



Positioning to Scale: Innovations to Empower Women and Girls Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Innovation Challenge

1. What is the purpose of the UNFPA-WIPO-ITU-ITC Joint Innovation Challenge 2022?

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) are launching the *Innovations to Empower Women and Girls Challenge* (the Challenge) to further develop and position to scale innovative solutions from social enterprises that can help disrupt inequalities and advance the empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity.

2. What type of innovations and innovators will the Challenge support?

The Challenge will support women-centered innovations, including those that i) provide affordable and sustainable access to essential reproductive health commodities, services, and information, with a focus on hard-to-reach areas and humanitarian settings, and ii) scale up prevention and response to gender-based violence and harmful practices.

The Challenge aims to support social enterprises¹ (the Companies) registered in UNFPA programme countries² to pivot from grant-making models to self-sustaining financial models, and from “doing innovation” to managing it. The Challenge will provide a mentorship scheme to increase the potential/capabilities of the awardees to scale up innovations across developing countries. It will thus create and nurture an ecosystem of innovators, mentors, and key stakeholders who will then, in turn, support the solutions and their sustainability models.

Eligibility

3. Who is eligible to participate in the challenge?

Applying Companies must be registered as a company/organization in a UNFPA programme country³. All additional eligibility criteria are listed on page 3 of the concept note posted on the [Challenge website](#).

¹ Social entrepreneurship defined as a form of entrepreneurship which predominantly focuses on social benefits rather than solely financial ones, and which seeks to address societal, cultural or environmental issues, often in an innovative manner (source: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/wyr2020.html>)

² List of UNFPA Programme Countries (please refer to Country and territory offices): <https://www.unfpa.org/worldwide>

³ <https://www.unfpa.org/executive-board/cpd-map>

4. What sectors or areas of emphasis should the innovations address?

The proposed innovations should be contributing to one of the following challenges: ending unmet need for family planning, ending preventable maternal deaths, or ending gender-based violence and harmful practices (see descriptions [here](#)).

5. Does the applying Company need to have an existing MVP to apply?

Yes, the Company must have already tested a prototype, proof of concept, and have a minimum viable product⁴ (MVP) which has been piloted and is ready to be positioned to scale. The MVP must belong to the submitting organization.

Support to Awardees

6. What kind of support will be provided to awardees of the Challenge?

UNFPA, WIPO, ITU and ITC will select up to 10 winning proposals from the applying Companies, and provide grants of up to \$60,000⁵ per award to position to scale. After the selection of awardees, winning Companies will sign a 9-month [contract](#), during which the awardees will fully develop and start implementing their plans to transition to scale, and will receive technical assistance in key focus areas, including intellectual property (IP) management and business modelling. WIPO will provide IP management support through a tailored workshop, including the use of WIPO IP Diagnostics. ITU will provide the bootcamp for winners, support mentorship, and support scale-up using its ecosystem development, initiatives sustainability, and scale-up frameworks. ITC will support the winners with training on business competitiveness, capacity building on gender mainstreaming within business practices, and capacity building on design thinking as a tool to develop innovative and client-centered solutions.

Timeline

7. What is the timeline for this Challenge?

⁴ An MVP (minimum viable product) is a product with enough features that can be used by early customers and receive feedback for future development.

⁵ Final amount at sole discretion of the organizer



Application Process

8. How do I apply for this challenge?

Interested Companies that meet the eligibility criteria are required to complete and respond to the Expression of Interest (EOI) by **15 April 2022, 15.00 hours Copenhagen time**⁶. If any doubts exist as to the time zone, please refer to [World Clock Copenhagen Time](#).

Submission of EOIs should be done through the following site:

<https://unfpa.brightidea.com/InnovationsToEmpowerWomenAndGirls>

If a Company is long-listed and invited to the Request for Proposal (RFP) stage, they will be notified accordingly and further instructions will be provided at that time. If a Company is short-listed after the RFP stage, they will be invited to a live Pitch Stage for final consideration.

9. Do I need to register on the [Challenge website](#) in order to submit an application?

Yes, when you click on the blue "Submit Solution" button, you need to accept the Challenge Terms and Conditions to see the registration page. You must create an account using an email address and password to submit your application.

10. Can an organisation submit more than one proposal?

No, only one submission per applying Company is permitted (in English only).

11. What is the evaluation criteria for the three stages of the application process (EOI, RFP, and Pitch stages)?

Evaluation criteria for each of the three stages can be found [here](#).

Funding

12. What is the funding allocation to each awardee?

⁶ The initial deadline 15 March has been extended to 15 April 2022.

Funding of up to USD 60,000 will be given to up to 10 awardees, based on the needs outlined in their [proposed budget and project design plan](#).

13. How will funds be disbursed to awardees?

Funding will be provided in two tranches, to position to scale proposed solutions, in accordance with the project design plan agreed upon with organizers during the bootcamp, consisting of a sound budget and workplan with clear milestones and budget allocation. The second tranche of the award will be given based on demonstrated progress of implementation and achievement of milestones. The awards will be provided by UNFPA subject to the terms and conditions of the funding agreement signed between UNFPA and each awardee Company. A template of the contract can be [found here](#).

14. How long is the award period for this challenge?

Funds will be awarded in July 2022 and closed after 9 months at the end of March 2023, following the completion of end-of-project reporting by awardees.

Partners

15. What are the roles of UNFPA, WIPO, ITU and ITC in this Joint Challenge?

UNFPA: UNFPA will finance and co-design the joint Challenge (with inputs from the three partners) and provide oversight and management in the announcement of the call, selection of finalists, and overall implementation of the Challenge. UNFPA Country Offices (COs) will support the Challenge with screening the proposals, helping to monitor progress of awardees, and provide technical assistance and capacity building as well.

WIPO: WIPO will provide support to awardees in the form of an IP management workshop which will cover the general principles of IP management, followed by a more tailored discussion on the IP issues of relevance to each of the awardees, based on the use of WIPO IP Diagnostics.

ITU: ITU will organize a bootcamp and facilitate the mentorship to awardees on business modeling and financial sustainability during the “position to scale” phase, given its expertise in technology, ICT policy and regulatory environments, global standards, best practices, digital innovation ecosystems, ITU innovation challenges, Equals Partnership (the Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age), and public-private partnerships. ITU and Equals will also provide the online course on “Management Skills for Women Entrepreneurs in Tech” to the awardees, where relevant.

ITC: ITC will provide support to awardees in the form of 1) Training on business competitiveness, 2) Capacity building on gender mainstreaming within business practices, given its expertise in women’s economic empowerment, as well as 3) Capacity building on Design Thinking as a tool to develop innovative and client-centered solutions. For this, ITC will leverage on support from ITC’s Innovation Lab and ITC’ SheTrades Hubs. Additionally, throughout the Challenge duration, ITC will support increased visibility and global promotion of the Challenge via ITC and ITC SheTrades corporate media platforms.

Contact

16. Who should I reach out to in case I have further questions related to the Challenge?

In case of any further questions, please send an email to innovation@unfpa.org.