



## Innovation Fund Guidelines

### Overview

The Innovation Fund is the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition's flagship initiative for inspiring and financing new activities that further the Coalition's strategic goals and those of its Implementing Mechanisms (IM): Working Groups, Caucuses, and Regional Forums. It is a critical catalyst for bridging all the sectors—advocacy, technical, commercial—that make up the Coalition's large and diverse membership.

Launched in 2009, the Innovation Fund came into being to ensure that all of the Coalition's working groups had equal access to the funds needed to carry out their objectives. Five years later, the number and types of groups have expanded, but the principle underlying the Fund remains the same. Activities eligible for support must serve the larger community, not just the interests of the applicant or implementing agency.

Traditionally, the Coalition has defined the concept of innovation broadly to include any promising new idea with the potential to bring about positive change. Innovation need not mean a radical departure from previous practice but rather could include new approaches to existing processes. Innovation also can apply to systems or processes and the generation of new knowledge. Finally, innovation extends to applying an existing strategy in a new context for the first time, thereby shedding light on how best to replicate and scale-up new approaches at the country level.

Managed by the Coalition Secretariat, the Innovation Fund provides grants via two mechanisms: competitive funding rounds and targeted requests. The first mechanism, competitive funding rounds, takes place at specified dates with reviews and allocations made multiple times per year. The maximum value of any single award under this mechanism is \$200,000, with duration of no more than 13 months<sup>1</sup>. **Annex 1** contains further details about the number of awards at different funding levels available per round as well as a detailed listing of application deadlines and maximum award terms. The second mechanism, targeted requests, is considered on an ad hoc basis in response to time-sensitive opportunities and issues that arise. The maximum value of these awards is \$50,000, with a maximum duration of 12 months. Both mechanisms employ the same application format.

The Innovation Fund strongly encourages applications from developing countries. At its discretion, the Fund may either earmark a percentage of funds available in any single round or it may hold special rounds exclusively for developing country applicants. Up-to-date information on the application of such provisions will be announced on the Coalition's [website](#) and included within the guidelines for that round. Eligibility to apply for support from the Innovation Fund is limited to active organizational members of any Coalition IM and to no more than one application per member-organization per round.

Evaluation of all applications is undertaken by a standing review committee composed of representatives of the Coalition's Executive Committee, the Secretariat, PATH, and external experts as appropriate. Non-competitive applications (i.e. targeted requests) will be vetted among individuals selected as needed by the Secretariat.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1 for complete list of maximum terms per round.

The Innovation Fund discourages, and in some cases excludes, certain activities from support. Projects involving research often require approval by an external review committee, which can considerably delay the contracting and funding of these activities. Applicants are discouraged, therefore, from submitting proposals that involve a significant research component, particularly any research involving human subjects. The Innovation Fund also does not support applications for routine service delivery activities or proposals where the primary purpose is meeting sponsorship. Proposals in which meetings comprise a small, but critical, element of a larger set of activities and agenda may, however, be considered. Finally, as a result of the conditions under which Innovation Fund resources are currently provided to the Coalition, funds cannot be re-granted to multilateral agencies.

## **Competitive funding rounds: Application process**

In the case of competitive funding rounds, the Innovation Fund application process entails five broad steps:

1. Request for applications, issued by Coalition Secretariat.
2. Preparation of proposals by applicants and submission to designated leader of the relevant IM by specified deadline (see dates below). IMs may have earlier deadlines for internal review processes.
3. Review of proposals by IM leader and/or IM as a whole, with revisions as deemed necessary (two weeks).
4. Submission of final proposals by IM leader to Secretariat (innovation@rhsupplies.org).
5. Evaluation of proposal by review committee, with results communicated to applicant and IM leader (six weeks).

The Secretariat, as manager of the Innovation Fund, will only accept applications that have been ***vett******ed by an Implementing Mechanism (Working Groups, Caucuses, Forums) and formally submitted to the Innovation Fund by the Implementing Mechanism leader.*** IM leaders and members should be viewed by potential applicants as a technical resource to help inform project design, offer solutions to any challenges that may arise in the project, and provide feedback during project implementation. The concurrence of an IM leader signifies the application's endorsement by the IM and serves three additional purposes:

- To verify that the proposed project aligns with the goals and priorities of the IM and its workstreams;
- To ensure that the applicants are active members of the IM and that members of the IM do support the proposal as important work of the IM as a whole; and
- To certify that the proposal meets the minimal standards and criteria worthy of a final review by the review committee.

Following the receipt of a completed proposal from an IM member, IM leaders have two weeks to review applications before forwarding them to the Secretariat. The IM leaders' names and email addresses are listed in **Annex 1**. Applications (electronic or in hard copy) ***must be received in full by the Implementing Mechanism leader by the relevant deadline*** (see **Annex 1** for more details).

*Dates for Competitive Funding Rounds:*

- Year 2014: September 1 by 17:00 EST
- Year 2015: January 12 by 17:00 EST

The Innovation Fund application form is attached in **Annex 2**.

## Selection process

Applications are judged by a review committee comprising two members of the Executive Committee, the Coalition Director, a representative of PATH (as the responsible fiscal agency for the grant funds), and depending on the content of the applications to be reviewed, appropriate technical expert(s). IM leaders are not eligible to participate in the review committee.

Each member of the review committee completes a standardized review checklist for each application reviewed (see **Annex 3**), the contents of which may evolve over time in response to Coalition needs. In completing its review, the committee may request further clarification from the applicant organization and may, if deemed appropriate, recommend adjustments to the proposed scope of work or budget. Every effort will be made to provide written notification of the review committee's decisions to IM leaders and the applicant organizations within approximately two months of the application's submission.

Upon award, the Secretariat will inform successful recipient organizations of all reporting and disbursement schedules. All contractual obligations must be met before any funds can be disbursed.

Please note: In preparing project proposals, applicants should not plan start dates earlier than two-and-a-half months from the date applications are due to the IM leader. This lead-time is the minimum required for the review process and notification, potential revisions, and finalization of grant paperwork.

## Targeted requests: Application Process

In exceptional circumstances, grants are awarded on a non-competitive basis so that IMs can undertake time-sensitive activities that could not otherwise wait for submission during a scheduled funding round. At this time, the only activities anticipated to fall within this classification are those related to the immediate program needs of an IM. In other words, in contrast to competitive rounds where individual organizations or groups of organizations can be expected to submit proposals that align with IM objectives, non-competitive applications are driven by the immediate needs of the IM itself. This may be to jump-start a critical programmatic intervention or to respond immediately to unanticipated program opportunities. Because of the immediacy of these grants, their maximum budgets and timeframes are less than those for competed grants.

In the case of non-competitive, targeted requests, the Innovation Fund application process entails three broad steps:

1. The IM leader initiates the grant request by writing to the Coalition Director and describing why funds are being requested; what activity is to be undertaken; why the need for funding is immediate; and which organization is likely to undertake the work.
2. If the request is accepted, the designated applicant organization develops a proposal using the standard Innovation Fund application template and submits the proposal via the IM leader to the Coalition Director (maximum two weeks).
3. The proposal is evaluated by selected external reviewers, with results communicated to the applicant and IM leader (maximum one week).

Upon award, the Secretariat will inform recipient organizations of all reporting and disbursement schedules. All contractual obligations must be met before any funds can be disbursed.

Recipients of non-competed grants will not be allowed to apply for a new grant in subsequent application rounds while the initial grant is still in effect. If, therefore, the aim of a non-competed grant is to jump-start a program, then it would be to the IM and applicant organization's advantage to keep to a minimum the requested amount and grant period.

Please note: In preparing project proposals, applicants should not plan start dates earlier than one month from the date applications are submitted to the IM leader. This lead-time is the minimum required for the review process and notification, potential revisions, and finalization of grant paperwork.

### **Monitoring and reporting requirements for all grants**

Recipient organizations within each IM are accountable for the appropriate utilization of all project funds. Recipients must submit financial and narrative progress reports and a final financial and narrative report within 30 days of the end of the project's activities. Progress reports must indicate the degree to which the project is meeting the timelines and outcomes as outlined in the application. They must also include additional information if requested in the original award agreement. Finally, they should explain any notable deviations from the application and the steps being taken to remedy these deviations. The recipient organization will be notified of the reporting schedule upon issuance of the award.

Progress reports and expected deliverables outlined in the grant agreement will be monitored by the Secretariat and shared with the sponsoring IM leader. Grantees are expected to actively share project results with their IM and engage with IM members throughout the life cycle of the project (e.g. through participation in annual meetings or regular teleconferences).

## Annex 1 Funds Available and Key Dates

### *Funding Tiers per Round*

Up to 13 grants will be awarded per round of the Innovation Fund as detailed below:

- Up to two awards at US\$200,000
- Up to three awards at US\$100,000
- Up to three awards at US\$75,000
- Up to four awards at US\$50,000

### **Year 2014**

*Applications due from applicant organization to IM leader/chair: September 1, 2014*

- Due from IM leader/chair to Innovation Fund: September 15, 2014
- Announcements: November 1, 2014
- Earliest grant start date: January 2, 2015
- Maximum grant term: 13 months

### **Year 2015**

*Applications due from applicant organization to IM leader/chair: January 12, 2015*

- Due from IM leader/chair to Innovation Fund: January 26, 2015
- Announcements: March 23, 2015
- Earliest grant start date: May 1, 2015
- Maximum grant term: 10 months

### **IM Leaders/chairs and Secretariat contact (as of February 2014)**

A&AWG:	Sarah Shaw, <a href="mailto:sshaw@ippf.org">sshaw@ippf.org</a> and Moses Muwonge, <a href="mailto:drmuwonge@gmail.com">drmuwonge@gmail.com</a>	Lou Compernelle, <a href="mailto:lcompernelle@rhsupplies.org">lcompernelle@rhsupplies.org</a>
MDAWG:	Ian Askew, <a href="mailto:iaskew@popcouncil.org">iaskew@popcouncil.org</a>	Anita Deshpande, <a href="mailto:adeshpande@rhsupplies.org">adeshpande@rhsupplies.org</a>
SSWG:	Leslie Patykewich, <a href="mailto:leslie_patykewich@jsi.com">leslie_patykewich@jsi.com</a>	Ellen T. Tompsett, <a href="mailto:etompsett@rhsupplies.org">etompsett@rhsupplies.org</a>
GEMS	Lester Chinery, <a href="mailto:lester.chinery@conceptfoundation.org">lester.chinery@conceptfoundation.org</a>	Anita Deshpande, <a href="mailto:adeshpande@rhsupplies.org">adeshpande@rhsupplies.org</a>
MHS:	Beth Yeager, <a href="mailto:byeager@msh.org">byeager@msh.org</a>	Milka Dinev, <a href="mailto:mdinev@rhsupplies.org">mdinev@rhsupplies.org</a>
NURHT:	Heather Clark, <a href="mailto:hclark@popcouncil.org">hclark@popcouncil.org</a>	Jamee Kuznicki, <a href="mailto:jkuznicki@rhsupplies.org">jkuznicki@rhsupplies.org</a>
ForoLAC:	Vicky Camacho, <a href="mailto:vcamacho@unfpa.org">vcamacho@unfpa.org</a>	Milka Dinev, <a href="mailto:mdinev@rhsupplies.org">mdinev@rhsupplies.org</a>
SECONAF:	Bocar Daff, <a href="mailto:mbdaff@gmail.com">mbdaff@gmail.com</a>	Badara Seye, <a href="mailto:bseye@rhsupplies.org">bseye@rhsupplies.org</a>



## Annex 2 Innovation Fund Proposal Application

**Instructions to applicants:**

Use this form to describe and submit your application. Please limit the length to five pages (not including the cover page or the budget attachment). Use eleven-point font, one-inch margins, and single spacing. Applications must be submitted to the Implementing Mechanism chair/leader with a cc to the Secretariat contact (a list is provided in the application guidelines in Annex 1); IM-approved proposals will be forwarded to the Innovation Fund.

For any questions, please contact [innovation@rhsupplies.org](mailto:innovation@rhsupplies.org).

**Date:**

**Project title:**

**Amount requested:** US\$

**Project start date:**

**Project end date:**

**Name of applicant organization/fiscal agent to receive funds:**

**Contact information (mailing address, telephone, and email):**

Indicate the following IM your organization is active within (only one may be checked):

**Implementing Mechanism**

- Advocacy & Accountability Working Group
- Market Development Approaches Working Group
- Systems Strengthening Working Group
- Generic Manufacturers for Reproductive Health Caucus
- Maternal Health Supplies Caucus
- New and Underused Reproductive Health Technologies Caucus
- ForoLAC
- Sécurité Contraceptive en Afrique Francophone

**Coalition Strategic Goal**

- Availability: To ensure the availability of reproductive health products and supplies from the manufacturers through the supply systems to point-of-access.
- Choice: Women and men are better able to choose from a wider range of contraceptive and other reproductive health supply options currently available in the global marketplace.
- Equity: To reduce the financial and product-related barriers that hinder access to the supplies people need to ensure their sexual and reproductive health.
- Quality: Women and men in low- and middle-income countries are able to obtain reproductive health supplies they know are safe and effective and meet international quality criteria.

# Innovation Fund Proposal Application

Please adhere to the following format in outlining your proposed project. The narrative sections of the application (sections 1 – 8) are limited to a maximum of five pages total.

**1. Introduction**

Describe briefly (two paragraphs maximum) the background and rationale for the activity being proposed. What is the problem or current state of affairs you wish to change through this activity? What hard evidence can you provide to substantiate the importance of the issue for your organization, sector, country, or region? How will this activity, if successful, make a difference in people’s lives? Describe why you have approached the Innovation Fund as a source of funding for this application. Have other donors previously been approached? Is co-funding available?

**2. Context**

In one paragraph, situate this project within both the context of your IM and the broader reproductive health supplies landscape. How have you engaged members in your IM to get feedback on this idea and ensure its relevancy? Within the broader reproductive health space, describe any consultations with important stakeholders or background research to ensure that the proposal does not duplicate but builds on existing work.

**3. Project goal and objectives**

Describe the overall goal(s) of the project. Also, describe up to *three objectives* to be accomplished during the project period and explain: 1) how they will contribute to the overall achievement of the IM’s and, ultimately, the Coalition’s strategic goal(s) and 2) how you intend to demonstrate the achievement of these objectives.

**4. Major activities and milestones**

What actions will you take to solve the problem described in the introduction? Provide descriptions of the major activities needed to meet each objective outlined in section 3. Explain how the activities link to the objective/outcome and provide indicators (qualitative or quantitative) and/or milestones that can be used to gauge progress and/or completion of the major activities. Identify in the format below key milestones that will be used to measure progress on these activities.

<b>Objectives/Activities</b>	<b>Indicators/Milestones</b>	<b>Completion Date(s)</b>
Objective 1: Activity X Activity X Activity X	X X X	
Objective 2: Activity X Activity X Activity X	X X X	
Objective 3: Activity X Activity X Activity X	X X X	

Starting dates should begin no earlier than two-and-a-half months after submission of the application—to account for the review process and notification, potential revisions, and finalization of grant paperwork.

5. **Innovation**

As stated in the guidelines (see page 1), innovation is defined as “any promising new idea with the potential to bring about positive change.” Based on this definition, provide a brief description as to how this project can be considered innovative.

6. **Organizational capability**

In less than ten lines, specify the attributes of the applicant organization that make it appropriately suited to undertake the proposed activity. This should not be a boilerplate description of the organization itself but rather a focused statement about its suitability for the activities at hand.

Please identify any other organizations that are expected to play a significant role in the implementation of the proposed work. If the proposed activity is to be carried out jointly, please explain (in less than ten additional lines) the rationale for joint implementation and describe the added value each partner brings.

7. **Monitoring and evaluation**

What needs to happen for you to be able to claim success, and how will you know you have achieved it? Describe the proposed methodology for measuring project success. Please indicate how and when you plan to assess the results through internal and/or external evaluations, describing plans for data collection, analysis, and decision-making.

8. **Dissemination and utilization of knowledge**

Describe (one to two paragraphs) plans to ensure that the results of your proposed activity will be communicated to and inform the work of the Coalition, its members, and/or the broader reproductive health supplies community. Where does the Coalition, as an institution, fit into those plans as an agent of change? How do you intend to use the Coalition (e.g. its communications media, meetings, staff, etc.) as a vehicle for disseminating new knowledge and/or facilitating its utilization?

9. **Budget narrative** (please download the budget template [here](#))

The budget component of the application includes a budget spreadsheet and a corresponding budget narrative. Together, they must clearly link the funding you have requested to the major activities described. The budget narrative and spreadsheet should only include the funds requested from the Coalition; however, a brief summary of other sources of support to the project should be included in the narrative.

- a. Personnel and fringe benefits: Identify the key staff or positions required for this project and the level of effort for each.
- b. Consultants: List amounts to be paid to individuals and specify what services they will provide. The budget narrative should include descriptions of the work to be performed and associated rates.
- c. Funds to other organizations: Identify funds that will be used to issue subagreements or subcontracts to other organizations in furtherance of the project. Include all agreements to be made and/or negotiated with other entities and the price and deliverables over a specified period in relation to the activities proposed.

The budget narrative should include concise descriptions of the work to be performed, rates, and whether the contract is confirmed or projected.

- d. Travel and per diem: Include transportation costs directly related to the major activities, including **expenses for all modes of transportation, lodging, meals, automobile expenses, mileage reimbursement, and per diem payments**. If your organization has a per diem policy, these should not exceed the US government rates for domestic travel or the [WHO/UN](#) or [US Department of State](#) rates for international travel for the location. Travel can be grouped according to trip(s) as long as all cost assumptions, *including class of travel*, are detailed in the budget narrative. Note that backup documentation (receipts) may be required for travel including M&IE, and business class is not allowable.
- e. Other project costs: The budget narrative should include an itemized list of supplies to be purchased (e.g. other non-personnel/ project-related costs such as office supplies, postage, software, meeting costs, communications, printing, etc.) and all cost assumptions. Desktop and laptop computers are not allowable costs.
- f. Overhead cost rates: These rates are maximum allowances. If your organization has lower rates, the lower rates should be used. If your budget includes overhead costs, please provide a copy of your institutional overhead policy. If you have a NICRA (negotiated indirect rate cost agreement), please provide a copy. If you do not and the application is successful, then the organization will be required to provide a written explanation of the institutional overhead policy, **three years of audited financial statements, and an auditor's statement as to how it is calculated**. If these items cannot be provided, then indirect/overhead rates will not be allowed. To the extent that overhead costs are applicable, they are subject to the following limits:
  - Up to 15 percent of total direct costs for non-US academic institutions and all private, voluntary, and nongovernmental organizations, regardless of location (including United Nations).
  - Up to 10 percent of total direct costs for US universities and other academic institutions.
  - No overhead costs will be paid to US government agencies.
  - Rates apply to all primary and subrecipients that are part of the application.

## Annex 3 Innovation Fund Review Criteria

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### 1. Justification of the project (35 points)

- Do the authors make a convincing case that the proposed activity promises to address or overcome a critical problem or issue (backed up by evidence) that impedes the achievement of one or more Coalition objectives?
- Is the project in line with the objectives of the Coalition and respective IM?
- Does the project hold out reasonable promise of delivering on what it purports to do?
- Does the project contribute to the work and effectiveness of the IM?
- Will this project make a difference in people's lives/ in the community?

### 2. Well-defined (40 points)

- Clearly defined objectives and outcomes. The activities are clearly linked to the objectives and outcomes.
- Reasonable and rational implementation plan.
- Realistic in terms of the implementing organization(s)' capacity to carry out the proposed work and experience conducting similar work.
- Adequate monitoring and evaluation plan.

### 3. Innovative (15 points)

- Does the project correspond to what the Coalition has defined as "innovative?"
- Does the work incubate new methodologies or ideas?

### 4. Budget plan (10 points)

- Clearly described.
- Appropriate for the work described.

### 5. Funding alternatives: (10 possible bonus points)

- Have other donors already been approached?
- Is co-funding available?
- Requested funding does not replace investment that would have been made.

### Overall

- Accept
- Accept with minor adjustments/clarification
- Re-write for subsequent round
- Reject

### Comments