

*Empowered lives. Resilient nations.*

**Innovation Facility**

**2018 Call for Proposals**





**UNDP Innovation Facility | 2018 Call for proposals**

**Proposal General Information**

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| --- | --- |
| Country / Region Office or HQ Unit  |  Syria Country Office, RBAS  |
| **Title of Initiative**  |  Digital impact investment platform “Recover Aleppo with the Crowd” |
| **Requested Amount**  |   |
| **Initiative Contact Person**  |  Minako Manome, Economic Development and Livelihoods, UNDP Syria  |
| **Is this initiative part of an existing project / programme?** [If yes, please note project name, and Atlas ID. If no, please state name of the new initiative]  |   |
| **Funding Window** [select one]  | Development Impact: D Early Stage D Scale D Business Model Innovation D Transformative Innovation   |
| **Stage of Initiative**   | D **Early stage:** idea generation phase up to first prototypes created and initial user-feedback collected to further develop them D **Test & Evidence Collection Phase**: the initiative is being tested with a subset of target users, partners, and stakeholders. Evidence is being collected to support an impact assessment and feasibility analysis of the initiative before it progressesD **Transition to Scale:** the initiative has demonstrated small scale successes; it has developed a model and attracts partners to help fill gaps in their capacity to scale. D **Scale**: the initiative is in the process of replicating, adapting and sustaining an innovation across large geographies and populations for transformational impact. The innovation is as yet to reach sustainable scale. |

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| **Will further/other funding be available?** [How much? And from whom? Please note cost-sharing is encouraged] |  110,000 USD UNDP Syria is implementing an area-based Aleppo recovery project with a total budget of more than 2 million USD for 2018 alone, with major donors of KFW, Japan and SDC. 110,000 USD will be allocated as co-financing for this current initiative from this Aleppo project.  |
| **Which SDGs will this initiative help to meet?**[select up to 3] | * SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
* SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
* SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions
 |
| **What is the expected impact?**[Please note: all UNDP’s innovative initiatives are asked to report in the ROAR and provide supporting evidence to creating comparative advantage over status quo / old process] | DMore cost-effective in delivering the product/service DMore time-effective in delivering the product/service DMore targeted, in reaching the identified groupDMore effective in reaching bottom-of-the-pyramid householdsDChanges/enhances programming (at any stage) through newly gained insightsDMore inclusive processes in specifying development problems / designingsolutionsDNew ways of financing unlockedDGreater organizational operational efficiency (partnerships, procurement, human resources and others)DOther: [please specify] |

**Based on the window selected please fill in the relevant form:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Window** | **Form** |
| Development Impact -Early Stage | A |
| Development Impact - Scaling | B |
| Business Model Innovation | C |
| Transformative Innovation | D |

Note: the online form will automatically redirect to the appropriate form

**2018 Call for Proposals | Form A - Early Stage and Test & Evidence Collection Stage**

**1. What problem does your innovation respond to? Please share evidence and/or data to support the problem statement** (up to 200 words)

Please describe the development challenge that your innovation seeks to address. Is this a well-recognized challenge (perhaps described in the Country Programme Document/Theory of Change) or a new one? Where else are similar problems seen? Have there been any successful attempts to solve it elsewhere or in your context? Please reflect on the main assumptions you have about the problem and its underlying causes and make them explicit.

The Syrian crisis since 2011 had a major impact on Aleppo which has been Syria’s economic capital. A recent study estimates the repair and reconstruction cost for this alone at over 5 Billion US$. Significant number of Aleppines have been displaced due to conflict but started to return since 2017. During the first half of 2017 Aleppo governorate received the greatest proportion of returns of refugees from the neighbouring countries into Syria, totalling over 20,000 individuals.

A social divisor in Aleppo city, both before and during the crisis, has been a socio-economic division between the eastern and western halves of the city. East Aleppo has been described as working-class, generally poorer than the West and more socially conservative with large numbers of people who moved in from rural parts of the governorate. The role that economic and social inequalities between parts of the city played in conflict in the city, with many people from East Aleppo joining opposition armed groups in rural Aleppo during the 2011 and helping those groups attack the city in 2012. Since the start of the crisis, this social division has been strengthened in some ways due to the fact that destruction and violence in Aleppo has been disproportionately experienced in East Aleppo. Inadequate reconstruction or recovery efforts in affected areas, which are overwhelmingly in East Aleppo, may contribute to the reinforcement of structural inequalities between areas of the city, contributing to long-term drivers of conflict.

Engaging now on resilience support in Aleppo will on the one side respond to urgent, uncovered needs of the population and reduce the risk of a potential humanitarian emergency soon, while, on the other, it will enable to set the bases for enhanced recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation in the post-agreement phase. This proposal assumes that efforts to include all parts and communities of the city in the recovery process will prevent crystallization of structural drivers of conflict. We hypothesize that through the use of a digital platform to enable direct communicate between citizens, returning IDPs, refugees and city of Aleppo and by establishing impact investments platform to enable alternative financing for projects in Aleppo mechanisms), we can design and implement solutions for transformative change.

**2. What is the desired change you want to achieve?** (up to 200 words)

Project yourself 7-10 years in the future and imagine the success of this initiative: what does change look like? Please describe the desired outcome and formulate it with measurable indicators. Make sure to formulate a development outcome and not a successful solution. For example “X number of formal and informal new jobs created for X many women and X many men” instead of “X number of women and men participated in our entrepreneur trainings”. Think about impact at scale and how your work can contribute to systems-change. Think also ahead, imagine you will apply for scaling funding next year – what evidence will you produce to demonstrate the success of your initiative?

The outcome in 7-10 years is to declare the city of Aleppo as “Peace City” recovered from the conflict with minimum 80 % of Aleppines returned through facilitating inclusive recovery with the aim to reduce structural inequalities, ensuring the implementation in ways that promote participatory approaches between parts of the community in both former opposition areas and other parts of the city with:

* Use a crowdsourcing and crowd-solving digital platform to enable participation and inclusion of all segments of the city in making decisions that impact their lives, including returning IDPs and refugees, and provide channels for proposals that will make the city more resilient and speed up its recovery;
* Leverage Aleppines diaspora engagement to reverse the outflow of financial and human capital from Aleppo in the last years, and support of the recovery of Aleppo;
* Include in the digital platform an impact investment aspect of “Recover Aleppo with the Crowd” that is connecting civic crowdfunding projects for financing main priority projects as recognized during the crowdsourcing process; and
* It is expected to raise at least US$ 500,000 with creation of crowdfunding campaigns during the first 9 months; and to create a pathway to successfully recover Aleppo with enabling citizens and refugees to set up priority projects to be financed. Through the crowdfunded projects, it is expected to bring at least 20 new jobs.

**3. Formulate a Hypothesis** (up to 75 words)

Innovation is about testing ideas and iterating until they work. To achieve your desired outcome you will have to formulate and test different hypothesis. Have in mind the assumptions that underpin your problem? Building on that formulate the hypothesis you wish to test over the next 9 months as an ‘If …., then…” statement.

If we foster participation and inclusion of all segments of the city (including IDPs and refugees) in making decisions that impact their lives, and

If we enable a digital platform connected to strong crowdfunding platforms with a focus on Aleppo’s recovery,

Then we are unlocking adequate economic recovery with a focus on creating livelihood equal opportunities, addressing structural inequalities between areas of the city, contributing to IDPs and refugees’ returns and sustained peace; creating and reviving common spaces to promote a common identity, leading to “Peace City”.

**4. What is your proposed idea? What is its added value?** (up to 300 words)

Your hypothesis essentially outlines your idea for a solution. Describe it here in more detail. How will end-users be involved in shaping and testing the idea? What is the added value of this approach? What makes it innovative and strategic? Can your solution be a pathway to designing a country platform – please consider what this pathway would look like.

The proposed idea is **to develop and test a digital platform** that would a) enable dialogue amongst citizens, refugees, and the local administration of the Aleppo city to prioritize needs through crowdsourcing; b) enable problem solving and prioritizing projects through crowd-solving; and c) enable finance priority projects on the same digital platform through including impact financing into the digital platform and linking with various platforms including what is ran by other Country Offices such as LiveLebanon to crowdfund.

**Designing the platform “Recover Aleppo with the Crowd”** intends to make Aleppo more livable through direct communication with citizens and refugees that lived there before. As such, enabling crowdsourcing of ideas and crowd-solving of solutions, and setting up an innovative resources mobilization mechanism through crowdfunding, thus, leading to safer, greener, and socially resilient city whilst reducing various risks. The platform will facilitate the broad engagement of the civil society, public, and business communities into the problem-solving process. New ideas will be brought for overcoming (or bypassing) key barriers that currently hamper the development; and by rethinking of infrastructure problems such as providing electricity to crisis-affected areas.

**Designing the Innovative Financing Mechanisms**: The initiative will ensure crowdfunding and crowd-investing for selected several projects with connections to diaspora, refugees, donor community, business sector that would be interested to invest in it.

This platform will be connected to the world’s leading crowdfunding platforms and enable not only donations to rebuild Aleppo, but will also serve as an impact investment platform. The first focus of the investments will be to support social and environmental impact entrepreneurs who are working in Aleppo; and some crucial infrastructure such as bringing solar powered lights, creating safe places for children etc.

The added values of this approach will include: co-innovating with citizens and refugees alike, engage them and building a better future. The innovation will come from the active dialogue with the community on prioritizing needs and solving challenges together with citizens and the local administrations. Innovation will also be introduced by allowing ordinary citizens to become impact investors in Syria’s recovery.

**5. What is the process to test your idea and monitor the roll out?** (up to 300 words)

Describe how you will test your idea. How will you monitor if you are on the right track? Please describe what data will you use as a baseline, what data will you collect during the test phase and how. Proposals must spell out an iterative process with a focus on creating evidence to inform the next steps to obtain funding.

**By the end of 3 months**:

* Understanding lessons learnt from other UNDP CO’s similar initiatives including YemenOurHome, and LiveLebanon as to design a platform
* Conducting needs and gap analysis, and identifying stakeholders and partnering crowdfunding platforms.
* Consulting with Aleppo city officials for adopting ConsulProject open source platform to be used for Aleppo in cooperation with the city of Madrid.

**By the end of 6 months:**

* Setting up aggregating platform “Recover Aleppo with the Crowd” and linking it to at least 4 different crowdfunding / crowdinvesting platforms connected to it;
* Setting up a public awareness campaign for citizens to include them in identifying priority needs (dialogue stage);
* Submitting ideas for priority projects; and to vote for them by smart phones and offline voting by tokens (prioritization stage);
* Using crowdsourcing process to get at least 100 proposals on projects/activities for Aleppo (projectization stage);
* Identifying and engaging with the Aleppine diaspora to leverage their networks, and human and financial capital, relying on technologies that allow willing Aleppines to contribute remotely to the inclusive recovery process (crowd-funding stage);
* Development and implementation of a marketing strategy to promote this platform and overall visibility of the campaigns put on it; and boost further interest among prospective investors.

**By the end of the project:**

* Setting up at least 4 crowdfunding campaigns on different platforms and supporting their implementation until they are successful through providing advisory support;
* Finding matching donors and partners that will increase the amount collected by crowdfunding campaigns;
* Continuous communication with media, the city of Aleppo, refugees and citizens;
* Supporting project implementation and supporting the sustainable pipeline of new projects for the platform by empowering local stakeholders and the city of Aleppo;
* Setting up “Aleppo Recovery Lab” with the support of the city and local and international stakeholders in order to ensure sustainable management of the digital platform and solutions that come out from it.

**6. Design for scale! What is the scalability potential?** (up to 300 words)

Draw a timeline from the beginning of the experiment to a date in the future, when you achieve the desired outcome. Be ambitious: design a proposal that aims at changing the lives of tens of millions within 5-10 years! Introduce milestones: what can you test and achieve within the next 6 and 9 months, what is needed to take over your idea and bring it to a larger scale. At what scale do you see it being impactful: regional, national, sub- national or local? Aim at sustainable scaling: who will be interested in your idea, who will support it financially? Is there political will for change? Do policy or regulatory frameworks need to change to allow scaling? Proposals that reflect on the political environment for scaling solutions and changing systems are more likely to obtain funding.

Proposal **aims at changing the lives of millions of Syrians in Aleppo in 5-10 years, declaring the city of Aleppo as “Peace City”**. Seed-funds will enable testing of the digital platform to identify needs through interactive engagement with the populations concerned through crowdsourcing and crowdfunding for Aleppo. It is expected that there will be major returns to Aleppo, this pilot model will be tested in response to this dynamic context of returns and reintegration to serve many. The achievements will be measured against the indicators on how many ideas were generated and implemented, how much funds have been achieved through crowdfunding but also at personal behavioral, community, institutional and structural levels (measured by micronarratives).

**Once proven to be effective, the platform will cover other cities**, sub-regions, and beyond to connect to Syrian refugees. The Government of Syria is interested in the application of the decentralization law. As such, this proposal will support the change in addressing the challenges and opportunities through direct engagement with the populations and diaspora.

**Using the digital platform to ensure direct communication** with all actors within the city is speeding up the recovery process and making them more resilient. By enabling the platform to also finance such priority projects – bringing transparency regarding where the money is coming from and how it is spent – is enabling impact investment to happen and to quickly bring financing where it is needed the most.

**Resilient cities** have in place the governance, social and financial infrastructure to adequately respond to sustain the peace, and to recover quickly and to bounce back to become stronger than before (future prepared). In this proposed case, resilience would be ensured by giving the voice to underrepresented – in order to prioritize possible projects by using simple digital platforms adopted for use in Syria through smart phones and with tokens in stores.

**7. Manage risks** (up to 200 words)

Innovating carries risks. What are the risks associated with testing your idea? How will you assess and monitor these risks? What is your plan to mitigate these risks?

1. **Lack or slow response from the Government counterparts** due to political sensitivity in engaging communities in the process - UNDP has been actively engaging with the municipality and governorate of Aleppo in ongoing service delivery and livelihoods activities.
2. **Lack of trust of communities to engage in the process**- UNDP has ongoing initiatives on social cohesion, which will support open communication with communities.
3. **Lack of willingness of partners to be a part of the platform** - UNDP AltFinLab has developed a wide range of networks to identify different incentives for partners, design a consultative participatory process which will generating buy-in for the partners.
4. **Lack of interest of private sector to cofinance the crowdsourced and crowdfunded projects** - UNDP Syria has started to map private sector inside and outside the country for fostering the dialogues and engaging them in the economic recovery of the country. They expressed interest in supporting this initiative financially from the very beginning.
5. **Lack of technical knowledge for fostering crowdsourcing and crowdfunding process** – UNDP AltFinLab is already in touch with existing platforms which expressed their interest to support this project.

**8. Introduce the team!** (up to 150 words)

Funders invest more in teams and a solid process. Describe briefly the team members, their areas of expertise and, if applicable, what skills are missing and how will you get them on board? Please be open regarding areas of expertise you are missing in your team: the seed-funding provided can help you address these gaps. Proposals with a short description of the team members, their core skills and areas of expertise, along with a short list of missing skills, are more likely to receive funding. We aim to support good teams that can iterate and become innovation advisors for the entire organization! Please feel free to also introduce team members who are not UNDP staff – this is certainly welcome.

UNDP Syria has just established an Innovation Core Group within the office composed of the members from the programme portfolios and operations with a mission of “To build an incisive and collaborative community of innovators who act for impact”. Amongst them, the following members will directly engage on the proposed initiative:

* Hala Rizk with expertise of Social Cohesion and Local Development
* Hayan Saffour with expertise of Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Essential Services
* Abir Achi with expertise of Energy
* Rani Sabboura and Tawfiq Alnhlawi with expertise of information and computer technology, and artificial intelligence
* Minako Manome with expertise of Economic Development and Livelihoods, who is also an innovation focal point

The expertise missing in our team is Big data mining and analysis, and experience of establishing and managing crowd-sourcing and crowd-funding. The team is in consultation with the UNDP AltFinLab iand Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development for their technical support and linking this current initiative to other countries’ similar initiatives-e.g. “LiveLebanon” in Lebanon and “Resilient City of Mogadish” in Somalia.

**9. Propose a budget**

How much do you need for what activities? Propose a rough budget to test your idea over the next 9 months. Identify any cost-sharing that (a) is being undertaken; and (b) will be undertaken if the initiative is successful in

9 months i.e. pledged funding. Please make note of the amount and source of cost-shared funding. For example, if the proposal requests $60,000 in funding from the Innovation Facility, the team must show at least another

$25,700 from other sources – making the total budget of the proposal $85,700.

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| **Item** | **Cost (US$) InnoFac** | **Cofinancing** |
| Adopting crowdsourcing platform ConsulProject for Aleppo |
| Translating the page to Arabic and adopting to Aleppo | 5,000  |  |
| Hosting server and IT support | 6,000 |  |
| Marketing campaign for crowdsourcing on Aleppo between citizens and refugees | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| Setting up aggregating platform ”Recovering Aleppo with the Crowd” |
| Web designer for setting up the platform, connecting ConsulProject and other crowdfunding platforms and continues support during the project | 10,000 |  |
| Getting partnerships with other crowdfunding platforms; gap analysis and finding additional stakeholders to build the ecosystem | 7,000 | 20,000 |
| Reaching out to diaspora groups and networks | 7,000 | 10,000 |
| Creating crowdsourcing and crowdfunding campaigns on ”Recovering Aleppo with the Crowd” |
| Supporting crowdsourcing campaign on ConsulProject  | 5,000 | 10,000 |
| Supporting at least 4 campaigns on external crowdfunding platforms (includes local travel; visual and other materials; lawyer costs) | 20,000 | 10,000 |
| Supporting the implementation of projects  | 7,000 | 50,000  |
| **Total                                                  77,000 110,000** |
| Overall 187,000 |
| GMS |   |   |
| **Total** |  |   |