Creates new markets (that are completely unknown) and value chains. Eventually disrupt and existing market, displacing a previous technology.

