



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Application Guide

“Operational procedures for the selection of applicants/applications and solutions for South-South and Triangular cooperation as part of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Solutions Lab of UNOSSC.”

October - 2024

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ACRONYMS

GORD: Gulf Organisation for Research and Development

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNECE: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

UNOSSC: United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

WFP: World Food Programme

About UNOSSC

The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1974 and hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), promotes, coordinates and supports South-South and triangular cooperation both at the global and United Nations system-wide level. UNOSSC brings together governments and the United Nations system to analyse and articulate evolving and emerging trends, dynamics and opportunities in South-South cooperation. To contribute to this overarching goal, the UNOSSC currently focuses on three outcomes¹ and five services.²

About main partners of the Lab:

Masdar City

Masdar City, located in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) is a pioneering development in sustainability and a hub for research and development, spearheading innovation to realize a greener, more sustainable model urban living. Masdar City's philosophy of urban development is based on economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Masdar City is dedicated to creating a new kind of city, a new way of working and living, and a more sustainable future for everyone. Masdar City's expertise includes pioneering real-world solutions in energy, water, waste management, mobility, and smart technologies.

GORD

The Gulf Organisation for Research & Development (GORD) is an RDI entity recognized among leading organizations in the global sustainability milieu. Headquartered in Qatar Science and Technology Park, GORD drives the transformation of societies, industries, and the built environment by influencing corporate ethos, fostering innovation, and developing capacity to enable low-carbon sustainable growth for present and future generations. The organization's key operations include R&D, standards setting, green buildings certification, accreditation services, voluntary carbon markets, performance testing, knowledge dissemination, 3D prototyping and advisory services on sustainability and climate change for governments, non-government, public and private sector organizations in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field. It works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, contributing to international peace and security and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

WFP

The World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organization saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity, for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change.

¹ Outcomes: (i) advance South-South and triangular cooperation policymaking and implementation; (ii) strengthen United Nations capacity to provide South-South and triangular cooperation support; and (iii) promote South-South and triangular cooperation knowledge exchange, capacity development and technology development, and transfer to enable developing countries to pursue more resilient and sustainable development.

² Services are: (i) facilitation of, and reporting on, intergovernmental processes and reporting; (ii) capacity development; (iii) Knowledge co-creation and management; (iv) South-South and triangular cooperation solution lab; and (v) trust fund management.

UNECE

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was set up in 1947 by [ECOSOC](#). It is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations. UNECE's major aim is to promote pan-European economic integration. UNECE includes [56 member States](#) in Europe, North America and Asia. However, all interested United Nations member States may participate in the work of UNECE. Over 70 international professional organizations and other non-governmental organizations take part in UNECE activities.

Zayed International Foundation for the Environment

The Zayed International Foundation for the Environment was established in 1999 by H.H. Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates – Ruler of Dubai, to recognize and honor outstanding environmental achievements aiming to protect the environment and promote Sustainable Development in line with the vision and philosophy of the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founding father of the United Arab Emirates.

About the South-South and Triangular cooperation Lab

Developing countries continue to face multifaceted challenges, ranging from extreme poverty, environmental degradation and a growing digital divide, to unsustainable debt and slow adoption of new technologies. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges, undermining progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Traditional solutions are insufficient and/or unsustainable, emphasizing the need for innovative and collaborative strategies. Constraints in legal, technological and financial areas often hinder cross-country, regional and sub-regional knowledge exchange. Successful practices are not disseminated widely enough, limiting their replication. In this context, South-South cooperation has emerged as a vital development cooperation modality, complementing North-South cooperation, fostering collaboration among developing countries by leveraging shared knowledge and resources, sharing experience with designed/tested solutions and forging and/or strengthening partnerships that cater to their specific circumstances.

Thus, the UNOSSC Strategic Framework 2022–2025 has called for the establishment of a South-South and triangular cooperation Solutions Lab to “facilitate the coordination, co-design, incubation and scaling up of initiatives that promote knowledge exchange, capacity development, and technology development and transfer while contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals” (para 38). The UNOSSC South-South and Triangular Cooperation Solutions Lab (the UNOSSC Lab or Lab) will address intricate development challenges faced by developing countries.

By enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation among member states, United Nations agencies, partners, and by harnessing local, regional, and inter-regional expertise and resources, the Lab aims to foster innovative and scalable solutions that expedite the realization of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

By forging broad partnerships, UNOSSC seeks to develop this demand-driven Lab. Labs by nature are innovative platforms designed to tackle complex development challenges such as sustainable development issues by promoting ideation, experimentation, evaluation, learning and collaboration. There are a variety of labs on the market, many of which focus on identifying and

testing solutions to complex development challenges, and some of which also focus on scaling up solutions that work and other services.³

The UNOSSC Lab⁴ represents a paradigm shift from the existing ad hoc collaborations to a more systematic strategic partnership among Southern countries and triangular cooperation partners to meet their respective development goals. The UNOSSC Lab is a timely initiative aimed at using foresight, innovation and collaboration to address complex development issues. Through experimentation, knowledge sharing and capacity building, the Lab will empower member states towards achieving inclusive, sustainable and resilient development, supporting accelerated achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Lab will foster innovation and collaboration among developing countries, leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation to create scalable solutions for inclusive and sustainable development and leave no-one behind.

The Lab has **three main interlinked objectives**:

- **Increase the capabilities of developing countries to use innovative, evidence-based and result-focused approaches to design and implement south-south and triangular cooperation initiatives.**

The Lab is set to establish a dynamic Learning Platform tailored to its main beneficiaries, continuously adapting to connect local and regional knowledge and expertise. By harnessing South-South and triangular cooperation, it aims to bolster knowledge exchange and mutual learning. The Lab will also spearhead policy dialogues on innovation and cutting-edge technologies, and foster dialogues on inclusive digital transformation. Engaging with countries, it will foster idea exchanges grounded in evidence-based research and policy strategies, tapping into global, regional and national networks. Furthermore, the Lab will help set up and foster networks of researchers and practitioners, to join efforts to address selected complex development challenges.

- **Incubate existing and new solutions to complex development challenges to be shared and scaled up through South-South and triangular cooperation.**

The Lab will meticulously select both time-tested and novel solutions based on criteria such as technological viability, innovation, user-centricity, cost and potential for growth. It will manage an active repository of these solutions, encourage groundbreaking ideas, and forge partnerships to secure funding and alliances for further development and scaling-up. The Lab's scope will cover diverse tech sectors such as ClimateTech, AgroTech, FinTech, MedTech and EduTech,

³ It is also important to note here that these labs are diverse in scope, size and affiliation. Most originate from the United Nations system; some of the labs operate under periodic calls for submissions and piloting projects; and some work as knowledge-based platforms to support innovation.

⁴ UNOSSC's Lab builds on research conducted on concepts and work of existing and past labs while exploring the gaps, challenges and opportunities that have accompanied their development. With the aim of distinguishing and carving out its potential, unique contribution to the attainment of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNOSSC reviewed various Lab's reports, practical experiences and evaluations. Several accelerator labs have been identified and assessed in preparing this concept note, such as (i) UNDP Accelerator Labs, consisting of a global network of labs in 91 locations support in 115 countries that focus on addressing the SDGs through innovation, collaborative problem-solving and rapid prototyping; (ii) the Global Solutions Lab, which brings together students, policymakers and professionals from around the world to collaborate on designing solutions to global challenges; (iii) the Sustainability Accelerator Lab, a multidisciplinary research forum that aims to address sustainability challenges by combining insights from the social, natural and engineering sciences; (iv) the Green Tech Accelerator, which supports start-ups and scale-ups in the cleantech and sustainability sectors; (v) the Green City Labs and other innovation solutions in UNDP Country Offices; and (vi) Microsoft's Artificial Intelligence for Good Labs.

connecting technology providers with relevant country demands for support through tailored value propositions and knowledge-sharing. For established solutions, emphasis will be placed on those that have resulted from and/or shared through South-South and triangular cooperation as well as those that have been proved successful at various scales, notably at national and sub-national levels, and that show promise for replication and expansion.

- **Join forces to create, assess and develop new policies to accelerate country-led progress on SDGs through South-South and triangular cooperation.**

The Lab will support integration of the selected solutions and insights into national, regional and sub-regional policymaking and programmatic engagement. A core aspect of its support will be fostering collaboration in crafting policies and regional initiatives that address current and evolving challenges affecting multiple nations, thereby deepening the impact of South-South, East-East (where applicable) and triangular cooperation. Developing guidelines and frameworks may facilitate this effort, together with collective resource gathering and the creation of related actionable strategies.

More detailed information about the UNOSSC's Lab is available here [Solutions Lab - South-South Galaxy \(southsouth-galaxy.org\)](https://southsouth-galaxy.org)

Main objectives and areas of support of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Lab and related Innovation Challenge:

- To identify innovative and scalable solutions addressing key complex sustainable development challenges. Proposals should focus on leveraging local, regional, and inter-regional expertise and resources to expedite the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Priority areas may include sustainable agricultural practices, energy and energy transition, digital transformation and urban development, with a strong emphasis on technological viability, innovation, user-centricity, cost-effectiveness, and potential for growth
- To invite proposals aimed at creating and enhancing platforms for knowledge exchange, mutual learning, and capacity building among developing countries. These initiatives should aim to increase the capabilities of countries to follow an evidence-based and result-oriented approach to plan and implement South-South and triangular cooperation, fostering policy dialogues on innovation, and promoting inclusive digital transformation. Proposals should detail mechanisms for engaging with diverse stakeholders, facilitating evidence-based research, and connecting local and regional knowledge and expertise through dynamic Learning Platforms.
- To call for proposals that focus on the creation, assessment, and development of new policies and collaborative frameworks to accelerate progress on SDGs. These initiatives should aim at integrating solutions to address current and evolving challenges affecting multiple nations into national, regional, and sub-regional policymaking. Proposals should outline strategies for crafting policies and regional initiatives, developing guidelines and frameworks for cooperation, and facilitating collective resource gathering and action plan creation to deepen the impact of South-South, East-East (where applicable), and triangular cooperation.

Main objectives for the 2024 South-South and Triangular Cooperation Innovation Challenge:

- Harnessing connections between innovators in the Global South and North.
- Source, select on a competitive basis and support the development of South-South and Triangular Cooperation innovative solutions in specific thematic areas prioritized for 2024;
- Support the un-packing, improvement and repacking of existing and new innovative solutions and their adaptation and use in new contexts through South-South and triangular cooperation;
- Provide knowledge and research support to new solutions sourced through the Innovation Challenge;
- Support where possible the evaluation of the potential of specific solutions to become part of larger portfolios of solutions addressing specific complex development challenges in the Global South.

Definition of ‘innovative solution’ in the context of South-South and Triangular Cooperation framework

Given the diverse landscape of definitions for social innovation, including that of the OECD, it's recognized that there is not a singular understanding of this concept. The OECD defines innovation as "a new or improved product or process, or combination thereof, that differs significantly from the unit's (organization's) previous products or processes and has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process)." Concurrently, social innovation is broadly understood to involve the design and implementation of novel solutions that necessitate changes in concepts, processes, products, or organization, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the welfare and well-being of individuals and communities.

Considering the various interpretations and the practical applications of these definitions, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) aims to craft an actionable definition to guide the execution of its Innovation Challenge. We propose a tailored definition of "innovative solution" specifically for the context of South-South and Triangular cooperation. For the current Innovation Challenge, an **innovative solution is a novel or significantly improved product, service, process, or a hybrid combination thereof, distinctively tailored to address the developmental challenges in the Global South.** Solutions are created by innovators of different types (e.g. government institutions, academia, private sector actors and civil society) from one country or from a group of countries through a collaborative effort leveraging their unique strengths, resources, and knowledge. It is characterized not only by its novelty and improvement over existing practices but also by its contextual adaptability, ensuring that it addresses the specific needs, capacities, and aspirations of its target communities or environments.

Such a solution is deemed innovative within this framework when it successfully integrates and adapts (a) technologies, (b) methodologies and knowledge/data, and (c) funding/financial strategies from various contexts, creating a particular synergy that enhances development outcomes. It must demonstrate a significant departure from previous practices, incorporating new ideas or ways of thinking that contribute to Sustainable Development Goals. The innovation should have been made available to potential users (in the case of products or services) or brought into operational use (in the case of processes) in countries from the Global South, showcasing tangible benefits and improvements.

Such a definition emphasizes the solution's capability to be adapted and re-contextualized for different settings within the Global South, acknowledging the diverse socio-economic and

environmental landscapes. This adaptability includes a process of continuous learning and iteration, allowing the solution to evolve based on feedback, new insights, and changing conditions. It also underscores the importance of collaborative engagement, where countries and partners share knowledge, resources, and technologies to co-design and implement these innovative solutions, ensuring they are scalable, sustainable, and capable of driving meaningful progress towards shared development objectives. As complex problems require a multidisciplinary and non-linear approach, an innovative solution will be implemented as part of or will require a broader 'portfolio' of solutions⁵, therefore for the purposes of the UNOSSC Innovation Challenges priority will be given to solutions that can become part of a portfolio and implemented as part of a wider and more comprehensive 'portfolio' of solutions.

Types of innovative South-South and Triangular cooperation solutions supported by the 2024 Innovation Challenge

In 2024, the UNOSSC Innovation Challenge will provide support to **two distinct types of solutions**:

- 1) **Existing innovative solutions** – existing South-South and triangular type of innovative solutions will be selected on a competitive basis and will receive tailored support for replication and up-scaling. This implies that, once selected, the solution will be unpacked, analyzed, improved where possible, and 're-packed' and adapted to a new context. A specific set of criteria will be applied for the selection of such solutions, as well as specific dedicated support will be provided on a case-by-case basis. For the existing solutions, preference will be given to those that use Southern technologies, but also solutions that have Northern technologies already adapted to the context of the Global South.
- 2) **New solutions** – completely new solutions will be selected on a competitive basis and support will be provided to incubate or test the solution in a specific context through South-South and triangular cooperation.

Proposed thematic windows for the 1st Call

In 2024, the UNOSSC Innovation Challenge is open for South-South and triangular cooperation innovative solutions in the below proposed thematic areas:

- A) **Accelerating adoption of and investment in climate tech and renewable energy with focus on cost, access and efficiency aspects, including through South-South and Triangular cooperation.** Specific South-South and triangular cooperation innovative solutions could focus on such aspects as the use of data for better decisions and policies for accelerating energy transition and adoption of renewables; microgrids and decentralized power systems; other dynamic combinations of technology, human capacity and financing that proved to lead or have capacity to lead to accelerated energy transition;
- B) **Enhancing agricultural productivity and climate resilience, including through South-South and Triangular cooperation.** Specific innovative solutions could include new or existing innovative ways of using data for decisions in this thematic area, including

⁵ This could also include, for example, the policy baskets as advocated by the G20 Alliance against Poverty and Hunger - <https://ipcid.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Guidelines-for-the-Global-Alliance-against-Hunger-and-Poverty-Policy-Basket.pdf>

- combination of more traditional and new types of data (Earth observation, other big data, other); various applications could be submitted on areas such as timely forecasts, regional agricultural advisory services, support to crop management; broader solutions could be focused on modeling more targeted interventions to alleviate hunger and food poverty and other combinations of technology, human capacity and financing that proved to lead to improved resilience;
- C) **Financial inclusion and use of digital platforms, including through South-South and Triangular cooperation.** Specific innovative solutions could include the use of data for better decisions in this space, mobile money platforms, new services and expansion of coverage for existing applications and other combinations of technology, human capacity and financing that proved to lead or have capacity to lead to accelerated financial inclusion, particularly for unbanked populations, those marginalized or fully excluded;
 - D) **Better informed urban planning decisions, including through South-South and Triangular cooperation.** Specific innovative solutions could include solutions focused on the use of big data and other data in combination with other available datasets to inform better urban planning decisions in the context of urbanization, access to public services and increasing urban population vulnerability to climate related risks (e.g. extreme weather events). Such solutions could include applications through which countries and communities could exchange and use data to inform decisions on urban planning, human mobility, infrastructure decisions that transcend national boundaries, access to services. Data solutions that require combinations of new technologies, methodologies, or applications from Southern countries, including the Global South and North are highly encouraged.

The prioritization of the thematic areas is based on a thorough analysis of the needs of the member states expressed in various recent resolutions on South-South and Triangular cooperation, most recent global forums and key policy dialogues. Nevertheless, given the multitude of emerging needs, UNOSSC and the Lab partners will be organizing frequent Innovation Challenges to ensure that all complex development challenges are addressed.

The process to support innovative solutions

Overall, the process of supporting the existing and new solutions involves several key steps, including announcement, selection, shortlisting, and providing comprehensive service package to each specific solution. The service package integrates research and data support, possible funding, and brokerage support to connect countries with proven solutions to others seeking to implement these innovations in new contexts. Upon a case-by-case analysis, the support can be provided online, via the existing UNOSSC Galaxy platform and afferent communities of practice (COPs).

A more detailed explanation of the support is presented below:

1. Announcement and selection process

Call for solutions: The Lab launches calls for innovative solutions across various thematic areas. For the 2024 Call, the thematic areas are listed above. **These calls target existing and new solutions from member states, United Nations entities, and other partners that can be further developed and scaled up through South-South and triangular cooperation.**

Specific criteria are developed for selecting both established and new solutions, focusing on innovation, technological feasibility, cost, scalability, relevance to end-users, and additional relevant factors.

2. Shortlisting and support process

The Lab undertakes steps towards identifying, evaluating, improving, and supporting the implementation of existing solutions in new contexts, through short sprints (up to 6 months) for focused development and testing.

For solutions not already present in the Lab's repositories, new solutions based on available resources are incubated, involving ideation, prioritization, co-designing, and adaptation. External collaborators may be engaged in testing and execution based on the solution's complexity.

3. Main support 'windows'

The support is mainly provided through the windows below:

- 1) **Data and research support** – mainly to be provided by UNOSSC Knowledge Management Team – envisages specialized support within the agreed thematic areas and types of solutions with additional research and access to various data to generate additional evidence on the results/impact of the solutions. The Knowledge Management team will closely work with the owners of the solutions to un-pack, analyze, improve and repack each solution from the South-South and Triangular cooperation perspective, augmenting the knowledge of the owners and facilitating access to the global and regional markets for solutions through the UNOSSC's South-South Galaxy platform. Access to new data will be provided on a case-by-case basis, including access to data coming from the private sector. Support will be provided towards increasing the capacities of the owners and seekers of solutions to use available data and evaluate the impact of the tested solutions or anticipate the potential impact, depending on the specific case. Dedicated support will be provided on a case-by-case basis specifically on the use of existing big data, including Earth Observation data, that is an important layer of data that covers a myriad of thematic areas, and is highly qualitative, coming in with high frequency and resolution.
- 2) **Policy and institutionalization support** – UNOSSC to facilitate greater visibility, dialogue and policy feedback on the Lab Initiatives through mandatory reports for the High-level Committee and the annual Secretary-General's Report on the UN support to South-South cooperation. Share Lab experiences and adaptations among UN Agencies through the Interagency Mechanism as well as through regional partners and networks. Incorporate Lab solutions in the South-South guidelines and the e-modules for the UN Development System at global and regional level and for member states. UNOSSC to also facilitate exchange and dialogue on innovative regional approaches in collaboration with key partners such as the Regional Commissions, Issue-Based Coalitions, inter-regional, regional as well as subregional cooperative agreements,
- 3) **Brokerage and co-funding support** – envisages support in further connecting owners and seekers of innovative South-South and Triangular cooperation solutions with some already existing and similar solutions that are being tested on the ground through UNOSSC's Trust Funds and other initiatives. Such access will facilitate the testing and replication of the solutions and create the required 'new markets' for innovation.
- 4) **Co-funding support** – mainly to be provided on a case-by-case basis and depending on the resources mobilized by UNOSSC and its partners. Such funding contribution will not exceed **60% of the total project budget** and **not more than 40,000 USD** per solution.

4. Integration and scaling up.

The Lab assists in defining specific action plans for scaling up successful innovations, integrating these solutions into national, regional, and sub-regional policies and programs. This includes technical support for mobilization of resources and collaboration with governments, development partners, and stakeholders.

5. Knowledge sharing and capacity building.

An interactive learning platform is established based on the existing South-South Galaxy platform, tailored for member states and partners, offering a focused curriculum designed to foster dynamic learning and collaboration. The Lab serves as a space for experimentation, knowledge sharing, capacity building, and fostering innovation among developing countries.

6. Governance and oversight.

A Steering Committee oversees the governance of the Lab, providing strategic direction, overseeing execution, and ensuring transparency and accountability. This includes engaging with a diverse and dynamic consortium of practitioners, thought leaders, and experts to offer insights and guidance. An independent **Selection Panel** will be formed to evaluate the applications and select the winning applications.

Amount of awards

Financial awards of up to an amount of **US\$ 40,000** are possible on a case-by-case basis. Such contribution shall not exceed 60% of the total project budget per innovative South-South. The awards are possible on a competitive basis, in line with the provisions of the current Expression of Interest and within the framework of the available budget. For more information please visit: [Innovation Challenges | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://undp.org) for general conditions, regulations, and specific rules.

Duration of the project

The anticipated duration of a project ranges from 6 to 12 months. Exceptionally, projects may request an extension of their duration.

Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants to the Innovation Challenge Scheme are:

- Member states
- UN Agencies
- Collaborative groups of CSOs and private sector
- Collaborative groups of member states, UN Agencies, CSOs and private sector

Instructions to the application process

Interested applicants can apply through the open call published on [Solutions Lab - South-South Galaxy \(southsouth-galaxy.org\)](https://southsouth-galaxy.org). Only online applications through the UNOSSC's Galaxy platform will be accepted. Queries about the applications and application process should be sent to solutionslab@unoss.org.

Only those applications that were positively evaluated might be invited for a Pitch of the Application.

While preparing the Application, the following rules apply:

- Only one Application per applicant (including collaborative group) is allowed;
- Re-submission of modified and improved Applications after the deadline is not allowed;
- Clarifications or requests for support should be submitted to solutionslab@unoss.org dedicated e-mail address only;
- In the evaluation process, only complete Applications will be accepted. Documents required by hard copies must not be sent by mail to the UNOSSC or other development partners, before such requested, if the Award is offered to the Applicant.

Project Application Documentation

The Awarding will be conducted through an open selection procedure in one stage (Full Application).

Application Form and Project budget

The applicants should submit the Full Application and Project budget (Annex A and B) via online application at this link [Solutions Lab - South-South Galaxy \(southsouth-galaxy.org\)](https://southsouth-galaxy.org).

The Application form should contain the detailed elaboration of the innovative South-South and Triangular cooperation solution, analysis of the existing market for such solution, model sustainability and other aspects.

The Project budget has to be submitted predicting all project expenses during implementation phase, including both the award contribution as well as the Applicant's matching funds.

The Application form should encompass the following:

Evidence of initial results and technological readiness – Applicants are required to provide clear evidence of so far achieved initial results of the proposed innovative solution to address complex challenges in one of the priority four thematic areas (see list above). This includes estimating and justifying the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the proposed solution, providing a solid basis for understanding its current state of development and readiness for deployment.

Justification of innovation's potential for accelerating South-South and Triangular Cooperation - Applicants are required to detail the potential of the proposed innovation to accelerate South-South and Triangular Cooperation. This should include an estimation of the solution's impact, such as cost savings or reductions in global warming potential per functional unit. A comprehensive justification of how the solution contributes to key cooperation goals is critical.

Market viability and analysis – Applicants are required to provide justification that there is an existing market for the proposed innovative solution or clear elaboration on the potential market for such solution. This should include initial bottom-up market research to determine the market size and a description of the envisaged business model and go-to-market strategy. A preliminary competitor analysis, possibly using a quadrant matrix, should be provided to highlight the solution's differentiation from competitors and the status quo. Even if the solution has a first-mover advantage, applicants must explain how it stands out in the market.

Project Plan and implementation feasibility – Applicants are required to present a realistic plan of the Project activities to further develop and/or scale up the innovative solution so that these can be implemented considering technological, financial, time and market constraints, possibilities, and opportunities. This plan should align with the Gantt chart or similar in Annex A, with key performance indicators (KPIs) and milestones clearly matched. A task interrelation diagram would further clarify the sequencing and dependencies of activities, providing evaluators with a comprehensive understanding of the project's feasibility.

Readiness for testing and scaling - Applicants should assure that all necessary activities for preparing the innovation for testing or scaling up are included in the project plan. A well-defined pathway from development to large-scale deployment is essential for project success.

Team expertise and capacity - Evidence that the project team has relevant experience, skills, and knowledge necessary to implement the planned activities is required. Applicants should provide details of the team's expertise in innovation development, testing, and market introduction.

Internal gap and risk assessment - A thorough assessment of internal gaps in resources, skills, and knowledge needed for full implementation and long-term sustainability of the project must be included. Additionally, a project-specific technical risk assessment will be vital to understanding potential hurdles and strategies for mitigation.

Corporate and other documentation

Additional supporting corporate documentation shall be submitted individually by applicants who have passed a complete evaluation of the application and are offered the award agreement. In case the necessary documentation is not submitted within the required deadline, the Applicant will not be offered support and/or financed.

The documentation includes obligatory and non-obligatory items:

- Registration Certificate issued by Authority (start-ups and groups of initiative will provide this before contract signature)
- Certificate of proof of lack of tax debt issued by Authority (in case of start-ups or groups of initiative, this is relevant for individual team members)
- Proof of matching funds: company/organization financial contribution (e.g. financial revenue acquired through current business operations), investment contract (e.g. capital contributions), credit agreements with the banks or financial institutions, financial inflows expected from the ongoing and future business operations and similar sources
- For the collaborative group, a commitment letter stating co-applicants support and involvement during the whole project
- Bank statement from the dedicated bank account number
- All agreements with third parties directly related to the project, e.g. subcontracts (prior to signing of the Award Agreement, if applicable).

Eligible and non-eligible expenses

On a competitive basis, the award should be used by the Applicant for innovation development activities in the following group of expenses, independently of the weight:

- Gross salaries of development staff directly involved in the project, on the proportion of time allocated to the project
- Small equipment and supplies with a proven intent to support the prototype/implementation process or other (no day-to-day equipment usage will be accepted)
- Technology, design, business, development and other consultancy services like quality certifications, copyright and patent application and fees strictly linked to the innovation and its deployment
- Costs of tailored training of the staff are specifically required under the projects;
- Training end beneficiaries
- Other costs including travelling connected to implementation of innovation project
- For the solution designed for public sector, costs can also cover expenses linked to deploying the prototype within the partner institution, and within the admissible categories, except salaries and fees for the employees of the public institution

- Visibility materials, agreed in advance with UNOSSC and other development partners, only in case they refer to raising public awareness about the improved access to public services.

The expenses shown above should be predicted to reflect the Project goals and should be clearly justified in accordance with Project objectives. Only expenditures accrued during the project in accordance with the Project Budget and completed by the end of the project are eligible for funding. All agreements with subcontractors or third parties must be submitted with the Application and must contain provision that the Applicant retains ownership of all new intellectual property and know-how that may be created during the implementation of the project.

Expenses that will not be considered for financing by the Innovation Challenge Scheme include but are not limited to:

- Interest or debt owed to any third party
- Expenditure and provisions for possible future losses or debts
- Items already financed through another similar scheme, program or institution, financial awards
- Bank and currency exchange expenses, losses, fees and penalties
- Marketing, sales and distribution costs for promoting the technology, products or service
- Purchase or rent of land or buildings, including any renovation
- Cash payments from the project account.

Solutions evaluation and selection criteria

During the selection of the innovative solutions, including South-South and Triangular cooperation solutions, the following principles should be respected when assessing innovation projects:

- Open, transparent competitive process aligned with UNDP/UNOSSC rules and practices.
- Advocacy for fundamental human rights, particularly work rights and access to scientific and technological advancements.
- Promotion of equal opportunities and inclusivity, encouraging applications from women-led companies and ensuring fair evaluation of all proposals.
- Environmental sustainability integrated into all activities, highlighting innovations that contribute to sustainability.
- Commitment to excellence, supporting the highest levels of business, technological, and managerial quality.
- Commitment to positive social, economic and environmental impacts.
- Commitment to measure and evaluate the impact or estimate the potential impact of the solution.
- Transparency in all activities, decisions, and financial matters.
- Projects' impact and results must be measurable for evaluation.
- Ensuring operations and decisions are free from conflicts of interest.
- Upholding ethical business practices in line with UNOSSC values.
- Focus on scalability of innovations.

An independent **Selection Panel** will be formed to evaluate the applications and select the winning applications. The Panel will consist of at least 5 members, with at least 3 representatives from UNOSSC and 2 from other UN agencies and partners. The selection process will be guided by UNDP Rules and Regulations governing Innovation Challenges: [Innovation Challenges | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://undp.org/innovation-challenges).

The solutions will be evaluated according to the following evaluation criteria:

Criteria	Explanation	Points
INNOVATIVENESS CRITERIA		
Degree of innovation	a) The innovation is built on the completely new and fully collaborative idea and/or latest technological developments, is radically new and is superior to similar solutions, including South-South and Triangular cooperation solutions. It will lead to new and meaningful impact and consistently accelerate progress on SDGs. It will result in a new product, process and service for governments and communities.	7 – 10
	b) The innovation should result in a product, process or service that is better than similar solutions and it brings evident development to the existing array of solutions or introduces some new niche solutions.	4 – 6

	c) The innovation is unlikely to lead to a new or significantly improved product, process, or service for members states and communities.	0 – 3
Potential for South-South and Triangular cooperation	a) The innovative solution has the potential to be scaled up through a global or at least regional South-South and Triangular cooperation initiative. b) The proposed solution is new in some features but could be deployed only in the domestic market, but there could have an important impact at regional level. c) The proposed product, process or service could hardly exhibit any impact on even local market.	9 – 10 6 – 8 0 – 5
Degree of innovation risk	a) The innovation represents a potential breakthrough in an emerging technology or non-technological sector with potential high impact to accelerate South-South and Triangular cooperation. The technological and market risks are high, but the Applicant(s) have a considerable expertise in this industry sector. b) The market and technological risks are moderate, or the non-technological innovation is of moderate impact. The Applicant(s) have a solid experience of working in the specific area/field. c) The proposed innovation represents already known idea with no or very small impact on the South-South cooperation. The technological risk is minor and innovative solution is of low impact.	9 – 10 6 – 8 0 – 5
IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA		
Market size	a) The collaborative solution (innovative product, process or service) has a potentially very large and growing market with only limited competition. The potential for future replication is considerable. b) The collaborative solution (innovative product, process or service) has moderate market prospects, but the market will not grow or is open to competition. c) It is unlikely that a market for the innovative solution (developed products, processes or services) exists and it will be very hard if not impossible to replicate the solution.	9 – 10 5 – 8 0 – 4
Market access and risk	a) The Applicant(s) are already present on the relevant market or are qualified to test the solution. The market obstacles for access are clearly identified and specific measures to reduce risk proposed. For non-technological solutions, Applicant(s) must have proven experience in working in a South-South and Triangular cooperation setting. b) The Applicant(s) are only capable of accessing the market at some extent and will required UNOSSC or partners support.	9 – 10 5 – 8

	<p>Several barriers to the market have been identified and some specific measures to reduce risk have been proposed.</p> <p>c) The risks associated with testing the solution, related to access to market are too high.</p>	0 – 4
Alignment to specific SDGs	<p>a) The collaborative innovative solution (product, service or process) has very high potential to impact on the people’s wellbeing, either objective or subjective wellbeing. A clear impact evaluation methodology is presented by the Applicant(s).</p> <p>b) The collaborative innovative solution (product, process or service) has moderate impact prospects</p> <p>c) It is unlikely that the products or services will bring any measurable impact.</p>	<p>9 – 10</p> <p>5 – 8</p> <p>0 – 4</p>
SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION POTENTIAL AND PROJECT QUALITY CRITERIA		
Solution contribution to South-South and Triangular cooperation	<p>a) The proposed solution (product, service or process) will clearly contribute to fostering South-South and triangular cooperation and will further coagulate the efforts in the specific area or theme;</p> <p>b) The achievements of the collaborative solution should lead to an increase in South-South and triangular cooperation within the thematic area.</p> <p>c) The results of the implementation of the solution will have little impact on the future South-South and Triangular cooperation.</p>	<p>9 – 10</p> <p>5 – 8</p> <p>0 – 4</p>
Project Team	<p>a) Project team possesses key, complementary qualifications and has strong South-South and triangular cooperation strategic interest to implement the solution and to achieve the results.</p> <p>b) The project team possesses reasonable qualifications to reach project targets, but completeness of the team can be improved.</p> <p>c) The project team has no sufficient technical expertise overall to implement the solution and would require substantial technical assistance and support.</p> <p>Note: In case of equal scorings between two proposals, the team with more gender parity would be prioritized. This is to support gender equality promoted by the organizing institutions.</p>	<p>7 – 10</p> <p>4 – 6</p> <p>0 – 3</p>

Project Plan: Methodology and planning approach	<p>a) The methodology is precisely formulated and all key aspects of the solution planning have been taken into account of.</p> <p>b) A suitable methodology has been proposed, but not all aspects have been thoroughly detailed. Project breakdown of cost and resources at activity level, analysis of the needs as well as assumptions and risks are part of the planning but not fully satisfactory.</p> <p>c) The methodology is incoherent or unrealistic or incomplete.</p>	<p>7 – 10</p> <p>4 – 6</p> <p>0 – 3</p>
Project Plan: Deliverables	<p>a) The relevant deliverables are clearly identified and realistic and quantitative indicators will be available to fully assess progress of the project.</p> <p>b) Deliverables and time schedule are included but some aspects are not realistic or clear.</p> <p>c) The proposal lacks clear deliverables or these are unachievable within the duration or with the proposed team of the project.</p>	<p>7 – 10</p> <p>4 – 6</p> <p>0 – 3</p>
FINANCIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA		
Project cost feasibility	<p>a) Types of expenses and their amounts fully meet the needs of the project implementation. The total development costs are realistic given the duration.</p> <p>b) Expenses and their amounts do not correspond fully to the needs of the project implementation. It is necessary to correct and add or remove some types of expenses. But the total cost is within acceptable level of the realistic budget.</p> <p>c) Expenses and their amounts do not correspond to the needs of the project implementation. The total cost of development is not within acceptable percentage of the realistic budget and it is too low (or too high). The implementation is not feasible within the proposed timeframe.</p>	<p>7 – 10</p> <p>4 – 6</p> <p>0 – 3</p>
Project costs explanation	<p>a) Costs are fully coherent with list of eligible & non eligible costs from this Operational Procedures. Costs are arranged in categories according to the guidance. A clear breakdown of the budget is provided and evidence of own and external funding is clearly demonstrated.</p> <p>b) Costs are not fully coherent with list of eligible & non eligible costs from this this Operational Procedures. Costs are not arranged in categories according to the guidance There is no clear breakdown of the budget provided and evidence of own and external funding is not clearly demonstrated. It should be fixed.</p> <p>c) No satisfactory breakdown of the project budget and financing has been provided.</p>	<p>7 – 10</p> <p>4 – 6</p> <p>0 – 3</p>

Financial capacity of the Applicant(s) and matching funds provision	a) The Applicant(s) has demonstrated its own financial capacity to participate. Participating companies have their own resources and necessary liquidity to ensure financial contribution, ideally close to or equal contribution, to the Project or satisfactory investor.	8 – 10
	b) The Applicant(s) is in the near term expected to have the financial capacity to implement in the project, with clear demonstration that it will ensure necessary liquidity (letters of intent by the bank or investor, or private funds)	4 – 7
	c) The Applicant(s) has to provide another proof to be able to finance its participation.	0 – 3

The maximum obtainable number of points is 130. There is no minimum passing threshold, applications are ranked, and Selection Panel is deciding on which applications will get support.

Should you require further clarifications, kindly address them to the following email address: solutionslab@unoss.org.

Applications should be submitted electronically (no later than the deadline indicated in the announcement) to the following e-mail: solutionslab@unoss.org.

Please indicate in the subject line of the message “Application to UNOSSC’s South-South and Triangular Cooperation Solutions Lab, *[name of the applicant]* and [Country or group of countries]”. Application submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

All the applications will be received through the above-mentioned email. UNOSSC will not assume any responsibility for any failure regarding transmission and/or receipt of emails. UNOSSC will not accept any liability and/or cannot be kept liable for not receiving email submissions that are rejected by its servers due to the excessive size of the email (i.e. larger than 10 MB), viruses, spam etc.

UNOSSC reserves the right to cancel the application, evaluation and/or the award process and reject all applications at any time prior to award of an agreement without incurring any liability to the affected applicants.

Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.