

Frequently Asked Questions

Request for Applications (RFA) Agri-MSME Digital Innovation Challenge:

Development and expansion of digital agricultural value chain business models and solutions to alleviate financial and other constraints for agribusinesses and smallholder farmers in the Pacific Island Countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tonga, Timor-Leste, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI))

- This document intends to provide answers to potential applicants for recurring questions about this RFA.
- If your question is not included in this document, please email to johan.nyqvist@uncdf.org and cc uncdf.rfa@uncdf.org under the subject line “Agri-MSME Digital Innovation Challenge”.

1. Who can apply under this request for applications (RFA)?

- For this request for applications (RFA), UNCDF invites applications from **registered** entities that can offer innovative and scalable solutions addressing one or more of the following challenges through five areas of intervention under this RFA (access to markets, access to finance/capital, access to inputs, efficient business processes, and access to information & skills).
- The applicant must be a **registered** entity in any of the targeted countries under the RFA (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tonga, Timor-Leste, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)). The interventions/solutions provided by the applicant must be implemented in one or more of the countries targeted under the RFA.
- The applicant must have audited financial statements for at least one operating year; if audited financial statements are not available at the time of application, the applicant must provide the latest management accounts at the due diligence stage and provide UNCDF with audited financial statements during the partnership.
- Entities registered outside of Pacific Region are required to have at least one local partner that is registered in any one of the abovementioned countries of the Pacific Region and apply as a consortium. The lead applicant shall be the entity registered in one of the 10 countries. If selected, the funding will be awarded to the lead applicant through the Performance Based Agreement (PBA) signed with UNCDF.
- Examples of registered entities that are encouraged to apply to this RFA are: Agritechs, mobile financial service providers, regulated Financial Institutions (Banks, Insurance, MFIs), regulated peer-to-peer lending providers, smart agriculture equipment providers, agricultural input suppliers/providers, agent banking aggregators, mobile network operators, technology providers, agricultural value chain companies, FMCG/ distributors/ wholesalers, Agritech companies and Fintech/Payment service provider companies. Other registered entities with



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solutions to address the challenges under the RFA are also welcome to apply. We strongly encourage Pacific-Region based businesses to apply.

- Joint applications between market players (including those examples of registered entities given above) in the target country or countries are encouraged if the solution proposed will expand delivery networks and promote rural and/or other last-mile access to market and financial services.
- Applications from consortiums of organizations must show that the partnership was established prior to this call for applications or due to this call for application with a letter of intent.
- The lead applicant and their financial service provider partner must be registered entities with at least one year of operations and must have statutory accounts and audited financial statements for at least one operating year. If audited financial statements are not available at the time of application, the applicant must provide the latest management accounts at the due diligence stage and provide UNCDF with audited financial statements during the partnership.
- If the applicant does not have regulatory approval to pilot the proposed solution in the target country or countries, then the applicant must partner with a regulated financial institution in the country/countries to deliver the solution.
- The solution proposed must be implementable in 2023 and 2024, with a project duration of between 12 and 18 months and activities are expected to be completed no later than December 2024.
- Applicants must contribute at least 30 per cent of the project's cash or in-kind costs (costs may include technical infrastructure, resources, and operations).
- Applicants shall not have been the subject of bankruptcy, liquidation, judicial settlement, safeguarding, cessation of activity or any other similar situation resulting from a similar procedure.
- Applicants and any of their staff or member of their board of directors shall not be included in the **United Nations financial sanctions lists**,¹ particularly in the fight against the financing of terrorism and against attacks on international peace and security.
- Applicants must not be involved in any of the following activities:²
 - Manufacture, sale or distribution of controversial weapons or their components, including cluster bombs, anti-personnel mines, and biological, chemical and nuclear weapons

¹ See: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/information>.

² See UNDP Policy on Due Diligence and Partnerships with the Private Sector (2013): https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/BERA_Partnerships_UNDP%20private%20sector%20due%20diligence%20policy%202013_FINAL.pdf&action=default



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- Manufacture, sale or distribution of armaments and/or weapons or their components, including military supplies and equipment
- Replica weapons marketed to children
- Manufacture, sale or distribution of tobacco or tobacco products
- Involvement in the manufacture, sale and distribution of pornography
- Manufacture, sale or distribution of substances subject to international bans or phase-outs, and wildlife or products regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- Gambling, including casino operations, betting, and so on (excluding lotteries with charitable objectives)
- Violation of human rights or complicity in human rights violations
- Use or toleration of forced or compulsory labour
- Use or toleration of child labour.

2. When is the application due?

Applications must be submitted by 23:59 hours (EST, the New York time zone) on 12th June 2023.

3. What languages should I use?

English.

4. How can I submit my RFA?

Applications must be submitted through the online form. Submissions via email will **not** be accepted.

5. With the online application form, an incomplete question blocks access to the next page. This means that I have no insight on whether any of these questions could be a deal breaker for my company and at which point down the line. Would it be possible to receive a document with all questions of the application?

A PDF version of the online application can be downloaded in the same RFA platform.

Please note that UNCDF will only accept applications submitted through the online platform and the PDF document is only for information purposes.

6. Can I submit multiple applications?

Applicants may apply only once under the RFA, whether independently or in a consortium.

7. Can I modify my application?

Yes, you can 'save' your application if you want to complete it in different stages while using the same device. However, it is not possible to amend your application after using 'submit'. Please prepare all the required answers and documents before submitting.

8. Does UNCDF provide any assistance in developing the concept note and proposal?

UNCDF will not provide any assistance to applicants in preparing proposals. In case of queries not addressed by these FAQs, and further clarifications on the RFA is required, please send an email to johan.nyqvist@uncdf.org cc uncdf.rfa@uncdf.org. Please mention in the email subject line – "Agri-MSME Digital Innovation Challenge".

9. How will my application be evaluated?

The applications will be assessed by a panel of UNCDF and independent experts based on the criteria in section 3.2 of the RFA "Evaluation criteria".

10. Can I apply alone or do I need partners?

Yes, an institution can apply alone, as long as it satisfies the requirements in in section 3.1 of the RFA (and given in answer to question 1 above, "Who can apply under this request for applications?").

11. Can I apply in a consortium with other firms or start-ups?

Yes, you can apply in a consortium with other firms or start-ups as long as you comply with the eligibility requirements set forth in section 3.1 of the RFA (and covered in question 1 above, "who can apply under this request for applications?"). In case of a consortium of entities applying to the RFA, the lead applicant will be responsible of:

- Submitting the application form on behalf of the consortium.
- Ensuring that each partner is fully aware of the composition of the partnership and of the contents of the Application Form.
- Signing the Performance-based Agreement with UNCDF.
- Fulfilling all obligations set out in the Performance-based Agreement.
- Ensuring the allocation and the fulfilment of the funds amongst the partner in the consortium in compliance with the Performance-based Agreement.
- Ensuring the allocation and the fulfilment of the tasks amongst the partner in the consortium in compliance with the Performance-based Agreement.

12. When a consortium application has been selected, will the entire consortium sign the performance-based agreement?

If a consortium applies and is selected, only the lead applicant will be signing the performance-based agreement with UNCDF and will be considered accountable by UNCDF and responsible for the other partner members.



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13. Can the lead applicant be from any country? Are there any restrictions on the country of intervention of a successful project?

In case of a single entity applying for the challenge, the organization must be registered in any of the targeted countries under the RFA. In the case of a consortium of multiple partners, the lead applicant must be a registered entity in any of the countries targeted under the RFA whereas other partners can be based anywhere. To further clarify, if any potential applicant is not operational and registered in any of the 10 countries, they must apply in consortium partnering with a local entity to qualify. The interventions/solutions provided by the applicant(s) must be implemented in one or more of the countries targeted under the RFA.

14. Is the US\$40,000 to US\$80,000 funding per solution?

Yes; US\$40,000 to US\$80,000 is allocated to solutions per country.