5th Call for Proposals
Marine Pollution and Plastics Reduction, Marine Ecosystem Restoration, and Sustainable Blue Economy

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is pleased to launch the 5th Ocean Innovation Challenge (OIC) Call for Proposals, inviting innovative private sector organizations to submit solutions that address critical ocean and coastal challenges while promoting sustainable and inclusive blue economy development.

Funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by UNDP through the Planet Hub, Ecosystems and Biodiversity Pillar, the OIC supports implementation-ready innovations that can generate measurable environmental, social, and economic impacts and demonstrate strong potential for replication and scaling.

The OIC recognizes that innovative entrepreneurs and businesses play a critical role in developing practical solutions to marine pollution, ecosystem degradation, and the sustainable use of ocean resources. Through this Call, UNDP seeks to identify and support private sector innovators capable of transforming promising innovations into impactful and scalable solutions that contribute to healthier oceans and more resilient coastal communities, in particular targeting women, youth and the poor. Preference will be given to women and youth led/owned innovations.

Who Can Apply?

The OIC 5th Call is open to legally registered **private sector organizations**, including:

- Start-up companies;
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs);
- Private companies;
- Social enterprises; and
- Other eligible private sector entities developing innovative ocean-related solutions.

Applications must be submitted by a legally registered private sector organization, either independently or as the Lead Applicant of a consortium. Universities, research institutions, NGOs, government agencies, and other organizations are encouraged to participate as consortium partners or technical collaborators but may not serve as the Lead Applicant.

Beneficiary Countries

Projects must be implemented in one or more of the following countries:

- Bangladesh
- Indonesia
- Philippines
- Thailand
- Viet Nam

The Lead Applicant is not required to be from the beneficiary countries; however, implementation of the innovation must take place within at least one of these countries, with acceptance of the government authorities. Partnership with local organizations is strongly encouraged.

Priority Thematic Areas

The OIC 5th Call seeks innovative solutions under one or more of the following thematic areas:

- **Marine Pollution Reduction:** Innovations that prevent, reduce, recover, or manage marine pollution, including marine plastics, ghost fishing gear, wastewater, and other land- and sea-based sources of pollution.
- **Coastal and Marine Ecosystem Restoration:** Innovations that restore and conserve coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass meadows, coastal wetlands, and other marine and coastal ecosystems while strengthening biodiversity and climate resilience.
- **Sustainable Blue Economy:** Innovations that promote sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, eco-tourism, blue biotechnology, circular economy approaches, ocean data solutions, and other sustainable ocean-based enterprises.

What Support Will Selected Innovators Receive?

Up to 10 winning proposals will be selected through the competitive selection process. Each selected innovator will receive:

- Up to **USD 100,000** in financial support through a UNDP deliverable-based contract under the Model Innovation Challenge Agreement (MICA);
- Up to **17 months** of implementation and incubation support;
- Technical mentoring from UNDP and external experts;
- Project management, monitoring, and reporting support;
- Communications and visibility assistance;

- Fundraising and investment-readiness and investment facilitation support;
- Opportunities to engage with investors, development partners, and private sector networks; and
- Increased visibility through UNDP's global knowledge-sharing platforms and events.

Key Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must:

- Be a legally registered private sector organization;
- Propose an implementation-ready innovation with demonstrated proof of concept or validated prototype;
- Request no more than **USD 100,000** in OIC financial support;
- Provide a minimum **50% co-financing contribution** (in cash and/or in-kind);
- Demonstrate the technical, managerial, and financial capacity to implement the proposed innovation;
- Provide proof of government support for implementation of this innovation in the location to be tested, and alignment with the UNDP framework agreements of the recipient country;
- Submit a complete application, including all required annexes and supporting documentations identified in the Call for Proposals, in English before the application deadline.

Selection Process

Applications will be evaluated through a fair and competitive multi-stage process comprising:

1. **Administrative Compliance Review** – Verification that the application package is complete and all required annexes and supporting documents have been submitted.

2. **Eligibility Screening** – Assessment of compliance with the eligibility requirements of the Call for Proposals.

3. **Technical Evaluation** – Independent evaluation by the Ocean Innovation Challenge Technical Review Board (TRB) against the published technical evaluation criteria.

4. **Value for Money Assessment** – Assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of the applicant's co-financing contribution.

5. **Due Diligence Assessment** – Verification of the applicant's legal status, financial and organizational capacity, integrity, environmental and social compliance, and other due diligence requirements based on the information and supporting documents submitted with the application.

6. **Final Selection and Contracting** – Funding recommendations will be based on the technical evaluation, Value for Money assessment, due diligence results, available funding, and the objective of maintaining a balanced portfolio across the three thematic priorities of the Call. Up

to 10 proposals will be selected for funding, subject to the availability of funding and satisfactory completion of the selection and due diligence processes

Successful applicants will enter into a **UNDP Model Innovation Challenge Agreement (MICA)** under which payments will be linked to the satisfactory completion and acceptance of agreed contractual deliverables

Application Deadline

Applications must be submitted by *15 November 2026, 23:59 New York Time*. The application window will remain open for approximately eight weeks from the launch of the Call. Applications received after the stated deadline will not be considered.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications well in advance of the deadline to allow sufficient time to upload all required documents and address any technical issues with the submission platform.

Indicative Timeline

Activity	Indicative Timing
Launch of the Call	October 2026
Open Information Sessions	October 2026
Application Deadline	***15 November 2026, 23:59 New York Time***
Technical Evaluation	November–December 2026
Contract Negotiation and Signature	December-January 2026
Innovation Implementation Begins	January-February 2027
Innovation Implementation Period	17 months
Project Completion	Mid-2028*

**The implementation schedule is indicative. If additional time is required during the application period—for example, to improve the quantity or quality of proposals received—the application deadline and subsequent milestones may be adjusted accordingly.*

How to Apply

Applicants should carefully review the complete **Call for Proposals requirements** and all application templates before preparing their submission. A complete application package shall include the following documents:

Annex	Document
Annex 1	Application Form

Annex	Document
Annex 2	Technical Proposal
Annex 3	Results Framework and Impact Measurement Plan
Annex 4	Project Work Plan
Annex 5.1	Detailed Budget and Budget Justification
Annex 5.2	The project itemized budget in Excel format
Annex 6	Co-financing Declaration
Annex 7	Organizational Capacity Assessment
Annex 8	Integrity, Conflict of Interest and Compliance Declaration (including the Social and Environmental Risk Screening Summary and Due Diligence Supporting Documents Checklist)
Annex 9	UNDP Social and Environmental Risk Screening Checklist
Other	Valid Registration Document, and other supporting documents

Applicants are also required to submit the supporting documents identified in Section G of Annex 8 as part of their application package. These documents will support UNDP's due diligence and eligibility verification processes.

Applications that are incomplete or do not include the required supporting documentation may be considered non-responsive and may not proceed to the technical evaluation.

Applications must be submitted electronically through the official submission platform identified in the Call for Proposals.

About the UNDP Ocean Innovation Challenge

The Ocean Innovation Challenge is a global UNDP initiative that supports innovative solutions addressing marine pollution, coastal and marine ecosystem restoration, and sustainable blue economy development. By combining catalytic financial support with technical mentoring, strategic partnerships, and investment-readiness assistance, the OIC helps innovators accelerate the implementation, scaling, and long-term sustainability of impactful ocean solutions.

The OIC 5th Call is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) through the Planet Hub – Ecosystems and Biodiversity Pillar, under the Water and Oceans Governance Team.

Contact Information

Ocean Innovation Challenge (OIC) Secretariat
UNDP Planet Hub – Ecosystems and Biodiversity Pillar
Water and Oceans Team
Email: oic.info@undp.org
Website: oceaninnovationchallenge.org