





SEEDLING

Introduction of the
UN Sustainable Development Goals
in Schools in South Eastern Europe

Small Grants Programme

Call for Proposals

October 2017



REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

SUMMARY

Donor:	Austrian Development Agency (ADA), with funds from Austrian Development Cooperation
Implementing agency:	The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)
Topic:	Implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Schools in SEE (SEEDLING)
Total amount available for all beneficiary countries:	EUR 200,000 per region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*¹, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia)
Amount per grant:	Up to EUR 7,000
Target:	Civil society organisations in South Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia) active in the area of education and sustainable development, and through them secondary and vocational schools in the region.
Goal:	To increase awareness of the UN Sustainable Development Goals among pupils and teachers in secondary and vocational schools and to build their capacities in “green jobs” creation through practical examples.
Selection process:	The selection process will have the following steps and deadlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ An informative meeting for all CSOs will be held at the REC country offices (for more information on the dates and locations please check the country office website)➤ Proposal submission deadline: November 30, 2017➤ Proposal evaluation meeting: December 11, 2017➤ Final decision: December 15, 2017➤ Winners meeting: December 20, 2017
Project timeline:	Projects will last six months, from January 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018

¹ * This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



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1 Background

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a dynamic process of adaptation, learning and action. Members of the international community are in agreement at all levels — globally, regionally, and nationally — that lasting peace and prosperity can only be secured by a transformational change to sustainable development, resulting in sustainable economies and sustainable communities. To achieve the significant changes required for this transformation, a pro-active approach to sustainability education needs to be implemented with a strong emphasis on creating strategic partnerships.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia face similar challenges in the process of reforming their educational systems. The concept of sustainable development is recognised, but very few tools, if any, exist to ensure that it is addressed in the educational system.

The project aims to strengthen education, capacity building and awareness raising on the SDGs in the countries of South Eastern Europe (SEE) by incorporating them into national school curricula (secondary education) and by means of regional cooperation and networking among decision makers, educators and teachers.

Specifically, the purpose of the project is to build the capacities and skills of relevant institutions, teachers and students towards an understanding of the SDGs and their introduction into the on-going educational reform process in the coming period, and to enhance cross-border cooperation between institutions in the field of education for sustainable development (ESD).

Project activities are divided into three clusters:

- (i) institutional strengthening and support to national and international institutional networking;
- (ii) the development of an online tool and capacity building for teachers and educators (TEEN Pack); and
- (iii) increasing students' knowledge about job creation opportunities through the Small Grants Programme.

1.1 Goal and objectives of the Small Grants Programme

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), together with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), is announcing the Small Grants Programme in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The total amount available is EUR 200,000 for the region as a whole, and the maximum grant award is EUR 7,000. The number of grants contracted in each country depends on the quality of the proposals and on the number of secondary and VET (vocational education) schools in the countries, in order to achieve equal distribution among beneficiaries. The number of grants may vary between three and seven, depending on the number of secondary and VET schools in each beneficiary country.



The Small Grants Programme is announced for CSOs that are active in the area of education and sustainable development. Partnership with one or more secondary and/or VET schools is obligatory, as the activities should focus on the implementation of the UN SDGs in the classroom.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- **create partnerships** with secondary and VET schools for the implementation of the UN SDGs in the classroom;
- **improve understanding** of the UN SDGs;
- **stimulate** discussions among teachers and pupils on implementing various activities relevant for achieving some of the targets related to the UN SDGs;
- **facilitate understanding** among pupils of the small things that each one of us can do to contribute to achieving the SDGs;
- **enhance entrepreneurship** among students by showcasing ways to create green jobs via practical examples; and
- **promote** education for sustainable development.

2 Requirements of the Small Grants Programme

2.1 Introduction

The SEEDLING project is a regional project funded by ADA, one of the final results of which will be an on-line ESD tool (TEEN Pack) for use by secondary and VET school teachers and their pupils. The pack will be available for use free of charge, like all the previous REC ESD tools such as Green Pack, Green Pack Junior and the Citizens' Pack. Final beneficiaries of the SEEDLING project are the ministries of education in the target countries. The TEEN Pack is under preparation, although all the texts developed so far can be downloaded together with the call documents (Annex G).

2.2 Programme objectives

The proposed Small Grants Programme in the area of ESD focuses on:

- **educational activities** — to raise awareness among young people about the existence of the UN SDGs and to nurture skills, values and habits for sustainable behaviour through active cooperation with secondary and vocational (VET) schools;
- **social activities** — the behaviour and actions of students and citizens should be placed in the general context of sustainable development; and
- **practical examples** — to enhance pupils' entrepreneurial skills and understanding of the value of "green jobs" via practical examples and demonstration activities at the school/local level using the UN document "Transforming our world" (provided in local languages in Annex F).

All CSO projects should strive to improve the implementation of ESD through practical and everyday examples. This improvement should address not only the environment but



also the social and economic aspects of the SDGs. Through their projects, CSOs should be able to demonstrate an improvement in capacities for SDG implementation, and an improvement in the entrepreneurial skills of pupils and their teachers at secondary and VET schools regarding the creation of green jobs and the overall quality of life in the target group or community through the project.

The CSOs should therefore apply the following approaches:

1. **Integrative approach:** Projects should be prepared based on the principles of sustainable development by integrating the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic). The project should integrate sustainable development with positive economic and social aspects.
2. **Inclusive approach:** CSOs are encouraged to use an inclusive approach in preparing and implementing their projects by initiating and/or improving dialogue, discussing with educational institutions and if possible local authorities, and using formal and informal ways of involving other CSOs.
3. **Partnerships:** In addition to partnerships with secondary and VET schools, CSOs are encouraged to cooperate proactively and build common positions with local authorities, thus becoming an appropriate and trusted partner of cooperative bodies formed in the field of sustainable development and protection of the environment at the local and national level.
4. **Dissemination of information:** In their projects, CSOs should demonstrate the dissemination of information through the development of communication strategies and communication with the public (which will attract public support and bring new members/volunteers into the organisation). Civil society organisations are encouraged to effectively use the public media and other communication tools in order to ensure direct communication with communities and decision makers involved in sustainability issues, thus ensuring a powerful impact on project results.
5. **Access to the right to equality:** Gender equality and ethnic aspects will be considered together with other environmental criteria during grants assessment. This will involve the application of such criteria in the grants, funding proportionality and project support, as well as direct support for interethnic activities.

2.3 Grant recipients

Only registered CSOs, with activities mainly in the fields of education, environment and sustainable development, gender issues and other SDG-related fields are eligible for grants. Other types of organisations may cooperate with CSOs in projects, but the grant applicant must be a CSO. Those CSOs applying for a national grant should be well developed and experienced in the area of ESD and management. They should be equipped with basic infrastructure in the form of an office, phone, fax, email, paid staff etc.

2.4 Geographical reach

National grants are available in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.



2.5 Financial terms/amount of national grants

For this call, a total of EUR 200,000 are available for the region, distributed to six target countries depending on the statistical data regarding the number of secondary and vocational schools in the country and the quality of the project proposals.

The maximum amount of the national grants is EUR 7,000 (no lower than EUR 5,000). A CSO shall not receive more than one grant. The REC encourages CSOs to seek matching or supporting funds from other sources. For example, CSOs may wish to seek funds from other foundations, from state and local governments, or from businesses in their country.

The selection process will take place in December 2017. Proposals will be evaluated by the Local Advisory Board of the REC office. The best proposals will be selected at the evaluation meeting in December 2017, using the selection criteria presented in this announcement. The results of the selection will be submitted to the REC head office for final approval in December 2017. Projects shall be implemented over six months, from January 1 to June 30, 2018.

2.6 Process of grants approval

The evaluation will take into account only those CSOs whose project proposals have been developed in accordance with the guidelines.

2.6.1 Administrative process

National grants are managed by the REC Country Office. The process involves:

- the publication of a call for applications and the issuing of guidelines, conditions and eligibility requirements;
- help for CSOs in preparing project proposals by organising an information meeting (phone calls will not be accepted: the REC will provide a Q&A document on-line, regularly updated and available for all applicants on November 15, 2017);
- the organisation of an expert Local Advisory Board of independent experts for analysing and ranking project proposals;
- support for CSOs in implementing their projects by providing advice on financial management, reporting on implementation, etc.; and
- offering opportunities to promote the final results of CSO projects.

2.6.2 Topics on project grant proposals

Projects should address the following topics:

- Education for sustainable development, by involving secondary and vocational schools (the number of schools involved is one of the criteria for assessment). In case of only one secondary or VET school as a partner, a justification should be offered.
- Sustainable development activities with respect to the UN SDGs and their targets in secondary and vocational schools, that aim to raise awareness among teachers and pupils and build capacities to define actions that individuals/groups/schools can implement to contribute to reaching the goals by 2030.



The REC's national grants **do not fund**:

- projects in which the main result is research, data collection and sampling. (However, when research results are used in support of other parts of a project — for example, using data about endangered species as the foundation for a conservation plan, then the REC country office will consider the project);
- purely operational expenditures, such as salaries or rent;
- operation costs, including salaries and overheads above 30 percent of the total budget;
- costs related to participation in activities and travel outside the REC region; or
- religious activities, political activities, the purchase of buildings or land, investments, vehicles, or the construction or remodelling of facilities.

2.6.3 Duration of the project

The project must not last longer than six months, and implementation must start within one month of the approval of the funds. Project implementation is expected to start no later than January 2018, and to finish by June 30, 2018.

2.6.4 Eligibility

Grant applications may only be submitted by registered CSOs that work in the area of education, sustainable development, environmental protection and related areas.

Registered CSOs, such as community development groups, social groups, gender-based groups, trade unions, religious groups, teachers groups etc., working in other related or auxiliary areas, can provide support and participate as social factors.

Besides the above, CSOs applying for national grants are expected to demonstrate the following features:

- readiness to develop and implement a national project with a maximum duration of six months;
- proven and recorded experience in project management;
- experience in sustainable development and ESD; and
- access to the necessary equipment and necessary facilities for the implementation of the project.

2.6.5 Cooperation and partnership

This grants programme is designed to promote cooperation among stakeholders in the countries. Partnerships with secondary education institutions are therefore obligatory, and in addition all applicants should consider how their projects will demonstrate cooperation among several social factors, as outlined below:

- CSOs from other areas of action, such as community development groups, social groups, gender-based groups, trade unions, religious groups, teachers groups etc., can also benefit directly from the project and be involved in the grant as a social factor, provided that the focus of the project is on ESD.
- Beneficiaries such as a specifically identified community or social group may be part of project activities.



- Other social factors, such as the local administration, and local or state authorities and their employees or officials, are also encouraged to engage in the preparation and implementation of grants, as well as in co-financing. However, they must not make any financial gain through the grants. Any payment to these participants will result in a termination of the grant.
- Applicants should bear in mind that, in addition to the scope of educational sustainability projects and cooperation elements, this programme is intended to promote and apply a number of additional principles. Where appropriate, applicants should take into account and incorporate the following principles into the project plan and ensure their implementation during project activities:
 - gender equality and equal opportunities;
 - equitable ethnic representation and diversity; and
 - the elimination of corruption.

The principles of the programme related to ethnic, gender and geographical coverage should be respected during the preparation and implementation of the project, and this should be demonstrated through the reports. Equal opportunities should be ensured throughout the project.

2.7 Special requirements of the programme

At the project proposal preparation stage, it is important to consider the following list of requirements that are specific or important to this call:

- The project must be implemented in partnership with a secondary and/or vocational school. Grants shall exclusively support projects that include cooperation with an educational institution as partner (or partners).
- The project should, if possible, cover more than one secondary school. In exceptional cases, where there is only one partner, justification will be needed.
- Project partners may provide co-financing that may be cash or an in-kind contribution.
- Project activities should anticipate the possibility of using the materials developed under the SEEDLING project as a guideline (see Annex G).
- The project may not last longer than six months, in the period from January 1 to June 30, 2018.
- Grants may not be used to support projects that relate to research or scientific work (unless they are related to other aspects of the project), for operating expenditures (such as basic salaries or office rental); or for the purchase of land, buildings, investments or vehicles that are not justified by the objectives of the project.
- The cost of salaries may be covered by the grants only in the case of coordination positions, if it would not otherwise be possible to carry out such project activities. Payroll costs in the budget items must not exceed 30 percent of the total budget (unless the nature of the project makes it absolutely necessary, and this is appropriately explained in the project proposal).
- Salaries, consultant costs, and per diem rates should be reasonable for each country. The rates normally used by the REC as a standard can be obtained from the respective REC country office.



- Other parties can benefit from the project where justified. These costs may be budgeted under the consultancy budget item, although the costs of salaries plus consultancy should not exceed 40 percent of the total budget.
- Eligible costs are those that relate to the actual project implementation only. Overhead costs unrelated to the project will not be admissible.
- Grants stimulate partnerships between different ethnic groups within the community. Projects should demonstrate the added value that such cooperation or partnership brings to the project.
- CSO partners from other fields, such as community development groups, social groups, gender-based groups, trade unions, faith-based organisations and teachers groups, can also directly benefit from the project and be included in the grant as CSO partners, as long as the project has a sustainability focus.
- Grants should demonstrate gender equality and the involvement of minority groups whenever relevant, and these should be included appropriately in the preparation and implementation of the project. It should also be possible to measure the impact or benefits of their participation in the project.
- Grant support must not be directed towards public administrations and local or national government authorities, their staff or officials. Any payments made to these groups will result in the cancellation of the grant.
- CSOs from outside the country in which the application is made for a national grant may not directly benefit from a grant as a partner organisation. They may, however, provide support or expertise.
- CSOs may not submit more than one project proposal as a lead CSO.
- CSOs may receive only one grant from the REC (as lead or partner CSO).
- If the CSO manages to provide additional funds for project implementation, it should demonstrate that the donor commitment is secured. In-kind contributions may include materials and supplies, work, communication etc.

2.8 Process of project submission

2.8.1 Process of drafting the project proposal

The CSO should meet with various identified partners and jointly write the project proposal.

To write a project proposal, the CSO should follow the guidelines for the development of grants. One representative of the CSO must be appointed as the project manager.

The preparation phase for the project proposals will be in October and November 2017.

Questions regarding the application process may be sent by e-mail no later than November 10, 2017 (20 days before the deadline for the submission of applications) to the address (es) of the respective REC country office, clearly indicating the reference to the call for proposals. Only eligible questions referring to the application process will be answered.

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications in response to questions received after this date.



To ensure the equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, affiliated entity (ies), actions or specific activities.

2.8.2 Evaluation process

The total funding requirements from CSOs usually exceed the amount available. Requirements are therefore selected through a competitive process. All project proposals will be evaluated by an independent expert commission, comprising the Local Advisory Board established by the REC, and the director of the REC country office.

All project proposals received are subject to a preliminary assessment in order to verify that they meet the following conditions:

- Applicants are eligible for national grants (see section on eligibility).
- Applications sent by post, courier or in person by the deadline, completed and containing all originally signed documents and forms. E-mail applications will not be considered.

2.8.3 Criteria for assessment and selection

Proposals are evaluated by the evaluation committee according to the following criteria:

<p>Project impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation plan demonstrates a probable and clearly indicated long-term impact and sustainable results, which will be carried on after the project is over. 	30%
<p>CSO approach and methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is built on the principles of sustainable development by integrating the pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic). • The project is relevant to the interests of students from secondary and vocational schools. The number of partner schools will also be considered. In case of a partnership with only one school, justification should be provided. CSOs are strongly encouraged to include VET schools. • If applicable, the project demonstrates a rights-based approach, ensuring that gender equality, multicultural/multiethnic representation, and women’s and minority participation and rights are promoted by the project as far as possible. 	30%
<p>Proposal quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The topic of the proposal is within the scope of the announcement. The project builds on the UN SDGs and their targets. • The objectives are achievable and feasible. There is a reasonable and realistic action plan. The proposal indicates how the expected outputs contribute to the outcomes. • The budget is cost effective. The budget of each activity is clearly explained and calculated. The overall budget follows the budget lines of the REC form. The limitations given by the guidelines are clearly followed. 	25%

<p>Organisation capability and viability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and/or volunteers have experience and competence on the issue. The CVs of the relevant CSO staff/volunteers demonstrate the required skills and experience. • Appropriate infrastructure (office and equipment) and resources are available. 	<p>15%</p>
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2.8.4 Notification of the decision

All applicants will be notified of the final decision as soon as it is made. Those CSOs receiving grants will be invited to a meeting of the winners (planned for the end of December 2017).

3 Preparing a project proposal

3.1 Eligibility of the lead CSO

Registered CSOs (see CSO definition below) that promote the concept of sustainable development in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia are eligible to apply.

In the case of a proposal where more than one CSO is involved, one of the partners in the project (either the lead CSO or a partner organisation) needs to be an organisation that is active primarily in the field of education, environment and sustainable development, gender issues and other SDG-related fields.

The lead CSO will be responsible for processing the grant, and for reporting and coordinating the work of all actors in the project. The roles and the share of the budget assigned to the partners in project should be clearly described in detail in the project proposal (both the narrative part and the budget).

In addition, CSOs applying for national grants are expected to meet the following criteria:

- a readiness to develop a national project of up to six months' duration.
- A proven track record in project management.
- Experience in the areas of ESD.
- Access to the necessary equipment and facilities for project implementation.

3.2 Stages in the application process

3.2.1 Choosing partners and interested parties

The CSOs should begin to look for partners and analyse other interested parties. Partners should meet and jointly write the project proposal. While partners are directly eligible for grant funding, other interested parties are not, although they can contribute to the project as consultants.



One representative from a CSO must be designated as the project manager for the whole project.

3.2.2 Preparation of documentation

This section contains important information about the forms that need to be completed for the project proposal. The forms can be found in the annexes at the end of this document.

Project proposals must be prepared according to the REC guidelines, provided in Annex O to this announcement. The forms that must be completed and returned to the REC country office are provided in Annexes A to E. The application should be compiled in the following order:

Forms:

- Annex A: Cover page of the project proposal
- Annex B: Partnership statement(s)
- Annex C: Description of the project proposal
- Annex D1: Summary of the budget for the entire project
- Annex D2: Review of the budget by activity (detailed budget)
- Annex E: Application statement

Supporting documentation:

- A description and brief history of the CSO, including activities, mission and goals
- Brief biographies of the project coordinator and other key persons involved in the project (partners or other relevant experts)
- Co-financing documentation (if any)
- Supporting documents from social factors
- A photocopy of the court registration decision
- A photocopy of the tax office registration number
- Financial report/statement from the preceding year
- List of project references from the last three years

3.3 Submission of proposals

The proposal must be delivered to the REC's country office by post, courier or in person on November 30, 2017, by 16:00. The full project proposal must contain one hard copy of all the documents listed under 3.2.2 (**Annexes from A to E and support documentation**) and one CD/USB with an electronic version of the same documents.

Delayed applications, or those sent by e-mail or fax, will not be considered.

3.4 Evaluation of the proposals

Project proposals are accepted in the local language, and decisions are made on the basis of evaluations undertaken by the independent local advisory board. The REC strongly recommends that applicants take the selection criteria into consideration when preparing



their project proposals. The project proposals will be rated, ranked and selected against these criteria.

3.5 Interviews

Representatives of the REC and members of the Local Advisory Board may interview the key actors in the proposed project after having established its written provisional conclusions but before concluding the evaluation. The date and time of any such interview will be confirmed and the applicant notified at least three days in advance. If the applicant is prevented from attending an interview by force majeure, a mutually convenient alternative appointment will be arranged with the applicant. If the applicant is unable to attend this second appointment, the application will be eliminated from the evaluation process.

3.6 Notification of decision

The selected grants will be submitted to the REC head office for final approval. The CSOs will be informed of the evaluation decision only after the SEEDLING implementation team has provided their final decision about the winners. The CSO winners will be invited to a winners' meeting (planned for December 2017).

3.7 Winners' meeting

Grant winners will be notified and invited to the respective REC country office for a winners' meeting. During the winners' meeting, each CSO will present their projects to the other grantees; familiarise themselves with the REC's reporting forms and requirements; and review and sign their award agreements. This document specifies the reporting conditions and disbursement schedule. The grantees will meet the assigned grants officer and a financial assistant from the REC's country office, who will work closely with them throughout project implementation.

3.8 Project implementation

Grant winners should expect the first grant instalments within one month after the award agreement has been signed. The duration of project implementation is six months. The CSO should manage the project implementation within the given timeframe according to the approved project proposal. The REC's assigned grants officer will monitor project implementation through direct contact and field visits.

3.9 Reporting

Requirements related to reporting are explained in Section 4.2 of the guidelines (Annex O to this announcement).



3.10 Visibility of the project

The SEEDLING project is financed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and the REC is the implementing agency. Whenever information about SEEDLING project activities is released to the public in the form of a written document, the logos of both ADA and the REC should be used:



5 Contacts

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe

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THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (REC) AS IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is an international organisation with a mission to assist in addressing environmental issues. The REC fulfils this mission by promoting cooperation among governments, non-governmental organisations, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, and by supporting the free exchange of information and public participation in environmental decision making.

The REC was established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. Today, the REC is legally based on a charter with over 30 signatories. The organisation relies on a network of offices and experts in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond. Its head office is located in Szentendre, Hungary.

The REC actively participates in key global, regional and local processes and contributes to environmental and sustainability solutions within and beyond its country office network, transferring transitional knowledge and experience to countries and regions.

AUSTRIAN DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (ADA)

The Austrian Development Cooperation is part of the Austrian foreign policy and the European Union's development policy, which aims to promote world peace in cooperation with other industrialized and developing countries.

ADA is an operational unit of the Austrian Development Cooperation and cooperation with Eastern Europe (ADC). ADA is in charge of realization of all bilateral programs and projects in the partner countries of ADC and for administration of the respective budgets. It funds about 650 projects and programmes annually with a total of EUR 500 million to improve living conditions in developing countries.

Education is only one of the priority areas where ADA is active, believing that as a major factor for poverty reduction and sustainable development, education can make a key contribution to social, economic, political and cultural development. Well-trained people have better opportunities to find employment and take part in social development. In addition to raising and assuring quality in the education sector, Austria is also committed to inclusion. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation, aims at giving even more people equal access to vocational education and training and higher education.



6 List of annexes

1. Annex 0 – Guidelines for proposal preparation
2. Annex A – Proposal cover page
3. Annex B – Partner information and statement of cooperation
4. Annex C – Description of the project proposal
5. Annex D1 - Summary budget
6. Annex D2 – Detailed budget
7. Annex E – Declaration of the applicant
8. Annex F – Transforming our World
9. Annex G – SDGs and targets in the national context

