



# PROTEGO

Prevention of Marine Litter in the Gulf of Guinea

adelphi 

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## Marine Litter Hotspot Innovation Challenge

### Addressing marine litter challenges in Nigeria and Ghana

Marine plastic pollution is a critical environmental issue affecting the Gulf of Guinea, with significant contributions from West African countries like Ghana and Nigeria. Rapid economic development, population growth, and changing consumption patterns have led to increased use of single-use plastics, overwhelming existing waste management systems. The PROTEGO project aims to address this challenge by reducing the inflow of plastic waste into aquatic environments, thereby protecting marine ecosystems and supporting sustainable development in the region. The PROTEGO project is funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) under the Grant Programme against Marine Plastic Pollution. adelphi research gemeinnützige GmbH is the main implementing organization, working in close collaboration with local and international partners. Local implementation partners are the Ghana Cleaner Production Center (GNPCPC), Plastic Punch (PP), WASTE Africa and the Nigeria Climate Innovation Center (NCIC). These partners bring valuable expertise in waste management, circular economy, and environmental conservation, ensuring the successful implementation and sustainability of the project.

With the PROTEGO Accelerator, the project aims to develop and implement innovative solutions to collect, sort, recycle, and reuse plastic waste which have a high potential to be scaled up and replicated across the region. Successful project proposals will receive access to project funding of **up to €40,000**, as well as tailored non-financial support during the preparation and implementation of the project idea.

### Who can apply?

- Eligible applicants are companies, NGOs, research institutions or community organisations registered in Ghana and Nigeria
- The organisation must be able to demonstrate a minimum of 1-year (initial) experience working with marine litter and/or waste management.
- Collaboration with other local or international partners is welcome, however funding will be directed to the lead organisation.

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# About the Innovation Challenge

The accelerator looks for innovative project ideas that can demonstrate impact, be sustainable in the long-term and address challenges or barriers to marine litter in the hotspot locations. With the Accelerator, PROTEGO aims to stimulate the establishment and scaling up of innovative projects that advance and support the prevention of marine litter in four PROTEGO hotspot locations. Each location is facing challenges around marine litter pollution and waste management that should ideally be addressed through the proposed ideas of the applicant. The challenges are as follows:

## NIGERIA



**Reduce, collect, or recycle low-value plastics and textiles in Ajegunle, Lagos.** This high-density urban slum faces **severe plastic and styrofoam pollution** in its waterways due to the dominance of single-use, low-value items that are not collected by the informal sector or recycled, compounded by high volumes of textile waste. There is a critical need for innovations that enable the **collection, recycling, or reduction of low-value plastics and textiles** through waste segregation, incentive systems, and public engagement.

**Improve waste infrastructure and lightweight plastic recovery systems in Nsidung and Atansinya, Calabar.** These two waterside markets present **unstructured waste management practices and widespread use of single-use plastics**, especially water sachets and flexible packaging, result in over 90% of non-organic waste leaking into the environment. There is a need for scalable innovations in **basic waste infrastructure, lightweight plastic recovery, and vendor engagement** to curb plastic pollution and protect the Calabar River ecosystem.

## GHANA



**Reduce plastic use and develop circular waste solutions at Ada Foah.** Nearby beaches are heavily **polluted with single-use plastics**, revealing gaps in local waste management and opportunities for regulatory and private sector action. Innovation is needed to **reduce plastic use, enable community-driven collection, and develop infrastructure to convert waste into sustainable products**, thereby preventing marine litter and supporting a circular economy.

**Strengthen waste management and promote sustainable coastal protection in Tema.** The coastal zone is facing a **severe plastic pollution** crisis driven by inadequate waste management, posing risks to public health, ecosystems, and local livelihoods. There is an urgent need for multi-stakeholder innovations that **strengthen waste infrastructure, promote environmental stewardship, and engage communities in sustainable coastal protection** efforts.

The pilot projects might generally focus on the different solution areas listed below. However, the PROTEGO Accelerator welcomes the initiative of applicants to suggest different solutions in line with the overall objective of advancing and supporting the prevention of marine litter as well as addressing the specific challenges of individual hotspots.

## Project Innovation Approaches

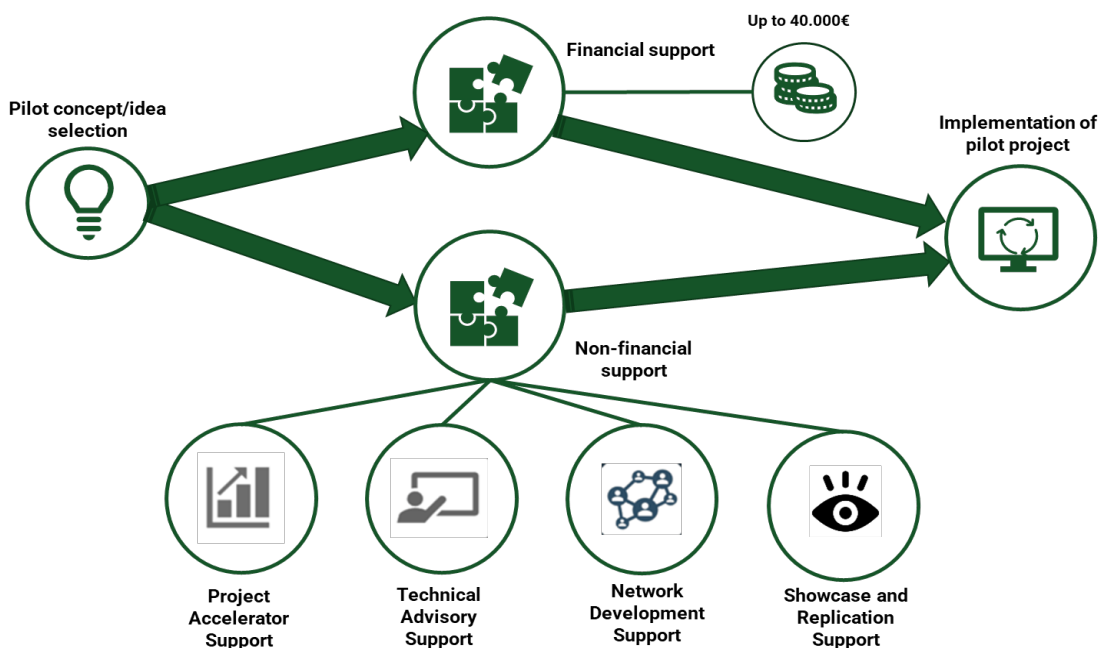
1. Product innovation	2. Collection systems	3. Post-Leakage
Products that reduce or substitute the amount of embedded plastic and reducing the quantities of plastic used shifting from single-use to reuse models	e.g. through renovating waste infrastructures by refurbishing existing facilities or building new ones and increasing recycling through better product design that facilitates disassembly	Solutions aiming at removing plastic from the environment through clean-up operations.

## PROTEGO Accelerator Support Package

If your project is selected for the PROTEGO Accelerator you will receive targeted financial support to facilitate the implementation of activities. The financial support is granted in the amount of **up to 40,000€**

In the application form applicants are requested to outline an intended budget in accordance with this amount. Shortlisted projects will be invited to a face-to-face online call with adelphi and the respective local partners. Upon selection, applicants will be supported to refine the proposal, with the final amount of financial support depending on the level of innovation, impact and scaling potential, as well as the feasibility of implementing the project from November 2025 to September 2026. To assist you in defining the most efficient use of the funding received during the project implementation phase you will also have the opportunity to receive professional support in the preparation of a project implementation and expenditure plan.

In addition to financial support, you will get access to tailored non-financial support and advisory services for developing and rolling out your project ideas. Based on a selection of well tried and tested tools from the PROTEGO Accelerator Toolkit.



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# Timeline

	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	REMARKS
<b>APPLICATION FORM SUBMISSION</b>	Submission of Application Form by Applicants	8 June – 21 July 2025	
	FAQ Webinar Sessions	18 June 2025 (tbc) 25 June 2025 (tbc)	
<b>SHORTLISTING</b>	Evaluation and short-listing process	21 July – 6 August 2025	All proposals will be evaluated by the PROTEGO team.
<b>FULL PROJECT AND SPENDING PLAN SUBMISSION BY SHORTLISTED</b>	Webinar on full project- and spending plan development	End of August 2025	Webinar for shortlisted applicants
	Full project- and spending plan submission by organisations	End of September 2025	Shortlisted candidates will be invited to develop a full project and spending plan.
<b>DUE DILIGENCE</b>	Due diligence exercises carried out for all shortlisted full project activities	September 2025	PROTEGO will conduct due diligence with inputs from external experts where necessary.
<b>VIRTUAL PITCHING</b>	Shortlisted applicants virtual pitch their project idea in a session with the PROTEGO team for max. 15 minutes, with a 15-minute Q&A	Early-October 2025	Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a virtual meeting to pitch their project idea.
<b>FINAL SELECTION OF PROJECT IDEAS</b>	Final review of applications and final selection of pilots	Mid-October 2025	
<b>ALLOCATION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT PACKAGES</b>	Disbursement of up to €40.000 financial support to the each of the winning proposals	Early November 2025	Disbursement of financial support according to the expected impact and feasibility
<b>IMPLEMENTATION PHASE</b>	Project plan implementation	November 2025 – September 2026	Technical advisory and support during the implementation of project plans
	Technical implementation support	November 2025 – September 2026	

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# Selection Criteria

Each submitted application will be reviewed to ensure that it complies with the minimum eligibility criteria listed in the table below. All eligible applicants are then evaluated against a set of selection criteria. Based on this first stage assessment, a number of short-listed applicants will be invited to do a virtual face-to-face pitch. If successful, the applicant will be invited to submit a full project plan.

## Eligibility criteria

Applicants need to fully meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for the Accelerator Programme:

Is my project idea eligible to receive the Accelerator support package?	YES	NO
The project idea addresses the challenges of marine litter in one of the four hotspots		
The project idea has a clear potential for continuation beyond the duration of the PROTEGO Accelerator support		
The application is submitted in English and led by an NGO, private company, research institution, community organisation etc., registered in Ghana or Nigeria		
The applicant or at least one of its partners have a minimum of 1-year experience in the field marine litter prevention. The applicant should have also already started with the implementation of the project.		

## Selection criteria

All applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be evaluated along a set of assessment criteria, including:

- **Relevance and innovation:** The activities covered by the project should contribute to marine litter approaches and ideally be viable in the long term once funding has stopped. Innovation can take place at a global, national, regional or local level and may also be linked to policy or standards.
- **Sustainable impact:** The proposed project should explain potential impacts and how it contributes towards sustainable development and integrate and deliver tangible social, environmental and economic benefits. Social benefits may include: community organisation, empowerment and employment, awareness raising. Environmental benefits may include: reducing the amount of marine litter and protecting biodiversity and ecosystems. Economic benefits may include: generating income for the leading partners and/or the local communities. The integration of components that respect and advance gender equality and balance as appropriate within the enterprise or in the community across the anticipated social, environment and economic benefits will also be considered during the evaluation.
- **Financial and implementation feasibility:** The project proposal should clearly demonstrate 1) how the project can be implemented within the given timeframe with the funds and 2) how the project can remain viable beyond the duration of the Accelerator.

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- **Local stakeholder cooperation:** The Accelerator aims to support projects that have a positive impact at the local level. The proposal should also describe how the activities fit into the local context.
- **Potential for scale up or replication:** Project proposals should show ambitions for continuation after the Accelerator, and/or growth of the enterprise or potential for replication elsewhere. Projects should have the potential to serve as inspiration to others.
- **Suitability to the Accelerator programme:** It should be clear how the project team's set up, roles and responsibilities as well as past experiences will enable achieving the project objectives. Applicants should also be able to outline how their needs can be matched by the financial and technical support provided in the Accelerator.

## Eligible uses for the financial support

The following items are eligible for using the Accelerators financial support package:

- Acquisition of services and assets such as equipment, tools and facilities
- Project operational expenses: salaries for project staff, transport and travel expenses, administration costs, leasing of equipment, land, and facilities
- Training and consulting: research, and consulting related to the project

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# How to apply

If you think your project idea fits the Call for Solutions and you are interested to apply for the financial and non-financial support package, we encourage you to submit your project idea.

## To apply, follow the steps below:

- Go to the PROTEGO website. [Here](#) you can find additional information on the Accelerator programme as well as the application template.
- Start the application process by downloading and filling out the application form. Should there be any questions during the application process you can contact PROTEGO via [innovation@projectprotego.org](mailto:innovation@projectprotego.org)
- Submit the finalised application form as a PDF document to [innovation@projectprotego.org](mailto:innovation@projectprotego.org) by **21 July 2025**. If your proposal is short-listed, you will be invited to do a face-to-face pitch.

*The PROTEGO Accelerator, implemented by adelphi research gGmbH, is funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) under the Grant Programme against Marine Plastic Pollution.*

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