

NOVEMBER 2017



Innovation Fund Guidelines



Reproductive Health
SUPPLIES COALITION

Background

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 IMs had equal access to the funds needed to carry out their objectives. While the number of Coalition IMs have expanded over the years, 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 can also apply to the generation of new knowledge around existing systems or processes. 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.

Application process

The Innovation Fund application process is a competitive funding round. Members may apply to the Fund individually or jointly with another member organization. Applicants will submit a [200-word concept note](#)¹ (see Annex 1) to IM Chairs by December 1st, 2017. IM Chairs will then work with members of their IM to select the concept notes to be developed into full proposals for review by the full Innovation Fund review committee. The selection of winning proposals should be completed by mid-March, 2018 which, following contract discussions, would allow project start-up to begin around mid-April, 2018. No IF resources may be used prior to the start-date of a contract agreement.

The Secretariat, as manager of the Innovation Fund, will only accept applications officially forwarded to it by the Chair of an IM (Working Group, Caucus, or Forum). IM Chairs and fellow IM members represent an important resource pool which should be tapped to help inform project design, overcome design challenges, and provide feedback during project implementation.



¹ For SECONAF and ForoLAC, concept notes may be submitted in French and Spanish respectively.

Submission by an IM Chair signifies the application's endorsement by the IM and ensures the following:

- › That the proposed project aligns with the goals and priorities of the IM and its work streams;
- › That the applicants are active members of the IM
- › That members of the IM are aware of the proposal and see it as supporting the strategic objectives of the IM; and
- › That the proposal is of a standard worthy of final review by the review committee.

Applications are judged by a review committee comprising members of the Executive Committee, the Coalition Director, a representative of PATH (as the responsible fiscal agency for the grant funds), and appropriate technical expert(s), as required. IM Chairs are not eligible to participate in the review committee.

Each member of the review committee completes a standardized review checklist for each application, which corresponds to the priorities of each funding round. 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.

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.

Eligibility

Eligibility to receive an Innovation Fund award is limited to member organizations of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition. There are only two exceptions to this general rule. First, PATH, as manager of the Coalition Secretariat and fiduciary agent for the funds is excluded from serving as the primary grantee on any Innovation award. Multilateral agencies are also precluded from receiving an Innovation award, given complexities in the contracting process.

Linkages to the broader RHSC agenda

In addition to helping the IMs to pursue their strategic goals, the Innovation Fund represents a critical tool for advancing the Coalition's own agenda as enshrined within its four strategic pillars: Availability, Equity, Quality and Choice. One pillar which has yet to see significant investment of either time or resources is that of choice—and more specifically product choice for marginalized populations such as young people, rural populations, and the economically disadvantaged. All applicants, therefore, are encouraged to incorporate into their concept notes and proposals, where relevant and feasible, provisions for addressing the commodity needs of marginalized populations. For more ideas on how this might be done, please consult the [Coalition's 2015-2025 Strategy](#), particularly the sections relating to equity and choice.

Exclusions from consideration

The Innovation Fund was designed to deliver financial support to member organizations as quickly and expediently as possible. To ensure this objective is met, proposals that have the potential to hold up the review or contracting process are excluded from consideration. Among these are:

- › Projects involving research requiring approval by an ethical or external review committee.
- › Research on human subjects.
- › Applications for routine service delivery activities or proposals where the primary purpose is meeting sponsorship.

The grant

In this round of the Innovation Fund, we will disburse up to \$500,000 total in individual subgrants. The number of successful grants and their sizes will depend on the quality of applications received and the balance of available funds. To guide applicants in developing proposals, however, we envision awarding up to one award, if at all, at the US\$200,000 level; up to three grants at the US\$100-150,000 level; and up to eight grants between US\$25,000 and US\$50,000.

Monitoring and reporting requirements for all grants

Recipient organizations must submit financial and narrative progress reports as stipulated in the grant agreement, and provide final financial and narrative reporting 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 shared with the sponsoring IM leader. Grantees are expected to share project results with IM members throughout the life cycle of the project (e.g. through participation in annual meetings or regular teleconferences).

Annex 1: 200-word concept notes

Concept notes can be downloaded from [here](#), and should include:

- › The problem you have identified
- › How you propose to address this issue
- › An estimate of total cost for the project.

With input from membership, Chairs will select up to two concept notes to be developed into full proposals based on the degree to which the proposed activity:

- › Supports the supplies-focus of the RHSC,
- › Supports the goals of the IM through which it is submitted,
- › Supports those element(s) of the RHSC agenda highlighted during the round, and
- › Offers value-for-money.

Timing

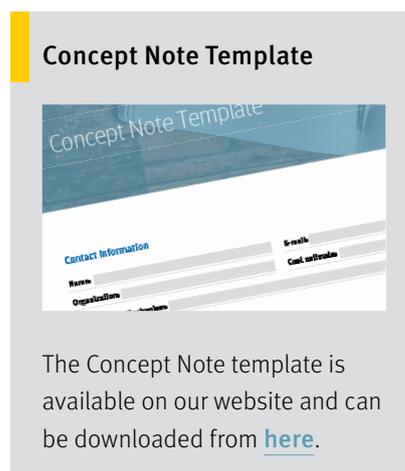
- › **December 1, 2017:** Latest date by which concept notes are due to Chairs.
- › **December 15, 2017:** Latest date by which Chairs notify members of concept notes that have been selected for proposal development.
- › **January 12, 2018:** Full proposals due to Chairs.

Who to submit to

Your IM Chair and corresponding secretariat lead.

IM Leaders/chairs and Secretariat contact (as of Nov. 2017)

Group	Chair(s)	Secretariat lead
A&AWG	Wendy Turnbull: turnbull@pai.org Halima Shariff: halima.shariff@gmail.com	David Eeckhout: deeckhout@rhsupplies.org
MDAWG	Elizabeth Westley: ewestley@msh.org	Julia White: jwhite@rhsupplies.org
SSWG	Ellen Tompsett: etompsett@ghsc-psm.org	Brian McKenna: bmckenna@rhsupplies.org
GEMS	Lester Chinery: lester.chinery@conceptfoundation.org	Brian McKenna: bmckenna@rhsupplies.org
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The Concept Note template is available on our website and can be downloaded from [here](#).



The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition

The Coalition is a global partnership of public, private, and non-governmental organizations dedicated to ensuring that everyone in low- and middle-income countries can access and use affordable, high-quality supplies for their better reproductive health. It brings together agencies and groups with critical roles in providing contraceptives and other reproductive health supplies. These include multilateral and bilateral organizations, private foundations, governments, civil society, and private sector representatives.