

Global Development Awards Competition Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project (MIDP) 2026 Edition

CALL FOR PROJECTS

Competition Theme

The [Global Development Network \(GDN\)](http://www.gdn.int) invites non-profit Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from low and middle-income countries to submit applications for the [Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project \(MIDP\)](#) within the theme “**Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) for Peace and Human Security**”.¹

The Award

The Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project is a competitive grant programme under the umbrella of the [Global Development Awards Competition](#), administered by GDN, funded under the Policy and Human Resources Development Fund (PHRD) trust fund managed by the World Bank, and generously supported by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Japan. The award programme invites non-profit NGOs and CSOs to submit project proposals supporting (in particular) improved service delivery, and innovative approaches that may be scaled-up through a grant. The Award targets projects currently at the stage of implementation, and which have a high potential for impact targeting exceptionally marginalised and disadvantaged groups located in developing countries - per the World Bank’s recognition as [low- and middle-income countries](#).

The winning projects will receive grants worth **US\$ 125,000 in total**. The two first prize winners will receive a grant of **US\$ 50,000 each**. The second prize will be a grant of **US\$ 25,000**. Additionally, awardees will be paired with a Technical Advisor throughout the entire implementation of the grant.

¹ More information about the theme is available at the end of this document.

The awards will be given to organisations whose projects embody an innovative approach to an important development need and hold the greatest promise for:

- i. responding directly to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, underserved groups to improve their lives aiming at rapid results for improved livelihood.
- ii. supporting initiatives that lead to developing sustainable outcomes through the scaling-up of the project.

The deadline for submission of applications is **June 17, 2026 (Indian Standard Time 6 PM)**

Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) Award

The JSDF award focuses on piloting socially innovative development projects that have been identified as having the potential for development impact and replicability through the MIDP Award. The objective of the JSDF Award is to support community-driven development and poverty reduction programmes that serve to enhance productivity, increase access to social and community services and infrastructure, and improve the living conditions of poor and vulnerable groups in eligible countries.

The two first prize winners will compete for the JSDF award after a minimum of 12 months implementation of their MIDP grant. GDN will review the suitability of the proposals for a much larger grant of **up to US\$ 200,000** within the framework of the World Bank-administered [Japan Social Development Fund \(JSDF\)](#).

Connector Grant

The 2022 edition introduced the Connector Grant, which aims to stimulate international cooperation through the development of collaborative projects to support scale-up efforts with research-based evidence. The Connector grant will be awarded to ORD grantees based on a project developed in collaboration with the MIDP grantees who received the JSDF grant. This grant will support the award recipients' collaborative efforts towards measuring and analysing scale-up impact, as well as enhancing the robustness of their M&E activities.

Important Dates

- Deadline for submissions: [June 17, 2026](#)
- Eligibility screening results: [June 22, 2026](#)
- Phase 1 - Desk review results (1st shortlisted applications): [July 21, 2026](#)
- Phase 2 - Business review results (2nd shortlisted applications): [August 10, 2026](#)
- Phase 3 - Site visits² to 2nd shortlisted applications: [August 10 until August 26, 2026](#)
- Announcement of finalists: [September 14, 2026](#)
- Announcement of winners: [December 2026](#)

Finalists, 1 representative per project, are expected to be available for the Communications Training and the physical event for the presentation of their projects to the jury during the Global Development Conference, to take place in December 2026 in Asia.

Competition Rules and Guidelines

Please review carefully. Any application that does not follow the guidelines below will NOT be considered.

General Rules

- Please note that the **submission of all documents is mandatory** for your application to be treated as complete and eligible.
- The application and the required documents **must be submitted as electronic files at GDN's online submission platform**. Please note that GDN accepts applications through the online submission platform **EXCLUSIVELY**.
- Proposals **must be submitted in English** only.
- An organisation can only submit one application.
- All applications must be accompanied by CVs of all the members of the project team (not from all staff).

² The site visits can take place on a virtual setting if justifiable within a methodological approach proposed by the selected MIDP Reviewer that does not jeopardise the assessment of applications.

- Please note that all personal information details provided in the application (along with the CV) should be correct, else the **application will be liable for disqualification at any stage of the competition**, including after the grant has been conferred.
- **GDN will take into consideration the geography, gender, issue area, among other factors**, aiming to increase the diversity and representativeness of applicants and projects awarded.

Eligibility Criteria

Geographical scope

Eligible countries for the MIDP competition are those classified by the **World Bank as low-income or middle-income countries**³.

World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF):

Comply with the [WB Environmental and Social Framework \(ESF\)](#) and the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs). Please check the Annexe at the end of this call to see the exclusion list of ineligible activities.

NGO Registration:

The project must be managed by a **registered** non-profit, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) or Civil Society Organisation (CSO) with its headquarters in one of the eligible countries.

Project Implementation:

The project must have started its implementation on 1st June 2025 or before to be considered eligible. The applicant will need to prove during the review stage that there is a track record of activities, since this Competition does not fund ideas or pilot initiatives.

Submissions concerning a recently started project, or only a project idea, or a feasibility or baseline study will not be considered.

Submissions for funding conferences (either in part or in full) will not be considered.

³ Press [here](#) to visit the list of countries which are recognised as low- and middle-income countries by the World Bank. Preference will be given to projects in low-income countries.

Recurrent Submissions:

Applicants from previous years (except winners) may reapply, but they must update the application to include new aspects of the project.

Previous Winners:

Previous MIDP winners are not eligible to apply.

How to Apply

Prerequisites

- Non-profit status - Obtain an official document certifying the registration of your non-profit NGO/CSO. If the document is not available in English, please provide a translation (noncertified is acceptable).
- Ability to receive funds from abroad - Obtain an official document certifying your organisation is legally able to receive funds from abroad according to your national legal framework (For example, if in India, the organisation must be FCRA registered and compliant).
- Budget from previous year - Upload the budget/financial report of the project in 2025 so that we can validate it has a track record/implementation history.
- Proof the project is ongoing – You will be asked by the Reviewers for proof that the project is ongoing (beyond the budget from 2025).
- Clarifications from GDN/Reviewers - An application will be excluded at any stage if the requests from GDN/Reviewers are not promptly complied with. Check the “Important Dates” section for more information.

Submit your application

1. Head to GDN’s dedicated online submission platform using the following link: app.gdn.int/grantee_portal
2. Register or log in to the platform to have access to your profile. You will receive an email confirming the successful registration of your profile. Only after verifying your profile will you be able to apply.
 - You must pass the automated *Eligibility Screening* before having access to the *Full Proposal*. If you fail it, you will not be able to apply but reach out to GDN if you are facing issues.

- Take note that you will be able to resume your entry at any time up to the deadline. If there are duplicate entries, the most recent one will be considered as only one proposal per applicant is allowed.
- 3. You must invite your team members by placing their name and email address.
- 4. Upload all necessary documents and fill in all sections otherwise, your application will not be submitted.
- 5. Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an email to confirm it.

Check our website for additional information on how to interact with the platform or reach out to us if you need any assistance.

Review Criteria

Throughout the review process, the proposals will be judged on the following criteria with the following considerations:

- Phase 1 - Special focus will be given to the criteria: Innovative approaches, Clear development objectives, Sustainable social impact, Expansion, and Cost efficiency.
- Phases 2 and 3 – All criteria will be considered.

Innovative Approaches

- How is your project different from other existing approaches?
- Is it proposing to pilot alternative approaches or to reach the target groups not reached by other programmes?
- Does this approach come from bottom-up partnerships engaging NGOs/CSOs, community associations, or local governments as implementing agencies?
- Does it reflect a participatory design and consultation process with the targeted beneficiaries?

Clear Development Objective, Activities and Measurable Results

- Does the project have a clear and measurable results framework?
- Does it utilise participatory monitoring and evaluation to help beneficiaries address their vulnerability and to ensure ownership and sustainability?

- Does the project have a realistic plan with steps/activities that build concretely towards achieving the project's objectives, and that can do so within a year of implementation after receiving the Award?
- Has the project designed a way to use monitoring and evaluation for learning and measuring outcomes and, ultimately, impact?

Sustainable Social Impact

- Does the project contribute to poverty alleviation and social development in the short and long term?
- Is the development impact sustainable in the long run?
- Has the project generated local ownership?
- Is there a plan to transfer ownership?
- Has the targeted population demonstrated an increase in skill development or an increased willingness to learn new skills?
- Does the project help strengthen the capacity of the targeted population to continue with the work themselves in the long run?
- Does the project support community-driven development by empowering the Poor at the local community level to participate in society and government and to affect their development and learning by doing?

Expansion

- How easily can the project be replicated and adapted to other countries, regions, sectors, and cultures?
- What are the prospects for the project's expansion using the resources obtained from the award?
- Does the project have the potential to have a large-scale development impact?

Cost Efficiency

- Is the cost of the project justified in terms of measurable impacts/outcomes?
- What are the measurable impacts/outcomes (performance) of the project in comparison to the cost of the programme?

Thorough Risk Assessment

- Are there any significant risks associated with the project?
- How well prepared is the project team in mitigating these risks?

Efficient Management of Financial and Human Resources

- Are policies in place within the organisation to ensure effective utilisation of financial and human resources for the implementation of the project?

Transparency and Accountability in Operations

- Does the project work in a way that allows gathering information on an ongoing basis and disclosing all appropriate information on the implementation, in particular to the project's direct stakeholders?

WB Environmental and Social Framework's Environmental and Social Standards

- Does the project comply with the WB Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), including the Environmental and Social Standards (ESS)? Are there any E&S risks and impacts associated with the project, and how is the project team planning to mitigate these risks and impacts?
- Does the project comply with the exclusion list of ineligible activities?

Priority will be given to projects to be implemented in low-income countries, followed by low-middle-income countries as per the [classification](#) given by the World Bank.

Selection Process

Once the submission of proposals is closed, a multi-stage review process will be used to select the winners.

- After a preliminary assessment by GDN, up to 30 applications will be reviewed by an independent external evaluator (MIDP Reviewer).
- The MIDP Reviewer will conduct the assessment in 3 Phases:
 - Phase 1 - Review focused on: Innovative approaches, Clear development objectives, Sustainable social impact, Expansion, and Cost efficiency. 10 applications are shortlisted for Phase 2.
 - Phase 2 - Review considering all criteria with interviews and request for additional information. 6 applications are shortlisted for Phase 3. Please note that shortlisted applicants must comply with the guidelines on the process outlined in the "Review Stage – Shortlisted applicants" document.

- Phase 3 – Review considering all criteria with in-depth interviews, written references, and site visits if needed and applicable. 3 applications are selected as finalists.
- A feedback paragraph will be provided to each applicant by the MIDP Reviewer upon request.
- The final selection of proposals will be undertaken by the MIDP High-Level jury after a public presentation of the projects by the finalists. The decision of the jury will be final.
- The jury for the Award will consider the substantive and operational merits of the submissions but will also consider the potential for expansion into other settings and countries.

Terms and Conditions

- GDN reserves the right not to grant one or more than one award.
- GDN reserves the right to modify, cancel or not award grants at any stage of the competition and grant-making.
- Cancellation of the Award: The Award is liable to be cancelled in case of unsatisfactory progress of research work, and if any of the researchers in the award team are found ineligible later.
- GDN will award the funds to winners through a written grant agreement.
- Shortlisted candidates will undergo a site visit. All applicant organisations will agree to undergo a site visit and cooperate with the review process.

Jury

The composition of the Jury for this year's competition has not yet been determined. Previous Jury members, among others, included representatives from:

- Association of African Universities, Ghana
- AusAID, Australia
- Australian National University, Australia
- African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), Kenya
- Center for Global Development, USA
- EADI, UK
- IDRC, Canada
- International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, India
- JICA Research Institute, Japan
- OECD Development Centre, France
- Peking University, China
- The Brookings Institution, USA

- The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, Egypt
- The Partnership for African Social & Governance Research (PASGR), Kenya
- The School of Social and Economic Development at the University of the South Pacific (USP), Fiji
- The World Bank, USA
- VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Zagazig University, Egypt.
- Association of African Universities, Ghana

Most Innovative Development Project Laureates

- Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), Pakistan
- BARKA Foundation for Mutual Help, Poland
- Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, Mexico
- Butterflies, India
- Byrraju Foundation, India
- Camara Rwanda, Rwanda
- Chinmaya Organisation for Rural Development, India
- Citizen's Proposal Group, Peru
- Colegio Virtual Iberoamericano, Ecuador
- Conservation through Public Health, Uganda
- Development Reality Institute, Zimbabwe
- Dnet, Bangladesh
- Dream A Dream, India
- Fundacion Paraguaya, Paraguay
- Impulse NGO Network, India
- IRRAD, India
- JAAGO Foundation, Bangladesh
- ONG Bethesda, Benin
- Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society
- The Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bio-Resources (ANSAB), Nepal
- Transparency International, India

List of Eligible Countries

Afghanistan; Albania; Algeria; American Samoa; Angola; Argentina; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Belarus; Belize; Benin; Bhutan; Bolivia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Brazil; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; China; Comoros; Colombia; Costa Rica; Congo, Dem. Rep; Congo, Rep.; Côte d'Ivoire; Cuba; Djibouti; Dominica;

Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; El Salvador; Eritrea; Eswatini; Equatorial Guinea; Ethiopia; Fiji; Gabon; Gambia; Georgia; Ghana; Grenada; Guatemala; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; India; Indonesia; Iran; Iraq; Kenya; Kiribati; Korea, Dem. People's Rep; Jamaica; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kosovo; Kyrgyz Republic; Lao; Lebanon; Lesotho; Liberia; Libya; Madagascar; Malaysia; Malawi; Maldives; Mali; Marshall Islands; Mauritania; Mauritius; Mexico; Micronesia; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Morocco; Mozambique; Myanmar; Nepal; Namibia; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Romania; Russian Federation; Rwanda; Samoa; São Tomé and Príncipe; Senegal; Serbia; Sierra Leone; Solomon Islands; Somalia; South Africa; South Sudan; Sri Lanka; St. Lucia; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Sudan; Suriname; Syrian Arab Republic; Tajikistan; Tanzania; Timor-Leste; Thailand; Togo; Tonga; Tunisia; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; Uganda; Ukraine; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; Venezuela; Vietnam; West Bank and Gaza; Yemen; Zambia; Zimbabwe

Theme | 2026 Global Development Awards Competition

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION (STI) FOR PEACE AND HUMAN SECURITY

Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) are often viewed as the "hardware" of development - the tools, laboratories, and digital infrastructures that drive economic growth. However, the ultimate impact of STI on human lives is determined by the "software" of society: the institutions, capabilities, and diplomatic relations that govern how knowledge is created and shared.

This edition seeks to explore the role of the social sciences in, on, and for STI.

We are looking beyond the tools themselves to the human systems that surround them. Centered on the Japanese guiding principle of "Human Security" - freedom to live in dignity and from fear and want - this call invites proposals that demonstrate how STI ecosystems can be shaped to foster peace, build human capability, and protect the most vulnerable through cross-border cooperation and Science Diplomacy.

GDN encourages the submission of projects that are either gender-specific or gender-transformative but requires that all projects be designed to respond to gender concerns.

Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project (MIDP)

We invite NGOs that are using innovation not just to deliver services, but to build human capabilities among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. We are moving beyond the deployment of "tech tools" to focus on projects that empower communities to understand, adapt, and leverage STI for their own security and dignity.

We are looking for projects that:

- Target the most vulnerable: Projects must explicitly benefit marginalized communities (e.g., refugees, indigenous groups, extreme poor, women in fragile settings).
- Build capacity: Rather than just dropping technology into a community, how is the project building the literacy, agency, and capacity of beneficiaries to use innovation to solve their own problems?
- Enhance Human Security: Projects that use innovative methods to secure freedom from fear (conflict, violence) or freedom from want (poverty, health, environmental risks) or freedom to live in dignity (governance, social relationships).

To be eligible, projects must reflect the global development imperative of **protecting vulnerable individuals and empowering communities** to build resilient, sustainable livelihoods.

Environment and Social Safeguards Activity Exclusions List

This exclusion list defines activities which will render a project proposal ineligible, vis-à-vis environmental and social standards.

The [World Bank Environmental and Social Framework \(ESF\)](#):

- Activities that cause involuntary resettlement or cause adverse negative impact on income-generating activities/livelihood resources.
- Activities which will involve any kind of forceful eviction of people.
- Activities/processes which will involve the use of highly toxic and/or banned chemicals, including pesticides
- Activities that involve child workers and/or forced labour, including activities that cause or lead to child abuse, child labour exploitation or human trafficking; No child under the age of 14 should work on the construction, rehabilitation or maintenance of a subproject. Children between the ages of 14-18 will not be employed or engaged in connection with the project in a manner that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with the child's education or be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.
- Involve the development of new settlements or the expansion of existing settlements in critical habitats, protected areas or areas proposed for certain levels of national protection (e.g., reserved forests), including the cutting of trees for commercial activities.
- Entail the purchase or use of illegal/illicit drugs, military equipment or other potentially dangerous materials and equipment, including chainsaws, pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, asbestos (including asbestos-containing materials); or other investments detrimental to livelihoods, including cultural resources.
- Processes/technologies that will discharge highly polluted processed water, emit toxic fumes and noxious odour exceeding the national emission standards or the World Bank Group Environment, Health and Safety Guidelines (EHSG).
- Activities that will produce wastewater that will not be possible or viable for on-site treatment.
- Activities which involve work related to religious and political infrastructure;
- Activities which involve the purchase of equipment for government agencies