

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are we?

About the WFP Innovation Accelerator and SDGx Acceleration

WFP has long implemented projects with the wider humanitarian community, supporting partners with logistics, engineering, digital identity management, cash-based transfers and emergency telecommunications.

Through its **SDGx Acceleration unit**, the WFP Innovation Accelerator builds on that history of implementing innovative projects with external partners, driving progress towards Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGx Acceleration unit combines expertise at the nexus of humanitarian and development work, with deep understanding of innovation and venture building frameworks in resource-limited settings, all of which is enhanced by the WFP Innovation Accelerator's global outreach and access to relevant entrepreneurial ecosystems in strategic regions. Since 2018, the WFP Innovation Accelerator has delivered over 20 SDG partner programmes and supported more than 190 ventures on their path to scale. Partners involved in these projects, among others, include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UNHRD, WHO, UNFPA, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster, the German Development Agency (GIZ), the Austrian Development Agency and Creating Hope in Conflict: A Humanitarian Grand Challenge.

Our calls for applications are an opportunity for us to source the most promising and daring solutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), from startups, NGOs, academic institutions or government agencies.

About the Smart Development Fund

The #SmartDevelopmentFund (#SDF) is a programme of the German Development Cooperation GIZ, under the patronage of the BMZ, EC and "Team Europe" partners from other European Union

Member States. With the primary goal of scaling digital innovations globally, the #SDF is committed to supporting innovators in accelerating their digital initiatives, including tech start-ups, digital entrepreneurs, NGOs, and social businesses, with particular emphasis on youth and women empowerment.

The impact of the #SDF has been significant, having already supported 9 digital innovations and scaled their solutions in 32 countries, reaching and engaging more than 13 million individuals worldwide.

Building upon these achievements, the #SDF is now launching its Digital Green Innovation Challenge (DGIx) to support digital innovations of the global south in addressing climate challenges in their countries and beyond. By scaling existing local innovations, the #SDF aims to contribute to ensuring a just and inclusive digital green transition, where no one is left behind.

Find out more about us: On our official website https://sdf.d4dhub.eu/ and on BMZ Digital Global Driving innovation to counter global challenges | BMZ Digital.Global (bmz-digital.global)

What is the Digital Green Innovation Acceleration Programme (DGIx)?

The Digital Green Innovation Acceleration Programme (DGIx*)* aims to support technology-powered solutions addressing pressing environmental challenges. The programme will select ventures, solution providers and consortiums who will receive financial, technical and methodological support from the WFP Innovation Accelerator and #SDF, and partners.

What is the WFP Innovation Bootcamp?

WFP Innovation Bootcamp is a 4-5 day virtual experience during which selected teams have the chance to dive into challenges, ideate solutions and refine project plans. Bootcamps introduce participants to innovation techniques such as human-centered design and the lean start-up methodology to create viable business models and solutions to improve the lives and livelihoods of diverse communities. The DGIx Innovation Bootcamp will end with an in-person Pitch Event – an opportunity for the selected 10 teams to share their solutions with an audience of investors and industry leaders who can help scale their ideas.

The Bootcamp is also a platform for the ventures to formulate and submit their Sprint proposals. The application for the WFP Sprint Programme becomes available after completing the Bootcamp.

What is the WFP Sprint Programme?

The WFP Sprint Programme is an intensive 12-month acceleration programme that, depending on the maturity of selected ventures, will help teams reach proof of concept and develop prototypes ready for implementation and/or scale. From 10 bootcamp participants, DGIx will select up to 5 ventures that will receive access to:

- support from the WFP Innovation Accelerator and #SDF, and relevant partners through the duration of their Sprints,
- mentorship and access to a global network of relevant stakeholders, and
- equity-free funding of up to US$230,000 for the implementation of a proposed growth plan.

Am I eligible to participate? Who can submit applications?

We welcome applications from any registered legal entities that fulfill the programme eligibility criteria, which can be found here.

For the DGIx, we are seeking solutions that address the mentioned challenges in the following target geographies: Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Togo.

Do I need to have a team?

Yes, your project should have a dedicated team that will manage its overall execution. If your application to the WFP Sprint Programme is successful, you will also be assigned a coach from the Accelerator and from #SDF to support and guide you with the management and implementation of the project.

What types of innovations do we support?

DGIx supports innovations with specific functional and maturity criteria. We welcome applications from any organization or consortium that meet both criteria below:

1. **Functional Criteria:** through this cohort, we are seeking innovations that enhance climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience. Refer to the Call for Innovation to find the identified challenge areas

2. **Maturity Criteria:** we are seeking ventures that:
    - Have at least a validated prototype
    - Have conducted pilot(s) or already established technical feasibility
    - Have proof of traction in one or more countries of the geographies of interest
    - Have identified revenue channels or are generating revenue.
    - Have identified or implemented functional distribution models and enablers that can help them attain replicability in a viable manner.

What are our selection/scoring criteria?

- Solutions that are transformative, novel, or innovative.
- Solutions that can have a strong impact on the identified challenge(s) and are scalable, particularly in the target countries/geographies.

- Solutions that can prove initial traction and match the profile of either the Scaling or Early Stage workstreams.
- Solutions with a financially viable business model and growth strategy.
- Solutions that are carried by a strong team with the relevant expertise and strengths to scale the solution.

How will the winners be selected?

Applications will be scored according to the above list of criteria. Final decisions on successful applicants are made by the WFP Innovation Accelerator, with the support of an Innovation Committee consisting of WFP representatives along with the programme's sponsors and subject matter experts.

What will we not fund?

- Proposals that do not present clear innovation; ideas that repeat conventional approaches without novel application.
- Proposals that are out of the scope of this call. This includes solutions not adhering to the functional criteria.
- Proposals for which proof of concept cannot be demonstrated, even at a small scale (from an operational perspective).
- Proposals for which impact is not quantified or proved.
- Proposals that do not consider the current context in relevant geographies.

What are WFP and #SDF Portfolio ventures?

You can find examples of portfolio ventures on the WFP Innovation Accelerator website and the #SDF website.

How do I submit my application?

To submit your solution, visit the DGIx programme page and fill out the application form.

Please be sure to check your eligibility and to answer all mandatory questions to the best of your ability. You will not be able to go back and edit the application once it has been submitted. On average, the application takes 30-60 minutes to complete.

Will my idea be published?

No, all applications are confidential. Applicants will be contacted before any submitted information is shared externally.

Can I apply more than once?

Yes, you are welcome to submit as many applications as you want, as long as they are focused on independent solutions or you are applying to different geographies.

What is the closing date?

The Digital Green Innovation Acceleration Programme (DGIx) is accepting applications until **Otober 1st, 2023, 11:59 pm (CEST)**.

What is the timeline of this program?

Key Milestones	Timeline
Call for Innovations launch	September 1- October 1, 2023
Information session	September 19, 2023
Venture selection deadline & and announcement	Mid November 2023
Virtual Bootcamp	December 4-7, 2023
In-person Pitch Event (Kigali, Rwanda)	January 31 - February 1, 2024
Due diligence and contracting period (TBC)	February - May 2024
Sprint programme (TBC)	May 2024 - May 2025

If my application is unsuccessful, am I able to receive feedback?

Due to the highly competitive application process and the high number of applications, not all applications are successful. We value all applications. However, we are only able to contact shortlisted applicants.

For all other enquiries, please contact global.innovation@wfp.org or feel free to attend the information session.