



Innovation Challenge Slovak Transformation Fund BOOST: Women Innovators

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Ref Nr: UNDP-IRH-CFP-202202

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Title of the call:	BOOST: Women Innovators
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>Slovak Transformation Fund</i> ”
Locality:	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo ¹ , Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
Expected contract start date:	August 2022
Maximum contract length:	12 months
Maximum grant amount:	US\$10,000

¹ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

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 technology has become a lifeline for millions around the world, and a critical tool to cope with the crisis. But as we embrace digital transformation and new technologies to propel us forward, the widening gender digital divide is impacting women's socio-economic opportunities in a wide range of fields – from healthcare and education to work and financial independence.

BOOST: Women Innovators is an open call for innovative ideas that leverage the power of technology to solve persisting problems of gender inequality or boost enablers for women and girls to advance and thrive. Tapping into the potential of innovators across the region, BOOST seeks to bring about social change, articulate alternative futures, and lay the groundwork for a new inclusive reality.

III. OUTCOMES

BOOST: Women Innovators seeks to move the needle on gender equality in Europe and Central Asia by supporting women-led or women-owned organizations to develop and scale innovative and/or tech-driven ideas in four key areas:

- **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.

- **Women in innovation and entrepreneurship:** Tech-driven innovations in any market or focus area (from health and finance to education and energy).

The innovations should have the 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 startups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), social enterprises, non-profit organizations and academic institutions.

The applying organization must be women-led or women-owned.

The organization must be operating in one or several of the following countries and territories in the region of Europe and Central Asia: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo*, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

V. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Organizations must submit their applications through the Gust platform:

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

The application should be submitted by Tuesday 15 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 Slovak Transformation Fund, BOOST: Women Innovators will provide a maximum of eight (8) grants, each of a maximum of US\$10.000, for scaling of the innovation. The applicants are expected to provide a minimum of in-kind or financial co-investment of a minimum 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
- Technology, design, 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:

- A. **Viability and scalability:** Innovations that have the potential to be implemented and scaled within or even beyond their respective geographical area of operations. (20%)
- B. **Degree of innovation:** Innovations that use cutting-edge technologies or innovative digital tools, or introduce new ideas, approaches, products or services to a target group. (20%)
- C. **Impact potential:** Innovations that can help bridge the gender digital divide by addressing one, two or all three thematic areas, and their underlying challenges. (20%)
- D. **System transformation:** Organizations that work to understand the systems in which they operate, and continuously re-assess and adapt their organizations and businesses to the context. (20%)
- E. **Management:** Organizations must demonstrate that they have an adequate team in place, with clear roles and responsibilities, and the capacity to implement their innovations in 6–9 months. (20%)

Each criteria A-E are equally weighted (20%). The highest scored applicants, a maximum of 45, 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 will be sent through the Gust platform. Announcement of selected participants will also be done on the public BOOST website by end-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 regional acceleration program concludes through a ‘Demo Day’, when participating organizations pitch their refined and reimagined 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 highest scored graduates, with a minimum scoring of 80%, will be awarded available grants, 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