



Innovation Challenge
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
& Koç Holding
BOOST: Women Innovators (Turkey)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Ref Nr: UNDP-IRH-CFP-202201

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Title of the call:	BOOST: Women Innovators (Turkey)
Agency:	UNDP RBEC Istanbul Regional Hub
Managing Unit:	UNDP RBEC Knowledge & Innovation Team
Type of Contract:	Agreement between UNDP and the Winning Entities under the " <i>Development Services</i> "
Locality:	Turkey
Expected contract start date:	August 2022
Maximum contract length:	12 months
Maximum grant amount:	US\$10,000
Co-financing:	Organizations provide at least 50% of the total project cost

II. OBJECTIVES

Launched in 2020 as part of UNDP's socioeconomic response to the COVID-19 pandemic, BOOST seeks to learn and generate actionable intelligence around complex development challenges, scale innovations that can help reimagine development, and accelerate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In the wake of COVID-19, digital technologies have become a lifeline for millions around the world, and a critical tool to cope with the crisis. For companies, digital transformation is no longer a competitive advantage, but a necessity for survival. But as digital transformation of our societies and economies accelerates, women still face a persistent gender digital divide, and women tech leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs attract much less investments than men. At the same time, numbers suggest businesses are [more successful when led by women](#).

BOOST: Women Innovators is designed to strengthen ecosystems of women and boost women's voices, economic participation, and civic engagement through the use of technologies. It is an open call for women-led startups to scale innovative ideas that leverage the power of emerging technologies and digital tools to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The BOOST model is set out to make digital transformation not a helpline for women to survive, but to thrive.

III. OUTCOMES

[BOOST: Women Innovators \(Turkey\)](#) seeks to move the needle on gender equality by supporting women-led startups to develop and scale technology-driven innovations that can create replicable and scalable social impact.

Example innovation areas include, but are not limited to; artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), Internet of things (IoT), Software as a Service (SaaS), cloud computing, blockchain, wearables, augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR), robotics, cybersecurity, fuel cell, battery technologies, nanotechnologies, and material technologies. Business model innovations and social innovations are also eligible if technology is used or developed.

The call also encourages applications from startups developing and scaling innovations that address gender inequality and its underlying challenges, through one or more of the calls' *special themes*:

- **Women and digital access and use:** Innovations that help bridge the gender digital divide, enabling women and girls to equally access and use

digital technologies – from affordable tech and enhancing digital literacy skills to tackling gender stereotypes.

- **Women in the digital economy and STEM:** Innovations that help increase women's active participation in digitally transformed economies or boost opportunities for women to be creators/drivers of innovation – for instance by leveraging the amplifying effect of emerging technologies, or by facilitating access to affordable finance.
- **Women in data:** Innovations that help close the gendered data gap, using gender-sensitive data to improve research, planning, design and monitoring in any field or industry to create better products, services, and policies.

The innovations should have a potential for financial sustainability and scaling. The applicants should consult their innovation with partners, stakeholders and users to ensure it is adapted to and viable in their specific context.

Targeted Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

The BOOST Acceleration Program supports innovators from across the Europe and Central Asia region to develop and scale their innovations, and simultaneously align their organizations and businesses with the SDGs. Program participants receive hands-on training, tools, and advice on Impact Measurement and Management, to build sustainable and impactful organizations.

BOOST: Women Innovators is a call to accelerate the achievement of **SDG 5**: Gender equality. However, complex development challenges need systemic, integrated responses. The call thus addresses a range of SDGs and their intersections. Particularly, it will provide actionable insights and support to:

- **SDG 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- **SDG 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **SDG 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- **SDG 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

- **SDG 9:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- **SDG 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

For more information about the SDGs, please visit: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

IV. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are startup companies, with an innovation in the stages: idea, minimum viable product (MVP), pre-or-post revenue stage.

The applying team must be led by a woman.

The startup must be operating in Turkey.

V. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Organizations must submit their applications through the Gust platform:

<https://gust.com/programs/boost-2>

The application should be submitted by Tuesday 01 March 2022, Central European Time (CET), 23:59.

General rules for applications:

- A. An organization may submit one or more applications, presenting different innovations. However, only one innovation per organization can be selected as basis for the organization's participation in the BOOST program, and potentially selected to receive a monetary grant at program graduation.
- B. Re-submission of modified applications are not allowed.
- C. Deadline for application is to be strictly respected.
- D. In the evaluation process, only complete applications will be considered.
- E. Answers in the submission form and any documents attached must be in the English language.
- F. UNDP 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 applying organization without any deviation or reservation.

VI. GRANT AWARD AND CO-FINANCING

Through the Agreement of Development Services between Koç Holding and UNDP, BOOST: Women Innovators (Turkey) will provide one (1) grant of a maximum of US\$10.000, for scaling of the innovation. The awardee is expected to provide a minimum of in-kind or financial co-investment of 50% of the project's total budget.

Typical items that can be covered by the grant include, but are not limited to:

- Salaries of project staff
- Business development and other consultancy services
- Small equipment and supplies
- Training and workshop expenses
- Costs including travel connected to the implementation and scaling of the innovation.

VII. SELECTION PROCESS

Screening

After submission deadline, all applications will be reviewed by the BOOST Project Team against the eligibility criteria, known as the *screening* stage. Eligible applicants will proceed to the following stage. Non-eligible applicants will receive a regret notice through the Gust platform. For these applicants, the selection process is finished. They also do not have the right to appeal.

Participant selection

All applications that pass the screening stage will be evaluated by an Evaluation Panel, consisting of four representatives from UNDP and partners, and two observers. Longlisted applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. **Feasibility:** Innovations that can be feasibly developed, tested, and implemented (20%)
2. **Innovation novelty:** Innovations that use cutting-edge technologies or innovative digital tools, or introduce new ideas, approaches, products, or services to a target group. (20%)
3. **Sustainable development impact potential:** Business models that can help accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. (20%)
4. **Management:** The start-up should demonstrate it has the capacity to implement the innovation within 6-9 months. Experts with technical

backgrounds to develop prototypes or products must be present in the team.
(20%)

5. **Scalability:** Innovations that are scalable within, or even beyond, Turkey.
(20%)

Each criterion 1-5 are equally weighted (20%). The highest scored applicants, a maximum of 10 startups, will be offered to take part in the BOOST regional acceleration program running from April through July 2022. There is no minimum required scoring for applicants to be eligible for the program, as the objective of the program is to strengthen capabilities and innovation skills of the startup.

An email to successful applicants will be sent through the Gust platform. Announcement of selected participants will also be done on the public BOOST website by mid-March. Non-selected applicants will receive a regret notice through the Gust platform. For these applicants, the selection process is finished. They also do not have the right to appeal.

Grant awarding

The BOOST: Women Innovators program concludes through a 'Demo Day', when participating organizations pitch their refined and reimaged innovations in front of an international jury of experts, including representatives from UNDP and partners. Assessment of innovations at this stage is based on the same criteria as in previous stage. The one (1) highest scored graduate, with a minimum score of 80%, will be awarded the available grant, as per section VI.

VIII. ANNEXES

Annex 1 – BOOST Innovation Challenges Guidelines

Annex 2 – Proposed Budget Breakdown Template

Annex 3 – Evaluation Criteria

Annex 4 – Contract Form