



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

93891 - UNV Innovation Challenge Fund

Modelling the economic and social contributions of volunteers to the Sustainable Development Goals

Meeting the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda requires the efforts of all of society. Everywhere, every day, ordinary people are acting on the issues that they care about. Over one billion active volunteers are carrying out a wide range of roles, from providing care and support to neighbours, extending basic services to under-served areas, campaigning for policy change, or building new relationships across polarized communities.

Although significant in size and scope, it is difficult to get a comprehensive picture of the contributions that these volunteers are making to our societies. Research shows that volunteers can make indirect and direct contributions, both through the specific tasks or activities that they complete, but also indirectly through improved health and well-being, increasing skills and confidence, and by strengthening trust, cooperation and innovation in communities. But to date, there has been limited investment in building from this research to analyse the benefits of volunteering and to integrate this into policy priorities at national or sub-national level. Stronger evidence and models could help nurture volunteering and its positive contributions both for individuals and for societies.

This Open Innovation Challenge therefore seeks ideas of how to apply existing data and research on volunteering to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, to help better understand:

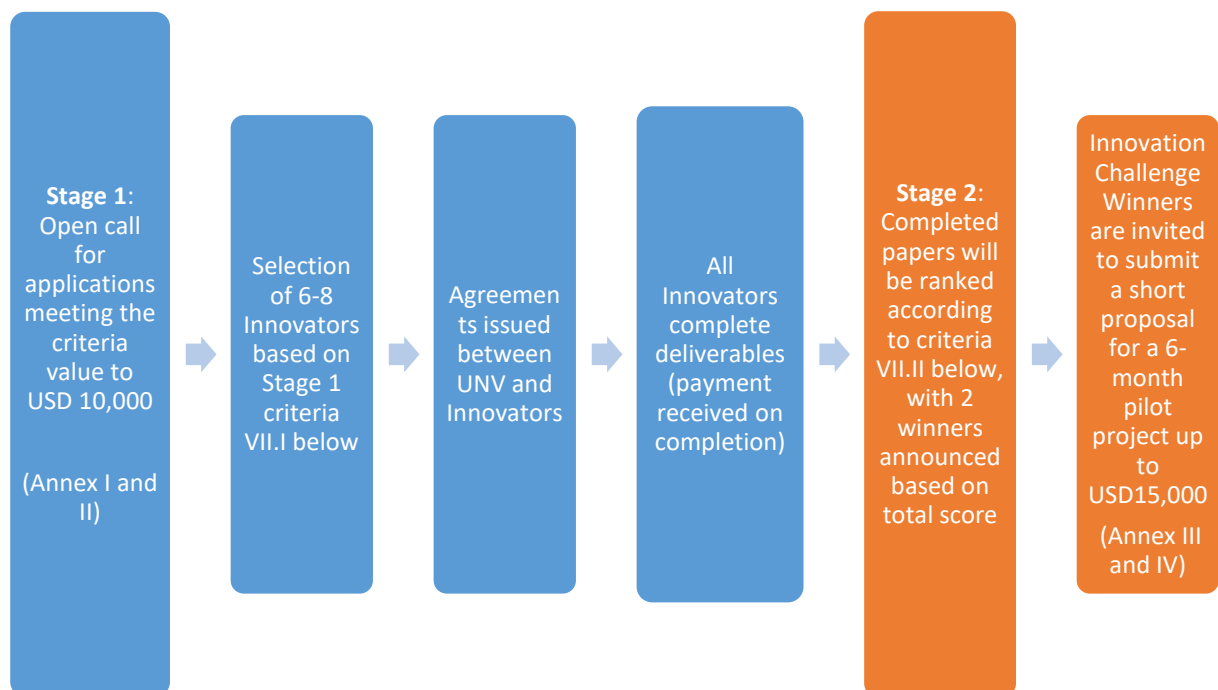
- Analytical approaches: What are some potential qualitative and quantitative analytical frameworks or models that could help understand the contributions of volunteers at community, district, municipal or national level to the Sustainable Development Goals?
- Alternative data sources: What are some freely available data sources that can be combined to provide insights or analysis on volunteerism and how would this be done?
- Measures: Which supplementary indicators or targets could better integrate an understanding of citizen contributions under specific SDG goals, targets or indicators?
- Models of development: can analytical models incorporating volunteering tell us more about the nature and quality of human development?



Under this Innovation Challenge (Stage I), UNV expects to form partnerships with 6-8 applicants to create and develop possible approaches to the above questions. Selected innovators will produce a 5,000-word paper including diagrams and infographics and will participate in Innovation Challenge activities as part of a community of practice. The papers will be published as part of an anthology for the Global Technical Meeting on Volunteering 2020 and will also inform a toolkit being developed on the measurement of volunteer work by UNV.

I- WHAT IS IN IT FOR YOU?

- Join a dynamic community of practice to share ideas and provide challenge through the study development process.
- All selected innovators will have their work published by UNV, including on the global Knowledge Hub on Volunteerism.
- Based on the final submissions by the innovators, two contributors will be awarded a further USD 15,000 to pilot their idea in relation to one context (country/community) by the end of 2020.
- Based on progress by May 2020, one innovator may be selected to participate in the Global Technical Meeting on Volunteering in July 2020 at the High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs in New York (maximum 2 representatives).



II- BACKGROUND

Globally, over one billion people are active volunteers¹, engaging in a wide range of activities from service delivery in communities, to participation in crowd-sharing information platforms.

In its report on the state of the world's volunteerism in 2018, UNV estimated the global formal and informal volunteer workforce at 109 million full-time equivalent workers, a number exceeding the workforce of many major global industries. Globally, 70 per cent of volunteer activity is organized informally between persons. Volunteering occurring formally through organizations and associations has relatively equal participation rates between women and men. Informal volunteering tends to have lower status and is largely carried out by women and girls, who take on more than a 70 per cent share in some regions. Thus, women constitute globally most volunteers, at 57 per cent.²

Analysis by the International Labour Organization in 2018 shows that in total, **103 governments have now collected data at least once on the scale and scope of volunteer work, using a range of sources including Labour Force and Time Use Surveys.** However, significant data gaps still exist, particularly in the least developed countries. Moving forward, under a partnership with UNV to support greater availability of data across all contexts, and particularly in low and middle-income countries, new tools are being developed and tested by ILO to increase data availability through national official statistics.³

Beyond understanding the scale and scope, there are a **plethora of approaches to understanding the value and contributions of volunteer work**, both qualitative and quantitative. For example, Voluntary Services Overseas has carried out extensive research on the value of volunteering for development together with the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex.⁴ As highlighted below, a number of countries have published national cost-benefit analyses or social return on investment studies of volunteering for organizations. Volunteer-involving development agencies are using a range of approaches to understand economic and social contributions from stories of change, to participatory evaluation and research.

¹United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme (2018) Global trends in volunteering infrastructure. Bonn

² United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme (2018). State of the World's Volunteerism Report: The thread that binds. Volunteerism and community resilience. Bonn.

³ ILO (2018) Review of national practices in measuring volunteer work: A critical review.

⁴ VSO International (2015) Valuing volunteering: The role of volunteering in sustainable development



Yet beyond individual pieces of research, there have been limited efforts to further develop approaches to more systematically understand and integrate the **contributions of volunteering to national development priorities**. Better evidence would not only enable citizens' contributions to be reflected and valued but would help inform policies and investments to maximise the positive impact of volunteering. UNV analysis of Voluntary National Reviews for the SDGs shows that overall 29 of 46 reporting countries (63%) documented the contributions of volunteers in 2018, increasing from 40 per cent in 2017 and 9 per cent in 2016 to reflect a whole-of-society approach to planning and implementation.⁵ However many countries could only provide case studies on volunteer activities under a single sector or theme, rather than analysis on how quantitatively or qualitatively this made a difference, particularly for those left furthest behind. This leaves an evidence gap when considering how public and private actors' investments in social infrastructure through volunteering can support development objectives.

To address this gap, UNV is establishing an opportunity for qualified individuals or institutions to **develop and showcase approaches to modelling the economic and/or social contributions of volunteer work that governments and policy-makers may consider and apply in the context of the SDGs**. Examples of existing analysis include:

- Aldrich and Sawada (2015) reviewed mortality rates across communities relating to the 2011 Tohoku Tsunami in Japan, in light of data on demographics, geography, infrastructure, political conditions and social capital (including volunteering). They found that stocks of social capital were important determinants for survival, in particular horizontal ties that increased social interactions and built networks of reciprocity within communities.⁶
- In 2018 the Government of Australia, drawing on data from the University of Adelaide, estimated the annual economic and social contribution of volunteering in the country as \$260 billion, based on returns to volunteers and the communities that they support.⁷ The 2015 OECD How's Life? Report estimated the GDP value of volunteering for 25 OECD countries using harmonized European Time-Use Survey data, showing that the economic contribution ranged from 4.7% in Australia to only 0.2% GDP in Hungary.⁸

⁵ United Nations Volunteers (UNV) guidance note (2018) Reflecting citizen voluntary contributions in Voluntary National Review 2019 available at: https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/REFLECTING%20CITIZEN%20CONTRIBUTIONS%20VNR%202018_0.pdf

⁶ Aldrich and Sawada (2015) 'The physical and social determinants of mortality in the 3.11 Tsunami' in *Social Science and Medicine* 2015 Jan 124: pp66-75

⁷ 'Report of the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals' 2018, Government of Australia

⁸ OECD (2015) How's Life? Chapter 5 p213

- Qvist and Munk (2018) look at the economic returns to volunteering for individuals in Denmark suggests that for labour market entrants there can be significant returns to volunteering for a minimum of a year, however this effect becomes insignificant after 6 years of labour market experience.⁹ In the UK, a human capital approach to cost-benefit analysis of the national citizen service scheme done, estimated a benefit-to-cost ratio of between 5.9 and 8.3, factoring in life satisfaction and earnings premium of participants.¹⁰
- Devaney (2017) proposed Civic Investment Value 4.0, to respond to the fourth industrial revolution takes the SDGs and the New Economics Foundations' 'Five Ways to Well-Being' as a basis for understanding policy potential based on reciprocity and sustainability.¹¹

To date, more policy research has focused on the economic contributions of volunteering as a form of work or human capital investment. **However, social value, and indirect and direct well-being measures would also be highly relevant to consider in terms of the value of volunteering.** Both understanding 'intangible assets' and moving beyond GDP measures of success are key issues for policy-makers of the 21st Century. Traditional measures including GDP also tend to lack the ability to look beyond time-fixed production and consumption periods, for example to understand how current activities and behaviours affect the sustainability of peaceful and equitable societies. They also tell us very little about how or whether people are able to lives that are satisfying and meaningful to them.¹²

Understanding the impact of non-tangible assets such as innovation, collaboration and social capital are challenging. But progress has been made - for example, statistical models examining the relationship between well-being and a number of variables, including social capital have been able to successfully predict over 80 per cent of the variation in subjective wellbeing across countries, including the World Happiness Report where regressions were able to explain over 70 per cent of variation in well-being.¹³ Constanza et al (2016) suggest in the case of the SDGs that a hybrid approach combining both wealth and well-being aspects may be most useful for measuring success, covering the contributions to sustainable well-being through measures of economy, society and nature. **There is scope under this fund to link up to some of the innovations in these areas to consider how**

⁹ Hans-Peter Y Qvist, Martin D Munk, The Individual Economic Returns to Volunteering in Work Life, *European Sociological Review*, Volume 34, Issue 2, April 2018, Pages 198–210,

¹⁰ Jump (2018) 'A well-being and human capital value for money analysis of the NCS 2015 programme'

¹¹ Devaney (2017), 'Civic Investment Value Index', The Indigo Prize, LetterOne

¹² Coyle and Mitra-Khan (2017), 'Making the Future Count', The Indigo Prize, LetterOne

¹³ Vemuri and Costanza, 2006; Abdallah et al., 2008 cited in Constanza et al (2016) Modelling and measuring sustainable well-being in connection with the UN Sustainable Development goals in *Ecological Economics* 130



measurement work on volunteering might contribute and deepen well-being measurement more broadly.¹⁴

The Plan of Action and Global Technical Meeting on Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda

In 2015 the UN General Assembly endorsed a Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 agenda, most recently re-confirmed under General Assembly Resolution 73/140 in December 2018. Under this process, UN Member States, Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia and Stakeholders are working together to collate and share knowledge on volunteering for the SDGs. A global technical meeting will be held on 15th July 2020 at the High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs in New York, to present regional and country experiences on partnerships with volunteers under the 2030 Agenda.

Under the Plan of Action process, UNV and partners will make a number of small research agreements with economic and social researchers from academia, public sector, private sector, civil society and others to develop and present possible quantitative and qualitative models for better understanding the economic and social contributions of volunteering, in the context of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and respective targets.

III- OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS/ DELIVERABLES

The overarching objective of the Innovation Challenge is to share innovative ideas and approaches that use volunteer work data and evidence to reflect on particular policy issues and to raise interest among policymakers, and to increase demand for volunteer work particularly in those geographical regions where coverage is low.

Due to time constraints, papers produced under this call should use secondary data sources (e.g. existing national statistics, published research or existing organizational or other data) to develop methodologies for, but not limited to:

- Interrogating current and relevant national or sub-national statistical models and theories on priority issues such as reducing employment, eradicating violence, improving service coverage, by integrating existing data and evidence on volunteer work

¹⁴ Costanza et al (2016) Modelling and measuring sustainable well-being in connection with the UN Sustainable Development goals in *Ecological Economics* 130

- Researching other relationships/correlations between volunteer work and its contribution to specific development goals and targets including via intermediary factors (such as social innovation) drawing on a range of data sources
- Looking at how measurement of volunteer work can strengthen broader human well-being and development models 'beyond GDP'
- Further developing or sharing models regarding the economic and social contribution of volunteers, beyond replacement market value to include current and future benefits to volunteers, to target populations and to wider communities and societies.
- Providing feasible policy recommendations based on methodologies and findings to strengthen systems to enable better estimation of the impact or contribution of volunteer efforts, including possibilities of relevant SDG indicators relating to volunteer work
- Any other proposed approach or methodology on the value of volunteer work that could be of use to public-policy-makers in the context of the 2030 Agenda

Demonstration and testing of the approaches (quantitative or qualitative models and frameworks) can be done at global, national, sub-national (e.g. municipal or community) levels in a particular context; however, the ability to apply the proposed models to a diversity of contexts including lower income countries is an important consideration and the issue of applicability should be addressed in the analysis/discussion of the paper. The rights of UNV and Plan of Action partners to access and reproduce data used in the assignment must be assured.

The resulting models/papers will be published ahead of the Global Technical Meeting on Volunteering (July 2020) and the content will inform and may be reproduced in whole or in part in the Global Synthesis Report on Volunteering, the Secretary-General's Report on Volunteering 2021 and the State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2021. Depending on the outputs, authors may be invited further to participate in these processes as technical experts.

Selected innovators will be expected to complete the following deliverables in Stage I which will be included in the agreement with UNV:

No.	Deliverable	Due date
1.	Submission of inception report to UNV	15 January 2020

2.	Participation in the inception workshop (location to be confirmed and logistical arrangements by UNV, so no need to incorporate travel costs in proposal only participation time)	30 January 2020
3.	Monthly updates and participation in monthly community of practice activities including feedback to other innovators	By 15 th of each month (February, March, April)
4.	Submission of draft paper	15 April 2020
5.	Incorporation of feedback and submission of final paper	5 May 2020

Awarded Innovators will be paid a lump sum on satisfactory completion of deliverables 1-5 by 5 May 2020.

Upon submission of the final papers, the winners of the Challenge will be automatically included in Stage II. They will be invited to submit a proposal for further activities, with bespoke deliverables depending on those submitted in the proposal and included in a new agreement.

IV- ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The eligible applicants include any individual or organization (public or private) that can demonstrate relevant expertise in volunteerism research and measurement or a related field (governance, social development). Collaboration/partnerships under one proposal are possible, however UNV will only be able to issue one agreement with one individual and/or responsible legal entity per proposal and additional internal arrangements must be made by innovators. Organizations or institutions must identify the lead personnel who will be involved in the development of the paper in their proposal.

V- HOW TO APPLY

Each applicant (individual or institution) is required to submit a proposal to UNV Procurement procurement@unv.org – Ref. 93891 – UNV Innovation Challenge fund for up to a maximum of USD



10,000 to prepare and deliver a 5,000-word paper addressing one or more of the objectives of the challenge fund.

The deadline for the proposal is **Monday 16 December 2019, 17h00 Bonn time**.

General rules:

- A. Each entity may submit one application
- B. Re-submission of modified and improved applications are not allowed.
- C. Deadline for application is to be strictly respected.
- D. In the evaluation process, only complete applications including financial proposal will be accepted.
- E. All submitted documents must be in English language.
- F. UNV shall examine the proposal to confirm that all terms and conditions under the UNDP General Terms and Conditions and Special Conditions have been accepted by the Proposer without any deviation or reservation.

V- PROPOSAL

Documents to be Included when Submitting the Proposals

Interested individuals and/or institutions must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:

Stage I

Technical Proposal:

- Application form for Stage I – Annex I
- The following documents are further required:
 - Technical proposal and methodology explaining how the institution will approach and complete this assignment;
 - CVs of lead staff member who will oversee the assignment on behalf of the institution
 - Any other relevant documents supporting the application.



Financial Proposal:

- Budget for Stage I – Annex II

The financial proposal for Stage I, shall be presented in a Lump sum with all-inclusive fixed total contract price. The lump sum shall include all the cost components including staff/consultancy time, travel, allowances, taxes, translations, communication, other as relevant. In order to assist the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including travel, per diems, and number of anticipated working days) in the worksheet in Annex II.

Any envisaged travel costs to carry out the work must be included in the financial proposal except for the face to face workshop (to be confirmed) organized by UNV.

Financial proposals should not exceed \$10,000.

Stage II

The two winners of the Innovation Challenge Stage I will later be invited to submit a proposal (Annex III) and proposed budget, (as per Annex IV). Typical items that can be covered from the Challenge Fund may include, but are not limited to:

- Salaries of project staff;
- Technology, design, business, development and other consultancy services;
- Advisory inputs;
- Small equipment and supplies;
- Training and workshop expenses;

The budget for Stage II should not exceed \$15,000 per Innovator.

VII- EVALUATION CRITERIA & METHODOLOGY

Eligible and complete applications will be evaluated as follows:

VII.I Selection criteria for participation in the Innovation Challenge (Stage I)

A: Individual/Institutional expertise (30 points)



- (15 points) Track record: Demonstrated excellence including publications by the institution or individual in relation to the research focus and approach
- (15 points) Local expertise and collaboration/inclusiveness of Southern researchers/research institutions

B: Strength of the proposal (40 points)

- (20 points) Clarity, thoroughness, and value-added of the proposed concept
- (10 points) Feasibility of the research to be completed to the required standard in the PoA timeframe to the necessary standard
- (10 points) Relevance of the proposed methodology across diverse contexts, e.g. in countries with less comprehensive data availability particularly LDCs

C: Financial considerations (30 points)

- (10 points) Proposal costs include access to full data and analysis for sharing and publication and further use by interested stakeholders
- (10 points) Value for money based on likelihood of broad acceptance among targeted beneficiaries and/or potential users
- (10 points) Demonstrated research approach should be financially viable and scalable for real-world use by policy-makers

Total points: 100

Notes:

- Minimum threshold to pass will be 50 points
- Proposals will be ranked based on total technical evaluation points from the highest to lowest technical score
- UNV will award based on highest score ranking from the highest technical score until total fund (\$80,000) is exhausted.
- Financial proposals above \$10,000 will be disqualified

Applicants that will be awarded a prize during stage I, upon submission of their final paper, will be automatically included in Stage II of the Innovation Challenge.

VII.II Criteria for selection of the winning challenges (for participation in Stage II)

UNV will award up to two follow-on projects USD 15,000 to further develop and pilot their approach by the end of 2020, for future publication on the UNV knowledge portal and as stand-alone papers.



Criteria for the winning prizes are as follows **and will be based solely on performance and delivery during Stage I:**

- Relevance (25 points) Ability to meet the needs of policy-makers and practitioners looking for better evidence and models around integrating volunteering into the SDGs, including feasibility across diverse development contexts
- Quality (25 points) Research undertaken is robust, products are clearly written and accessible
- Innovation (25 points) Use of new approaches, or adaptation of approaches from other sectors to the issue of volunteering and SDGs
- Collaboration (25 points) Effective participation in the community of practice, to support range of stakeholders working on this Challenge through feedback, suggestions and networking

Total points: 100

Notes:

- Proposals will be ranked based on total technical evaluation points from the highest to lowest technical score
- UNV will consider the top 2 to be the Innovation Challenge winners
- Innovation Challenge winners will be invited to submit a proposal to pilot their approach up to \$15,000 (Annex III and IV)

The awarding decisions are guided by the principles of impartiality, transparency, and rationale use of funds.

VIII- LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Following the award decision, the selected Applicants will be offered to sign the Award Agreement. All awards will be formulated based on the following templates (for [companies](#) and [individuals](#)).

IX- ANNEXES

Annex I – Application form (Stage I)
Annex II – Lump sum budget template (Stage I)
Annex III – Proposal format (Stage II)
Annex IV – Budget template (Stage II)
Annex V – Award Agreement template for Companies
Annex VI – Award agreement for individuals