WFP INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Does your innovation offer **relief**, foster **resilience** and disrupt **hunger**?

Apply before **30 July 2023 11:59 pm (CEST)**

UN WFP World Food Programme | INNOVATION ACCELERATOR

Call for Applications

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Innovation Accelerator is dedicated to identifying, nurturing, and scaling bold new solutions to tackle global hunger and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In response to the unprecedented global food crisis, we are launching the WFP Innovation Challenge to discover groundbreaking innovations that address the urgent needs of millions affected by hunger.

Today, over 828 million people - more than one in ten of the world's population - still go to bed hungry each night. The number of people facing acute food insecurity has reached a record high of 345 million, up from 135 million in 2019. More than 900,000 people worldwide are fighting to survive in catastrophic hunger/one step away from famine. The cost of delivering food assistance has reached unprecedented levels due to soaring prices of food and fuel. The combination of increased expenses for food and transportation, worsened by the economic consequences of the pandemic, climate change, and the conflict in Ukraine, has made food inaccessible for millions of people, placing significant strain on WFP's operations.

This edition of the WFP Innovation Challenge seeks to identify and support disruptive social innovations that address key challenges in the fight against hunger. We are particularly interested in solutions for humanitarian assistance and supply chain resilience as we aim to ensure that every **donor dollar goes further in addressing hunger**, while reducing the need for ration cuts. Additionally, we are looking for innovative solutions that foster close collaboration with the private sector to combat the global food crisis together.

We encourage startups and nonprofit innovators to submit their innovative solutions that can help eliminate hunger, build resilience to shocks and stress, improve access to safe and nutritious food, advance equitable livelihoods and youth engagement, strengthen climate change adaptation in food systems, and enable greater resilience for vulnerable communities in an increasingly adverse and unpredictable environment.

Together, we can work towards achieving our goal of zero hunger and transform the lives of those who need our help the most.

Application Deadline: 30 July 2023 11:59 pm (CEST)

What We Offer

The WFP Innovation Accelerator has a track record of organizing 51 flagship innovation bootcamps to date, supporting over 440 teams to rapidly refine their innovations, field testing over 100 solutions within WFP operations, and bringing 22 disruptive social innovations to scale, reaching 37 million people in 2022 alone.

Selected teams:

- will be invited to take part in a three to five days long WFP Innovation Bootcamp and Pitch Event;
- will have the opportunity to apply for the WFP Sprint Programme, a six-month acceleration programme providing up to US$100,000 in equity-free funding, mentorship, and connections to our global field offices in 120 countries and territories;
- may qualify for further funding and support, if they are scaling innovations that have proven their concepts and value for social impact.

What We Are Looking For

For this edition of the Innovation Challenge, we are looking for both **low and high tech solutions** that enable early planning and effective delivery of relief assistance. We also encourage strong "wildcard " entries. We aim to identify and support exceptional innovations from around the world that hold the potential to address these challenges on a significant scale. WFP's current innovation priorities are listed below:

1. Preparedness and Prevention

The global landscape of emergencies has become increasingly complex, spanning prolonged conflicts, economic crises, natural disasters, and disease outbreaks. WFP is adapting its operations in alignment with this evolving reality, prioritizing the timely readiness of its human resources, systems, and tools. This means we need to improve our risk assessment, contingency planning, and proactive strategies to facilitate prompt response and anticipatory actions to safeguard lives and resources. Therefore, we actively seek new solutions that:

- perform global and data-driven monitoring for escalations of conflict and violence, focusing on sudden onset of conflict with a 6 month-outlook period;
- use generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) model specifically trained on UN material to support projections of potential future shocks and scenarios on (1) humanitarian needs and (2) in-country WFP operations;
- accurately predict exchange rates and local prices for the next one to three months;
- provide country-level and medium-term (1-year) probabilistic forecasts on food-security deteriorations with high recall rates. The system should include trend analysis and visualization tools to assist analysts in prioritizing medium-term operations across a substantial number of countries;
- run data-driven simulations that can be modified to specific contexts and enhance WFP's ability to prepare for emergencies;
- enhance skillful weather forecasting or early warning systems for weather events (e.g. floodings, tropical cyclones, heat waves) by utilizing Cloud Computing, AI post-processing, global ensemble models, etc. These systems should be designed to include people living in rural and hard-to-reach areas; and,
- monitor or detect seismic activities and deliver rapid early warning messages to governments, local communities or decision-makers.

2. Effective Relief Assistance

During crises, delivering timely and appropriate support is crucial for WFP. Effective relief entails addressing immediate needs like food, water, shelter, and medical assistance. For the past sixty years, WFP has provided emergency food assistance, often in conflict, post-conflict or disaster situations. To this day, we continue to assist displaced communities who are deprived of basic resources by cataclysmic events, and it requires efficient coordination, targeted assistance, and respect for the dignity and rights of affected communities. Therefore, we seek innovative and new solutions that:

- immediately estimate the population impact after a sudden onset hazard using predictive and/or historical modeling;
- establish a central repository that streamlines the coordination of staff deployment in an emergency;
- monitor efficiency gains/cost savings from emergency preparedness integration;
- forecast the availability or facilitate the procurement of high-energy bars to be distributed in emergencies;
- use remote sensing or radar-based technology for damage analysis/assessment and humanitarian assistance; and,
- optimize the time and cost efficiency of logistics deployment and assistance delivery in the aftermath of a disaster.

3. Supply Chain Resilience

At any given time, the WFP is on the frontlines in the fight against hunger. Thousands of dedicated staff channel their expertise and use all means at their disposal – trucks, planes, ships, helicopters and even amphibious vehicles – to ensure that vast quantities of food and other essential items reach those who need them most. However, in times of crisis, unforeseeable supply chain breakdowns hinder WFP's emergency assistance to affected communities. Thus, establishing a resilient supply chain is crucial. Supply chain resilience involves the ability to withstand and recover from disruptions, ensuring continuous functionality. Hence, we are seeking innovations that:

- provide cost-effective solutions that help health workers to measure malnutrition accurately, while reaching the last mile and covering all members of the target groups;
- implement an agile and responsive production system that centralizes manufacturing, resulting in reduced lead times and minimized inventory costs to address inefficiencies and waste;
- introduce a mobile clean energy-producing generator that harnesses renewable resources, providing a reliable and sustainable power supply in off-grid locations; and,
- utilize data-driven solutions to improve supply chain resilience in the face of climate change and emerging risks while ensuring the sustainability of business activities.

Eligibility Criteria

Applications will be scored according to a standard set of criteria set by the WFP Innovation Accelerator, including:

- alignment with WFP operational priorities and the impact towards the Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger;
- the level of innovation the solution brings to WFP and the humanitarian sector at large; and,
- indicators that the solution can be feasibly integrated and financed in the long-term, including the team qualifications.

Application Process

- To submit your application, please fill in **this Application Form** before **30 July 2023 11:59 pm (CEST)**.
- Or, if you know a relevant innovation that you would recommend for this challenge, please let us know by completing **this Referral Submission Form**.
- We will review and match successful applications with one of our WFP Innovation

Bootcamps in the next six months. The next WFP Innovation Bootcamp will be held in November 2023. While we value all applications, we are only able to contact shortlisted applicants.

Interested but don't feel your innovation is ready yet? Don't let this stop you! We accept applications on a rolling basis throughout the year, and applications received past this deadline may still be considered for future programs in 2024. For more information, see the **Frequently Asked Questions**.

About the WFP Innovation Accelerator

The WFP Innovation Accelerator sources, supports and scales high-impact social innovations to disrupt hunger. Based in Munich, Germany, we provide WFP employees, entrepreneurs and startups with funding, hands-on support and access to WFP's global operations. Through the Innovation Accelerator, WFP is leveraging unprecedented advances in digital innovation — such as mobile technology, artificial intelligence, big data, robotics and blockchain — and new business models to transform the way we serve vulnerable communities across the world. Since 2015, the WFP Innovation Accelerator has supported more than 100 social innovations , with 22 of them scaling up to achieve significant impact. These innovations have impacted 37 million lives in 2022 alone and will continue to do so, in support of WFP's humanitarian field operations. Find out more and explore our portfolio of innovations in the WFP Innovation Accelerator Year In Review 2022.

Find out more about us: **wfp.org/enablers** and **innovation.wfp.org**. Subscribe to our **e-newsletter**. Follow us on **Twitter** and **LinkedIn**, and watch our videos on **YouTube**.