

Request for Quotation:

Research project: Plastic pollution, flooding and human health

Date of Request for Quotation: 23 January 2023

Deadline for Submission of Quotation: **6 February 2023**

Details of contact at Tearfund

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Quotes should be submitted by email to the named contact above.

Any contract formed with a supplier will incorporate Tearfund's and the Supplier's terms and conditions.

Context

Tearfund is a Christian international development and humanitarian organisation that partners with communities, churches and local organisations. We work in over 50 countries worldwide to tackle poverty through sustainable development, responding to disasters, and challenging injustice.

Economic and environmental sustainability is a key strand of Tearfund's work and over recent years we have focused particularly on waste.¹ It is clear to us that plastic pollution is hitting the world's poorest people the hardest, pushing more people further into poverty. More frequent and more serious flood events are one of the key impacts of plastic pollution we see affecting communities in low- and middle-income countries.

UN member states are currently negotiating a global treaty on plastic pollution. Tearfund is lobbying delegations calling for a treaty which includes a comprehensive plan to tackle the impacts of waste and plastic pollution on people living in poverty.² As part of our lobbying work we are keen to bring to light new evidence on the impacts of plastic pollution on people living in poverty, including in relation to flooding and its consequences for human health.

¹ See our publications [No time to waste](#) (2019) and [The Burning Question](#) (2020).

² For more on our treaty position see [Plastic pollution and poverty: A briefing to inform negotiations on a UN treaty on plastics](#) (2022).

Background

Between 2000 and 2019, plastic waste generation more than doubled. Today, half of all plastic is designed to be used just once before being discarded. And yet some 2 billion people in low- and middle income countries don't have access to solid waste collection. They have little other option but to burn or dump it.

As a result, large amounts of plastic end up in waterways and drainage systems. Plastic waste is therefore likely to be acting as a significant threat multiplier when it comes to flood risk. Plastic is both causing flood events that would not otherwise have occurred, and making flood events more serious. As climate change makes extreme rainfall events more frequent, the combined effect of plastic pollution and climate change could be extremely serious for communities at risk of flooding.

However, as far as we are aware, there has not yet been a systematic assessment of the magnitude or prevalence of these impacts. In our 2019 paper '[No Time to Waste](#)' we summarised the available evidence as follows:

2.1 Health hazard: flooding caused by blocked waterways and drains

Plastic pollution is notorious for blocking waterways and drains in low- and middle-income countries, causing flooding. When combined with inadequate sanitation services, these floods can quickly lead to severe outbreaks of cholera and other diarrhoeal diseases, as well as causing drowning and damage to property (with knock-on health effects).

As long ago as 1988, vast tracts of Bangladesh were submerged by floods attributed to plastic waste.⁵⁸ Since then, areas of Uganda, West Africa and India have all had similar experiences.⁵⁹ The damage caused by such floods can be significant. For example in 2011, floods in Accra, Ghana, caused by blocked waterways, damaged 17,000 homes and led to 100 cholera deaths.⁶⁰

In 2018, WasteAid, on behalf of Tearfund, carried out a survey of development practitioners from across the globe, looking at the impacts of plastic pollution on poverty.⁶¹ Over 90 per cent of the development practitioners surveyed said that waste had caused flooding in their area over the previous two years. Over half (56 per cent) indicated that flooding caused by plastic was a serious problem in slums, with at least four or five incidents per year where plastic was a factor.

Specification

As a first step towards filling this evidence gap, this project will answer the following research questions:

- To what extent is plastic pollution making flood events more frequent and more serious?
- Across how many countries and regions are these effects being felt? Where are they most acute?
- Approximately what population might be suffering more frequent and/or more serious flooding as a result?
- Looking at likely trends for climate and plastic pollution, how are these effects likely to change going forward?
- What health impacts are commonly associated with flooding caused/contributed to by plastic waste?

It will do so through:

- A literature review of available evidence, including published and grey literature, and any other relevant sources.³
- Possible interviews with 5-6 key informants from Tearfund teams in relevant countries/regions or else a review of transcripts of recent interviews.
- An estimate of relevant statistics for affected populations, estimating projections of future impact based on plausible scenarios for climate change and plastic pollution.

The output will be:

Executive Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stand alone summary report ● Approximately 5 pages ● Co-branded and fully designed ● Main audience - media, plastics treaty negotiators ● Content and structure to include: major findings; conclusions and key insights
Research Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Co branded, designed full research report ● Approximately 15-20 pages ● Main audience - policy experts and development practitioners ● Content and structure to include: research subject and methods; major findings; conclusions and key insights
Presentation/Slide Pack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Slide deck to be used to present findings to Tearfund colleagues

³ For example: media reports, podcasts, blogs, interviews, discussion forums, social media posts, conference papers/proceedings, theses and dissertations, research reports, working papers, datasets, survey results, statistical reports, policy statements, press releases and pre-print articles.

Consultant

We invite quotes from a consultant or organisation with:

- Expertise in issues relating to environmental sustainability and social justice, particularly in relation to plastics and waste.
- Experience in working with NGOs in the development sector, particularly in relation to environmental sustainability and social justice.
- Experience of conducting research reviews which aim to have social impact and contribute to a more sustainable and just world.
- Experience in considering so called grey literature as part of the research process.
- Experience in conducting interviews with those working on the ground in difficult and challenging environments.
- An understanding of the UN plastics treaty mandate and the importance of the treaty in bringing about an end to plastics pollution in all environments.

Resources and timeline

We hope to be able to publish the report and executive summary in advance of the second negotiations on the UN plastics treaty (INC-2) which are scheduled to take place w/c 22 May 2023.

The budget for this project is approximately £12,000

We propose the following timeline, subject to discussion with the successful bidder:

Project phase	Activity	By when
Phase 1	Briefing meeting with Tearfund	10 February
	Literature review	31 March
	Possible interviews with key Tearfund informants	31 March
Phase 2	Draft 1	31 March
	Comments from Tearfund	7 April
Phase 3	Draft 2	21 April
	Comments from Tearfund	28 April
Phase 3	Delivery of research report and executive summary	8 May

Submission details

Please submit a bid outlining:

1. Your relevant experience and expertise (max 2 pages). If more than one person will work on this project, please also name the individuals that will conduct the research and their related experience/expertise. Please also include CVs.
2. The approach that you will take to the project, referencing (or attaching) any similar work that you intend to draw on (1-2 pages, with further information as annexes if required).
3. A breakdown of your costs including the number of days and the day rates for each individual as well as other relevant costs.

Please fill in the following sections below:

Company name	
Company registration number	
Office address	
Contact name	
Telephone number	
Email address	

EXPERIENCE OF ORGANISATION: Please provide details of your experience of providing such solutions to the market.

(enter answer here)

LEAD TIMES AND PRICING: Please share details of your proposed project plan and pricing detailing the lead time for delivery.

(enter answer here)

Proposed solution with options: Please provide details of your proposed solution with any options below.

(enter answer here)

We look forward to receiving your quotation.