

**UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (UNCDF)  
Ghana challenge on Youth and MSMEs empowerment**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**  
**Deadline for submission: October 4, 2019**

**1. INTRODUCTION TO THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

UNCDF is looking for a firm to support with expert guidance on innovation journey focused on youth and MSMEs empowerment in Ghana. The journey will undertake different activities to support the development of digital solutions that address 2 market challenges (1. youth & financial services 2. Youth and digital skills development). It will engage developers / entrepreneurs' communities to build solutions against these challenges, mentoring these developers/ entrepreneurs, building human capital, facilitating the creation or the strengthening of innovative and sustainable concepts that would drive new businesses or optimize existing businesses.

The result of this journey will be the creation or the strengthening of MSMEs/Start-ups that will bring in innovative services to Ghana and will give impetus to the digital economy, thus reinforcing youth skills, creating jobs and driving MSMEs growth, especially in digital trade industry. UNCDF will support the generation of new ideas or the improvement of existing solutions. This process will bring in different types of support as listed below.

1. Mentoring: opportunity to work alongside industry leaders and experienced investors to catalyze growth.
2. Access to Digital Financial Services DFS infrastructure, collaboration tools and digital platforms.
3. Knowledge Sharing: sharing know-how within local tech community members and start-up founders.
4. At the end of the process, grants to the two selected start-ups, winners of the challenges, working across use-cases where digital is a key enabler to develop youth skills, financial services, create jobs or address other MSMEs or youth challenges.

UNCDF will select a firm which will support the different applicants throughout the innovation Journey. The overall duration of the engagement is expected to take up to 3 months.

### **Applications & RFA Calendar:**

- Publication date: **September 17, 2019**
- Final deadline for applications: **October 4, 2019 8 pm Eastern Standard Time (GMT -5)**

You may send questions to [digital.info@uncdf.org](mailto:digital.info@uncdf.org). A FAQ document will be generated based on enquiries received on or before October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The FAQs will be posted on the UNCDF website no later than **October 3, 2019**.

Applications should be returned to the UNCDF by email at [digital.info@uncdf.org](mailto:digital.info@uncdf.org) no later than **October 4, 2019 8pm Eastern Standard Time (GMT -5)**. Applications must follow the submission format in Annex I.

#### ***1.1. Purpose of the RFA***

UNCDF is promoting digital innovations that accelerate MSMEs participation in digital commerce and foster the development of the digital economy, resulting in positive employment and livelihood outcomes especially for the youth.

The purpose of this request for applications (RFA) is to engage the services of a firm with whom UNCDF will support the capacity building of 40 preselected fintech (simultaneously 2 cohorts of 20) and manage the selection of the two winners of the challenges that will enable the latter to benefit from a grant to develop a new concept or scale-up existing service that better suit the challenges criteria.

UNCDF will provide a grant to the selected firm to attain the following results:

1. Bring strong private sector stakeholders to drive and scale this challenge in Ghana
2. Refine the tools and curriculum to be delivered, accomplished alongside UNCDF team
3. Support in refining the problem statements for the 2 challenges and the eligibility criteria for the selected start-ups.
4. Support with structuring of the mentorship engagement with both global and local pool. Along with bringing in the expertise required for specific intervention.
5. Support from end-to-end the innovation journey activities (from application to bootcamp to mentorship to project structuring)
6. Successful completion of the preselected start-ups with the results documented;
7. Working with UNCDF communication team on the visibility of all the activities related to or the partners involved in the program;

Proposals should have a strong public good component and the people supporting the initiative would be critical and should have depth of knowledge in space of digital finance, West Africa environment and

working with use-cases.

All applicants should give full consideration to the [Principals of Digital Development](#).

### **1.2. Timing**

**Applications should be returned to the UNCDF by email** no later than **midnight on October 4, 2019 8 pm Eastern Standard Time (GMT -5)**. It is anticipated that shortlisting will be completed within 2 weeks of application submission. UNCDF would like to conclude all agreements **end of October 2019**

Activities are expected to start at the **end of October 2019**. The overall duration of this engagement is expected to be for a period of 3 months.

### **1.3. Contact**

Applications and any consultation about this RFA should be submitted via email at [digital.info@uncdf.org](mailto:digital.info@uncdf.org)

### **1.4. Responses**

All queries and submitted applications will be acknowledged. A FAQ document will be generated based on enquiries received on or before October 2. The FAQs will be posted on the UNCDF website on the 3<sup>th</sup> of October 2019.

## **2. ORGANIZATION CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **2.1. Organization Context**

The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) makes public and private finance work for the poor in the world's 47 least developed countries. With its capital mandate and instruments, UNCDF offers "last mile" finance models that unlock public and private resources, especially at the domestic level, to reduce poverty and support local economic development. UNCDF's financing models work through two channels: financial inclusion that expands the opportunities for individuals, households, and small businesses to participate in the local economy, providing them with the tools they need to climb out of poverty and manage their financial lives; and by showing how localized investments—through fiscal decentralization, innovative municipal finance, and structured project finance—can drive public and private funding that underpins local economic expansion and sustainable development. By strengthening how finance works for poor people at the household, small enterprise, and local infrastructure levels, UNCDF contributes to SDG 1 on eradicating poverty and SDG 17 on the means of implementation. By identifying those market

segments where innovative financing models can have transformational impact in helping to reach the last mile and address exclusion and inequalities of access, UNCDF contributes to a number of different SDGs.

## 2.2. Leaving no one behind in the digital era

The UNCDF strategy ‘Leaving no one behind in the digital era’ is based on over a decade of experience in digital finance in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. UNCDF recognizes that reaching the full potential of digital financial inclusion in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aligns with the vision of promoting digital economies that leave no one behind. The vision of UNCDF is to empower millions of people by 2024 to use services daily that leverage innovation and technology and contribute to the SDGs. UNCDF will apply a market development approach and continuously seek to address underlying market dysfunctions.

### 3. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected applicant is expected to support the operations and management of the activities as listed below:

Phases	Activity	Deliverable	Responsible	Timeline
p1	- Partner with one or several strong DFS stakeholders in Ghana to run the journey and scale the results	Partnership signed	Selected firm	End of October
	Setting the problem statement for the two challenges and the eligibility criteria for the two cohorts	Document/PPT outlining the challenge and the criteria for selection	Selected firm and UNCDF	
	Launch the challenge window and Structuring the mentorship and technical engagement necessary to support the process and engage with the start-ups	Listing of mentors with their skills who will engage with applicants during the program	Selected Firm closely engaging with global UNCDF team working on same	
Phase 2	Selection of the applicants with minimum 40 applicants screened and 20 selected (10 for each challenge)	List of applicants with the identified mentors to engage and required technical assistance	Selected Firm	Nov-19
	Bootcamp Implementation and Management	– Boot Camp event	Selected Firm	



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		<p>– Bootcamp report and KM coverage</p> <p>Brief document outlining the outcomes, along with KPIs and road-map</p>		
	Assist the preselected start-ups in their project's briefs preparation and pitch presentation	<p>project brief for at least 14 start-ups,</p> <p>Pitch day</p> <p>Minutes of pitching sessions with mentors</p>	Selected firm and UNCDF team	
Phase 3	Facilitation of the final selection process of the two start-ups	Evaluation form completed	Selected Firm and UNCDF	Dec. 2019 to Jan 2020
	Assist the two selected start-ups in (re)structuring their projects	Project documents finalized	Selected Firm	
	Announcement event to award the two winners with grants of USD 15,000 maximum per challenge	Minutes of event, and signed winners' award management and result measurement reporting engagement	Selected Firm and UNCDF	

#### 4. FORESEEN BUDGET

The applicants are invited to submit a budget clearly outlining the costs for the implementation of this program.

#### 5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

##### 5.1. Eligibility requirements

- Applicant(s) should be duly registered in its country of incorporation;
- Not to be in a state of repair or to have been the subject of bankruptcy, liquidation, judicial settlement, safeguarding, cessation of activity or any other similar situation resulting from a similar procedure;
- Not to be included in the United Nations financial sanctions lists, particularly in the fight against the financing of terrorism and against attacks on international peace and security;
- To have fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or obligations relating to the payment of taxes according to the legal provisions in its country of incorporation;

##### 5.2. Minimum qualification criteria

- Experience of person(s) managing the selected firm would be crucial. The persons engaged should have a background in space of digital finance and innovation at global level.
- Successfully conducted similar assignments at a country or regional level either in individual capacity or as a firm with proven excellent results, including financial services and other development issues
- Good knowledge of West Africa region
- Ability to work in English
- Submit a complete application
- Partner with one or several DFS stakeholders to deliver the journey in Ghana and scale it.

##### 5.3. Structure of the Application

- The application includes a suggested template for submissions in Annex 1: *Submission Format*. Section 1 must be followed as in the Annex. Applications may choose a format for sections 2, 3 and 4 provided all the necessary information is included.
- Additional documents or links to documents may be included at the applicant's discretion.

##### 5.4. Submission of the Application

- Applications and any consultation about this RFA should be submitted via email at [digital.info@uncdf.org](mailto:digital.info@uncdf.org)
- The subject line of the email should be: RFA Fintechs Challenges program in Ghana
- The **deadline** to submit the applications is **October 4, 2019 8pm Eastern Standard Time (GMT)**

## 6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation will follow the combined scoring method:

<p><u>Rating the Technical Proposal (TP):</u></p> <p><b>TP Rating</b> = (Total Score Obtained by the Offer / Max. Obtainable Score for TP) x 100</p> <p><u>Rating the Financial Proposal (FP):</u></p> <p><b>FP Rating</b> = (Lowest Priced Offer / Price of the Offer Being Reviewed) x 100</p> <p><u>Total Combined Score:</u></p> $\frac{(TP \text{ Rating}) \times (\text{Weight of TP, e.g. 70\%}) + (FP \text{ Rating}) \times (\text{Weight of FP, e.g., 30\%})}{\text{Total Combined and Final Rating of the Proposal}}$
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**Technical proposal (including CVs of team): 700 Points**

Expertise of the Firm	Points Obtainable
Expertise of the firm in digital finance and innovation space. Experience working with start-ups/entrepreneurs with focus on financial inclusion and low-income segments with be of added advantage	100
Existing partnership with local DFS infrastructure providers	75
At least ten year demonstrated track record of the management team in implementation of digital finance and innovation related engagements	75
Quality assurance procedures and mechanism, guarantee provided by the individual in lead or firm	75
Solid background in youth skills development	50
Knowledge of West Africa region	25
<b>Total Part 1</b>	<b>400</b>

<b>Understanding of the mandate and proposed approach</b>		<b>Points Obtainable</b>
	The proposal addresses the requirements laid out in the milestone section appropriately	100
	The design of the proposed approach is structured, and appropriate to UNCDF requirements and to achieve the goals	100
	The proposal presents efficient and cost-effective measures ways to manage the implementation	100
<b>Total Part 2</b>		<b>300</b>

**Financial Proposal (300 points)**

Only the financial offers of the applicant scoring at least 70% of the technical proposal will be To be computed as a ratio of the Proposal's offer to the lowest price among the proposals received by UNCDF.

**Total 1,000 points.**



**ANNEX 1: SUBMISSION FORMAT**

[insert: Location]  
[insert: Date]

To: Sabine Mensah, Regional Technical Specialist, and UNCDF

Dear Madam,

We, the undersigned, hereby apply for *Fintechs challenges program* in accordance with your Request for Application dated [insert: Date] and our Application. We are hereby submitting our Application, which includes the Technical Proposal including proposed budget allocation.

We hereby declare that:

- a) All the information and statements made in this Application are true and we accept that any misrepresentation contained in it may lead to our disqualification; and
- b) We have no outstanding bankruptcy or pending litigation or any legal action that could impair our operation as a going concern

We confirm that we have read, understood and hereby accept the duties and responsibilities required of us in this RFA, and the standard language of UNCDF’s Performance Based Agreements (PBA), including the requirements regarding the public good nature of the outputs to be produced (see Annex 2 for a sample of our legal language in this regard).

We fully understand and recognize that UNCDF is not bound to accept this application that we shall bear all costs associated with its preparation and submission, and that UNCDF will in no case be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the evaluation.

We remain,

Yours sincerely,

Authorized Signature [*In full and initials*]: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title of Signatory: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Please mark this letter with your corporate seal, if available]*

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## SECTION 1: GENERAL APPLICANT'S INFORMATION

1. Applicant's Legal Name:
2. Type of Organization (e.g. commercial for-profit firm, educational, non-profit, etc.):
3. In case of Joint Venture (JV), legal name of each party:
4. Actual or intended Country/ies of Registration/Operation:
5. Year of Registration:
6. Countries of Operation / No. of staff in each Country / Years of Operation in each Country
7. Legal Address/es in Country/ies of Registration/Operation
8. Description and value of top three grants or contracts relevant to the scope of this RFA for the past five years. Provide the following information for each of them.
  - Name of the project (website if applicable):
  - Date, location:
  - Client/Funder (if applicable):
  - Grant/Contract value in USD:
  - Types of results produced/activities undertaken:
  - References, contact details (name, position, email, phone number):
9. Applicant's Authorized Representative Information
  - Name:
  - Address:
  - Telephone/Fax numbers:
  - Email Address:
10. Are you in the UN Ineligibility List?  YES or  NO
11. Attached are copies of original documents of:
  - Financial statements for the past 2 years (in English or French)
  - Letter from the applicant organization's executive director, CEO, or board, expressing its commitment to the execution and participation in this process
  - Complete resumes of all the team members involved in the assignment

- Staff time allocation spreadsheet per result
- Electronic copies and hyperlinks where available of studies, knowledge products produced under similar assignments and list of dissemination channels

## SECTION 2: SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

12. Please describe your organization's experience in producing **similar** projects. For each one, make sure you describe the following (maximum 1 page per project up to 5 projects):
  - Name of the project (website if applicable);
  - Client/Funder (if applicable);
  - Grant/Contract value;
  - Description of the **approach/methodology**;
  - Types of **outputs/deliverables** produced and activities undertaken;
  - Tools used or developed (dashboards, maps, etc.);
  - Results of project for client, if known;
  - Time it took you to complete the assignment, dates, location;
  - Number of people and names of the staff that participated in the assignment;
  - Knowledge product production and dissemination strategy of the assignment;
  - References, contact details (name, position, phone number, email);
  
13. The applicant should describe his organization's expertise in managing incubator or accelerator program and the key insights, lessons learned or other takeaways from this work not mentioned in no. 12 above. (maximum 6 pages)
  - a. The applicant should describe their specific experience related to managing the challenge windows and methodology deployed around accelerator program, providing more in-depth explanation on specific tools with an emphasis on their relevance, accessibility and use by participants
  - b. Experience in the relevant country/ies
  
14. The applicant shall clearly state the tools and content that they intend to bring in terms of methodology to support the process (maximum 1 page)
  
15. The applicant should describe the team, knowledge product production, packaging and dissemination process of your organization (maximum 1 page)
  
16. The applicant should note their organization policies around legal and ethical use of methodology or content or data and provide copies or links, if available.

## SECTION 3: APPROACH AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (10 pages)

### 17. Approach to Scope of Work and Proposed Deliverables

The applicants should propose a scope of work. As noted, the applicant may suggest an alternative scope of work and / or deliverables that achieves the same objectives. However, the applicant should address each component of the SOW in Section 3 of the RFA, even if they are proposing to do very little in that component.

- Note
  - the availability of data, present and future
  - expertise in or relationships with Ghana stakeholders
- Address all issues in section 3.1 of the SOW, Expected Activities and Outputs, including:
  - working with stakeholder to identify and select use cases/challenge
  - validating analysis/design process and further accelerator

Highlight the type of support or guidance you would need from UNCDF.

### 18. Describe the proposed tool

The applicant should describe the tool and may provide links to prototypes or similar tools for review. Indicate if it will be newly developed or adapted from existing tools; on-going support provided or needed for maintenance or adaptation; user-friendliness; plan to make some or all accessible beyond the applicant and UNCDF.

### 19. Approach to the Implementation and working with UNCDF Team

The applicant should provide a detailed description of how the applicant will plan, implement and deliver the overall project. Indicate the type of team, resources that the applicant will provide, how it will organize itself for the work. Pay specific attention to the appropriateness to local conditions and project environment. Highlight the support it would need from UNCDF.

### 20. Approach to Communications

The applicant should provide detail on what type of knowledge products from deliverables and how it prefers to communicate the progress and results on the overall project as noted in section 3.3 of the RFA. Also note what support would be needed from UNCDF.

### 21. Approach to legal compliance, data privacy and security, and ethical use of data

The applicant should clearly state how it will protect customer data privacy and security and the extent to which the proposed project will comply with of the [Principles of Digital Development](#). For principles that cannot be upheld in the project, the applicant should clearly state the reasons. The

applicant should note how it intends to ensure that its work is in compliance with local laws and regulations.

**22. Implementation Timelines**

The applicant shall submit a Gantt Chart or Project Schedule indicating the detailed sequence of phases, activities that will be undertaken and their corresponding timing, specifying timelines, responsibility, and time devoted to each result. Start date should be no sooner than mid October 2019.

**23. Risks / Mitigation Measures**

Please describe the potential risks for the implementation of this project that may impact achievement and timely completion of expected results as well as their quality. Describe measures that will be put in place to mitigate these risks. The applicant should address issues around data privacy and security.

**24. Technical Quality Assurance Review Mechanisms**

The methodology shall also include details of the applicant’s internal technical and quality assurance review mechanisms.

**SECTION 4: PERSONNEL**

**25. Management Structure**

Describe the overall management approach toward planning and implementing this result. Include an organization chart for the management of the project describing the relationship, roles and responsibilities of key positions and designations.

**26. Sub-grantees, contractors or other critical relationships**

Explain whether any work would be delegated, to whom, how much percentage of the work, the rationale for such, and the roles of the proposed sub-grantees or contractors. Special attention should be given to providing a clear picture of the role of each entity and how everyone will function as a team. If there are any other critical relationships or partnerships, please highlight them here. For other organizations that play a substantial role (e.g. > 25% of time or cost), please provide items 1 thru 8 in Section 1 of this Annex.

**27. Staff Time Allocation**

Provide a spreadsheet to show the activities of each staff member and the time allocated for his/her involvement. Please describe any travel/missions/field visits planned for this assignment indicating team member participation and duration.

(Note: Substitution of key personnel will once the grant has been awarded will be subject to the written approval of UNCDF. No increase in grant will be considered as a result of any substitution.)

## 28. Qualifications of Key Personnel

Provide the CVs for key personnel (Team Leader, Managerial, Technical experts) that will be provided to support the implementation of this project. CVs should demonstrate qualifications in areas relevant to the results to be produced.

In addition to the CVs, please submit a summary for each person in the following format:

Name:		
Position for this Contract:		
Nationality:		
Contact information:		
Countries of Work Experience:		
Language Skills:		
Educational and other Qualifications:		
Summary of Experience: <i>Highlight experience in the region and on similar projects.</i>		
<b>Relevant Experience (From most recent):</b>		
<b>Period: From – To</b>	<b>Name of Organization/Project/Activity, if applicable:</b>	<b>Job Title and Activities undertaken/Description of actual role performed:</b>
<i>e.g. June 2015-January 2016</i>		
<i>Etc.</i>		
<i>Etc.</i>		
<b>References no.1 (minimum of 3):</b>	<i>Name Designation Organization Contact Information – Address; Phone; Email; etc.</i>	
<b>Reference no.2</b>	<i>Name Designation Organization Contact Information – Address; Phone; Email; etc.</i>	
<b>Reference no.3</b>	<i>Name Designation Organization Contact Information – Address; Phone; Email; etc.</i>	

**Declaration:**

I confirm my intention to serve in the stated position and present availability to serve for the term of the proposed grant agreement. I also understand that any wilful misstatement described above may lead to my disqualification, before or during my engagement.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Nominated Team Leader/Member

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed

**SECTION 5: PROPOSED BUDGET ALLOCATION**

Please provide budget allocation in the following suggested or similar format:

**29. Summary of costs**

Level of effort		# Days	Cost	Total
	Team member #1	.. days		
	Team member #2	.. days		
	.....	.. days		
			Sub-Total LOE	<b>USD ...</b>
Travel/mission/other budget			Cost	Total
	Travel			
	Equipment / Technology			
	Consultants / sub-grantees			
	Other (describe)			
			Sub-Total Travel	
			<b>Total</b>	<b>USD ...</b>

## ANNEX 2: SAMPLE OF UNCDF LANGUAGE REGARDING PROPRIETARY RIGHTS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS PRODUCED UNDER THIS ASSIGNMENT

### 6.0 COPYRIGHT, PATENTS AND OTHER PROPRIETARY RIGHTS:

6.1 Except as is otherwise expressly provided in writing in the Agreement, the UNCDF shall be entitled to all intellectual property and other proprietary rights including, but not limited to, patents, copyrights, and trademarks, with regard to products, processes, inventions, ideas, know-how, or documents and other materials which the Recipient Institution has developed for the UNCDF under the Agreement and which bear a direct relation to or are produced or prepared or collected in consequence of, or during the course of, the performance of the Agreement, and the Recipient Institution acknowledges and agrees that such products, documents and other materials constitute works made for the UNCDF. In line with the public good nature of the grant, UNCDF will place all the deliverables specified in the public domain with the intent that they can and should be freely and widely used by other parties and the Recipient Institution shall not be excluded from the ability to use such deliverables on the same basis as other external parties.

6.2 To the extent that any such intellectual property or other proprietary rights consist of any intellectual property or other proprietary rights of the Recipient Institution: (i) that pre-existed the performance by the Recipient Institution of its obligations under the Agreement, or (ii) that the Recipient Institution may develop or acquire, or may have developed or acquired, independently of the performance of its obligations under the Agreement, the UNCDF does not and shall not claim any ownership interest thereto, and the Recipient Institution grants to the UNCDF a perpetual license to use such intellectual property or other proprietary right solely for the purposes of and in accordance with the requirements of the Agreement.

6.3 At the request of the UNCDF; the Recipient Institution shall take all necessary steps, execute all necessary documents and generally assist in securing such proprietary rights and transferring or licensing them to the UNCDF in compliance with the requirements of the applicable law and of the Agreement.

6.4 Subject to the foregoing provisions, all maps, drawings, photographs, mosaics, plans, reports, estimates, recommendations, documents, and all other data compiled by or received by the Recipient Institution under the Agreement shall be the property of the UNCDF, shall be made available for use or inspection by the UNCDF at reasonable times and in reasonable places, shall be treated as confidential, and shall be delivered only to UNCDF authorized officials on completion of work under the Agreement.