

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Date: 15 April 2021

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) from Kuwait are invited to apply to an (up to) 6 months innovation program – SDG Accelerator.

In view of supporting Kuwaiti SMEs towards a recovery from COVID-19 impacts, UNDP Kuwait jointly with the General Secretariat of Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) with technical support from UNDP Denmark and Moldova offices are launching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Accelerator Pilot for Kuwait to support three SMEs to test and demonstrate opportunities for new business models and innovative solutions linked to SDG achievements of the Kuwait National Development Plan (KNDP).

The Kuwait Pilot SDG Accelerator provides a series of business innovation acceleration workshops and relevant mentorships for a period of up to 6 months for the three selected SMEs. The selected SMEs will benefit from a range of supports from UNDP international mentor(s) and will master a tailored business process toolkit designed to support comprehensive launching of a new business innovation initiative in Kuwait and we will work with the SMEs from the very earliest stages to ensure successful market commercialization.

Some of the benefits the program will bring to the participating SMEs are:

- UNDP ‘in-kind’ advisory support international expert consultancies on business modeling, business innovation and new product/service development in the SME target industry/sector.
- Exclusive access to a business innovation toolkit developed in Denmark and successfully used and applied by companies around the
- International visibility of the SME’s products/services and higher awareness in Kuwait due to UNDP’s ongoing communications and publicity activities to bring the world to the selected SMEs.
- Develop new collaborative relationships with contractors, partners and customers under UNDP’s collaborative acceleration approach for the selected SME’s SDG initiative.
- Measure the impact of the selected SMEs new business model on specific sustainable business development targets.

For more benefits, please read the application guidelines.

Who can apply?

- Kuwaiti privately-owned SMEs (at least 75 percent private per the JSC SME Law) companies, established at least two years before April 2021, operating in any industry sector except: production and distribution of tobacco products.
- Only profitable SMEs duly registered with Kuwait Ministry of Commerce and The National Fund for SME Development, and operating under the National SME Law.
- The applicant SME has at least 10 full-time employees.
- We are not permitted to work with SMEs who possess outstanding debts in terms of public contributions or have accumulated losses above the declared equity value.
- The managers and owners of the SMEs should not have been convicted of crimes connected to business operations.

Interested companies shall submit the following information:

- Letter of intent to commit- the time and resources needed internally for participation over a six month period.
- Application Form fully filled in as provided.
- A Draft Proposed SDG Business Case template as provided and a corresponding SWOT analysis for the Case
- A copy of the company's registration certificate.
- Audited financial statements for the last two years.
- Membership evidence in the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI).

How to apply?

Qualified companies are invited to submit their interest, in English, to the following e-mail address: procurement.kw@undp.org, with the subject line "SDG Acceleration Challenge"

Application deadline: 15 May 2021.

Unless the deadline is extended, applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Selected SMEs will receive an acceptance letter for their signature.

Supporting documents:

- (Annex 1) Terms of Reference and Guidelines
- (Annex 2) Application Form template
- (Annex 3) Business Case template
- (Annex 4) SWOT analysis template

(Annex 1)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title: SDG Accelerator Pilot Program for Kuwait SMEs
Project: **A PILOT PROGRAM FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES IN Kuwait (2021) TO PROMOTE UN GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BUSINESS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PRIVATE SECTOR'S CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)**
Coordinator: UNDP Kuwait
SDG Innovation
Journey Facilitator: International Business Analyst
Duty Station: At company level, with virtual working meetings in Kuwait.
Duration: up to 6-month acceleration cycle, starting June 2021

UNDP in Kuwait invites Kuwaiti small and medium sized companies to express their interest in taking part in the SDG Accelerator Pilot Program. The Program is described below in this call for expression of interest.

- A. Depending on your company's ambition and challenge you want to solve, the benefits of participating in the SDG Acceleration Program are:**
- Free UNDP international expert business consulting and mentoring about your SDG business model, business innovation process, and new product/service/process development (up to 10 working days of direct consultancy on your business model per company provided free, additional experts based on industry product/service specialisations agreed separately);
 - Exclusive access to a proprietary SDG business innovation toolkit and successfully used and applied by Danish companies and piloted internationally.
 - Collaborate with and learn from the experience of other SDG Accelerator graduates from your industry who we will connect you with.
 - Access to international examples of business models responding to the sustainable development challenges the companies face in the challenging times ahead.
 - International visibility and networking for of your company's products/services and higher awareness in Kuwait will be realized;
 - Develop new collaborative relationships with contractors, partners and customers using new tools and through public awareness of your SDG Business Case campaign for change.

- Become connected with potential sources of financing from investors and bankers seeking more sustainable investment opportunities (ESG and SDG opportunities);
- Learn about lean data in designing more effective marketing strategies to increase sales (growth hacking);
- Learn about global best practices and benchmarking your SME within your industry and sector;
- All of the above can improve your company's efficiency, increase profits and sales revenues.

B. How to participate?

Interested SMEs shall submit the following information:

- The written expression of interest (EOI) and commitment to participate for at least six months (no particular format but please use company letterhead) describing the specific interest of the company to participate and vision of how the program will be used for the modernization and development of the company through an SDG Business Case Programme;
- Provide the SME's responsible persons' names and contact info, including a key contact point or project manager.
- Application Form (template provided and attached as Annex);
- A detailed description of your Draft Proposed SDG Business Case and a corresponding SWOT analysis for the Case (templates provided as Annexes);
- Copy of company's registration certificate.
- Audited financial statements for the last two years.
- Membership evidence in the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI).

Interested companies must submit the package of materials by the deadline of 15 May 2021 via email to procurement.kw@undp.org with the subject line "SDG Acceleration Pilot Programme"

Application Deadline: 15 May 2021

C. Who are eligible to apply?

Eligible applicants to the SDG Acceleration program are:

- Kuwaiti privately owned (at least 75 percent private per the SME Law) companies, established at least two years before *[April 2021]*, operating in any industry sector
- For profit SMEs, registered with Kuwait Ministry of Commerce and The National Fund for SME Development under the SME Law.
- The applicant SME has at least 10 full-time employees.
- Not possess outstanding debts in terms of public contributions or have accumulated losses above the equity value.
- The Applicants and individual owners have not been convicted of crimes connected to business operations.

D. Background

[Agenda 2030](#), adopted by the UN and global Governments in 2015, calls for a new partnership for development involving all stakeholders (public sector, private sector, development partners, civil society and citizens). The business community plays a key role in achieving sustainable development of the economy in its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental), and fulfilling the commitments outlined in Agenda 2030. As stated in the SDG declaration, private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and capacity to apply creativity and innovation – needed ingredients to solve development challenges. A prerequisite in this regard, for a well-functioning business sector that contributes to sustainable development, is respect for protection of labour rights and environmental and health standards in accordance with relevant international guidelines, such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the labour standards of ILO (article 67, Preamble to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development).

The UNGPs set forth expectations on the private sector to undertake human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, and mitigate potential negative impacts due to their respective business operations. As such, the UNGPs should be seen as an inevitable component of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Moreover, companies willing to take advantage of the existing and upcoming opportunities of today and tomorrow might want to incorporate UNGPs into their business models and policies.

The private sector should embark from a perspective of avoiding adverse human rights impact through application of the UNGPs. The SDGs should be seen as an opportunity for development of private sector led answers and technologies to address common and global challenges. This in turn can realise corporate benefits, such as finding new business opportunities, enhancing long-term profitability, and strengthening stakeholder relations.

A sustainable and diversified economy is an integral part of the national Vision 2035. The Kuwait National Development Plan (2021 – 2025) also aims at enhancing the business environment, as well as innovation capability and international competitiveness, the importance of which is increasing more than ever at the midst of COVID19 and new normal environment.

E. The Kuwaiti context

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), embedded in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, is not a commonly integrated strategy by Kuwaiti enterprises. Most of the time, corporate responsibility is interpreted as a charity and many companies therefore engage in onetime events and campaigns without including new practices and routines as a strategic aspect of the businesses per se.

At the early onset of the COVID-19 crisis at the end of February 2020, the Government of Kuwait acted promptly on safety measures and lockdowns. The impact on businesses is varied with some types of enterprises based on old business models affected relatively more than e-commerce and IT sectors. According to Bensirri report on business impact survey released in May 2020, 45 percent out of 498 business owners/respondents indicated that they suspended or shutdown their business. Another 26 percent are on the verge of collapse after seeing their revenue drop by more than 80%.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with fluctuating oil prices, the government is increasingly focusing on the involvement of the private sector in all sectors of the economy, which is overarching theme of the new Kuwait National Development Plan (2020 – 2025). Sustainable diversified economy is an integral part to for the national Vision 2035, through increasing local productivity and development of non-oil sectors while improving standards of living for citizens and engaging the private sector into the national economic activities of the country. Furthermore, the KNDP aims at enhancing the business environment, as well as innovation capability and international competitiveness, the importance of which is increasing more than ever at the midst of COVID19 and new normal environment. It is important to enable entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to explore and expand new business opportunities, which are in tune with new market environment, evolving consumer needs and advancing social benefits. In a new normal, or post-COVID SME environment, innovation creativity and social enterprising are no longer “add-on” but rather became essentials for business survival and sustainability.

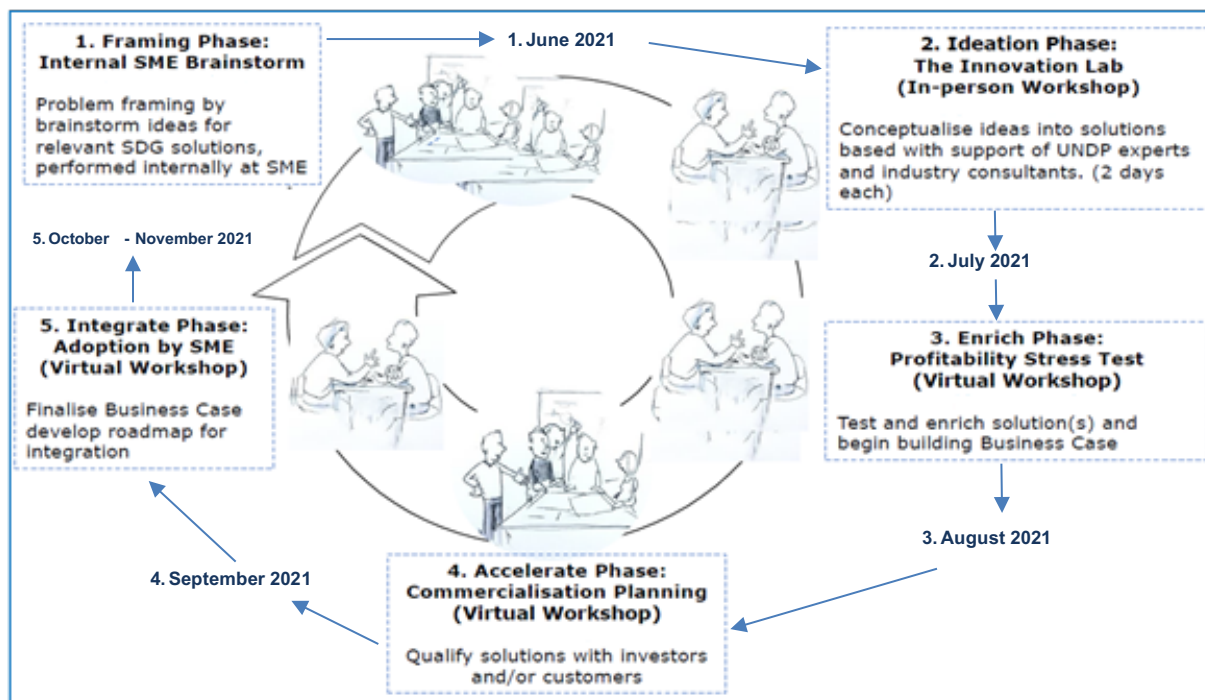
Globally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a plan of action for addressing the world's most interlinked challenges, and also a framework for sustainable solutions. The private sector is an essential part of these solutions, and more and more companies recognize the SDGs as levers for innovation, growth and better competitive performance. The SDGs also make up a powerful framework for strengthening the companies' purpose narrative and for attracting talents, customers and investors.

F. A pilot program for small and medium sized Kuwaiti businesses (SMEs)

UNDP and the State of Kuwait, represented by the General Secretariat for the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) will jointly initiate business opportunity mapping in the face of COVID19 and post-pandemic environment in support of SMEs. So called "the SDG Accelerator for SMEs" is a proven UNDP global initiative aiming to accelerate business solutions to contribute the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while making business bottom-line sustainable as well. Increasing the number of SMEs that are recognizing the SDGs as successful business models for driving innovation, growth and better competitive performance. The SDGs also make up a powerful framework for strengthening the SMEs purpose narrative and for attracting talents, customers and investors.

Through the SDG Accelerator process, the participating SMEs will receive guidance and a comprehensive method to develop new products, services or business models that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. As the mindset shift of all layers of each SME plays an important role in advancing new corporate culture, innovation and productivity, companies will be assisted in communicating and engaging their employees in their work with the SDGs through internal campaigns and activities.

The Kuwait SDG Accelerator's innovation journey starts by framing the SME's SDG's "pains" p described in the Draft SDG Business Case which it seeks to solve and ends with planning how the company should integrate the new solution into their daily business operations. The SDG Innovation journey shifts between individual and group sessions lead by our Facilitator and joint workshops will address the path to successful solutions in team briefings as depicted below.



G. Main objectives of the SDG Acceleration Program

- Guide selected SMEs in understanding the SDGs and the opportunities they open to the participating companies, as well as guide them in identifying the new or adjusted product/service/process supporting company sustainable development;
- Support SMEs to dissect and reconstruct their proposed SDG business models to incorporate UN Guiding Principles for Business, Human Rights, and making their internal business processes and models more inclusive, innovative and gender-balanced.;
- Support companies to develop a SDG-focused impact framework enabling them to evaluate and manage their full impacts, and to build an internal capacity for such;
- Support with targeted communications on SDG alignment both inside the organization, as well as in mass media to the marketplace;
- Business match-making, and networking around SDGs as a profitable and permanent business process.

UNDP Kuwait invites businesses to join the SDG Accelerator Pilot by applying to this expression of interest call. A small number of local companies (3) will be selected to take part in the SDG Innovation journey. For a period of up to 6 months, the participants, will have access to free international expert business consulting and mentoring about SDGs business modeling, and reduced fee experts based on specific technology areas, as well as exclusive access to a proprietary SDG business innovation toolkit developed by UNDP Denmark, with support from Deloitte, and successfully used and applied internationally.

H. Evaluation and selection process

The assessment of applications will be undertaken in 2 stages by the evaluation committee where representatives of UNDP Kuwait Project Team, SDG Accelerator Moldova, and International Business Analyst will take part. Requests received after the deadline will not be considered for evaluation.

The following evaluation stages will be applied:

Stage I: Verification of eligibility of applicants and how applicant's vision and ideas described in the application form are aligned to the program's objectives and met the evaluation criteria.

All applicants who will meet the eligibility criteria stated in point C. above, will be evaluated against the below criteria:

Evaluation criteria:	Maximum points awarded
The motivation of the applicant to take part in the Accelerator and its commitment to undertake program activities	Up to 20 points
The applicant has an initial understanding of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Kuwait Strategy, and is open to learn more and mainstream SDGs at the business level	Up to 20 points
The Draft Proposed Business Case (new product/service) is contributing to one or more SDGs and the applicant is available to revise its business case in the following 6 months as it adapts to the real marketplace experience	Up to 30 points
The capacity of the applicant to run the SDG Acceleration program, has sufficient resources (including HR), and has submitted a completed SWOT analysis	Up to 30 points
Total	Max 100 points

Stage II: The first 3 applicants who gained the maximum number of average points in the 1st stage of the evaluation will be interviewed for clarifications and additional details related to the application package. In case one or more companies from the first 3 interviewed will not be included in the program following the interview clarifications, the company will receive an argument-based notification letter and the following company/ies in the list will be interviewed. A total of 3 companies will be recruited to benefit from the program.

Participants’ selection principles:

During the selection of participants for the pilot program, the following principles will be considered in the assessment process:

- Open and transparent competitive process based on UNDP practices and rules.
- Promotion of key human rights, in particular the right for work and the right to have access to the developments in science and technology.
- Promotion of equal opportunities and access of women and men to get relevant knowledge and experience in promotion of innovations applied to real business environments.
- Promotion of environmental sustainability aspects in all daily undertakings and specific activities, showcasing how innovations create a more sustainable environment. Readiness to do start this kind of promotion is also considered.
- Accountability – recognizes and supports business, technological and managerial excellence at the highest level.

- Transparency – all activities, decision-making and financing are fully transparent and public.
- Avoiding conflicts of interest – all operations and decisions made avoid direct or indirect conflict of interest of all persons involved in procedures.
- Ethical and other good practices in business are promoted - in the sense that UNDP corporate values will be supported.

All applications will be equally and justly evaluated, and objectively and independently assessed.

I. SDG Acceleration program agreement

Following the evaluation process, the applicants recruited into the SDG Accelerator program will sign an Acceptance Letter to confirm its agreement with the terms of the program including a commitment of up to six months' time and internal resources (team work), areas of cooperation, rights and responsibilities of both parties.

(Annex 2)

Application Form

SDG Business Acceleration Kuwait Pilot Program for SME

A. INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICANT

A1. TYPE OF THE APPLICANT [please select what applies to you]

<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium enterprises	Capital from KD 251K to KD500K	Employees from 51 to 150 with 550 Kuwaitis at least.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small enterprises	Capital \leq KD 250K	Employees \leq 50 with 1-4 Kuwaitis at least.

A2. GENERAL INFO ON THE APPLICANTS

SME name:	
SME Director's Name:	
Year founded:	
Website:	
Number of employees:	
Annual turnover (gross revenues):	
Contact person/s:	
Mobile number:	
E-mail:	
Ownership of the company:	

Does the company/ organization possess outstanding debts in terms of public contributions?	Yes Please specify: No
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B. INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COMPANY

B1. Industry area:

Select the industry area/s your company operates in. If your company area does not belong to either of the area, enter the area that applies to you.

- 1. ICT
- 1. Energy and Environment
- 1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery
- 2. Education, skills and labor market inclusion
- 3. Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Materials
- 4. Media and Communication
- 5. Medicine, Biomedicine, Pharmaceutical Industry
- 6. Food and Beverages Production
- 7. Mechanical Engineering
- 8. Traffic and Transport Technology
- 9. Trade and Financial Services
- 10. Other industries and services

B2. Describe your motivation and commitment to participate in the SDG Acceleration Pilot program:

Provide a brief description of the reasoning why you want to participate in the SDG Business Accelerator and why you think this will benefit your organization and ultimately your customers and employees. What are your expectations from participating in the program?

Max 1.500 characters (1/2 page)

B3. Briefly, what is your current business model and your vision for the future business model?

Describe your current business model and how you envision your future business model. Do you expect better results with the SDG Business Accelerator which you could not obtain alone? Also describe to what extent and how you integrate the care about the environment, employees, and society at the moment.

Max 1.500 characters (1/2 page)

B4. How do you currently design and place new services/products on the market?

Briefly describe how you identify, develop and place on the market new products/services. Do you have a dedicated department/team working on the new products/services? How many new products/services did you launch during the last year?

Max 1.000 characters (1/3 page)

B5. Describe in summary your Draft SDG Business Case and what pains it addresses as well as what SDG targets it will focus on? Please also fill in the Business Case and SWOT analysis templates provided.

If you already have an idea (ideas) of what you would like to work on in the SDG Business Accelerator, please describe it here.

Max 1.500 characters (1/2 page)

B6. Please describe the team to be involved in the SDG Business Acceleration Pilot program?

Tell us who from the management team and/or support staff will be involved in the SDG Business Accelerator. Who else are you thinking to involve, what is their role in the company, and what would be their role in the Accelerator? Are you ready to assign at least 2 people who will be engaged in all stages of the program?

Max 1.000 characters (1/3 page)

C. STATEMENT OF THE APPLICANT

This statement confirms that the Applicant:

1. The information provided in the application form is true;
2. Are willing to give all necessary additional information and documents for the purpose of the evaluation of the application;
3. Have consent that all the information provided may be stored by UNDP, but processed solely for the purpose of evaluation and project implementation;

4. Have consent that the basic information about the Applicant – name, web address, field of activity of the company are publicly available and that some information provided will be used for visibility and promotion;
5. Have willingness to respect the integrity of the evaluators and will not try to influence any person who participates in the evaluation of the applications;
6. Have consent that on the decision on dismissal or rejection of the application do not have the right to appeal;
7. Are ready, in case of a positive evaluation of the application, to accept the conditions of the program, sign a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing on specific company-related objectives to be achieved with the support of the SDG Business Accelerator, and commit the necessary time and resources needed to achieve the objectives;
8. Do not possess outstanding debts in terms of public contributions and do not have accumulated losses above the equity value;
9. The Applicants and individual owners have not been convicted of crimes connected to business operations;
10. That there not initiated any court proceedings against the Applicant, its individual owners or director(s) and the individual owners have not been convicted of crimes connected to business operations.

**Signature of the
responsible person of the Applicant**

(Annex 3)

Crafting the Draft SDG Business Case

An SDG Draft Business Case for the company's new SDG proposed programme under the SDG Accelerator needs to be prepared and submitted as one key component of the SME application so the UNDP evaluation team can review the overall preliminary approach. This should clearly demonstrate the vision for its impact towards support of the Kuwait National SDG Strategy in general then specific and realistic primary and secondary targets for SDG impacts. Please review the SDG background information and the priority areas for impact before conducting an internal brainstorm activity to further elaborate the potential business model which would be the focus of your activities in the accelerator.

Application Template for the SDG Business Case

Model Questions/Issues	Company Responses and Preliminary Approach
Company Profile (employees, founding date, revenue history, outstanding debts)	
What is the value proposition of your new product/service?	
What pain or problem are you addressing?	
Describe your novel solution. How does your novel solution address those pains or problems?	
How do you plan first to enter the market and when?	
Primary SDG goals addressed	
Secondary SDG targets addressed	
How does this help with Kuwait's SDG strategy? <i>(Please review that if you have not already done so.)</i>	
Envisaged partnerships	
Estimated investment needs for the solution	
How do you want the UNDP SDG Accelerator to help your company to realize success?	
Address and contact info, website.	

(Annex 4)

SWOT Analysis

Please thoughtfully fill in the SWOT Analysis below for your SME Business Case, and include it with your SDG Application:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p>