



▶ Participants' Guidelines

Skills Challenge Innovation Call in India

Upgrading informal apprenticeships through digital transformation

▶ 1. Context

The global megatrends, such as technological advancements, demographic shifts, climate change, globalization, and more recently COVID-19 pandemic are making major disruptions in the world of work, causing the loss of some jobs while creating new ones. Capitalizing opportunities, under such circumstances, will depend on building an agile workforce capable of transitioning smoothly to newly created jobs through appropriate and timely skilling, reskilling and upskilling. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, apprenticeships are an indispensable component of any strategy designed to address future challenges in the world of work. The apprenticeships systems, however, need to be modernized and transformed to respond to such paradigm shifts.

It is within this context that the Government of Flanders and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have conducted a research project "Apprenticeships Development for Universal Lifelong Learning and Training (ADULT)" and issued a series of report, including a global policy research report, titled "[The digital transformation of apprenticeships: Emerging opportunities and barriers](#)" and "[Unlocking apprenticeship potential in small and medium enterprises](#)", as well as a country-level report in India, titled "[Good practices in apprenticeships in India: Challenges and opportunities](#)" under the project.

The Indian economy is driven by its enterprises operating in informal market. With nearly 94 per cent of the enterprises in the country and employing 110.9 million workers, micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) have immense potential for employment and income generation. MSMEs provide employment for a large section of both the rural and urban masses and serve as rich learning grounds for the casual workforce of the country. Those who start their careers in the informal sector could acquire technical skills and enter the formal labour market, thus informal apprenticeships¹ can emerge as an effective way of preparing the skilled workforce with right hands-on skills.

However, without adequate upgrading through modernization and transformation, informal apprenticeships could adversely limit the enhancement of employability and career advancement of workers, as well as the productivity and competitiveness of MSMEs. Upgrading informal apprenticeships refer to the gradual improvement of a training system embedded in the culture

¹ Informal apprenticeship refers to the system by which a young learner (the apprentice) acquires the skills for a trade or craft in a micro or small enterprise learning and working side by side with an experienced practitioner (craftsperson). Apprentice and master craftsperson conclude a training agreement that is embedded in local norms and traditions of a society. Apprentices learn technical skills and are inducted into a business culture and network which makes it easier for them to find jobs or start businesses when finishing their apprenticeship.



and traditions of societies. It aims at making the informal apprenticeships system more dynamic to respond to current and future changes and to support the creation of dynamic local economies that benefit from innovation and entrepreneurship in apprenticeships trades.

An upgraded informal apprenticeships system can also address decent work deficits in informal apprenticeships, including gender segregation. In particular, women tend to be disadvantaged by the preponderance of male-dominated trades among those offering informal apprenticeships and concentrated in a few traditionally female trades. The existing gender segregation is often based on socio-cultural beliefs, values and stereotypes, and reflects the situation in the labour market in general.

Whilst the way to upgrade informal apprenticeships could vary in each situation, one of the overall findings of the project was the need to apply and utilize digital means to make informal apprenticeships more relevant, inclusive, and innovative. The access to modern technology is often limited due to the constrained resources of MSMEs in informal apprenticeships that do not always follow decent work standards nor necessarily equally accessible to women. The adaptation towards digital and green transitions have been increasingly observed in the rapidly developing Indian economy, yet the impact of such transitions is yet to be extended beyond the relatively small formal sector and reaching out to MSMEs, which dominate the country's informal sector.

Under these circumstances, with the support from the Government of Flanders, and building on the findings from ADULT project, the ILO, in partnership with UNICEF/YuWaah launch the Skills Innovation Challenge Call to seek innovative solutions for upgrading informal apprenticeships through digital transformation. More specifically, the Challenge Call will seek proposals that fall under the criteria described in the following section of this document.

► 2. Objective and scope

The objective of the Challenge Call is to identify, incubate, test, and disseminate innovative solutions in India that support **upgrading of informal apprenticeships through digital transformation**:

- The proposed solutions have to apply **digital means** in order to tackle one or more of the following issues:
 1. Anticipate skills required in targeted sectors and design structured training programmes on a systematic basis and at lower cost
 2. Provide complementary theoretical training in informal apprenticeships for targeted occupations with improved outreach and cost effectiveness
 3. Conduct skills assessments in informal apprenticeships with greater outreach and improved cost effectiveness
 4. Improve productivity and occupational safety and health in workplaces in informal apprenticeships
 5. Increase women and their families' awareness of the potentials of non-traditional jobs in digitally supported occupations



- The proposed solutions targeted at **women**, especially those in disadvantaged and remote groups, will receive bonus points during the evaluation process.

The proposal should have an **innovative dimension** – for example, innovative training approaches; tools and technologies; data analysis for skills development; and partnerships that contribute to upgrading of informal apprenticeships. The solutions can be at any stage of development. They can be early-stage innovations or at a more advanced stage. They can be ideas to improve, expand and/or promote a solution that is already being implemented. They can be an idea of a single organization or involve a joint collaborative effort of different actors, including through partnerships with governments, employers' and workers' organizations. Each organization can only be part of a single consortium presenting a solution and can only apply once.

► 3. Eligibility of applicants

The applicant organisation must meet the following criteria:

- Legally registered not-for-profit organizations in India that carry out non-profit oriented work, including non-governmental organizations (NGO), universities, other research and educational institutions (including public TVET institutions, schools, and training providers), and other relevant organizations, can submit proposals to the Challenge Call.
- The applicant organization must have contractual capacity and have been in existence for at least two calendar years before the deadline of the submission for applications (10 August 2023).
- The applicant organization must provide a detailed budget and indicate a contribution from the proposing organization corresponding to at least 10 percent of the value of the proposal, which can be represented by in-kind or staff costs.
- The proposed solution must address one or more of the five target issues listed under the section 2 (objective and scope) of this document.
- Application documents and following correspondences must be made in English.
- The ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah reserves the right to carry out reasonable due diligence, including contacting references provided and other third parties to confirm the eligibility of participants, and may refuse to award the grant to a participant if there is suspicion of any irregularity, fraudulent activities, etc.

► 4. Awards and applicable procedures for winners

A total of four winning organizations will be selected and receive the following support:

1. Financial Support

The top four winning organizations will be awarded **USD 20,000** each to implement their proposed solutions. (The expenditure of the grant needs to be completed by the end of December 2023, though the project implementation may continue after January 2024.)



2. Technical guidance

The winning organizations will receive technical support from the ILO, UNICEF/YuWaah and their partner organizations, where applicable, to refine, develop, and pilot their ideas.

3. Global visibility

The winning organizations will receive support to raise awareness of their solutions through attending an international event and/or showcasing their work on websites and social media channels of the ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah, among others.

4. Access to a network of innovators in skills development

The winning organizations will be invited to join the ILO Skills Innovation Network, where they will get access to tools, resources, and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

The winning organizations will be required to follow the below-mentioned procedures:

- To receive the financial award, the applicant must sign a grant agreement with the ILO. Financial award recipients must comply with the terms and conditions stipulated in the agreement, including reporting provisions. Please ensure to read [Terms and Conditions applicable to ILO Grants](#) before submitting your application. As a precondition, before being allowed to sign a grant agreement with the ILO, the winning organizations must produce a detailed work plan (incl. financial plans) within a given period.
- Under the grant agreement to be signed, the winning organization must complete the expenditure of the full grant amount by the end of December 2023. This is regardless of the continuation of the proposed activities until after January 2024 onwards, however the full grant amount needs to be spent by the end of December 2023.
- The winning projects should acknowledge that the proposed activities are carried out with the support of the ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah, and their partner organizations where applicable, in all articles produced and published (e.g. reports, brochures, press releases, videos, software, conferences, seminars, blogs, social media, etc.), using the logo of the ILO (including the ILO Skills Innovation Facility) and UNICEF/YuWaah with mentioning the following:

"This... is produced/realized with the support of the International Labour Organization and UNICEF/YuWaah through the ILO Skills Innovation Facility."

However, the applicant may not use, unless previously agreed in writing, the logos of the ILO, UNICEF/YuWaah nor that of any of their partner organizations.

- One of the central activities of the ILO is documenting and disseminating the lessons learned from the process of developing and implementing projects. The winning organizations are expected to participate in knowledge sharing opportunities as well as analysis and documentation processes to capture the lessons learned during their innovation work. This may include financial reporting and regular project updates, and



the possibility for ILO staff and consultants to collect data, information, stories, and testimonies, and to conduct field studies, among others.

► 5. Application process and key dates

The application process comprises two rounds:

1st Application round

Applicant organizations should:

- 1) Review the eligibility criteria for participation in the Challenge Call, selection criteria for assessments, and the Terms and Conditions applicable to ILO Grant Agreements specified in this Participants' Guidelines.
- 2) Fill in the online [Application Form](#) (incl. [Budget Template](#)) and submit it by **3 September 2023** (midnight Delhi time).

Before preparing the Application Form, please look at the list of [Application Questions](#) (see annex of this document). We recommend preparing your application information and answers first using this list, since the online application form does not allow saving an application before submission. Also, please prepare a budget estimate using the [Budget Template \(excel file\)](#) and submit it as an attachment to the online Application Form.

Applications can be submitted only in English. Only the applications selected for the second application round will be contacted. No fee is required to participate in the challenge call. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

2nd Application round

The shortlisted applicant organizations will be requested to submit an extended project proposal and will be invited to the final round of evaluation, which may include an interview or pitch event.

Key dates and deadlines

The key dates and deadlines are as follows (and remain **subject to change**):

Challenge Call launched	3 July 2023
Deadline for submission of proposals	3 September 2023
Eligibility review	August/September 2023
First round of evaluation	August/September 2023
Second round of evaluation	September 2023
Winner announcement ceremony	October 2023
Awards formalized	October 2023
Project implementation started	October/November 2023

For any questions regarding the application process, please send an email to: kanamori@ilo.org



► 6. Evaluation criteria

The submitted applications will be assessed by an independent panel, composed of ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah specialists in the subject areas. The panel may also include external experts, from partner organizations where applicable. All proposals will be assessed based on the following criteria:

1) Relevance

The extent to which the objectives and design of the solution are clearly responding to the beneficiaries' and partner institutions' needs, policies and priorities, and are sensitive to social, economic, environmental, and equitable and political conditions in which the solution takes place.

2) Feasibility

The extent to which the solution is technically and economically feasible and can be done in a simple, measurable, achievable, realistic way and within a time-bounded period.

3) Innovation

The degree of urgency and unaddressed nature of the problem selected, and the creativity of the proposed solution (i.e., new approaches, tools, and technologies).

4) Value for ILO's and UNICEF/YuWaah's priorities

The extent to which the solution develops added value to the ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah priorities in the areas of informal apprenticeships and digital transformation in skills development, as well as the degree of contribution to generate new social and economic outcomes to beneficiaries.

5) Potential for impact

The degree to which the solution has the potential to produce measurable impact and its potential for social, economic, environmental, and other impacts. The proposal should include an estimate of direct and indirect beneficiaries.

6) Sustainability and potential for scalability and replication

The possibility that benefits of the solution continue beyond ILO's and UNICEF/YuWaah's support, and the ability of the solution to be scaled-up and/or replicated in other regions/countries, or to provide valuable learnings for the sector.

7) Ability to leverage and ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah's expertise and networks

The extent to which the team has a good understanding of how to leverage the ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah network and expertise and would bring value for the ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah's stakeholders.



Annex

▶ Application Questions

Skills Challenge Innovation Call in India

Upgrading informal apprenticeships through digital transformation

1. Section A. Identification of the applicant

Name of the applicant organization

2. Section A. Identification of the applicant

Type of organization

- Government agencies
- Employers' organizations
- Workers' organizations (trade unions)
- Cooperatives
- Education and training institutions (including schools, training providers, and universities)
- NGOs and civil society organizations
- Research institutions
- Other (please specify)

3. Section A. Identification of the applicant

Please provide a brief background about the principal projects or programmes of the applicant organization (max. words: 200)

4. Section A. Identification of the applicant: Please carefully fill in the following:

- Number of people who work in the organization
- The date when the organization was formally established (mm/yyyy)
- Address of the organization
- Telephone number of the organization
- Email address of the organization
- Organization website (URL)
- Name of contact person (First name, surname)
- Job title of the contact person
- Email address of the contact person

5. Section A. Identification of the applicant

Please upload a proof of legal registration that shows the existence of the applicant organization for at least two calendar years before the deadline of the submission for applications (10 August 2023).



6. Section A. Identification of the applicant

Please upload a copy of current CVs of each team member involved in the proposed solution with an indication of their role in the solution. Please combine all CVs in one PDF file for uploading.

7. Section A. Identification of the applicant

Does the organization have prior experience in any of the following fields: apprenticeships; skills development; women; or digital transformation? If so, please provide a brief description. (max. words: 200)

8. Section B. Identification of the solution

Name of the solution (max. words: 100)

9. Section B. Identification of the solution

Please provide a brief description on the background context (including specific aspects related to informal apprenticeships that the proposed solution will solve), overall objectives, and core functions of the proposed solution (max. words: 400)

10. Section B. Identification of the solution

What is the location of the proposed project and the reason for choosing the location? (max. words: 200)

11. Section B. Identification of the solution

Please indicate which target scope of the Skills Innovation Challenge Call in India is most relevant to your solution?

1. Anticipate skills required in targeted sectors and design structured training programmes on a systematic basis and at lower cost
2. Provide complementary theoretical training in informal apprenticeships for targeted occupations with improved outreach and cost effectiveness
3. Conduct skills assessments in informal apprenticeships with greater outreach and improved cost effectiveness
4. Improve productivity and occupational safety and health in workplaces in informal apprenticeships
5. Increase women and their families' awareness of the potentials of non-traditional jobs in digitally supported occupations

12. Section C. Relevance

Please explain to what extent do the objectives and design of your solution are clearly responding to the beneficiaries' and partners'/institutions' needs, policies and priorities? (max. words: 200)

13. Section C. Relevance



Please describe to what extent do the objectives and design of the solution are sensitive to economic, environmental, equity, social, political or other conditions in which the solution takes place? (max. words: 200)

14. Section D. Feasibility

Please describe to what extent is the solution technically and economically feasible? (max. words: 200)

15. Section D. Feasibility

Please explain to what extent can the solution be realised in a simple, measurable, achievable, realistic way, and within a time-bounded period? (max. words: 200)

16. Section E. Innovation

Please explain what makes your solution new and innovative? (max. words: 300)

17. Section E. Innovation

Please identify and explain the status of your proposal: is it in its early stage/emerging idea; intermediate stage/pilot implementation; or advanced stage/wide-spread implementation? (max. words: 200)

18. Section F. Value for ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah's priorities

What added value does the solution develop to the ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah priorities in the areas of informal apprenticeships and digital transformation? (max. words: 200)

19. Section F. Value for ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah's priorities

What added value does the solution generate for new social and economic outcomes to beneficiaries? (max. words: 200)

20. Section G. Potential for impact

Who are the target beneficiaries of your solution? (max. words: 100)

21. Section G. Potential for impact

What are the estimated number of direct and indirect beneficiaries? (max. words: 100)

22. Section G. Potential for impact

What will be the long-term impact of the proposed solution? (max. words: 200)

23. Section G: Potential for impact

Who are the major partners and/or supporters of the proposed solution, if any? 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: 300)

24. Section G. Potential for impact



Please upload a letter(s) of support from potential partners or supporters of the proposed solution, if any.

25. Section H. Sustainability and potential for scalability and replication

If the idea has already been tested, please describe the results. (max. words: 200)

26. Section H. Sustainability and potential for scalability and replication

How can the proposal achieve sustainability in order to continue after the ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah's support ends? (max. words: 200)

27. Section I. Ability to leverage ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah's expertise and networks

How can the ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah network and expertise in the areas of informal apprenticeships and digital transformation of skills development contribute to achieve the solution? (max. words: 200)

28. Section I. Ability to leverage ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah's expertise and networks

How does your solution bring value for the ILO and UNICEF/YuWaah's stakeholders? (max. words: 200)

29. Section J. Budget

Provide a budget estimate concerning the utilization of the grant over the duration of the implementation of the solution. Please use the Budget Template.

- Include the cash or in-kind contributions provided by the applicant and/or other partners, if any, specifying the amount of each contribution.
- Provide all cost information in United States Dollars.
- The cost categories provided are standard and not all may be applicable to your project.
- The applicant must provide a detailed budget and indicate a contribution from the applicant organization corresponding to 10 percent of the value of the proposal, which can be represented by in kind and staff costs.

30. Section K. Video (optional)

Please create a pitch video in English (or with English subtitles) that presents the proposed solution and how it meets the criteria of the Skills Innovation Challenge Cal in India. The video should not be longer than two (2) minutes in length. Upload your video on a platform of your preference and provide the link below.

31. Section L. 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 and UNICEF/YuWaah 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 Terms and Conditions applicable to ILO Grant Agreements 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 timeframe or it is considered of insufficient quality as determined solely by the ILO. The ILO have the right to reject submissions or cancel the competition without providing any further reasons or notice.