



Innovation Fund Guidelines

Background

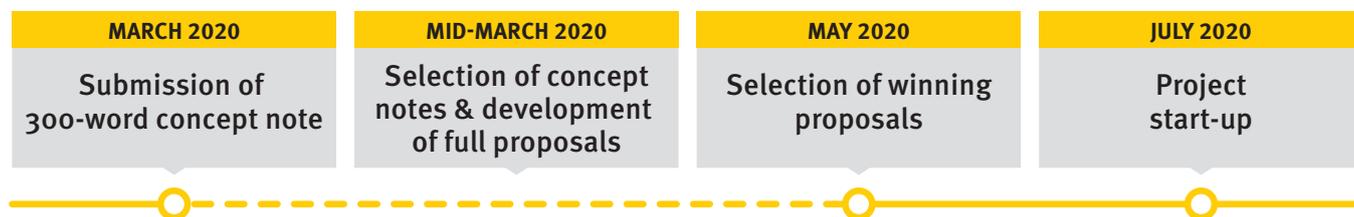
The Innovation Fund is the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition’s flagship initiative for inspiring and financing new activities that further the Coalition’s strategic goals and those of its Implementing Mechanisms (IM): Working Groups, Caucuses, and Regional Forums. It is a critical catalyst for bridging 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 Implementing Mechanisms (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 300-word concept note¹ to IM Chairs by March, 2020. 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. While multiple concept notes and proposals may be developed, no more than one proposal can ultimately be awarded per organization. The selection of winning proposals should be completed by the end of May which, following contract discussions, would allow project start-up to begin around July, 2020. No IF resources may be used prior to the start-date of a contract agreement.



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

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. 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.

Priority theme for Innovation Fund Proposals Round 18

Every funding cycle, we commit ourselves to advancing the objectives of our four strategic pillars: Availability, Equity, Quality, and Choice. Over time, some pillars become relatively well-populated with results, while others end up with far less to show. To maintain some degree of consistency across pillars, we routinely turn to our members. We support relevant workstreams within our various implementing mechanism; we occasionally invest in new Secretariat-led initiatives; and we use the Innovation Fund to support initiatives that promise to address strategic areas that have yet to show significant impact. Therefore, in addition to helping the IMs to pursue their strategic goals, the Innovation Fund represents a critical tool for supporting the strategic objectives of the Coalition as a whole.

This targeted round of the Innovation Fund is made possible by a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation so applications must address the following theme:

PRIORITY THEME

OVERCOMING THE SUPPLIES BARRIERS TO SAFE ABORTION ACCESS AND THE RH NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

Given earmarked donor investment and in response to demand from members, we are looking for proposals that:

1. Address safe abortion supplies challenges; or
2. Target the RH supplies needs of adolescent/youth populations

Supplies lens

All successful Innovation Fund proposals will apply a supplies lens to the problem they seek to address. A supplies lens focusses on the interface between the product and the entire system through which the product passes. It also includes policies that govern what procurers buy, the markets that determine product affordability, and product awareness that determines whether something even gets on the procurers' radar screens.

An effective way of applying a supplies lens to any challenge is to build from the [RHSC strategic indicators](#)². These indicators unpack the contents of each strategic pillar—Availability, Equity, Quality, and Choice—with a supplies focus. To ensure proposals are squarely within the Coalition's scope, this round's Concept Note submission will require applicants to indicate which strategic indicator(s) your project intends to use to achieve its objectives.



Webinar

For more information on the supplies lens, please take a look [at this webinar](#) conducted by RHSC Director, John Skibiak.

Eligibility

Eligibility to receive an Innovation Fund award is open to member organizations of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition which are actively engaged in the Coalition's Implementing Mechanisms.

Exclusions from consideration

The Innovation Fund was designed to deliver financial support to member organizations as quickly and expediently as possible, and to minimize any risk of conflict of interest. To ensure this, the following exclusions apply:

- › Routine service delivery activities or proposals where the primary purpose is meeting sponsorship will not be considered.
- › Applications will not be accepted which include funds spent directly on the purchase of supplies.
- › Applications will not be accepted for research on human subjects or any other research requiring approval by an ethical or external review committee.
- › The organization to which the IM Chair belongs can submit funding proposals to the Innovation Fund. To avoid any conflict of interest, however, the Chair cannot be involved in either the proposal's development or assessment. The Chair is thus required to delegate review responsibility and decision making to another member(s) or co-leader of her/his IM.
- › 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.
- › Organizations may only have one active Innovation Fund grant at any one time.
- › Multilateral agencies are precluded from receiving an Innovation award, given complexities in the contracting process.

² For more detailed information on the indicators, please see the [RHSC 2015–2025 Strategic Plan](#), pages 9–12.

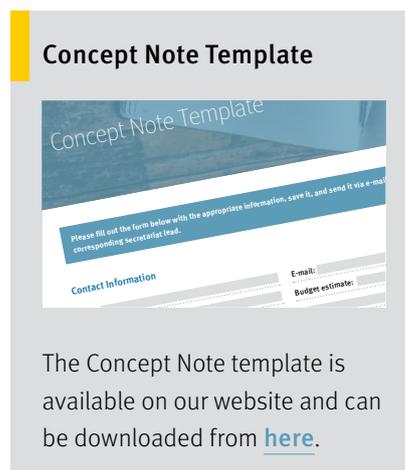
The grant

In this round of the Innovation Fund, we will disburse up to \$150,000 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.

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).

The graphic shows a document titled "Concept Note Template" with a blue header. Below the title, there is a blue box with white text that reads: "Please fill out the form below with the appropriate information, save it, and send it via e-mail to the corresponding secretariat lead." Below this, there are fields for "Contact information", "E-mail:", and "Budget estimate:".

Concept Note Template

Please fill out the form below with the appropriate information, save it, and send it via e-mail to the corresponding secretariat lead.

Contact information

E-mail:

Budget estimate:

The Concept Note template is available on our website and can be downloaded from [here](#).

300-word concept notes

Concept notes 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 (unless indicated otherwise) to be developed into full proposals based on the degree to which the proposed activity:

- › Addresses the priority theme (see above);
- › 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

- › **March 9, 2020:** Latest date by which concept notes are due to Chairs.
- › **March 23, 2020:** Latest date by which Chairs notify members of concept notes that have been selected for proposal development.
- › **April 20, 2020 :** Full proposals due to Chairs.

Who to submit to?

The application must be submitted to your IM Chair with copy to your corresponding secretariat lead.

! Please note: Any single concept note may only be submitted to **one** Implementing Mechanism.

IM Leaders/chairs and Secretariat contact (as of February 2020)

Group	Chair(s)	Secretariat lead
A&AWG	Rosemarie Muganda-Onyando: rmuganda@path.org Sara Stratton: Sara.Stratton@thepalladiumgroup.com	Charlotte Soulay: csoulay@rhsupplies.org
MDAWG	Andrea Bare: abare@umich.edu	Safia Ahsan: sahsan@rhsupplies.org
SSWG	Ellen Tompsett: etompsett@ghsc-psm.org	Greg Davidson: gdauidson@rhsupplies.org
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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.