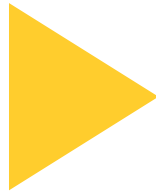




International  
Labour  
Organization

▶ Participant Guidelines



# ILO Skills challenge innovation ▶ call

Finding solutions  
to skills mismatch

ILO  
SKILLS  
INNOVATION  
FACILITY

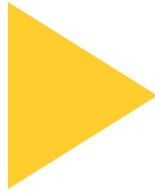
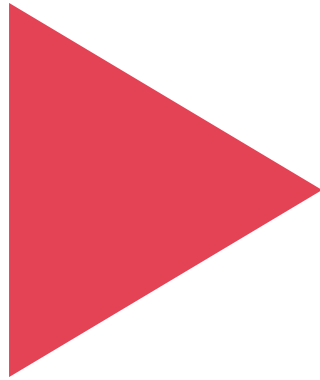
Bringing together great ideas

With the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



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# ▶ Participant guidelines

Recognizing the active role of individuals and organizations in driving innovation in skill systems and addressing pressing skills challenges, the ILO Skills Challenge Innovation Call invites innovators to propose new and practical ideas and solutions with the potential for sustainability, scalability and replication on a wide scale.

We are looking to mobilize a global cohort of skills innovators to rethink skills development and lifelong learning and to help build the future of work we want!

We aim to create change in three ways:

- Incentivising people from all regions to identify major current and future skills challenges they confront;
- Sourcing innovative ideas and solutions to those challenges; and
- Encouraging innovative partnerships involving representatives of employers' and workers' organizations and other key stakeholders.



## 1. What is the skills mismatch challenge?

▶ Skills systems are confronted by the need to respond to increasingly dynamic and fluid labour market and societal conditions. Climate change, technology, demographic shifts, migration and globalization are causing increasing disruption in the world of work, while making skills development more complex, fluid and unpredictable.

Skills mismatch continues to be a challenge in today's labour markets. The concept of skills mismatch<sup>1</sup> covers different issues (see box below) and requires targeted solutions. Studies have reported that in 2018 up to 45 per cent of employers could not find people with the right set of skills, an increase from 31 per cent in 2008<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, more than one-third of workers experience qualification mismatch<sup>3</sup>, with a sizable wage penalty of 20 per cent compared to their well-matched counterparts<sup>4</sup>.

### ▶ What is skills mismatch?

Skills mismatch can take different forms. It can refer to the problems faced by employers to fill vacancies (skills shortages), where employees lack the skills necessary to do their jobs effectively (skill gaps); and when individuals have qualifications above or beyond those required for their job (over/under qualified). It also covers the concept of skills obsolescence where workers lose skills over time due to lack of use.

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the challenge of skills mismatch see the [Supplementary notes on skills mismatch](#).

<sup>2</sup> ManpowerGroup. 2018. *Solving the talent shortage: Build, buy, borrow and brige*, Available at [https://go.manpowergroup.com/hubfs/TalentShortage%202018%20\(Global\)%20Assets/PDFs/MG\\_TalentShortage2018\\_lo%206\\_25\\_18\\_FINAL.pdf](https://go.manpowergroup.com/hubfs/TalentShortage%202018%20(Global)%20Assets/PDFs/MG_TalentShortage2018_lo%206_25_18_FINAL.pdf) [Accessed 9 January, 2020].

<sup>3</sup> OECD Stat. 2016. *Mismatch*, Available at <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=MISMATCH> [Accessed 9 January, 2020]

<sup>4</sup> OECD. 2019. *Skills strategy 2019*, (OECD publishing, Paris)

These examples of skills mismatch are particularly pressing in developing and emerging economies, where education and training systems are not equipped to deliver high-quality programmes, well-paid jobs are limited and where skilled workers have no option but to work in lower-skilled jobs or find employment in the informal economy. The challenges pertaining to skills mismatches are also closely related to the wider challenges affecting labour markets, including high unemployment, increasing inequality and the lack of decent work opportunities.

To address the complex skills mismatch challenge there is a clear need for innovative and scalable solutions that provide the opportunity for multiple stakeholders to contribute.

As the skills development challenge is not the sole responsibility of any one stakeholder, governments have to work with social partners to develop and deliver solutions. Moreover, there are increasing expectations that the private sector take on a more active role in the development of skills. As the benefits of high-quality and relevant skills programmes are shared among individuals, employers, workers and governments, these actors need to be involved in the development of innovative and scalable solutions at the national, regional, sectoral and local levels. These solutions need to address a range of questions associated with skills mismatch:

- How to ensure that workers have the knowledge, experience and exposure to the skills required today and for the future?
- How to ensure that education and training providers are aware of the skills needs of employers and that training programmes respond to these needs?
- How to provide efficient and effective training and employment services to job seekers?
- How to enable enterprises to better develop and utilise the skills of their workers and link skills development with business strategies?
- How to improve collaboration and partnerships between key stakeholders to deliver solutions to skills mismatch?



## 2. What is the call?



The ILO is calling on individuals and organizations to share innovative ideas and solutions to address the skills mismatch challenge. The ILO Skills Challenge Innovation Call will recognise and support the development of solutions that aim to address the different forms and dimensions of skills mismatch. These can include proposals to:

- enhance the effectiveness of vocational education and training programmes through innovative delivery and assessment partnerships;
- improve the development and recognition of knowledge, skills and attributes of employees through innovative work based learning initiatives;
- empower enterprises to better utilise the skills of their workers;
- improve the collection, analysis, management and use of data and information on skill needs and labour market trends;
- improve the training and employment of under-represented groups in particular among migrant and refugees, people with disabilities, young people and women;
- improve the provision of active labour market programmes through the integrated provision of vocational and job search assistance, training and work placement for the unemployed; and
- establish new and innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships to address skills mismatch at the regional, sectoral or local levels.

The ILO Skills Challenge Innovation Call aims to support the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) [4](#), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and SDG [8](#), which aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, by enabling new solutions for workforce development that deliver relevant skills for productive employment and decent work.

### 3. Who can apply?

- ▶ Any individual or any legally recognized organization/company that is able to contract and in existence for at least two calendar years prior to the deadline. By organizations we mean cooperatives, education and training institutions (including schools, public and private training providers and universities), government agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations, public and private enterprises, regional and sectoral bodies and research organizations.

The ILO reserves the right to carry out reasonable due diligence, including through the contacting of references and other third-parties to confirm eligibility and may refuse to award the prize to a participant if there is suspicion of any irregularities, fraudulent activities, etc.

#### ▶ We are looking for...

**...all kinds of actors.** Anyone with a new and transformative idea to solve an aspect of the skills mismatch challenge is invited to bring a solution to the table.

**...all kinds of innovations.** We embrace innovative approaches, projects, tools, technologies and partnerships that seek to rethink and redesign the way we work to match skills and labour market needs.

We are open to all ideas and solutions at any stage of development. They can be at an early-stage or more mature innovation. They can be a one person's idea or involve a collaborative joint effort from different actors, such as governments, employers' and workers' organizations.

An independent panel, composed by ILO skills specialists, external innovation experts and other external members, will evaluate all proposals and select a winner. The winner will receive support to turn the idea into reality and cement their role as innovators in skills development.

## 4. What will the winner receive?

▶ The winning entry will receive substantial support including:

### Financial support for a maximum of 12 months

The winning entry will receive a US\$50,000 grant (paid in local currency and into a bank account in the name of the entrant/entity) to implement the proposed solution. The grant will be paid in three instalments:

- a) The first instalment (10 per cent of the amount) will be made within 15 working days of signature of the grant agreement by both parties and upon receipt of an agreed detailed work plan (see details below) to be completed no later than three weeks from the award;
- b) The second instalment (40 per cent of the amount) will be made upon receipt of an interim progress report; and if required, a revised work plan;
- c) The third instalment (50 per cent of the amount) will be made upon completion of the activities and submission of a final progress report, which will include a financial statement, within the 12 months.

The ILO reserves the right to adjust, suspend, terminate or withhold any disbursement of the grant funds at its sole discretion.

### Six-month innovation lab

The winner will receive technical support to transform the idea into prototype ready to be piloted, including through boot camps and remote mentoring via a virtual platform.

The Skills Innovation Lab will involve two stages:

#### 1. Prototyping

During the six-month programme, one representative of the winning entry, together with ILO experts and partners will convene three times for bootcamps in the respective [ILO country office](#), at the ILO's expense. During this period, the innovator will receive training and mentorship to prototype the solution. Throughout the entire process, participants will communicate, debrief and share documents and feedback through a virtual lab.

**Bootcamp 1 - Refining solution:** During the first bootcamp, participants will work on the ground to further develop and refine the solution.

**Bootcamp 2 - Prototyping:** During the second bootcamp, the innovator will receive technical support and facilitation to develop a prototype or test version of the solution.

**Bootcamp 3 - Action Plan:** At the end of the process, the innovator will develop a final report of the prototype, including an action plan and/or business plan for the innovation.

## 2. Piloting

Once the prototype is developed, the innovator and partners will pilot the solution. The Innovation Steering Committee will oversee progress and impact in consultation with project partners. It is envisaged that each pilot will be completed within a maximum of 12 months.

At the end of the pilot, the innovator will be invited to pitch their prototypes to an audience of national and international key stakeholders during an International Forum on Innovation in Skills Development.

## Worldwide visibility

The winner will receive support through awareness raising of the idea, including an invitation to a global event where they will present their innovation concept to potential partners and sponsors, press articles in media channels, videos, among others.

## Extended network and partnerships

The winner and shortlisted entries will join the ILO's Global Network of Skills Innovators. They will have the opportunity to exchange with other innovators and share their solutions with ILO's stakeholders.

## 5. What must the winner do?

▶ To receive the grant, the applicant must sign a [Grant Agreement with the ILO](#), which includes standard clauses on intellectual property rights, financial reporting requirements, criteria for the disbursement of funds, dispute resolution, and details of the proposed solution implementation. Naturally, grantees are expected to comply with the terms and conditions stipulated in the agreement.

As a pre-condition, before being permitted to sign a grant agreement with the ILO, the winner must within three weeks produce a detailed work plan and budget that will form the basis for the milestones that must be achieved. Final award is subject to the satisfactory completion of this detailed work plan.

## 6. What might a good idea/solution look like?

▶ A good solution to address skills mismatch takes both the supply and demand sides of the labour market into consideration. It seeks to connect the two sides and develop a more holistic solution in the process. We are looking for:

- Ideas that support improved demand signalling; i.e. communication between employers, educators, government and other stakeholders to signal what skills are needed in the workforce;
- Ideas that support the development of soft and hard skills that meet market demands;
- Ideas that enable enterprises to utilise the skills of their employees and link skills development with business strategy;
- Ideas that support collaboration and cost-sharing of skills initiatives;
- Ideas that deliver work based learning;
- Ideas that support the involvement or increase the engagement of the businesses in training development and selected stages of training delivery;
- Ideas that support to professional development of teachers, trainers and instructors through technical training or workplace exposure;
- Ideas that support developing or accessing resources that help workers attain quality education/skills development opportunities.

## 7. What eligibility criteria apply?

In addition to the aforementioned, the proposal must meet all of the following eligibility criteria:

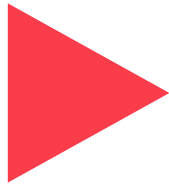
- The solution answers one or more of the questions of the challenge listed in section 1;
- The proposed solution responds to a clear need;
- The proposed solution has the support and commitment of key stakeholders;
- Applicants are available and able to commence the Innovation Lab phase from September 2020.

## 8. What is the application process and key dates?

To submit your idea or solution, applicants should:

- 1) Go to the [ILO Skills Challenge Innovation Call webpage](#);
- 2) Review the eligibility criteria and terms and conditions of the competition, as well as the [Grant Agreement](#) with the ILO;
- 3) Develop the proposal and secure support from partners;
- 4) Complete the form available on the website (shown here in Annex 1);
- 5) Send the completed form and completed supporting documents to [skills@ilo.org](mailto:skills@ilo.org) by 30 April 2020 (midnight, Geneva time).

Applications and supporting documents can be submitted in English, French and Spanish and applicants will receive a confirmation email that their application has been received. Incomplete or late responses will not be considered. Dates and deadlines for the Skills Challenge Innovation Call are:



- 29 January 2020  
**Launch of the Call**
- 30 April 2020 (midnight, Geneva time)  
**Submission deadline for ideas**
- 18 June 2020  
**Announcement of winner**
- September 2020  
**Skills Innovation Lab commences**
- September 2021  
**Piloting of solutions completed by**

Any queries related to the challenge call in general or the application process itself should be directed to: [skills@ilo.org](mailto:skills@ilo.org)

## 9. How will the proposal be assessed?

Your submitted proposal will be evaluated by an independent panel, composed by ILO skills specialists, external innovation experts and other external members. All proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

### 1) Relevance and innovation:

- The idea or solution directly addresses the skills mismatch challenge;
- The proposal brings together stakeholders in new and different ways;
- It is substantially different from and/or adds value to existing solutions;

### 2) Value creation:

- The solution develops added value for stakeholders and partners;
- It contributes to or generates new social and economic outcomes for direct beneficiaries and wider stakeholders;
- It contributes to the achievement of SDGs;

### 3) Feasibility:

- The solution is technically and economically feasible;
- It can be done in a simple, measurable, achievable, realistic way, and within a time-bound period;
- It can be easily brought to and used by the target beneficiaries;

### 4) Sustainability of the innovator(s):

- The innovator or team is from the country where the solution will be developed and implemented;
- The innovator or team has a good knowledge of the local skills ecosystem and the conditions required to implement an effective solution;
- The innovator or team has - or has secured - potential local connections, networks or partnerships that could be of help to the development of the idea;

### 5) Viability and scalability:

- The proposal has a clearly expressed outcome statement and theory of change;
- It is appealing to potential partners and has the potential to build synergy with other initiatives;
- The proposal has a strong likelihood of being piloted and taken to scale if successful.



## 10. What is required in terms of acknowledgement for solution outputs?

▶ The innovator is required to acknowledge that the activity is implemented with the support of the ILO through its Skills Innovation Facility in items produced and published (e.g. reports, brochures, press releases, videos, software, conferences, seminars, blogs, social media, etc.) using the ILO's Skills Innovation Facility visual identifier and mentioning as follows:

"This...is produced/made with the support of the International Labour Organization through its Skills Innovation Facility that is hosted by the ILO Skills and Employability Branch (SKILLS)."

Nevertheless, the applicant cannot in any case, unless specific written prior agreement, use the logo of the ILO, nor from any other partner organizations of the ILO Skills Innovation Facility.

## 11. What does the skills innovation facility expect from the winning entry?

▶ A central purpose of the Facility is to document and disseminate lessons learned from the development and implementation of the solutions.

The winner would be expected to participate in the analysis and documentation process to capture the lessons from their innovative efforts. This process includes providing financial reports and regular updates of the project, and allowing the ILO's officials and consultants on site to collect data, information, stories, and testimonials, and conduct studies.

The winning entry will also be expected to be an active member of the ILO's Global Network of Skills Innovators to share experiences with other grant recipients as well as those interested in learning about skills development and innovation.

## 12. Where do I find out more information?

Go to the: [ilo.org/skills/projects/innovation-facility/challenge-call/lang--en/index.htm](https://ilo.org/skills/projects/innovation-facility/challenge-call/lang--en/index.htm)

**ILO Skills  
challenge  
innovation  
▶ call**





## Annex I

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- 
- ▶ **ILO Skills challenge innovation call**  
Application form



# ▶ Application form

This form serves to collect information required to participate in the ILO Skills Challenge Innovation Call. Please make sure that all the critical information regarding your idea or solution is included in this form and that supporting documentation is provided as requested.

## ▶ A. IDENTIFICATION OF TYPE OF APPLICANT

### 1. Type of applicant

Individual

Organization

### 2. Contact information

#### For individuals

**Title:**

**Name:**

**Surname:**

#### Contact details

**Address:**

**City/province:**

**Country:**

**Region:**

Africa

Latin America and the Caribbean

Asia and the Pacific

Arab States

Europe and North America

**Email address:**

**Telephone:**

**Please provide a summary of your work experience**

*Max. words: 200*

**Please summarise your prior experience in the field of skills development**

*Max. words: 200*

**Please submit two (2) professional references, complete with phone numbers and email contacts**

**Please attach a copy of your current CV to the proposal.**

## For Organizations

### **Name of the Organization:**

### **Type of Organization:**

Government (e.g. Ministry and/or Employment Agency, )

Non-governmental organization (including civil society organizations) or  
Non-profit organization (including charitable organizations)

Workers' Organization

Employers' Organization

Private sector (please specify)

Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN, donors, Banks)

Other (*Max. words: 10*)

### **The organization is:**

Local / Municipal

National or Federal

Provincial / Regional

Sectoral

International

### **Objectives of the organization.**

*Max. words: 200*

**Number of people who work in the organization:**

**What date was the organization formally established? (mm/yyyy)**

**Brief background, principal projects or programmes of the organization.**

*Max. words: 200*

**Address of the organization:**

**City/province:**

**Country:**

**Telephone:**

**Email:**

**Website:**





**For each member of the team involved in the solution provide a short bio and an indication of their role.**

*Max. words: 200*

**Please attach a copy of current CVs of each team member involved in the proposed solution.**

**Please submit two (2) professional references, complete with phone numbers and email contacts.**

**Does the organization have prior experience in the field of skills development?**

*Max. words: 200*



## **B. IDENTIFICATION OF THE SOLUTION**

3. Name of the solution:

4. Brief description of background context, specific aspects related to the skills mismatch challenge that the solution will solve.

*Max. words: 200*

5. Brief description of the solution, including overall and specific objectives, core functions, main components, key users.

*Max. words: 500*

6. Explain what makes the solution new and innovative?

*Max. words: 200*

7. Where will the solution be piloted?

*Max. words: 200*

8. Are there similar solutions in the market? If yes, explain how your solution will build upon and/or interact with existing solutions and how it will add value to the field.

*Max. words: 200*

9. Explain how the solution is technically and economically feasible?

*Max. words: 200*

10. If the idea has already been trialled describe the results.

*Max. words: 200*



## C. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

### 11. Target beneficiaries of your solution

Employers

Young people (ages 15-24 but could be above and below depending on a definition)

Adults

Elder adults (65+)

Women, girls

Indigenous, marginalized, minority populations

Persons with disabilities

Other:

### 12. How does the solution address the needs of beneficiaries?

*Max. words: 200*

13. What value does the idea create for beneficiaries?

*Max. words: 200*

14. What social, economic and development outcomes will the solution deliver?

*Max. words: 200*

15. Who are the major partners and/or supporters of the proposed solution? Please detail organization name, type of organization, area of work, purpose and status of partnership and/or support and proposed methods of engagement and participation.

*Max. words: 500*

16. Please attach letters of support from potential partners or supporters of the proposed solution.

17. How do you think the ILO Skills Challenge Innovation Call will benefit the proposed solution?

*Max. words: 200*



## **D. EXPECTED RESULTS, OUTPUTS AND IMPACT**

18. What are the expected results and outputs (quantitative and qualitative) of the proposed solution?

*Max. words: 200*

19. What will be the long-term impact of the proposed solution?

*Max. words: 200*



20. How will you measure the success of the proposed solution?  
Please include measurement criteria.

*Max. words: 200*

21. What might be the unanticipated spill-overs (both positive and negative) that might arise and how might negative impacts or challenges be overcome?

*Max. words: 200*

22. What do you think it will take for the solution to reach proof of concept and scale?

*Max. words: 200*

## **E. ANNEXES**

23. Provide a budget estimate concerning the utilization of the funding over the duration of the implementation of the solution. Include as well the cash or in-kind contributions provided by other sources, if any, specifying the amount of each contribution.

## **F. VIDEO SUBMISSION**

24. Please create a pitch video in English, French or Spanish (or with subtitles in one of the three languages) that presents the idea or solution and how it meets the criteria of the ILO Skills Challenge Innovation Call. The video should not be longer than two (2) minutes in length. Upload your video on YouTube and provide the link below.

## **G. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

25. If you would like to add any information that you consider important and that would enrich the quality of the idea presentation (and which has not been considered in this form), please do so here:

26. Please attach any files you wish to add to complement your answers (photos, documents, videos, etc.): *Optional*.

27. How did you hear about the ILO Skills Challenge Innovation Call?

Through professional contacts;

Through social media or other channels, specify;

Through a website (please specify);

Other:



## H. DECLARATION

I declare that the information presented in this form and accompanying documents is true and verifiable. I authorise the evaluation panel to verify the information presented in this document, including financial information, and to contact references, as well as partners and supporters to verify their commitment to the proposed solution. I also authorise the ILO to use any information and images provided by me for the purpose of promotion if my proposal is successful. I further acknowledge that I have read the Grant Agreement of the ILO and, if selected, I do not have any modifications to propose with respect to its content. I also understand that the ILO may transfer data including personal data to any of its partners, either for the purposes of evaluating the submission, or, if awarded, for purposes specified in the Grant Agreement of the ILO. I further understand that there is no legal recourse possible against the evaluation panel's decision, including in the event of non-selection or rejection; or, if an award is made but I do not complete the detailed work plan within the specified time-frame or it is considered of insufficient quality as determined solely by ILO. The ILO has the right to reject submissions or cancel the competition without providing any further reasons or notice.

**Yes:**

**No:**

**Signature:**

**Name:**

**Position:**

**For or on behalf of:**

*(please affix company seal/  
stamp is submitting on behalf  
of an organization)*

**Date and Place:**



**Skills and Employability Branch (SKILLS)**

International Labour Office  
4 Route des Morillons  
Geneva 22, CH-1211  
Switzerland

Email: [skills@ilo.org](mailto:skills@ilo.org)  
Website: [www.ilo.org/skills](http://www.ilo.org/skills)