



Call for Applications.

The Public Sector Innovation Challenge

A. Background

The Malawi Government with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is calling for submission of proposals for the **Public Sector Innovation Challenge**, in line with ongoing efforts to support government institutions to adopt innovative reforms for improving public service delivery and the achievement of both the Malawi 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The second round of this Challenge seeks to complement government's efforts to enhance productivity in the wider economy and generation of revenue as highlighted in the sectors prioritised by the President in the State of the Nation Address (SONA) at the opening session of Parliament and 2023/2024 Budget meeting: Finance and Economic Affairs, Agriculture, Tourism, Mining, Industry and Trade, Foreign Affairs, and Natural Resources and Climate Change.

These sectors are also complementary to the goals stipulated in the Malawi Implementation Plan (MIP-1), which has identified innovation as a focus area across three pillars:

Pillar I: Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization

Pillar II: Industrialization

Pillar III: Urbanization

The Challenge focuses on the promotion of two interrelated Enablers of the MIP-1, Enablers 2 and 3 respectively.

Enabler 2: Effective Governance Systems and Institutions, whose objective is to have effective and efficient governance systems and institutions with strict adherence to the rule of law.

Enabler 3: Enhanced Public Sector Performance, whose objective is to have a world class high performing and professional public sector for the efficient delivery of public services and goods.

The Innovation challenge will also prioritize two thematic areas for innovative solutions: “**Boosts Productivity**”, which applies to innovations that can demonstrate increased/improved level of service (output/outcome) with the least possible cost; and “**Revenue Generation/Growth**”, which applies to innovations that 1) enhance efficiency in revenue collection through improved administration (systems, processes etc.); or 2) increase revenue by diversifying revenue sources (broadening revenue bases).

The Innovation Challenge provides an opportunity for line ministries to identify challenges and opportunities for positioning themselves to be more productive in their performance and enhance revenue generation, to deliver services more effectively and efficiently, using innovative approaches.

The challenge adopts the definition for innovation from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2005) as “the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (goods or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations”.

The Public Sector Innovation Challenge will use a merit-based and competitive process to identify winning submissions. The institutions of the selected awardees will receive support to implement innovative solutions that can be replicated in other institutions.

B. About the Public Sector Innovation Challenge Call

Submission of proposals for the Public Sector Innovation Challenge are requested from all line ministries. The challenge targets innovations, that are solving a clearly defined challenge and are at **proof-of-concept** stage, to be determined by the selection panel.

The selection of the winning submissions will be guided by the following principles:

Innovativeness

The entry is genuinely innovative and creative within the public sector. The innovation can either introduce a new mechanism, system, method etc. or adapt a working mechanism, system or method from another sector that is new in the proposed ministry or make improvement of an existing mechanism/solution.

Relevance

The innovation should spell out clearly the motivation for the change; purpose and objectives of the change; positive outlook for the future; and demonstrates applicability to:

- a) the main functions of the institution.
- b) the enhancement of productivity and/ or revenue collection efficiency and broadening the revenue collection bases.
- c) the achievement of national development goals and alignment to Malawi Implementation Plan (MIP-1) of the Malawi 2063.

Significance

The innovation should have potential for generating substantial change with gains in the institution.

Replication

Innovation has the potential of universal appeal and adaptation to institutions facing similar challenges.

Sustainability

The innovation can be sustained by the Ministry beyond available funding and presents a more cost-effective alternative as compared to the status quo.

Efficiency

The innovation should demonstrate the ability to achieve the highest results by putting the resources available to use, in the best way possible.

Feasibility

The innovation should be technically, financially, and legally viable, with practicality for implementation and scale up.

C. Criteria for submissions

The total value of the Award is USD 120,000. Up to 40,000 USD each, will be awarded to three winning proposals based on these criteria.

- Alignment to one or more of the seven prioritized sectors
- Alignment to one or both prioritized themes: boosts productivity and/or generates/grows revenue.
- Innovativeness
- Scalability
- Timeliness
- Financial viability
- Sustainability

D. Eligibility

- a) All Ministries are eligible to apply.
- b) All submissions must be signed off by the Ministry's Controlling officer. The Controlling officer of the ministry will facilitate sourcing and selection of innovative proposals from department and agencies for submission.
- c) Submissions by individual departments are not accepted.
- d) Awards will not be made to individuals but to the institutions.
- e) Each Ministry can only submit a maximum of two proposals (one proposal per thematic area or covering both areas).

E. Deadline for Receipt of Applications

Deadline for application is **Wednesday, 31st May 2023**. Applications received after this date shall not be considered.

F. Application Procedures and Guidelines

1. Ministries are only allowed to send one submission per thematic area .
2. The submission should demonstrate how the innovation will improve revenue generation and or overall productivity of the Ministry.
3. The innovation should be clearly aligned to at least one focus area of either one of the pillars of Malawi 2063.
4. The submission should clearly demonstrate that the proposed innovation can work.
5. The submission should clearly demonstrate partnership building.
6. The submission should provide a clear description of the implementation plan of activities and timelines.
7. The submission must include a letter of endorsement from the Ministry's Controlling Officer of the submitting Ministry.
8. Submissions shall be made on a prescribed online entry form and shall not exceed a total number of prescribed words from the following link <https://forms.gle/HrGhkR8AuvHNLdCe8>
9. The selection of winning submissions will be done by an independent panel, duly constituted with knowledge in public sector management and innovation.
10. The submission must include a completed application form that includes the following designated roles of the institution's innovation team:

a. Team Lead

A designated officer in the institution who will coordinate the innovation team on innovation validation, testing, refining and scaling. The team lead will be the change agent of the institution and will work closely with the Public Sector Innovation Technical Committee.

b. Innovation design and testing officer/Innovator.

A designated officer who will be responsible to design new innovations for identified challenges or adapt existing innovations to suit identified challenges in the institutions. He/she will also be responsible in coordinating small scale testing & piloting of the innovations.

c. Planning and strategic partnerships officer

A designated officer who will be responsible to explore possible partnerships (i.e with other MDAs, private sector or citizens) that could support design,

testing, growing/institutionalizing the innovation.

d. Young Professional/Intern (Not more than 35 years of age)

A young officer/intern who will work closely with the team to support administrative tasks for the team, reinforce solution validation, testing and implementation, document and share lessons with other MDAs for replication of the innovation.

**Ministries are particularly encouraged to include females in the team.*

Further information concerning the application form, procedures, and guidelines for application can be accessed from the Public Sector Reforms Management Unit website at <http://www.reforms.gov.mw/psrmu> and the UNDP website at <https://www.mw.undp.org>

For ministries facing connectivity challenges and those with any questions concerning this application process, please send your concerns to the Office of the Vice President through innovation.challenge@mail.gov.mw or call the following numbers: 0999957500/0888377551/0888441456 for guidance.