TERMS OF REFERENCE

Call for Business Plan Proposals from Women-Led Organizations and Networks for Income-Generating Activities that Strengthen Protection and Economic Independence

Project name	REBUILD: A multisectoral intervention to strengthen the resilience of host communities and internally displaced persons in Somalia.
Organization	ActionAid International Somalia
Location	Beledweyne, Hiiraan, Somalia

Background

Somalia continues to face a severe protection crisis, with gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls exacerbated by armed conflict, forced displacement, recurrent droughts and floods, poverty, and harmful social norms. Women and girls, particularly those living in IDP settlements and hard-to-reach communities, face heightened risks of sexual violence, rape, physical assault, sexual exploitation, and child early and forced marriage, overcrowded shelters, inadequate lighting and sanitation facilities, and limited access to safe spaces further increase their exposure to violence.

Beledweyne district in Hiiraan region, faces multiple and recurring crises driven by climate change, conflict and insecurity. Drought-induced displacement and insecurity caused by Al-Shabaab attacks have forced large numbers of people to flee to Beledweyne town, while repeated flooding during the Deyr (October to December) rains has compounded the humanitarian situation. Protection remains under-funded, and women and girls are exposed to risks such as rape and other forms of GBV. Survivors and at-risk women often lack the economic autonomy needed to leave situations of violence or to reach essential services such as legal and psychological support.

ActionAid International Somalia (AAIS) is implementing A multisectoral intervention to strengthen the resilience of host communities and internally displaced persons in Somalia aimed at strengthening the protection of women and girls and the meaningful engagement of communities with humanitarian and development actors. The project recognizes that women-led organizations and networks are best placed to identify and address protection issues such as gender-based violence (GBV) and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG), because they know their communities and are trusted by women and survivors, including those who access protection services in safe spaces and who are therefore particularly vulnerable.

As part of this effort, AAIS invites women-led organizations and networks to participate in a ***Small Grants Business Plan Call***. AAIS will launch a localized campaign encouraging community organizations and networks to submit business plans for starting small income-generating activities, such as soap making, tie and dye clothes and shampoo formulation.

The call will particularly contribute to the project's protection and economic empowerment components by introducing products that promote good hygiene practices to the local market, launching businesses that can sustain themselves after the project ends, and enabling participating women to build autonomy and economic independence and to more easily access essential protection services. It will also recognize and strengthen the role that local women's organizations and networks play in their communities, highlighting the challenges women face and actively working to mitigate them.

Purpose of the Grant

The overall purpose of the grant is to enable women-led organizations and networks to start and manage small, sustainable income-generating businesses that strengthen the economic independence of women and girls and improve their access to protection services. AAIS will support the selected organizations throughout the process:

- Grant funding of €5,000 per organization or network
- Training in starting and managing small income-generating businesses
- Coaching, mentoring and monitoring support throughout implementation
- Linkages to protection services, including legal and psychological support
- Visibility for the role of women-led organizations in addressing GBV and VAWG, and
- Other capacity-building resources identified during implementation.

The support should build sustainable, long-term capacity within the selected organizations, drawing on their local knowledge and expertise, and strengthen the overall protection landscape in the region.

Business set-up and implementation

According to the approved business plan, the grantee:

- Will set up the income-generating activity (for example, soap production) in line with the approved business plan, budget and work plan.
- Will procure equipment and raw materials in line with the consortium's procurement rules.
- Will ensure product quality, health and safety standards, and appropriate packaging and branding.
- Will market and sell products in the local market, with a focus on promoting good hygiene practices.
- Will maintain simple financial and sales records and reinvest returns in line with the sustainability plan.
- Will ensure that the business reflects gender, age, disability, inclusion and protection considerations.

Capacity building

The two selected organizations will receive training and resources from AAIS to effectively launch and manage their businesses, including:

- Business planning, costing and pricing
- Financial literacy, bookkeeping and cash management
- Production skills and quality control
- Marketing, customer relations and market linkages
- Organizational management, governance and financial accountability

- Survivor-centered approaches, safeguarding and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)
- Coaching and follow-up support during the implementation period.

Engagement of women and Girls and protection linkages

In engaging women and survivors, the grantee will focus on:

- Develop and implement a community engagement plan that outlines the strategy for engaging the community by identifying GBV survivors and other women with protection concerns, through safe spaces, service providers and community networks, and grouping them according to their needs (for example, survivors seeking legal or psychological support, women at risk, displaced women, women with disabilities and female-headed households)
- Ensure that identification and grouping are done with informed consent, strict confidentiality and without disclosing the identity of survivors
- Voluntary, safe and dignified participation of women and survivors, including those accessing services in safe spaces
- Fair and transparent working arrangements and safe working conditions
- Confidentiality and avoiding any additional risk to participants
- Safe referral of women and survivors to legal, psychological and other protection services through existing referral pathways
- Collaboration with other women-led organizations, networks, community leaders and local authorities.

Documentation, visibility and learning

The grantee will document the experience of the business and its contribution to women's autonomy through:

- Changes resulting from the grant for women and survivors
- Good practices and challenges
- Lessons learned
- Success stories and photographs, with informed consent
- Recommendations for scaling up or replicating the approach.

Key Deliverables

No.	Deliverable	Description
1	Signed grant agreement and work plan	Detailed work plan, budget, risk management plan and safeguarding arrangements agreed with AAIS.
2	Participation in capacity building	Active participation of the organization's members in the training on starting and managing small income-generating businesses, with attendance records.
3	Business established and operating	Equipment and materials procured, production started and products available in the local market.
4	Participation of women and Girls	Number and profile of women and survivors engaged in the business, with a note on safe referral to protection services.
5	Progress reports	Brief narrative and financial reports on implementation, sales, challenges and corrective actions.

No.	Deliverable	Description
6	Business and financial records	Simple records of sales, expenses and stock, with supporting documents, available for monitoring visits.
7	Success story and visual documentation	At least one success story with photographs, collected with informed consent.
8	Final report	Summary of activities undertaken, results achieved, financial report, lessons learned and a sustainability plan for continuing after the project ends.

Eligibility and Required Qualifications

This call is open to women-led community-based organizations (CBOs), women's groups and women's networks working in Beledweyne. Applicants must:

- Be women-led, with women holding most of the leadership and decision-making positions.
- Be legally registered, or recognized by the relevant local authorities, and operate in Beledweyne District.
- Have demonstrated experience working on women's rights, protection, GBV/VAW prevention or response, or in supporting women and survivors in the community.
- Be able to engage women and survivors in the proposed business in a safe, voluntary and survivor-centred way.
- Have a bank account, mobile money account or other verifiable financial system and the capacity to manage funds transparently.
- Have basic experience in managing projects, community mobilization or small enterprises (desirable).
- Not be affiliated with any political party or armed group and not appear on any sanctions or exclusion list.

Selection Criteria

A selection committee will review all eligible proposals in a transparent and competitive process and score them against the following criteria:

No.	Criterion	Weight
1	Potential impact on the autonomy, economic independence and access to protection services of women and survivors	25%
2	Viability and market potential of the business, including local demand and contribution to hygiene promotion	20%
3	Sustainability of the business beyond the end of the project	20%
4	Demonstrated experience and expertise of the organization in women's rights, protection and GBV/VAWG	15%
5	Organizational and management capacity, including financial management	10%
6	Narrative proposal with clear strategy for implementation detailing step by step plans including timelines, number of direct beneficiaries Work plan and budget	10%
	Total	**100%**

Shortlisted organizations may be invited for an interview or field visit. Legal registration and eligibility will be verified before an award is made, and the consortium may conduct a due diligence assessment of the selected organizations.

Application Requirements

- Technical Proposal (Business Plan), including understanding of the call and the local context, the proposed business idea and product or service (for example, soap making), market analysis and target customers, production and marketing approach, proposed work plan and timeline, expected results and deliverables, role and safe participation of women and survivors, risk management and ethical/safeguarding approach, sustainability plan for continuing after the project ends, and team composition (maximum 10 pages).
- Budget of up to €5,000, with a short justification of each cost line.
- Organizational documents, including proof of registration or recognition, a short profile of the organization or network, and details of leadership and relevant experience.
- Updated CV(s) for senior management /team members.
- Two references from partners, local authorities or community leaders for experience

Submission of Applications

We invite interested women-led organizations and networks to submit their application documents not later than [**15th November 2026**] via: admin.somalia@actionaid.org **Subject:** Business Plan Proposal – Women-Led Organization/Network – Beledweyne. Organizations that need support in preparing their proposal and may contact AAIS for assistance during the question period.

Assessment will be done on merit, and women-led organizations and networks are strongly encouraged to apply. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.