



PLAN
INTERNATIONAL

**PLAN INTERNATIONAL GENDER LENS
INCUBATOR PROTOTYPE**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



PLAN INTERNATIONAL GENDER LENS INCUBATOR PROTOTYPE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS DETAILS

RFP Reference	ITT FY23 – 0168 Co-creation and implementation of a Gender Lens Incubator for Gender-inclusive Businesses in Kenya
RFP Launch Date	27 th July 2022
Contract Manager	Agnes Makena
Deadline for submission of offers.	26 th August 2022, 23:59 BST
Submission of offers to	procurement@plan-international.org

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls.

We believe in the power and potential of every child. However, this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination – and it is girls who are most affected. Working together with children, young people, our supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children.

We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood. And we enable children to prepare for – and respond to – crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

We have been building powerful partnerships for children for more than 80 years and are now active in 75 countries.

[Read more about Plan International's Global Strategy: 100 Million Reasons.](#)

1.2 PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S IMPACT LAB

With more than 80 years' experience working alongside communities in developing countries, Plan International is bringing its gender expertise, strong local partnerships and broad geographic presence to the gender lens investing market. For Plan International, gender lens investing presents an opportunity to partner profit with purpose – creating, investing in and supporting financially sustainable solutions that address gender issues and promote gender equality in developing countries.

The Impact Lab was created in January 2020 and leads the design and implementation of the organisation's social finance strategy and capability building across its 75 countries of operation. In 2021, Plan International launched a pilot in Kenya to identify and test more disruptive roles for the organization in the gender lens investing market. The pilot kicked off with human-centred GLI market research and developed the report, [Disruptive Roles in Gender Lens Investing in Kenya](#). The report explores the needs



of women-owned and gender-inclusive businesses¹, investors and intermediaries and highlights market opportunities for stakeholders creating solutions in the market. The report also set the foundation for Plan International to create interventions that address financial and non-financial barriers facing these businesses, leveraging its gender and fundraising capabilities and global footprint. Plan International has since identified four potential interventions for the market:

1. Gender Lens Incubator for Gender-Inclusive Businesses: This intervention aims to provide early-stage, gender-inclusive businesses with incubation support and concessional funding to test, refine and commercialize their gender-inclusive products or services.
2. Gender Lens Fund: This intervention aims to bridge the “missing middle” financing gap, by providing targeted and affordable financing for women-owned and gender-inclusive businesses, as well as post-investment support.
3. Investor-Entrepreneur Matchmaking: This intervention aims to provide pre-investment support to women-owned and gender-inclusive businesses and facilitate connections and conversations with investors.
4. Gender Lens Hub: This intervention aims to create a platform which aggregates various GLI resources including research and publications, toolkits, capital supply and demand databases as well as GLI training courses and opportunities.

[Read more about Plan International's Gender Lens Ventures work.](#)

2. THE OPPORTUNITY

2.1 CONTEXT

Lack of incubator and accelerator programmes for women-owned and gender-inclusive businesses

Incubator and accelerator programmes contribute significantly to the growth of businesses. They provide support in critical areas such as business strategy, financial management and modelling, mentorship, access to investors and access to seed capital which catalyse businesses' growth. However, despite the growth in the number of incubator and accelerator programmes, there are significant gender gaps in access to and the benefit of these services. All-women teams make up just 13% of accelerator participants versus 52% for all-men teams, begin the process with lower levels of existing financing, and end up falling even further behind their all-men team peers after acceleration.² Furthermore, all-women teams benefit significantly less from acceleration services than all-men teams, accessing less equity financing following programmes than their male counterparts.³ A study from Village Capital further reinforced this and identified accelerators as exacerbators of the financing gap, as their services allow all-men teams to more than double the amount of equity they raise post-acceleration relative to all-women teams.⁴

Furthermore, there are few incubator and accelerator programmes that specifically offer support to gender-inclusive businesses. GALI's research discovered that while 37% of accelerator programmes

¹ Gender-inclusive businesses are defined as businesses that create a positive impact on women and girls by providing them with direct employment, integrating them across the value chain as suppliers and distributors or serving them as the primary customer segment.

² Davidson, A. and Hume, V., 'Accelerating Women-led Startups: A Knowledge Brief by the Global Accelerator Learning Initiative', Global Accelerator Learning Initiative, 2020.

³ Davidson, A. and Hume, V., 'Accelerating Women-led Startups: A Knowledge Brief by the Global Accelerator Learning Initiative', Global Accelerator Learning Initiative, 2020.

⁴ Village Capital and International Finance Corporation, 'Venture Capital and the Gender Financing Gap: The Role of Accelerators', International Finance Corporation, 2020.

stated that they give preference to women entrepreneurs, all-women teams only accounted to 15% of their programme applicant pool, despite this stated preference.⁵ However, GALI did find positive correlation between the inclusion of women in selection committees and mentorship pools and greater participation of women entrepreneurs in acceleration programmes,⁶ highlighting the importance of demonstrating gender inclusivity of programmes rather than simply playing lip service to it. Furthermore, there is a significant lack of gender specific incubation and acceleration services which target businesses designing products and services with a gender lens. While most incubator and accelerator programmes in Kenya are sector-agnostic there has been growth in the number of sector-specific programmes, however, these are primarily within male-dominated sectors such as technology.

From our market research, [Disruptive Roles in the Gender Lens Investing Market in Kenya](#), we identified the lack of early-stage financial and non-financial support among the biggest challenges facing gender-inclusive businesses, preventing them from commercializing and scaling their products. 56% of the businesses we interviewed noted that they had not received any non-financial business support and 32% felt that available services did not effectively meet their needs. Furthermore, our analysis identified that incubators comprised the smallest segment of the gender lens support ecosystem. We identified 7 gender lens incubators in Kenya compared to 25 accelerators and other business support providers, and did not identify any active incubators focused on supporting businesses producing products and services for women and girls. This service provision gap creates a barrier for these businesses to become commercially viable and become eligible for acceleration programmes.

Based on our market research, we believe that the lack of early-stage support is resulting in a dearth of businesses designing products and services for women and girls reaching investment readiness. In particular, the market research identified the following critical gaps hindering the growth of early-stage, gender-inclusive businesses: lack of pre-investment non-financial support, lack of small ticket financing and lack of gender-inclusive business support. Therefore, by filling this market gap of early-stage financial and non-financial support for gender-inclusive businesses, we will build a market pipeline for investors and accelerators.

The Gender Lens Incubator:

Plan International's Impact Lab is seeking a supplier to co-create and implement a Gender Lens Incubator for gender-inclusive businesses in Kenya.

The Gender Lens Incubator aims to improve and increase the development of products and services that enhance the lives of marginalized women and girls (gender-inclusive products) by targeting gender-inclusive businesses. Early-stage gender-inclusive businesses face the challenges of a lack of adequate and appropriate financing and gender-inclusive business support. The Incubator therefore takes a three-pronged approach to addressing these problems and delivering impact:

1. Provision of gender-inclusive incubation to support the growth and scale of early-stage businesses that design products and services for marginalized women
2. Provision of early-stage capital in the form of EUR 10k financing to support the development and growth of businesses designing products and services for women and girls. During the prototype, we will assess how returns can be generated from these investments.
3. Leveraging Plan International's relationships with communities and deep knowledge of community needs to strengthen the development of products and services which

⁵ Davidson, A. and Hume, V., 'Accelerating Women-led Startups: A Knowledge Brief by the Global Accelerator Learning Initiative', *Global Accelerator Learning Initiative*, 2020.

⁶ Ibid



target marginalized women and girls as customers.

The objective of the Incubator is to support and strengthen gender-inclusive businesses to achieve scale and to service the needs of marginalized women and girls as customers through non-financial support, market testing and financing. The Incubator offers an innovative approach for Plan to engage with social innovations, while also addressing critical market gaps in gender-inclusive incubation. The Incubator forms an integral part of the Impact Lab's broader gender lens investing strategy and will work in conjunction with 3 interventions being deployed in parallel.

The Impact Lab has received some internal funding to prototype the Gender Lens Incubator with 5 businesses in Kenya. The Impact Lab seeks to co-create the prototype with an external partner, with the view to continue the collaboration following the completion of the prototype to scale the programme through follow-on funding.

2.2 PURPOSE

The aim of this RFP is to select a supplier to co-design and co-create the Gender Lens Incubator, in partnership with Plan International. The supplier will help Plan International to design and deliver incubation support to a cohort of 5 enterprises.

In this first phase, Plan International is launching the programme as a prototype to understand and test key learning questions that will lead to a successful launch. Some of these key questions include:

1. What are the most critical non-financial needs of early-stage GIBs?
2. What are the optimal financial instruments to support the growth of early-stage GIBs?
3. How can the Incubator support businesses to achieve product-market fit and scale?
4. How can Plan International develop mechanisms to test businesses' products and services with its communities?

2.3 SCOPE

We have outlined a preliminary scope of activities which we will further refine with the selected supplier. The supplier will work closely with Plan International's Impact Lab team in Kenya throughout the project to deliver these activities.

Design and launch of the Gender Lens Incubator

1. Co-design the Gender Lens Incubator
 - a. Using human centred design, create an incubator program and curriculum
 - b. Identify data monitoring and evaluation materials
 - c. Create program milestones
 - d. Create business evaluation criteria, such as sector, stage, geography, commercial viability and feasibility
 - e. Refine project scope
2. Launch call for applications
 - a. Identify potential business sourcing channels and partners
 - b. Launch call for applications for businesses
 - c. Evaluate businesses
 - d. Select 5 final businesses

Provide incubation support

1. Assess business needs and provide training on areas including:
 - a. Product/solution
 - b. Operations

- c. Business model
 - d. Investment model
 - e. Management and governance
 - f. Finance and fundraising
 - g. Others
2. Assess businesses' financial needs:
 - a. Identify financing needs
 - b. Create investment milestones for businesses
3. Support businesses to commercialize their products and services
 - a. Support businesses to identify market entry strategies
 - b. Support businesses to identify distribution networks and partnerships necessary to commercialize products
4. Provide post-investment support to businesses

Market testing

1. Develop market testing support
 - a. Identify market testing needs for businesses
 - b. Identify market testing areas/communities aligned with businesses
 - c. Develop market testing methodologies with businesses
 - d. Create data collection tools for various businesses
2. Conduct market testing
 - a. Support market testing by businesses within Plan communities
 - b. Review and iterate market testing strategies by businesses
 - c. Support the collection of data and feedback from the market testing
 - d. Provide post market testing support to businesses in preparation for commercialization of products and services
3. Report on market testing feedback, learnings and results

Monitoring and evaluation

1. Develop monitoring and evaluation framework for the project
 - a. Identify key indicators to measure the project's progress
 - b. Define key learnings questions
2. Evaluate project delivery
 - a. Collect data against defined indicators
 - b. Evaluate key learnings for the project
 - c. Outline key lessons (successes and failures) from throughout the project
 - d. Identify areas which require change for the Gender Lens Incubator pilot

2.4 METHODOLOGY

Throughout the project, compliance with [Plan International's Global Policy: Safeguarding Children and Adolescents](#) and Plan International's MERL Standard and MERL Policy must be assured at all times. In accordance with Plan International's MERL Standard and MERL Policy, the project must ensure appropriate, safe, non-discriminatory participation; a process of free and un-coerced consent and withdrawal; confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

3. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES

3.1 KEY DELIVERABLES

Plan International expects the following deliverables during the project in line with the different phases of the project:

1. Detailed project scope, including:
 - a. Timeline
 - b. Methodology
 - c. Ethical considerations
 - d. Consent forms for any primary data collection
2. Gender Lens Incubator program design
3. Selection of 5 businesses to form the first cohort for the Incubator
4. Delivery of incubation support and training
5. Delivery of market testing support
6. Final report including summary of findings and project evaluation

Table of Deliverables:

Deliverable	Format	Due
Detailed project scope	Document – Word or PowerPoint	End of week 1
Incubator program design	Document – Word and/or PowerPoint	End of month 1
Selection of 5 businesses to form the first cohort for the Incubator	Document – Word and/or PowerPoint	End of month 2
Delivery of incubation support and training	Document – Word and/or PowerPoint	End of month 4
Delivery of market testing support	Document – Word and/or PowerPoint	End of month 6
Final report	Document – Word and/or PowerPoint	End of project

Note: In the event that there is a change or additional deliverables during the contract period, an addendum to the contract must be agreed and signed. The change/additional deliverables must be in line with the initial scope of the project.

3.2 TIMELINES

The following table outlines the indicative key dates and timelines associated with this tender process. Plan International reserves the right to change these at any time as the tender progresses. To maintain transparency, fairness, and adequate time to prepare your offers, Plan International will inform all interested Parties of any changes to these key dates and timelines simultaneously and in a timely fashion.

Activity	Deadline Date
Issue of Invitation to Tender	27 th July 2022
Deadline for supplier submission of clarifications questions	3 rd August 2022 at 23.59 BST
Deadline for Plan to respond to clarification questions	8 th August 2022
Deadline for submission of offers	26 th August 2022 at 23.59 BST
Mobilisation/Implementation Period	12 th September 2022

Note: At this stage the timeline is indicative and should support any external suppliers in the development of their proposal. As part of the process, this timeline should be re-evaluated in consultation between Plan International and the supplier and may be subject to change based on the supplier's proposed approach.

4. INSTRUCTIONS TO TENDER

These instructions are designed to ensure that all Bidders are given equal and fair consideration. It is the Bidders responsibility to ensure their offer is complete and that you provide all the necessary information asked for in the format specified, or risk your offer being rejected. Further details can be found in section 6 of this ITT document, '**List of Documents to be submitted with this RFP.**'

Women-owned businesses and companies actively engaged or advancing gender equality and women empowerment in the workplace are especially encouraged to apply.

Documents comprising this tender pack are as follows:

- ITT FY23 - 0168 Plan Tender Dossier
- ANNEX A - Non Staff Code of Conduct
- ANNEX B - Supplier Questionnaire Tenderers are required to submit their proposal, inclusive of all required annexes, via email to procurement@plan-international.org. Offers must be received by the deadline specified in the section '**3.2 Timelines.**'

The offer and all correspondence and documents related to the tender must be written in English.

Each Tenderer or member of consortium or sub-contractor may submit only one offer.

Unless stated otherwise, all communications from Bidders in relation to this tender, including Clarification Questions, must be directed to procurement@plan-international.org and must include the ITT reference number: ITT FY23 – 0168.

5. EXPECTED QUALIFICATIONS OF SUPPLIER

Suppliers should demonstrate the following qualifications, experience and capabilities:

1. Proven track record and reputation working with early-stage businesses towards successful commercialization and growth in Kenya
2. Experience providing incubation and/or business development support using human centred design approaches, preferably with a gender lens

3. Experience providing market testing support to early-stage businesses to refine product-market fit
4. Experience working in Kenya in gender lens investing, impact investing and social entrepreneurship, demonstrated through case studies and, if possible, references
5. Experience in data analysis, monitoring, and evaluation
6. Ability to mobilise a team with relevant experience to deliver under a tight timeline, carrying out different tasks in parallel

6. LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED WITH THE RFP

The following minimum information is to be submitted by the supplier:

1. Detailed response to the RFP, including proposed scope and methodology
2. Ethics and child safeguarding approaches, including any identified risks and associated mitigation strategies
3. Proposed timelines
4. CVs
5. Example of previous work
6. 3 References
7. Detailed budget, including daily fee rates, expenses, etc.
8. Signed Annex A – Non Staff Code of Conduct
9. Annex B - Supplier Questionnaire

7. SUBMISSION OF OFFERS

Please send your response to Plan International by the following method:

1. By email to: procurement@plan-international.org
2. The subject heading of the email shall be the title of the RFP
3. Electronic copies are to be submitted in PDF and native (e.g. MS Word) format and suppliers may submit multiple emails (suitably annotated – e.g. Email 1 of 3) if attached files are deemed too large to suit a single email transmission
4. Responses must be prepared in English
5. Responses must be submitted by the submission deadline 23:59 BST, 26th August 2022.

8. EVALUATION OF OFFERS

Plan International, at its sole discretion, will select the successful RFP. Plan international shall be free to:

- Accept the whole, or part only, of any submission
- Accept none of the proposals
- Republish this Request for Proposals

Plan International reserves the right to keep confidential the circumstances that have been considered for the selection of the offers. Following the review and assessment of responses to the RFP, shortlisted suppliers may be invited to discuss their proposals in more detail at Plan's discretion. Part of the evaluation process may include a presentation from the supplier.

Value for money is very important to Plan International, as every additional £ saved is money that we can use on our humanitarian and development work throughout the world.

Plan International may award multiple contracts and all contracts will be non-exclusive.

9. PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S ETHICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The supplier should follow environmental standards and good practices that follow the principles of ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems, and in particular to ensure compliance with environmental legislation.

Throughout the process, compliance with [Plan International's Global Policy: Safeguarding Children and Adolescents](#) and Plan International's MERL Standard and MERL Policy must be assured at all times. In accordance with Plan International's MERL Standard and MERL Policy, the research must ensure appropriate, safe, non-discriminatory participation; a process of free and un-coerced consent and withdrawal; confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

The supplier is required to provide a statement within their proposal on how they will ensure ethics and child protection in the research process. Ethical approval is required before this research commences. This may be achieved via one of three ways as follows:

- Point of ethical approval before research starts: If external suppliers work for a University or research institution that has an ethics approval process, then that University or research institution may provide approval.
- Some countries may require ethics approval from governmental or other regulatory bodies, in such cases ethics approval must be obtained through these processes.
- Where external ethics approval cannot be obtained from the two previous methods, ethical approval must be received from Plan International's Ethics Review Team (ERT).

10. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By submitting a Bid as part of this Tender process, you also acknowledge and understand that:

- Plan International will not be liable for any costs or expenses incurred in the preparation of your offer
- You or your company will undergo vetting checks against an Anti-Terrorism and Sanctions Database as part of due diligence protocols
- Plan International reserves the right to keep confidential the circumstances that have been considered for the selection of the offers
- Part of the evaluation process may include a presentation from the Bidder and a site visit by Plan International staff, where applicable and necessary
- Plan International reserves the right to alter the schedule of tender and contract awarding
- Plan International reserves the right to cancel this tender process at any time and not to award any contract
- Plan International reserves the right not to enter into or award a contract as a result of this invitation to tender
- Plan International does not bind itself to accept the lowest, or any offer
- Any attempt by the Bidder to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or Plan International during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing tenders will lead to the rejection of its offers and may result in the termination of a current contract where applicable
- You accept in full and without restriction the conditions governing this tender as the sole basis of this competition, whatever its own conditions of sale may be, which you hereby waive

- You have examined carefully, understood and comply with all conditions, instructions, forms, provisions and specifications contained in this tender dossier. You are aware that failure to submit a tender containing all the information and documentation expressly required, within the deadline specified, may lead to the rejection of the tender at Plan International's discretion
- You are not aware of any corruption practice in relation to this competition. Should such a situation arise, we shall immediately inform Plan International in writing
- You declare that you are affected by no potential conflict of interest, and that you and our staff have no particular link with other Bidders or parties involved in this competition. Should such a situation arise during performance of the contract, you shall immediately inform Plan International in writing
- You accept Plan International's standard terms of payment which are 30 days after the end of the month of receipt by Plan of a proper invoice or, if later, after acceptance of the Goods or Services in question by Plan International Ltd

11. CLARIFICATIONS

The onus is on the invited individual/companies to ensure that its offer is complete and meets Plan International's requirements. Failure to comply may lead to the offer being rejected. Please therefore ensure that you read this document carefully and answer fully all questions asked.

If you have any queries in relation to your submission, or to any requirements of this RFP, please email: procurement@plan-international.org.

Thank you for your proposal.