

WFP Innovation Challenge 2020

DEADLINE: 14 SEPTEMBER 2020

Apply now!

Do you have a project with the potential to solve hunger?

Apply to the WFP Innovation Accelerator to receive up to US \$100,000 in equity-free funding, mentorship from industry experts and access to the world's largest humanitarian organization



Frequently asked Questions

The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating food insecurity, interrupting supply chains, and moving more people into hunger than previously predicted. WFP seeks cutting-edge solutions to transform emergency response and to achieve SDG2: Zero Hunger by 2030 for communities impacted by COVID-19 and beyond. Innovations are needed more than ever before to achieve this goal.

Our call for applications is an opportunity for us to source the most promising and daring solutions to end hunger from startups, NGOs, academic institutions or government agencies.

What's in it for me?

By submitting your solution, you might be selected to attend the next Innovation Accelerator Bootcamp, from November 30-December 04. In addition, your solution may be considered for the Accelerator Sprint Programme, with up to US\$ 100,000 in funding, and access to our support and insight.

What is the Bootcamp?

Innovation Bootcamps help selected teams dive into challenges, ideate solutions and refine project plans over five days. Bootcamps introduce participants to innovation techniques such as human-centred design and the lean start-up method in order to create viable business models and solutions for WFP and its beneficiaries. Each Innovation Bootcamp ends with the Pitch Event—an opportunity for teams to share their solutions with an audience of investors and industry leaders who can help scale their ideas.

However, participation in Bootcamp does not guarantee any individual or team a place in the Sprint Programme. To be eligible for the Sprint Programme, all teams must submit a separate application, after completing the Bootcamp.

What is the Sprint Programme?

Our Sprint Programme is an intensive 6-month acceleration programme that helps projects and start-ups reach proof of concept, develop prototypes ready for implementation and/or scale. Projects in this programme will receive guidance and space to bring their idea to life from the Munich-based Accelerator, and access to WFP's global network of partners and resources.

Teams may also receive up to US\$ 100,000 per Sprint, with further funding dependent upon progress and measurable achievement of key targets.

Am I eligible to participate?

Yes! Anyone from a startup, NGO, academic institutions or government agency, stationed anywhere in the world, is eligible to submit ideas.

Do I need to have a team?

It's time to #disrupthunger.

Yes, your project should have a dedicated team that will manage its overall execution. If your application to the Sprint programme is successful, you will also be assigned a part-time project manager from the Accelerator to assist with the management and implementation of the project.

What do I need to apply?

Your startup, NGO or institution must be incorporated or recognized as a legal entity, and operating as a non-profit or for profit, at the time of application.

What are the types of innovations that you support?

The following problem statements should help you understand current innovation priorities of WFP. These statements are meant to give inspiration of potential solutions, but they are not an exhaustive list. We explicitly encourage strong “wildcard ideas” to apply. Together with the brightest and best minds globally, we will be able to end hunger.

1. COVID-19 emergency response. WFP is mobilizing to meet the needs of up to 138 million people in 2020, with more than half of WFP’s operations scaling up direct assistance in urban areas. Cities are bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 crisis, accounting for 90 percent of COVID-19 cases and leaving millions without jobs unable to meet food or other essential needs. It is challenging to identify, locate, target and reach those in most in need, particularly in urban areas and informal settlements. At the same time, better access to phones and internet in cities in comparison to rural areas, bring opportunities of using new technologies to address those challenges.

We are looking to support:

- *ICT tools that provide efficient, effective, and transparent assistance to people, including urban areas and informal settlements.*
- *Solutions that empower beneficiaries to autonomously register for and access WFP assistance, adhering to social distancing measures.*
- *Tools for data-driven decision making to assess numbers and locations of people affected in emergencies.*

2. Local food security and market access for smallholder farmers. Domestic food supply is a challenge in many countries in which WFP operates, due to many factors – including severe water scarcity, limited farmable land availability, a growing urban population and weak supply chain infrastructure. High volumes of imports and movement restrictions can create volatility and cause high price shocks, as seen during COVID-19.

We are looking to support:

- *Innovative mechanisms to increase production and consumption of locally available and low-cost nutritious food, without increasing pressure on water sources.*
- *Tools for food safety quality management and monitoring for the increased local sourcing of specialised or fortified foods.*
- *Market-based solutions to improve the market access of smallholder farmers e.g. through post harvest management.*

3. Sustaining and creating livelihoods. Two billion people – more than 61 per cent of the world’s employed population – make their living in the informal economy, most of whom reside in developing countries. COVID-19 movement restrictions have damaged the economic activity of millions of vulnerable people, and informal economy workers have very little access to reliable,

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adequate income generation opportunities.

We are looking to support:

- *Mechanisms that incorporate vulnerable workers into bigger or more stable supply chains and job markets at scale.*
- *Mechanisms that connect household businesses to wider markets at scale.*
- *Solutions that generate income for food-insecure populations, with particular emphasis on women, youth, disabled people, the elderly, and those living in rural or poor urban settings at scale.*

4. Affordable, nutritious diets and awareness. Healthy diets are on average five times more expensive than nutrient-poor diets; healthy diets are unaffordable for more than 3 billion people around the world, and poor diets are often further exacerbated by a lack of awareness of the benefits of nutritious food and healthy consumption habits in low-resource environments.

We are looking to support:

- *Solutions that increase the consumption of low-cost, diverse nutritious foods amongst food-insecure people (including technical solutions or locally produced nutritious food, fortified food that can scale in multiple countries as well as ways to sustainably increase both institutional and 'supported-consumer' demand [e.g. commodity specific (e-)vouchers] to encourage increased supply of fresh and fortified nutritious foods.*
- *Solutions that increase awareness of nutrition, support changes in diet-related behaviors and increase purchasing power to enable beneficiaries to make better nutritional choices.*

5. Appropriate energy solutions along the food value chain. Access to energy is a consistent obstacle to food processing, cooking and preservation, which in turn has negative impacts on food availability, intake and nutritional value. Irrigation, tilling, milling and pressing are few examples of processes that are considerably enhanced by energy leading to increased quantity and quality of food. In addition, food is lost at every step of the value chain due to lack of cooking or preservation options, such as energy-efficient cooking options, refrigeration, smoking, drying, canning and sealing.

We are looking to support:

- *Energy-accessible production and delivery models that increase efficiencies in food production and processing, eliminating food losses in the value chain.*
- *On-grid and off-grid Institutional and household electric cooking solutions (e.g. standalone solar PV cookers, electric pressure cookers, solar water heaters for cooking).*

You can find examples of projects that we selected and accelerated on our [website](#).

What are the selection criteria?

- Solutions that are transformative, novel, or innovative.
- Solutions that can have a strong impact on hunger and are scalable, particularly in low- and middle-income countries and settings.
- Solutions that can prove initial traction and are at the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) stage.
- Solutions with a financially sustainable business model and growth strategy.
- Solutions which are carried by a strong team with the relevant expertise and strengths to scale the solution.

It's time to #disrupthunger.

How will the winners be selected?

Applications will be scored according to the list of criteria above. Final decisions on successful applicants are made by the WFP Innovation Accelerator management, with the support of an Innovation Advisory Board consisting of WFP experts, Country Directors, and senior management.

What will we not fund?

- Proposals not presenting clear innovation; innovative ideas that repeat conventional approaches without novel application.
- Proposals that are purely focused on food production. Traditional farms, even if they can have a strong impact on the local systems, do not fit within the WFP Innovation Accelerator operating model.
- Proposals for which proof of concept cannot be demonstrated, even at a small scale (from an operational perspective)
- Proposals for which impact is not quantified and proved.
- Proposals that do not clearly consider the current context of available financial systems and infrastructure in relevant geographies.

How do I submit my application?

To submit your solution, go to our [application page](#) and fill out the [F6S application form](#)

Please be sure to check your eligibility and that you have answered all required questions to the best of your ability. You will not be able to go back and edit it once the application has been submitted. Answering these questions will take you around 30 minutes-1 hour.

Will my idea be published?

No, all applications are confidential. Applicants will be contacted before any submitted information is shared internally or externally.

Can I apply more than once?

Yes, you are welcome to submit as many applications as you want, as long as they are independent solutions or problems.

I'm unsure if my idea falls under WFP's mandate. Can I still submit my idea?

Yes. The Accelerator provides high-level strategic support to ensure submitted solutions align with WFP's mandate. It is advised that you review WFP's corporate strategy and Country Strategic Plan in the country or context you seek to operate in (more information can be found [here](#)). In addition, have a look at our [current portfolio](#) for examples of the types of ventures we typically fund. Have more questions? Email us at global.innovation@wfp.org.

What is the closing date?

The challenge closes on **Monday 14 September**, 23:59 CET (Rome).

Can I submit ideas after 14 September?

Yes. Applications can be submitted year-round via our [application page](#). However, submissions received after 14 September will not be considered for the WFP Innovation Bootcamp in 2020.

If my application is unsuccessful, am I able to receive feedback?

Due to strong demand in the services offered by the Accelerator, the application process is competitive and we regret to say that not all applications are successful. We place priority on ideas or concepts that are deemed to have high potential in the fight against hunger—regardless of their origin.

The Accelerator aims to provide feedback to all applications, and can be accessed by contacting global.innovation@wfp.org.

Go design, fail, repeat and scale. And please - be *bold*. It's time to #disrupthunger.

For all other enquiries, please contact global.innovation@wfp.org.