

Welcome!

GDC Innovation Challenge

Q&A Webinar

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An initiative by:

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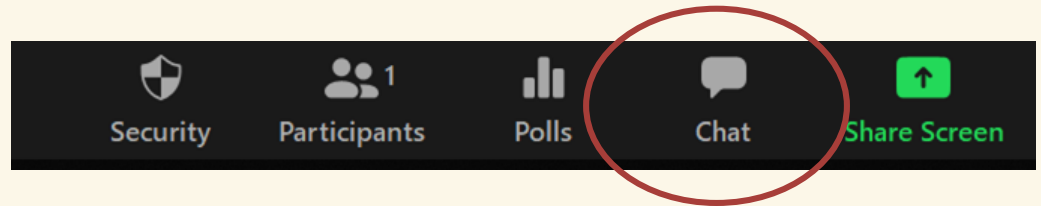
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#TheGDCInnovationChallenge

Agenda

1. About the GDC Innovation Challenge
2. Briefing for this challenge
3. Eligibility and evaluation criteria
4. Q&A





About the GDC

The Global Distributors Collective (GDC) is a **collective of over 150 last mile distributors** who operate in over 40 countries and reach millions of unserved customers with life-changing products such as solar lights, clean cookstoves and water filters.

Our ambition is to make last mile distribution the first priority, so that life-changing products can be made affordable and available to all.

About the GDC Innovation Challenge

A **unique** challenge that crowdsources innovations from **GDC members** and other organisations, helps **pilot the best ideas**, and supports the broader last-mile distribution community to **replicate and learn** from those innovations.

Our first Innovation Challenge (2019)

Past winners



Digital sales training facility for drip irrigation



FEBCO, an energy microfinance cooperative



Lean assessment tool to scale in new regions



Inexpensive 'rent-a-shelf' solar retail kiosks

Feedback received

"We deal with a lot of funders, and the way that the GDC has structured the grant, the check-ins and the technical support has been great and made it really easy for us"

- Jamie McCloskey, SolarAid

18 out of 27 (67%) of surveyed members are interested in replicating the current innovation pilots in their business.

- GDC member survey April 2020

This year's Innovation Challenge (2020)



Context

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on last mile distribution:

- 5% of GDC members* have reported **increased sales**
- 71% experience **reduced sales**
(due to reduced customer income and access)
- 14% said they had **ceased operations** altogether;
- Just 10% said they had **not yet been affected**.

** Based on a survey of GDC members carried out between 25th March and 11th April 2020.*

How might we build resilience* in last mile distribution?

** Measured by an improved ability to respond to future shocks*



What kind of ideas?

Discrete innovations that make your business more **resilient** and that can be **replicated** by others (not core business activities), as well as applications in **partnership**.

Changing current business practices to make them more resilient.

Eg. ideas for digitising operations or spreading financial risk.

Developing a new service.

Eg. ideas for serving new target segments.

Establishing new partnerships.

Eg. ideas for sharing costs of business activities with others.

What kind of ideas?

- Innovation
- Feasibility
- Replicability
- Sustainability
- Impact
- Commitment

Who can apply?

- **You must be a GDC member, or applying with a GDC member.**
- You must work in the last mile distribution sector for at least 1 year.
- You must sell energy access products* to underserved communities, or, through your idea, add energy access products to your portfolio.
- You must have operations in the eligible countries* in SSA and SA.
- ...more criteria on our website and application form.

** The geographical and product scope of this Innovation Challenge are determined by the TEA programme, supported by UK aid from the UK government.*

What do the winning ideas receive?

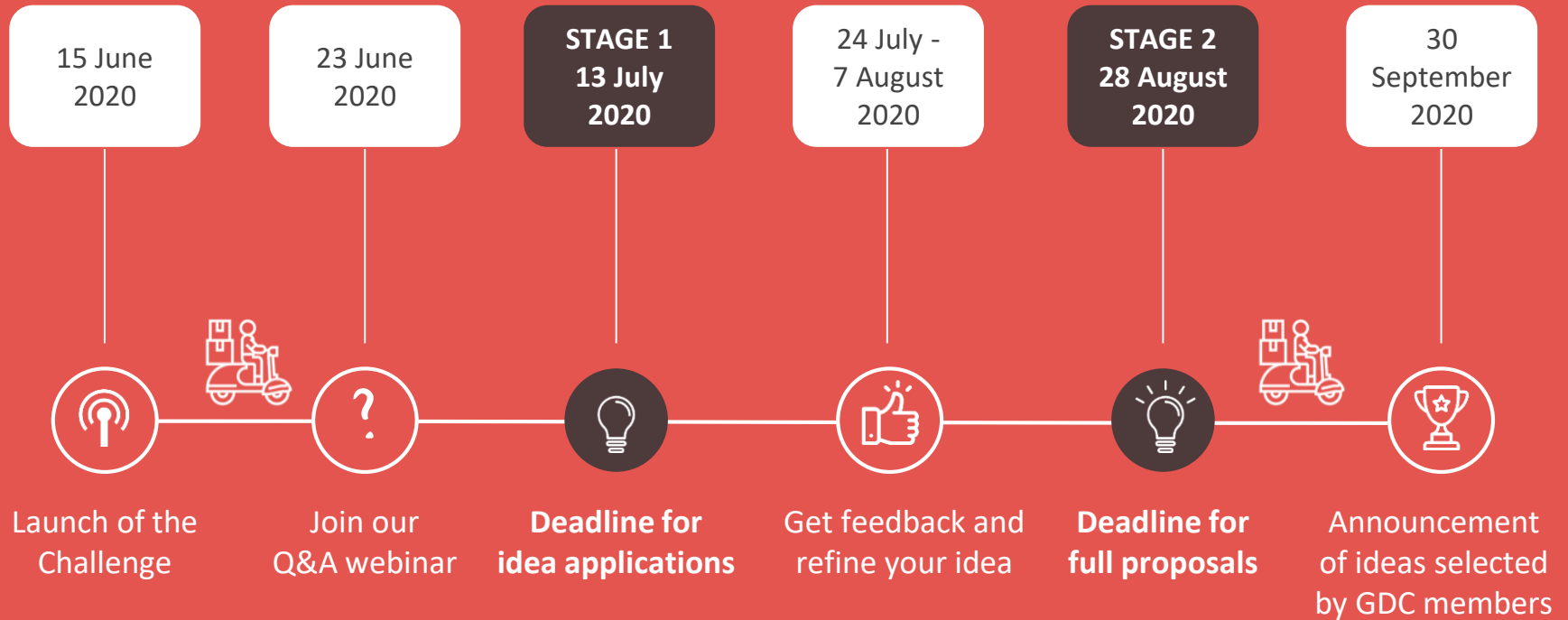
- Up to £50,000 in funding to pilot the idea
- Expert technical assistance
- Connections to key stakeholders
- Profile and support to disseminate learnings and insights across the sector



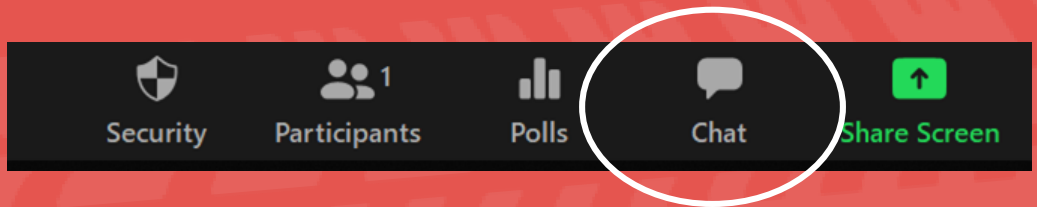
What's
next?



The process



Q&A



Question 1

What exactly do you mean by ‘energy access products’?

We accept ideas that support the last mile distribution of products that contribute to SDG7. This includes solar lanterns, solar home systems, energy efficient appliances, improved cookstoves and fuels, as well as solar powered appliances for productive uses. You or the GDC member you apply with must sell these energy access products or, through your idea, be seeking to add them to your portfolio.

Question 2

When will successful applicants receive the financial and technical support?

We plan to announce the winning ideas at the end of September, after which we will carry out the due diligence process with the winners. This means our collaboration will start no earlier than 1st November 2020.

Question 3

Can I apply as a start-up?

To be eligible, you or the GDC member you are partnering with must have worked in the last mile distribution sector for at least one year.

Question 4

Can I apply if am not a GDC member?

We are accepting applications from GDC members as well as organisations that support last mile distributors and are co-applying with a GDC member (e.g. service providers, manufacturers, and software companies). If you are a last mile distributor but not yet a GDC member, [sign up here](#).

Question 5

Are (e-)toilets for rural areas an eligible product/innovation?

If these toilet facilities are only providing access to latrines, then no. If at the facilities you sell or, through your proposed idea, intend to sell energy access products, then yes.

Question 6

What does the replication activity entail?

This depends on the innovation. For some, it will mean replicating with some tweaks – for others the idea will be a service for LMDs that they can access. The GDC team will be capturing the learning from each innovation and supporting other members to adopt these innovations, i.e. through working groups, open-sourcing tools/templates, or having members present their innovations to the wider community.

Question 7

How can I use the funds if they are not meant to support the core business? And are there any restrictions to budget use.

In the second stage of the application process you will need to present a detailed budget, in which you should specify how money will be used to finance the piloting of your idea. This might include the salary of team members, and/or procurement of materials or software. We will not fund the following costs as part of the pilot: overheads; financing or similar costs; maintenance and support costs to the extent that these relate to maintenance and/or support services beyond the scope of the pilot; taxation; fines and penalties; non-cash items (incl. depreciation, amortisation, impairments, and movements in provisions).

Question 8

Do winners maintain the intellectual property of the idea they pilot?

Winners must understand that your idea and learning from your pilot will be used to benefit other GDC members; either because you will open-source the approach for others to replicate, or because it is a service that you or another organisation will be providing to other members.

Question 9

Is it important to develop a proposal together with either another GDC member or a service provider?

We welcome applications in partnership, either with another GDC member or an organisation like a service provider - if they make sense and will add value. This is not mandatory or a prerequisite.

Question 10

What is the required registration of the entities applying? Does the challenge only support for-profit entities?

There are no restrictions around what type of company you need to be, to apply for GDC membership. GDC members are for-profit, not-for-profit or have hybrid models!

Question 11

If a country is not part of the list of eligible countries, is it possible to add it to the list?

Unfortunately this list is closed, and is not dictated by the GDC but by the geographic focus of the UK aid Transforming Energy Access program, under which this GDC Innovation Challenge is funded.

Thank you!

Submit by:
13 July 2020
23:59 UK time (BST)

Apply online:

globaldistributorscollective.org

