THE INSURANCE INNOVATION CHALLENGE IN UGANDA

Participant Selection Criteria

Background

Uganda's micro-insurance market remains underdeveloped despite its decade-long presence. Additionally, the sector faces challenges such as limited uptake and other significant market barriers. UNDP, through its Insurance and Risk Finance Facility (IRFF) initiative seeks to address these challenges by fostering sustainable, scalable, and commercially viable insurance solutions. Among other interventions to address this, UNDP Uganda, in collaboration with IRA, has launched the 2026 Insurance Innovation Challenge (IIC) to identify and support inclusive insurance solutions, expand market reach, and address protection gaps for underserved communities.

Participants will enter a Hackathon-style accelerator, gaining Intensive training, mentorship and an opportunity to win an award.

This document contains the criteria for participants who will be selected to take part in the Insurance Innovation Challenge Hackathon. The criteria for selection of the winner(s) of the final award will be communicated to participants during the 4-day Hackathon.

The criteria are two-fold: (1) A mandatory/ Eligibility Criteria and (2) an innovation Assessment Criteria

1. The Mandatory/ Eligibility Criteria

The criteria comprise baseline requirements that all applicants must meet to be considered for the Hackathon. They are non-negotiable and will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis.

No	Criteria	Description	Evidence
	The Insurance Innovation Challenge will have two competing categories: (1) established/standard organisations and (2) early-stage/non-standard innovators, each competing within their own group with winners drawn from both.		
1	Legal Status	The Insurance Innovation Challenge is open to the following; **A. Established/standard organisations** 1. Graduates and participants of IRA InsureX programme 2. Micro-insurance companies 3. Insurance players (insurers, brokers, bancassurance agents) with micro-insurance solutions 4. Technology companies (Agri-Techs, Fin-techs, Insure techs and health techs) **B. Early-stage/non-standard innovators** 5. University-based Innovators 6. Start-up companies/ individual innovators in Uganda with a clear roadmap for development and a viable strategy for formalisation or collaboration with an established entity to ensure successful implementation and scaling.	Registration certificate, online published lists, etc. Identification documents (e.g. national ID of individuals) Roadmaps (startups)

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<tr><td></td><td></td><td>7. Early stage organizations, entrepreneurs and community-based innovators developing solutions that can address insurance access barriers for underserved population</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>Team Composition</td><td>A. Established/standard organisations
Each Applicant must submit a team of 4 members (2 core team members who will attend in person and 2 supporting team members who will participate off-site/ remotely), ensuring diversity in expertise, demographics, and perspectives on innovation.

Each team must demonstrate how they have factored inclusion in their composition (e.g. gender, youth, persons with disabilities, regional disaggregation etc)

Applications from youth, women and disability-owned businesses are strongly encouraged. Solutions that promote gender equality and social inclusion will be prioritised.

B. Early-stage/non-standard innovators
In case of an organisation, applicants can submit up to two members. Individual innovators can participate as a single individual.

Participant Eligibility: Applicants should confirm their teams can fully engage across all program phases, including virtual sessions, market research, field testing, and the 5-day Hackathon (for the 2 core members). Teams are responsible for their own travel arrangements.</td><td>Submission Template, participant commitment form</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>Solution Requirements</td><td><table>
<tr><th>Parameter</th><th>Requirement</th></tr>
<tr><td>Focus</td><td>Micro-insurance</td></tr>
<tr><td>Format</td><td>Solutions may be products, technology, distribution models, service innovations, approaches, etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Priority sector Focus</td><td>1. Agriculture insurance
2. Insurance for SMEs
3. Health insurance
4. Life insurance</td></tr>
<tr><td>Stage of Development</td><td>Accelerator stage
Solutions should be at least prototype-tested, stage or beyond, with essential features functional and ready for real- world testing and feedback.

Preference will be given to solutions that are ready to scale (e.g solutions that have obtained the necessary approvals, have the operational arrangements, and partnership arrangements for better distribution in place for market launch and expansion). Innovative solutions that are already in the market but have not yet achieved scale will also be considered, provided they present a clear and credible strategy for scaling.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Innovation</td><td>1. New fresh product/service/ solution or a novel approach[1]
2. Creative and disruptive</td></tr>
</table></td><td>Submission template</td></tr>
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[1] Ideas must be fresh and new in the sector, away from the regular solutions

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<tr><td>Profitability</td><td>The solution must operate as a for-profit enterprise and demonstrate the potential for becoming a revenue-generating model.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Business Case</td><td>Solutions must target a broad section of the population or demonstrate a strong business model with viable market adoption.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Insurance Challenges</td><td>Solutions should aim to address any of the following main insurance challenges.
1. Insurance coverage/ uptake
2. Limited partnerships for Microinsurance
3. Distribution</td></tr>
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Added Advantage
Solutions with the following attributes will gain additional consideration:

• Participants who can prove a real distribution relationship (an MFI, bank, agent network, farmer or SACCO association, etc.)
• Solutions with pilot user records or a fully functional prototype.
• Solutions with established partnerships or evidence of future partnership agreements (scale/ potential of distribution partnerships)
• A well-defined and sustainable business model.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Regulatory Compliance</td><td>Applicants must demonstrate willingness to comply with IRA regulatory requirements, including potential sandbox testing, and must not have any pending enforcement actions or sanctions from IRA or other relevant regulatory bodies.</td><td>Submission template</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>Intellectual Property Clarity</td><td>Applicants must declare ownership or licensing rights to all intellectual property underlying their solution. Solutions with unresolved IP disputes or unclear ownership will be disqualified.

All applicants must disclose any existing partnerships, affiliations, or regulatory engagements relevant to the proposed innovation.</td><td>IP declaration form</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>Data Protection and Privacy Compliance</td><td>Given the sensitive nature of insurance data, applicants must demonstrate understanding of and commitment to Uganda's Data Protection and Privacy Act, 2019, and must outline how they will safeguard customer data.</td><td>Data Protection Declaration form</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>No Conflict of Interest</td><td>Applicants must declare any existing relationships with UNDP staff, IRA officials, or proposed judges/mentors that could constitute a conflict of interest. Failure to disclose will result in immediate disqualification.</td><td>Conflict of Interest declaration form</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>Submitting Requirements</td><td>1. Joint applications are accepted for only up to two companies/ individuals
2. Applicants must demonstrate commitment to ethical conduct, transparency, and fairness throughout the process
3. Applications must be submitted using the prescribed application templates and within the officially communicated submission timelines. Late submissions or incomplete applications shall not be considered.</td><td>Submission template</td></tr>
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2) The Innovation Assessment Criteria

These criteria will be used to evaluate and score shortlisted proposals during the screening and judging phases.

No	Criterion	Description	Score
1	Relevance/ alignment with needs	The extent to which the proposed solution addresses identified insurance, risk financing, or resilience challenges affecting underserved populations through practical and innovative approaches. This will also assess the extent to which the innovation addresses core challenges such as insurance coverage/ uptake and partnerships in the microinsurance market in Uganda	25
2	Originality (Unique selling point)	The degree to which the solution introduces new or significantly improved approaches, products, services, or business models within the Ugandan insurance context. This includes novelty of concept, creative use of technology, and departure from conventional insurance practice. This criteria measures uniqueness and innovation	10
3	Inclusion parameters	The extent to which the solution deliberately targets inclusion of groups that have ordinarily been excluded from the insurance sector (underserved, low-income, or excluded populations (women, youth, PWDs, rural communities, informal sector workers)) and demonstrates understanding of their specific risk profiles and protection needs. Focus will be put on the innovative design and how applicable it is for the targeted marginalized group	15
4	Feasibility	The practical viability of implementing the solution within the Ugandan market, considering technical requirements, regulatory constraints, operational capacity, and resource availability and market conditions.	15
5	Scalability and Market Potential	The potential for the solution to expand beyond initial pilot or target populations to reach larger numbers of underserved customers across different geographies or market segments in Uganda. This parameter will also measure the likelihood that the innovation can achieve market acceptance, customer uptake, commercial viability within Uganda's insurance ecosystem. The demonstrated demand for the solution, size of the target market, competitive positioning, and realistic revenue or sustainability model. The participants will describe the solution traction (Evidence of milestones, success, and progress achieved), and the projected scale The applicant should demonstrate evidence of a credible, scalable distribution partner or channel, the size of the pool it reaches, and a realistic path from pilot to scale.	25
6	Sustainability	The capacity of the solution to continue operating and delivering value beyond the life of the challenge funding, including financial sustainability, institutional anchoring, and pathway to commercial viability or sustainable partnership models. These criteria will also measure Strategies for addressing potential negative impacts and risks of the solution	10