



Call for Proposal || Small Tea Growers Sustainability Program of IDH

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1. Introduction

About IDH

IDH accelerates and up-scales sustainable trade by building impact-oriented coalitions of front running companies, civil society, governments, knowledge institutions and other stakeholders in several commodity sectors. We convene the interests, strengths and knowledge of public and private partners in sustainability commodity programs that aim to mainstream international and domestic commodity markets. We jointly formulate strategic intervention plans with public and private partners, and we co-invest with partners in activities that generate public goods.

IDH has been working in India since 2009 to promote sustainable value chains across sectors including cotton, tea, spices, grapes, palm and apparel and at landscape levels in 18 Indian states, by bringing together stakeholders in action-driven coalitions to unlock scaling of sustainable production and trade. We engage with different actors to design fit-for-purpose solutions to address sustainability challenges and create sustainable models building local capacity, shared responsibilities, transparent progress reporting, and optimizing leverage to drive and sustain progress.

IDH has been working in the tea sector in India for over a decade. Since 2019, IDH has been running the Small Tea Grower Sustainability Program (“STGSP”), with the goal to improve incomes **for Small Tea Growers (“STGs”) in North India, focusing on Assam and West Bengal.**



Tea Sector in India

Tea production in smallholding has been growing worldwide. The contribution of small tea plantations has been growing significantly and currently shares a good proportion in the total tea production in the country. Small tea plantation is cost effective, economically sustainable, and adds fresh impetus to the industry as there is gradual decline in quality and production of tea in estate sector. The Small Tea Grower (STG) is an alternate model of tea cultivation that fosters the growth of entrepreneurship and provides both direct and indirect employment.



Increasing number of small tea plantation is one of the major boosts to the Indian economy in terms of income, employment generation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. Though, the trend of small tea plantation has been growing but the small tea growers have been confronting with multiple problems as outlined below.

About STGSP

The **Small Tea Growers' Sustainability Program ("STGSP")** in India has started by IDH in 2019. This program aims to close living the living income gap of 35,000 STGs by 2025 through income improvement from tea and other crops, as well as through improving environment sustainability of tea production This program engages with the sector around the topic of income improvement for STGs in North India, focusing on Assam and West Bengal.

The Program

STGSP scales evidence-based approaches to support small tea growers of India in achieving living income and improve environmental sustainability. It follows the IDH [Living Income Roadmap](#). The key improvement areas for STGs are:

- Improved status of natural resources such as soil health
- Mitigate threats from disease, pests & climate
- Improved adoption of sustainable/regenerative agricultural practices
- Emphasis on good tea cultivation practices for quality green tea leaves
- Synergistic linkage between grower and Bought Leaf Factory (BLF)
- Provide better access to services such as input, training, etc.

Program Outreach

Projects under the STGSP that address these key improvement areas are implemented with different stakeholders relevant to the sector, such as government, private sector, local communities and NGOs.

Currently, the program is present in 5 districts of Assam (Jorhat, Golaghat, Tinsukia, Sibsagar and Dibrugarh) and 1 district of West Bengal (NB-Jalpaiguri).

Specifically, IDH has a partnership with the [Syngenta Foundation of India \(SFI\) / Agri-Entrepreneur Growth Foundation \(AEGF\)](#). This project aims to improve income of small tea growers through the implementation of Agri-Entrepreneur (AE) model. The [AE model](#) provides one stop solution to the small tea growers in terms of access to input, resource, information, market linkage for tea and other associated on-farm and off-farm produce from the STG families.



2. Objective and Scope

The objective of this Call for Proposal is to work with partners who can support the program to create impact at small tea **growers'** level with improved income (by reducing living income gap) and managing the natural resources (soil and water) sustainably.

We are looking for partners who can create projects that improve, innovate, scale or accelerate the effectiveness and efficiency of living income agenda and environmental sustainability initiatives in the Indian tea sector while considering gender as cross-cutting theme. The Call for Proposal expects the solution around following approaches:

- Identification and implementation of innovative approaches which helps increasing the income of STGs to achieve decent standard of living.
- Find the balance between income improvement and environmental sustainability (nexus between IDH themes 1. Better environment and 2. Better income in projects)
- Creating gender transformative project/program while achieving program aims and objectives.

This Call for Proposals document contains technical information about the process and criteria of the Call for Proposals and includes the Annexes.

The proposals must be in line with the IDH Better Income and Better Environment impact areas, outlined in Annex 3.

3. Project Selection Criteria

Applicants must comply with the following eligibility criteria for their application to be considered:

- **Applicant's applications** are expected to be in-line with the objective and scope mentioned in section 2.
- Applicants should be or willing to operate in Assam state of India.
- Applicants must have prior experience in tea sector and experience of working with small tea growers will be desirable.
- Applicants does have experience in delivering or improving agronomic/social training or extension services.
- Applicants must have ability to receive foreign funding such as Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) for not-for-profit organization.
- The projects should lead to self-sustaining business models independent of grant funding.



Applicant(s) can submit and be awarded multiple project proposals under the Program, either as lead applicant or applicant in those projects. In case of multiple project partners, the lead applicant demonstrates the strength of the project team, proven track record of project management and demonstrates the technical capacity of the implementing organisation(s) in project management.

The IDH team will assess applications received in the concept note phase and shortlist best fitting ideas according to the following criteria:

- **Alignment with STGSP's objective:** the proposal is aligned with outcomes that the Program is seeking.
- **Relevance to IDH impact areas:** The proposal is relevant for small tea growers and in line with the focus of the impact areas outlined in Annex 3.
- **Predefined geography:** Preferred region for implementation is Assam state of India (specially districts under the STGSP). Other districts can be considered if a strong argument is provided for why this region should be considered.
- **Scalability:** The solution has the potential to be scaled up and to be replicated across regions.
- **Feasibility:** The proposal presents measurable outcomes which are achievable within the project timeframe and budget.
- **Capacity of the partner:** The applicant has proven capacity to implement, manage, communicate and report on the activities proposed.
- **Co-funding and exit strategy:**
The following general rules apply for co-funding:
 - There are no minimum and maximum budgets for proposed projects. However, IDH co-funding will be available up to EUR 90,000 for a period of 3 years. Besides this, IDH can provide support to project implementation through existing work on STGSP, both through its Program staff and linkages with other projects.
 - The applicant(s) shall guarantee the availability of their own part of the funding of the project.
 - The maximum percentage of co-funding by the Program is 30%; the remainder will have to be funded by the project applicant(s), with a minimum of 70% financing from private sector partners.

In the full proposal phase, the proposals will be assessed as per the selection criteria outlined in section 5.

Grounds for Exclusion

Applicants shall be excluded from participation in the call for proposals if:

- they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- they, or persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;



- they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the IDH can justify;
- they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established, or with those of Switzerland or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- they, or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them, have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental **to the IDH core funder's financial interests.**

Tenderers shall not make use of child labour or forced labour and/or practice discrimination and they shall respect the right to freedom of association and the right to organize and engage in collective bargaining, in accordance with the core conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Project applicants must confirm in writing that they are not in one of the situations as listed above.

4. Process

This Call for Proposal will be completed in following phases.

i. Concept note phase

In the first round, applicants must submit the concept note for the proposed project via a provided template (Annex 1). Applicants are also welcomed to submit additional materials, such as photos and videos. Only applications received before the deadline will be accepted.

The concept notes will be assessed and reviewed by IDH team as per the criteria mentioned in Section 3.

ii. Full proposal Phase

In the second round, decision on concept note phase will be communicated to shortlisted applicants and they will be asked to submit a full project proposal. IDH will share the template for full proposal. Full proposals will be assessed and scored as per the details given under section 5 (project evaluation).

iii. Contracting & financing



Finalized applicants will be awarded with project and contracting will be done by IDH using the IDH Funding Agreement template and the IDH General Terms and Conditions for Funding Agreements. These documents will be shared with applicants during full proposal phase. Payments for the projects will be made after signing the contract with the project applicants. The exact amounts and conditions of payments vary per situation. The first payment will be made directly after signing the contract.

Legal aspects

By participating in this procedure, the project applicant declares to unconditionally agree to the contents of the following guidelines and its annexes. IDH is not obliged in this procedure to conclude a contract with a project applicant. IDH reiterates its right to update, change, extend, postpone, withdraw or suspend the guidelines, the time schedule, or any decision regarding the contract. Nothing in this Call for Proposals shall be construed as setting an obligation for IDH to disburse any funds to an applicant. No claim for compensation can be made towards IDH, its employees or third parties acting on their behalf, for example in the following cases:

1. not following up on a selection award decision;
2. not concluding the contract;
3. suspension and/or postponement and / or attachment of further conditions to the contract decision; or
4. suspension and/or cancellation of the procedure.

The documents provided by or on behalf of IDH will be handled with confidentiality. The participant will also impose a duty of confidentiality any parties that it engages. Any breach of the duty of confidence by the participant or its engaged third parties will give IDH grounds for exclusion of the call for proposals, without requiring any prior written or verbal warning. All information, documents and other requested or provided data submitted by the participant will be handled with due care and confidentiality by IDH. The provided information will after evaluation by IDH be filed as confidential. The provided information will not be returned to the participant.

5. Project Evaluation

The below criteria and process for scoring and weighing will be used to assess the project proposals under the Call for Proposals.

Concept note phase

Project Proposals should meet all the criteria outlined in the section 4 of this document. Project proposals can be excluded from the proposal review process for the following reasons:

- Project proposals do not fulfil the eligibility criteria;



- Absence of a confirmation in writing that project applicants are not in one of the situations listed under the grounds for exclusion;
- Project proposals are incomplete.

Full proposal phase

In the full proposal phase, the selection criteria are compared and weighed according to the procedure below. This concerns a general outline of the scoring methodology and an explanation how the proposed projects can demonstrate compliance with the evaluation criteria.

Step 1 - Criterion Quality

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the components. The evaluation committee at IDH will score each component unanimously.

During the full proposal phase, the project proposal will be assessed based on the following selection criteria:

Component	Criteria	Max. Grading
1	Alignment with STGSP's objective	12
2	Relevance to IDH impact areas	12
3	Traceability at farm level	8
4	Innovation	10



5	Scalability	Project proposal demonstrates substantiated potential for scalability to the STGs in India.	8
6	Pre-defined geography	Preferred region for implementation is Assam state of India (specially districts under the STGSP). Other districts can be considered if a strong argument is provided for why this region should be considered.	8
7	Feasibility and capacity of the partner	The proposal presents measurable outcomes which are achievable within the project timeframe and budget. The applicant has proven capacity to implement, manage, communicate and report on the activities proposed.	8
8	Auditability and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	Project proposal contains a Theory of Change that explains how the project will contribute to achieving the targets of the Program. Project proposal contains clear KPIs that link to achieving the overall targets of the Program (full proposal stage). Project proposal should create the ability to learn from the projects to support or inform actions of other members of the Program (full proposal stage).	10
9	Finance and cost-effectiveness	Project proposal clearly demonstrates the cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the proposed interventions and describe the Return on Investment in terms of numbers of results / outcomes.	12
10	IDH co-funding exit strategy	Project proposal contains a clear strategy on the continuation of the proposed project when co-funding has ended.	12
Total			100

Step 2 – Scoring and Weighting

In the full proposal phase, the Evaluation Committee at IDH will score each component by assigning scores from 1 to the maximum grading for respective component, with the



maximum grading representing optimal performance on the component and 1 representing extremely poor performance on the respective component.

In the case that the number of applications under the call for proposals exceeds the available funding for the Program and final scores for project proposals are equal, priority will be based on the total scores that were given for components 1, 2, 4, 9 and 10. The assignment will be awarded to the applicant that has received the highest score for these components. If the evaluation of the components does not lead to a distinction, the score for the component 1 will be decisive. If this does not lead to a distinction, the ranking will be determined by the drawing of lots.

Step 3 – Award

Once the Evaluation Committee at IDH has decided which project proposals will be selected, a written notification thereof is sent to all parties that have submitted project proposals.

The applicants are contracted using the IDH contracting templates for funding agreements, outlined in the section 'process' above and more detail will be shared during full proposal phase.

6. Timeline

What	When
Release of call for proposal	17th November 2022
Date of submission for concept note phase	16th December 2022
Shortlisting of applicants for full proposal phase	10th January 2023
Date of submission for full proposal	10th February 2023
Final decision on selection	5th March 2023
Project implementation	April 2023 to December 2025

If there is any query regarding the call for proposal, please reach out to us: Marlies Huijssoon at huijssoon@idhtrade.org or Jatin Bavishi at bavishi@idhtrade.org by 30 November 2022.



Annexure 1 – Application Template for Concept Note Phase

Applicant Details

- Organization Name
- What is the primary industry the organization operates in?
- Organization website
- Organization type (Private/ Non for profit)
- Organization size (full time employees)

Team Details

- Team Location (Country)
- Team Leader Name
- Alternate Team Leader Name
- Team Leader Email
- Team Leader Mobile Number

In case of a consortium of project applicants, please communicate details for all applicants and indicate which organization is the lead applicant.

Application Questions

- Project Description (Narrative)
- Which theme is your proposal addressing?
- Describe your proposal in summary (100 words)
- What stage is your proposed solution in? (Exists as a prototype but has not been tested/ just an idea yet/ proven product or service at scale)
- Describe the pathway or approach your proposal is based on and why you think this will be effective (200 words)
- How does your proposal align with the STGSP Theory of Change and the IDH Living Income Roadmap (300 words)
- Please provide any evidence (from other experience) that the proposal can address the problem (500 words)
- How will projects be gender intentional or transformative (200 words)
- What are some external factors / assumptions that need to hold true for the proposal to be successful? (200 words) How will you design and test the proposal with potential users? (200 words)
- What are some risks (and mitigation measures, if any) that are associated with your proposal? (200 words)

Project Description (Financial)

- Indicate budget request (high level) (more detailed budget will be requested to those applicants shortlisted for round 2)

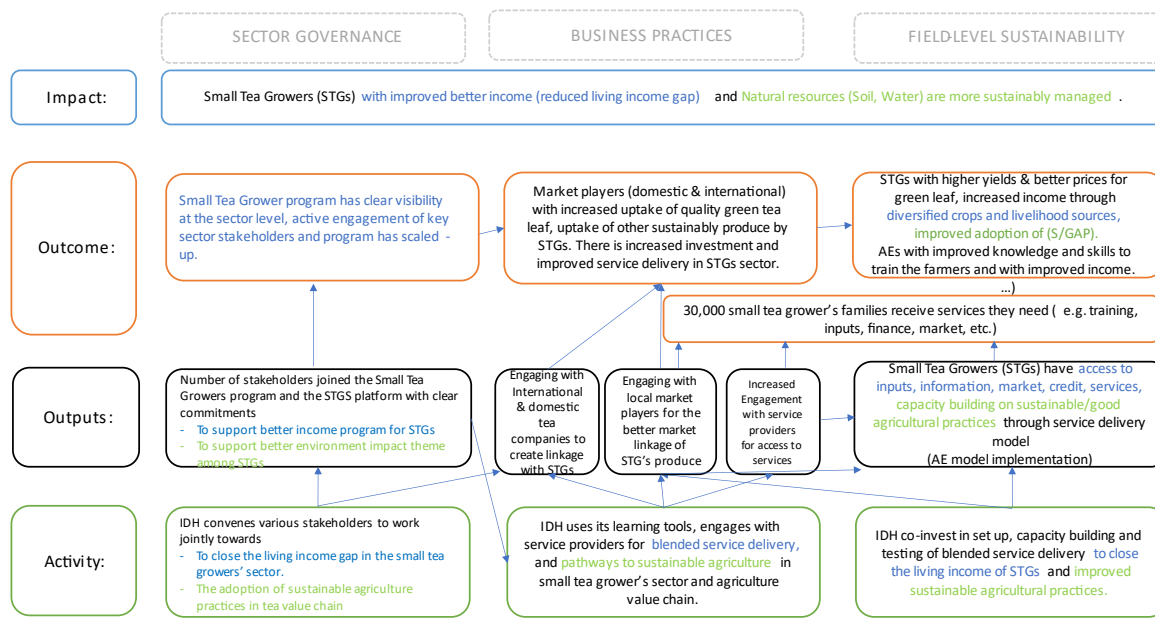


- Do you have access to additional funding to co-fund this project (from your organization, other grants and challenges or donors)?
- How will the solution be financed and sustained in the long-term? Tell us a little about your thoughts on the sustainability and business model of your solution (200 words)
- (Optional) Upload any other information or documents to support your application.

If there are any questions on call for proposal and application template, deadline to reach out is 30 Nov 2022.



Annexure 2 – Program Theory of Change



Note: Better Environment: Highlighted in green; Better Income: Highlighted in blue, Stakeholders: the government, civil society applicants, private sector, non-government applicants, small tea growers, certification bodies, and local communities, Market Players: Indian companies, Bought Leaf Factories, Local companies, Service provider, international buyer, etc.



Annexure 3 – IDH Impact themes



BETTER INCOME



MORE INCOME

to be able to alleviating poverty



STABLE INCOME

to be resilient against shocks and other risks



EQUITABLE INCOME

to ensure equal chances on a better income



BETTER ENVIRONMENT



IMPROVED AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY

of water resources for women, men and ecosystems. Optimized usage of the available water resources.



IMPROVED QUALITY/HEALTH/CONDITION

of soils used for production of agricultural goods/commodities.



INCREASED AREA OF FORESTS

and other natural ecosystems. Reduced degradation of natural ecosystems, including reduction of deforestation.



REDUCTION AND REMOVALS OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS



Gender unintentional

No steps taken to understand the different needs and preferences of men and women, or target gender gaps/barriers.



Gender intentional

Considers the different needs and constraints of women and men and takes some steps to create gender equality. Such projects adapt to the needs of women and men without seeking to change gender norms or barriers.



Gender transformative

Understands the different needs and constraints of women and men, and address the root causes of gender inequality. A gender transformative approach needs to foster changes in:

- individual capacities (agency)
- gendered norms and expectations (relations),
- institutional rules and practices (structures).



4. Further Reading

About IDH

<https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/about-idh/>

About IDH work under Tea Sector

<https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/sectors/tea/>

IDH Living Income Roadmap

<https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/roadmap-on-living-income/>

IDH Income Driver

<https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/step-2-measure-current-income-and-the-gap/>

Myths around living Income

<https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/news/busting-myths-to-reveal-the-reality-around-living-incomes/>

Information around measurement of actual and feasible income at LICOP website link

<https://www.living-income.com/>

IDH India Annual Report

<https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/publication/idh-in-india-annual-report-2021-22/>

IDH Gender Brochure

https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/uploaded/2021/11/IDH-Gender-Brochure-2021_External-1.pdf