WHO Western Pacific Innovation Challenge: Innovation for the Future of Public Health

The World Health Organization in the Western Pacific has launched the first WHO Western Pacific Innovation Challenge: Innovation for the Future of Public Health". The Challenge is calling for innovators to submit their solutions to better the health and wellbeing of people in the Western Pacific Region. The deadline for entering the challenge is 30 November 2021, and all solutions can be submitted here.

Purpose: find tailored solutions for health in our region

The demand for health innovations in the Western Pacific is high and will continue to increase with emerging socioeconomic dynamics. In 2019, as part the *For the Future* vision in the Western Pacific, the Organization identified four strategic priorities to tackle over the coming five years: health security, including antimicrobial resistance; noncommunicable diseases and ageing; climate change and the environment; and reaching the unreached. In achieving this vision, *For the Future* calls on WHO to find new approaches through innovation to meet these challenges and future ones.

WHO in the Western Pacific has made efforts to embed innovation in the organizational culture, and is working to empower countries to chart a sustainable path to improving the health of people across the Region.

The Innovation Challenge is an opportunity for WHO to source and select innovators with profound understandings of the health needs of people in the Western Pacific and to create an ecosystem of innovators who have sustainable, cost-effective, and inclusive solutions that can address these needs.

WHO believes in the potential for both entrepreneurial forms of innovation, with new technologies, services and products that can advance the efficiency and effectiveness of public health, as well as more home-grown innovative solutions which may have explosive impact because they are already adapted to the local context potentially costing less to implement and scale.

Submission categories:

The WHO Western Pacific Innovation Challenge has five categories of submission:

1) **Covid-19 Innovation:** having an immediate and future impact on COVID-19 preparedness and response, potentially improve health outcomes and quality of life, and/or offer a solution to an unmet health need.
2) **Universal health coverage:** ensuring all people and communities have access to quality health services where and when they need them, without suffering financial hardship.
3) **Health security and emergency**: saving lives and protecting health in all situations including health threats from disease outbreaks, natural disasters and conflicts.
4) **Healthy environments and populations**: creating healthier environments, better food choices, safer settings and inclusive health services for a healthy start for every newborn, and a long life for every person.
5) **Disease elimination and control**: reducing the number of new infections and efficiently treat people currently infected by a communicable disease, or affected by a Non-Communicable Disease.

All solutions submitted to the Innovation Challenge must be beyond the ideation stage, having gone through pilot testing to prove feasibility and ideally effectiveness. The solutions must have been adapted or be adaptable to the WHO Western Pacific Region.

Eligibility:

The Innovation Challenge is open to all public health innovators from any of WHO's Member States, but especially those investing in the countries and areas of the Western Pacific Region, or those willing to explore opportunities there. Any person from or organization registered in any WHO Member State is eligible to submit their work.

Submissions from individuals or organizations who are working with or have worked with military, arms, tobacco, alcohol or pharmaceutical products or services, or for advertising of these commercial products or services will not be accepted. Submissions should also have not been produced with funds or any kind of support from the above-mentioned industries. Entries must also be original solutions.

Selection criteria:

The Innovation Challenge will have panels of WHO staff and industry experts to judge the submissions and select 30 finalists.

Finalists will be invited to attend the WPRO Innovation Forum to be held in February. Their solutions will be presented to representatives of WHO Member States in the Western Pacific, public organizations, partners and donors. Accelerators will also be in attendance.

The finalists will also be invited by *The Lancet Regional Health – Western Pacific* to contribute Viewpoints (peer reviewed opinion pieces) to a series co-created with WHO on public health innovation. All submissions are subject to editorial appraisals and peer-reviewing according to the journal's procedure.

The submitted solutions will be assessed on five dimensions:

1) Innovativeness (20%)
2) Relevance (20%)
3) Scalability (20%)
4) Adaptability & Viability (20%)
5) Impact (20%)

Submission deadline:

All submissions must be received by 30 November 2021, 11:59 PM Manila Time (GMT +8).
The finalists will be selected as early as in early January 2022 and contacted individually via email.

Apply now:

Submit your application here: https://wproinnov.awardsplatform.com/
Frequently asked questions are also available on the site. If you need support, please contact wproinnov@who.int.

About us

WHO Western Pacific Innovation Challenge: Innovation for the Future of Public Health is organized by the Innovation and Research (INR) unit in the Data, Strategy and Innovation (DSI) group of the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific.

About the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific

The WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific works to translate global health initiatives into regional plans that respond to the specific needs and challenges of the countries and areas of the Region, including coordinating the Organization's efforts with those of other United Nations agencies and global health initiatives. The Regional Office and 15 WHO country offices in the Region provide tailored support to countries and areas to maximize health gains at the country level while working to make health systems strong and more resilient to face future challenges.

The WHO Western Pacific Region includes 37 countries and areas: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Fiji, France (which has responsibility for French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna, Hong Kong SAR (China, Japan, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Macao SAR (China, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of, Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (which has responsibility for Pitcairn Islands, the United States of America (which has responsibility for American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam.

About DSI

The Data, Strategy and Innovation (DSI) group was established in 2019 in the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific to support implementation of the vision For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region. DSI focuses on innovation, data and strategic engagement with countries on health systems transformation.

About INR

The Innovation and Research (INR) unit is within the DSI group. Challenged to define WHO's meaningful contribution to better leverage innovation for health, INR identifies the direction and means to attaining universal health coverage as enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals. We take the process of iterative development from the stimulation and identification of innovation to its adaptation and scale-up, including financial, systems, technological and social innovation. This will eventually lead to health system promoting resilience in the population they serve, improve health, and prevent diseases by accompanying individuals throughout their life course, anticipating health risks and effectively responding to health needs.