**Why Innovation?**

This is a VUCA world – volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity are the new normal; and we have to act accordingly. The business case for innovation for UNDP and its partners has been made by the new UN Secretary-General and UNDP’s senior management; it is iterated in the QCPR and the early drafts of UNDP’s new Strategic Plan. We have seen Country Offices around the region use a range of innovative approaches, from big data in Tunisia to micro-data in Jordan, from social innovation camps in Egypt and Iraq to open innovation challenges in Yemen, from foresighting to gamification in Sudan. By “doing development differently,” colleagues are generating new kinds of insights, establishing a broader range of partnerships, mobilizing resources from unexpected sources, and most important achieving sustainable results.

**Call for Proposals**

This year, the UNDP Innovation Facility invites colleagues in Country Offices, Regional Hubs and HQ to work with them to test new ways of working. After supporting more than 110 experiments in across 76 countries over the past three years with seed-funding and many more with advisory services, they will build the 2017/2018 portfolio, together with you, around the following emerging service lines:

1. Alternative Finance
2. Behavioral Insights
3. Data Innovation
4. Public Sector Innovation Labs

The Innovation Facility also invites you to apply for funding if you are working on:

1. Scaling innovations
2. Testing entirely new approaches for key development problems

If you have an idea you would like to test or work you would like to expand in these areas, we ask you to prepare proposals, for up to $80,000, and send them by **1 June 2017, 5pm EST** to Jennifer Colville, our Regional Innovation Team Leader. Please read below for more information about these areas of work, the underlying principles, selection criteria and the proposal template.

**Four Principles for innovation in 2017**

Based on the lessons of the past years, these principles are framing our efforts this year:

1. *Think of the change you want to achieve, not the solution.* Innovation in UNDP is not an end in itself. It is paramount to clearly define the desired change you aim to achieve and to have realistic mechanisms in place to monitor whether the innovation achieves the desired change.
2. *It is not just about ideas but about testing ideas*. We will put an emphasis on funding a well-thought out processes of understanding the problem, testing ideas, then designing a solution for larger scale. You are invited to propose a process that starts with understanding the problem better and generating different experiments to design a solution instead of proposing a solution right away. We will not fund one-off events or processes that do not outline how the desired change can be measured.
3. *Assemble the right team*. To test a hypothesis, it is important to have team members who are great in execution, others who are aces in marketing and communication and those who can create new partnerships and yet others who are data experts or IT specialists. The specific profile of the team depends on your very proposal. Just like angel investors, we take a close look at the team behind a proposal and the competencies the members bring to the table.
4. *Design for scale.* The SDGs are a highly ambitious agenda. We invite you to be bold and design proposals that aim at changing the lives of millions. Designing for scale entails clear pathways for data collection to assess whether the innovation can be scaled; it entails a scaling pathway that ideally includes financial sustainability in the not too distant future and it entails an assessment of the political economy in which an innovation will flourish.

These overarching principles will inform the funding decisions for proposals in these areas which are emerging as new service lines and which we seek to expand with you in 2017:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Emerging Service Line | What is it? | What do we want to drive? |
| Alternative Finance | Test the viability of new ways of financing the SDG achievement. This includes crowdfunding, impact bonds, disaster bonds, any other forms of pay-for-success instrument, digital currencies and access to finance through context-adequate technologies. | The setup of new finance architectures at the country or regional level with concrete investment cases; the practical test of blockchain or successor technologies and new partnerships for financial inclusion with best-fit models. |
| Behavioral Insights | Use findings from behavioral science to improve policies and programmes that have a behavior change component. The approach entails testing different options to alter ‘choice environments’ and nudge people to act in accordance with their own long-term goals. It comes with rigorous M&E mechanisms to assess what works. | The adaptation of tested models such as using behavioral insights to improve tax compliance or reduced energy use. Or testing this approach in unexplored fields related to UNDP’s mandate. An important criteria will be the capacity to run evidence-based experiments among large user groups. |
| Data Innovation | Leverage new and emerging data sources to produce better and ideally real-time insights that help deliver on the SDGs and that help improve decision-making. | Identify and use emerging data sources to improve decision-making. Use new data to generate new and more granular insights about populations. Test new models to identify M&E mechanisms for SDG Tier 3 indicators. |
| Public Sector Innovation Labs | Setting up dedicated spaces with Government partners to a) redesign public services with citizens; b) create feedback mechanisms between government officials and citizens; c) develop ‘experimental policy design’ trials; d) launch Challenge Prizes to invite citizens to solve development problems. Some Labs focus on one element, others on all. | Work with government innovation champions on outcome-based, concrete experiments that can lay the foundation for future Labs. Broker knowledge exchanges with UNDP’s established Labs to inspire Government partners to invest in innovation. Initiate the redesign of services for at-risk communities based on established methodologies. |
| Scaling Innovation | After conducting smaller experiments to assess whether an innovation has the desired effect on the development problem and gathering evidence, it is complex to bring an innovation to larger scale as it requires the right partners and often to decommission old ways of delivering. | Initiatives that have clear evidence of initial success are invited to work with the team on a) unlocking funding that helps to further scale, b) further improve a scaling pathway that pursues reaching more people, with a focus on marginalized communities, and that aims at financial sustainability of the innovation. |

**Eligibility criteria**

All UNDP Country Offices are eligible to receive funds from the UNDP Innovation Facility. Teams from Regional Hubs and HQ are also eligible to submit proposals. For proposals from Regional Hubs and HQ teams that include testing or scaling the initiative in Country Offices, an endorsement of the Country Offices’ participation must be a part of the proposal.

**Proposal format**

Please see pages 4-7 for the proposal format. Proposals are usually up to 4 pages.Previous proposals that have received funding can be found [here](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/development-impact/2015-year-in-review/).

**Proposal submission**

Regional thematic teams and projects and COs should submit proposals by **1 June 2017, 5pm EST** to your Regional Innovation Advisor. HQ thematic teams and other units are invited to send the application to the global Innovation team.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Global** | **Africa** | **Arab States** |
| [Benjamin Kumpf](mailto:innovator.support@undp.org)  [Malika Bhandarkar](mailto:innovator.support@undp.org) | [Marc Lepage](mailto:Marc%20Lepage%20%3cmarc.lepage@undp.org%3e) | [Jennifer Colville](mailto:Jennifer%20Colville%20%3cjennifer.colville@undp.org%3e) |
| **Asia Pacific** | **ECIS** | **LAC** |
| [Alex Oprunenco](mailto:alexandru.oprunenco@undp.org) | [Milica Begovic](mailto:Milica%20Begovic%20%3cmilica.begovic@undp.org%3e) | [Wilmer Castañeda](mailto:Wilmer%20CASTANEDA%20%3cwilmer.castaneda@undp.org%3e) |

**Reporting requirements**

Recipients of seed funds will be asked for: a) a brief written update of their learning mid-way; b) a blog entry to be published on undp.org and/or the Country/ and or Regional Office website; c) submission to the innovation section of the 2017 ROAR and a brief end-of-year narrative reporting template.

To promote global learning from this investment, successful teams commit to participate in relevant global/regional innovation events, learning webinars and provide input into policy development surveys.

**Funding ceiling**

1. Seed funding awarded to successful Country Offices, Regional Hub and HQ teams will be up to US$ 80,000 per proposal (inclusive of GMS at 8%).
2. Cross-regional proposals are particularly encouraged across Country Offices from different regions with a higher funding ceiling of up to US$120,000 per proposal (inclusive of GMS at 8%).
3. We encourage proposals to have at least 30% in cost-sharing from the Country/Regional Offices/HQ teams, Government or partners. For proposals that are ready to scale, we encourage at least 50% in cost-sharing of finances.

**What is the selection process?**

Proposals received by the deadline will be assessed by a review committee comprised of the global Innovation Facility team, UNDP experts on data and select external partners.

The review committee will score in accordance to the above mentioned principles with an emphasis of evidence-based approaches and feasibility of the implementation plan. We encourage the early submission of quality proposals!

**Proposal Template**

The following **format and guiding questions** have been elaborated to support UNDP Country Offices, Regional Hubs and HQ teams in the drafting of innovation proposals.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **GENERAL INFORMATION** | | |
| **Country Office / Regional Hub / HQ unit** | Regional Hub of Amman (Arab States) |  |
| **Title of Initiative** | Innovation4Cast – Innovation Podcast in Arab States |  |
| **Requested Amount** | $14,256 |  |
| **Initiative Focal Point** | Jennifer Colville |  |
| **Is this initiative part of a new or existing project /programme?** | No |  |
| **Stage of initiative:** | ☐ **Early stage:** ideas generated, prototypes created and initial user-feedback collected to develop them  X **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 progresses  ☐ **Scaling-up:** following testing, the initiative has solid data proving the effectiveness of the innovation and is now working with partners to expand the scope to reach more people, geographies, new markets etc. |  |
| **Type of Innovation approach/es being tested** | ☐ Alternative Finance ☐ Behavioral Insights  ☐ Data Innovation ☐ Public Sector Innovation Labs  X Other: Communication for Development |  |
| **Will further/other funding be available?** | No |  |
| **Which SDG target will this initiative help to meet?** | SDGs covered will depend on country case studies selected |  |
| **What is the expected development impact?** | ☐ More cost-effective in delivering the product/service  ☐ More time-effective in delivering the product/service  ☐ More targeted, in reaching the identified group  ☐ Changes/enhances programming (at any stage) through newly gained insights  ☐ Other: More effective ways of knowledge sharing  [Please note: all UNDP that innovative initiatives are asked to report in the ROAR and provide supporting evidence to the following question: Did the innovation result in evidence that suggests its comparative advantage over status quo / old process?] |  |

**INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION FOR PROPOSALS**

Fill in **FORM A** for Early-Stage and Test Phase initiative. Fill in **FORM B** if you are applying scaling up an innovative initiative.[Please ensure to answer all the questions across the 9 sections]

**FORM A: FOR** **EARLY-STAGE AND TEST PHASE INITIATIVES**

1. **What is the problem? What evidence and/or data supports the problem statement? (up to 200 words)**

Please describe the development challenge. Is this a well-recognized challenge (perhaps described in the Country Programme Document/Theory of Change) or is it a new one? If you have assumptions what causes the problem, make sure to make these assumptions explicit and do not imply what possible solutions could solve the problem. Add available evidence and data to support the problem statement.

Working out loud is a core component of UNDP’s innovation for development approach and principles, and is a requirement of Innovation Facility funding. Working out loud helps document and share experiences and lessons learned at the national level as well as helps elicit input and feedback on our programmatic activities, often from unlikely corners. It can lead to new opportunities and new partnerships (e.g., FabLab Bahrain initiated contact with us to undertake a Crowdfunding Academy in Bahrain based on social media activity during the Global Crowdfunding Academy in April). Working out loud acts as evidence for reporting purposes and contributes to organizational learning. It also provides visibility for the work carried out by UNDP to a wider global audience.

There is much innovation work in the Arab States region, but innovation champions often “work quietly,” rather than out loud. Too often innovation activities are not documented and stories of change and impact left untold. Too often the approaches teams take, and the lessons they have learned, are not shared, depriving others of inspiration and encouragement, as well as possible partners. One of the most important aspects of working out loud is to show colleagues and national partners that they are not the first, or alone, in their innovation journey; this message is often what gets teams over the initial hurdle of innovation.

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

Imagine yourself several years from now: you and the team have achieved your goal and helped to create tangible change. 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 how many women and how many men” instead of “X number of women and men participated in our entrepreneur trainings”. Check to see if the initiative you are proposing can contribute to the results noted in the Country Programme Document.

Imagine your experiment is successful and you will apply for scaling funding next year – what evidence will you produce to demonstrate the success of your initiative in the first 9 months?

We aim to have innovation become something that CO colleagues and national partners welcome as an integral part of their planning and programming process, and look to as something that adds value to their services offerings and their programming. Innovation is an approach that they do not fear or are not (entirely) skeptical about. We aim to do this by telling stories of innovation and innovators, by making innovation more accessible and relatable, by showing the positive impact that innovation can have on individuals, organizations, and communities.

* Short term (9 months):
  + 6 podcasts of innovation stories produced and disseminated.
  + 1,000 downloads per podcast, in English; 500 per podcast, in Arabic
  + CO colleagues and national partners around the region are better informed on innovation work and methodologies in the region.
  + UNDP Innovation Facility possesses qualitative evidence of innovation results for M&E purposes.
  + UNDP reaches a broader, previously untapped audience with its innovation for development message in the in Arab States region.
* Medium term (18 months)
  + UNDP regional Innovation team produces a regular, branded podcast series that showcases innovative work carried out by COs and counterparts in the region.
  + There is increased demand for / use of innovative approaches by UNDP COs and their national partners.

1. **Formulate a hypothesis (up to 75 words)**

Innovation is about testing ideas and to iterate until they work. To achieve your desired outcome you will have to formulate and test different hypotheses. Formulate the hypothesis you want to test over the next 9 months as an ‘If …., then…” statement. The attached template can help you.

If UNDP uses an alternative communications delivery mechanism to share the stories of innovative experiences in the Arab Region, then:

* UNDP colleagues and their national partners across the Arab States region, and globally, will have access to further examples of methods and approaches to address development challenges, and will be more inclined to use innovative approaches, methodologies and tools.
* UNDP will possess an evidence base of the results of innovative initiatives in the region.
* UNDP’s profile in the inno4dev space will be higher.

1. **What is your proposed idea? What is the value added of this idea? (up to 300 words)**

Your hypothesis mentions 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 value added of this idea? What makes it innovative or strategic? Who has solved this challenge (including outside of UNDP)?

The idea is to develop a creative storytelling series delivered through podcasts. Radio and audio are extremely popular in the region and reach more people than the internet, with only TV reaching more people than audio.

The objective is to use podcasts to examine and communicate the innovative work led by Country Offices and their national partners. In the first phase, we will produce six podcasts, all following a similar format/structure, but each one telling a personal story of innovation for development in one country. Each will focus on a different theme/sector and different innovation methodology. The stories will dig into the challenges, tease out the lessons, and celebrate the successes as individuals and organizations have broken the waves in search of doing development differently.

The target audience for the podcasts are three-fold: i) UNDP colleagues who have not yet “tried” innovation, to familiarize them with innovation for development and demonstrate that others have used innovative methodologies and lived to tell the tale; ii) national partners who are interested in seeing that others have tried something ground-breaking before, making it easier for them to test the waters and gain their higher-ups’ support; and iii) potential donors, to showcase UNDP’s support and encourage funding for similar initiatives.

COs would need to apply to become the subject of a podcast. They would be chosen based on the narrative potential, the availability of people to interview, the innovative-ness of their approach.

The podcast would become branded, each podcast with the same narrator, structure, music, and closing with a signature/offbeat question (or a lightning round of questions), e.g., what is the color of innovation? The podcasts would be produced in both English and Arabic to expand the reach (French for stories from North Africa).

We would work with a regional audio storytelling/podcast outfit, called [Sowt](https://sowt.com/) (voice in Arabic), that recently launched an Arabic-language podcast series.

1. **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? Proposals that are based on solid evidence will have higher changes of obtaining funding. Please describe what data you will use as baseline, what data you will collect during the test phase and how. Proposals that are able to build in real time monitoring or data collection are encouraged.

Our success will depend on how compelling the stories we choose to tell are, how effective we are in telling them, and how effective we are in marketing the podcast series.

The monitoring process will be two-pronged, the first about the podcast reach:

1. Number of downloads / people reached
2. Number of countries where podcast is downloaded / heard

And the second about the impact of the podcast:

1. Impressions/opinions on the podcast, its story, and innovation for development
2. Number of demands for innovation support that are triggered due to the podcasts.

The following timeline is proposed to be carried out during nine months; where one podcast would be launched every month and the elaboration of the first podcast would take two months:

1. **Design for scale! What is the scalability potential for the proposed idea? (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. We invite you to be ambitious in your goals: design a proposal that aims at changing the lives of tens of millions within 5 years!

Introduce milestones: what can you test and achieve within the next 6 and 9 months. Add 1-2 paragraphs below the timeline and describe who needs to take over your idea to bring it to larger scale. Aim at financial sustainability: if your test is successful, who wants your idea and who can take it over? At what scale do you see it being impactful: regional, national, sub-national or local?

We would like to begin with testing of podcasts and measuring their uptake through the elaboration of six podcasts. If the podcasts are successful, then there is the potential of:

1. Creating a regular podcast series in the Arab States region focused on innovative experiences. Interested COs could pitch their stories and help finance the elaboration of the new podcasts.
2. Expanding the development of podcasts at a global scale, meaning that other regions and HQ could also participate in the podcast series with stories from different countries and global initiatives.
3. **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?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Risk** | **Monitoring** | **Mitigation Strategy** |
| Delays in the elaboration of the podcasts due to delays in obtaining information from COs and unavailability of interview subjects | Weekly liaison with COs. | Plan the podcast elaboration so that the first Country Offices involved already have up and running inno initiatives. Provide hands on regional support. Elaborate timetables with COs in order to ensure that deliverables will be met on time. |
| Little buy-in / interest from colleagues in the region | Coordination with COs and communications officers. | The Regional Hub will work with the communications officers from COs and the Hub in order to disseminate the podcast. |

1. **Introduce the team! (up to 100 words)**

Funders invest more in teams and a solid process than in ideas themselves. Describe briefly the members of the team, their areas of expertise and if you are missing skills, what are these? How can you get them onboard?

The initiative will be led by the regional innovation lead in Amman, Jennifer Colville. She will coordinate with the innovation focal points and communications teams in each selected CO, as they would be responsible for providing inputs, reviewing the scripts, and validating the final products.

The regional innovation team would partner with *Sowt*, a podcast platform that provides high quality, on-demand audio content for Arabic speakers around the world. Sowt, under the supervision of the Regional Innovation Team, will provide editorial support (an experienced journalist to conduct research, interview the cases, and develop a script); technical assistance (all equipment, high-quality production); and post-production (editing, adding narration, music, and other sound effects).

1. **Propose a budget**

How much do you need for what activities? Please note that up to US$80,000 is available per proposal (inclusive of GMS at 8%). 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 special note of the amount and source of cost-shared funding.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Budget Item** | **Amount US$** |
| Podcast production, |  |
| * Research, interviews, post-production ($1200 per podcast), two languages | 7,200 |
| * Travel to selected countries ($1000 per podcast) | 6,000 |
| 8% GMS | 1,056 |
| Total | 14,256 |