Play Learn Thrive

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

—

January 21, 2025

Executive Summary

Grand Challenges Canada is launching a new portfolio, Play Learn Thrive, to respond to gaps in current Early Childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDiE) and Education in Emergencies (EiE) approaches.

We aim to create strong support systems for children in complex crisis settings so that they can play, learn, and thrive. We recognize that children's holistic development, including their physical, intellectual, psychological, cultural, and social wellbeing, is intrinsically linked to the wellbeing and capacity of their caregivers and educators, as well as other members of their community. Strengthening this support network is essential to foster children's growth and development.

In this funding call, we seek solutions that create more robust support systems for children from birth to 12 years of age in complex crisis settings, with a focus on those who are left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met.

With funding from the LEGO Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada will award grants in two categories through this Request for Proposals:

Proof of Concept (POC)
Funding for new, untested ideas and approaches to determine whether they are effective. These are grants of up to $250,000 CAD per project over a maximum of 24 months.

Transition to Scale (TTS):
Funding for more mature innovations that have already achieved proof of concept

and are ready to be implemented more widely. These are grants between $300,000-$1,500,000 CAD per project over a maximum of 24 months.

We expect to award approximately nine (9) Proof of Concept and seven (7) Transition to Scale innovations in this funding call.

While the Play Learn Thrive portfolio will have a broader geographical focus, this RFP will only fund projects that will be implemented in at least one (1) of four (4) countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, and Uganda.

To be eligible for funding, applying organizations must (among other criteria):

- Be not-for-profit organizations that are legally incorporated[1]

- Have an active presence in at least one of the four priority countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda)

- Be legally registered to do business in at least one of the four priority countries

- Implement programming directly in at least one of the four priority countries.

The following general areas of focus must be reflected in all project proposals to be considered for funding.

Innovations should either focus on:

- Strengthening children's (from birth to 12 years of age) education and/or development, with a focus on those who are left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met; OR

- Strengthening the capacity and/or wellbeing of the support networks around children, including though not limited to their educators, caregivers, community care providers, OR

- Supporting children AND their support networks. While we would encourage and consider proposals that only focus on one of the first two options, preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate a dual focus on children and key figures in their support networks.

- Innovations should integrate play-based solutions in their programmatic concept (Appendix A provides illustrative examples of play-based solutions).

- Innovations should be culturally sensitive and community-driven, accounting for the complex social, cultural and environmental drivers contributing to children's early learning and development in at least one of the four priority countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda).

- Preference will be given to proposals that align with the sub-themes listed in Appendix B. Please note that we would still encourage and consider proposals that do not explicitly focus on these sub-themes, so long as they align with the general areas of focus described above.

While this Request for Proposals is translated in Arabic and French, only applications that are submitted in English will be reviewed.

Applications in any other language will be rejected without review. Note that quality of the use of English language in proposals will not play a factor in their evaluation unless it significantly affects the clarity of the information. Please read through this entire Request for Proposals for all of the requirements and instructions related to your application.

Application deadlines

PROOF OF CONCEPT (POC)
Applications for POC grants are due on April 24th, 2025, at 2 pm ET.

TRANSITION TO SCALE (TTS)
Applications for TTS grants will be accepted on a rolling basis between January 21, 2025 and November 27th, 2025.

For TTS, the first application deadline for review by Grand Challenges Canada is on April 24th, 2025, at 2 pm ET. Subsequent TTS application deadlines throughout the year will be posted on the Grand Challenges Canada website and in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). TTS applications will involve a two-stage process:

- Stage One: applicants will complete a screening questionnaire and project summary

- Stage Two: applicants will submit a full project application. Only those applications that pass stage one will be invited to submit a full application in stage two.

*Please note that having an established Proof of Concept for your proposed project is a key requirement for TTS funding. Please see Section 5 for more details on TTS eligibility requirements.

To apply for funding, applicants MUST use the online application form provided, which is ONLY accessible via Grand Challenges Canada's Fluxx Portal <https://gcc.fluxx.io>. Existing users should login to their account and new users must register for an account on the main application portal on Fluxx. (See Appendix D for Instructions for Application Portal.)

For technical assistance with registration or the online application, contact Grand Challenges Canada's Fluxx Technical Support team at: http://www.grandchallenges.ca/fluxxsupport/

Email playlearnthrive@grandchallenges.ca with 'Request for Proposals' in the subject line for questions not answered in the supplemental Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.

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1. Introduction

1.1 GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA / GRANDS DÉFIS CANADA

Grand Challenges Canada's vision is:
A world where innovation helps every person thrive.

Our mission is:
To build a healthier, more equitable world by supporting local, scalable, sustainable innovation.

Grand Challenges Canada is dedicated to supporting Bold Ideas with Big Impact®. With funding from a variety of government partners and organizations, including Global Affairs Canada, our mission is to support innovation that saves and improves the lives of the most vulnerable across low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and Canada. The bold ideas Grand Challenges Canada supports combine science and technology, social and business innovation – known as Integrated Innovation®.

One of the largest impact-first investors in Canada, and with a feminist investment approach, Grand Challenges Canada has supported a pipeline of more than 1700 innovations in over 100 countries. Since 2010, innovations supported by Grand Challenges Canada have reached more than 80 million people who would otherwise not have had access with life-saving or life-improving initiatives.

For more information, please see: www.grandchallenges.ca/

1.2 ABOUT GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT WORK

Grand Challenges Canada has developed extensive internal expertise and external networks in early childhood development (ECD) through its Saving Brains initiative, which seeks to improve early brain and child development globally. To date, the Saving Brains initiative has supported 163 innovators across 42 countries, with 9.7 million lives reached, and 5.4 million lives improved.

The Saving Brains initiative is housed within Grand Challenges Canada's overarching Humanitarian Innovation Program, which supports bold, life-improving innovations that better meet the needs of the most vulnerable and hardest-to-reach people impacted by humanitarian crises. Our work has demonstrated that children's needs and challenges in emergency settings are both unique and dire, requiring dedicated and continued investments.

To address this, we are launching the new Play Learn Thrive portfolio to respond to gaps in current Early Childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDiE) and Education in Emergencies (EiE) approaches.

With funding from the LEGO Foundation, we are looking to create a pipeline of new scalable solutions that better meet the unique needs of children in complex crisis settings, what we refer to as 'polycrisis'. The World Economic Forum defines polycrisis as, "a cluster of related global risks with compounding effects, such that the overall impact exceeds the sum of each part". Polycrisis includes, though is not limited to compounding economic, social, public health, climate and conflict driven disasters that have detrimental impacts on children's ability to survive and thrive.

We believe that this new program has the potential to unlock untapped innovations within ECDiE and EiE spaces and also work towards addressing critical challenges within humanitarian assistance delivery models.

1.3 THE PROBLEM

UNHCR's 2022 Education Report illustrates how refugee children and youth fall behind their non-refugee peers regarding access to inclusive, quality education. A concerning trend over the last few years shows that 48% of all school-age refugee children worldwide are not in school, and primary school enrollment for refugees is significantly below that of those countries. Additionally, more than 50% of girls not accessing education are in crisis-affected countries.

In 2022, an estimated 468 million children—one in six children worldwide—were living in a conflict zone.[2] Long-term exposure to conflict and displacement can fundamentally alter young children's life trajectories,[3] and existing literature points to the inadequate attention paid to the specific needs of young children in crisis settings, particularly those living in urban refugee settings.[4] The socioeconomic consequences of crises leave families in positions of reduced capacity to support their children in attaining formal or informal learning, with many being forced to withdraw their children and youth from learning environments and/or lacking the capacity to provide nurturing care for young children.[5]

Research has shown that young children born into environments with compounding negative experiences – such as exposure to violence, trauma, poverty, lack of opportunities and limited responsive interactions with caregivers – are more likely to face poor health outcomes, toxic stress response and decreased wellbeing.[6] The psychological trauma experienced during crisis, combined with physical deprivation and inadequate access to basic services, can have lasting impacts on young children's ability to grow and learn.[7]

Forced displacement heightens the risk for disrupted parenting, child neglect, and exploitation of young children, often after the death of their parents, separation from

their families, or forced marriages.[8] During displacement, community structures and support also deteriorate, family structures may break down, and chances of experiencing discrimination and harassment in the host community may increase, further impeding young children's socioemotional development.[9] In conflict-affected contexts, children's play is sacrificed as families respond to crises by rushing children out of play spaces and limiting outdoor activities and other recreational activities to protect children from imminent harm.[10]

Yet, play is vital for children's well-being. It can help children heal and adapt to their challenging environments. Thoughtfully designed play experiences enable children to build positive relationships, cope with trauma, and regain a sense of control over their lives. Through play, children can express their emotions, develop social skills, and practice problem-solving in a safe and supportive space. Play also offers non-verbal avenues for self-expression, which is especially important for children struggling with language barriers or the inability to talk about their traumatic experiences. By engaging in imaginative play, children can reshape their narratives and foster hope, empowering them to move forward with resilience.[11][12]

Children are also shouldering the burden of climate change. Approximately 1 billion children globally – nearly half of the world's children – live in countries that are at an "extremely high risk" from the impacts of climate change.[13] According to UNICEF, 43.1 million children were internally displaced due to climate-related disasters over the last six years, equivalent to approximately 20,000 children displaced per day.[14]

2. Our Approach

2.1 OUR APPROACH: PLAY LEARN THRIVE

We are leveraging our extensive 10+ years' experience in supporting innovations in the ECD space and humanitarian settings to tackle a new Grand Challenge for the Play Learn Thrive portfolio.

We aim to create strong support systems for children in complex crisis settings so that they can play, learn, and thrive. We recognize that children's holistic development, including their physical, intellectual, psychological, cultural, and social wellbeing, is intrinsically linked to the wellbeing and capacity of their caregivers and educators, as well as other members of their community. Strengthening this support network is essential to foster children's growth and development.

We seek solutions that create more robust support systems for children from birth to 12 years of age in complex crisis settings, with a focus on those who have been left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met.

Locally-driven priorities

We are committed to funding, supporting, and advocating for more locally led solutions to drive change in the ECDiE and EiE spaces, as well as the humanitarian system more broadly. Our funding priorities are guided by locally driven country analyses and consultations with leading humanitarian organizations, technical experts in ECDiE and EiE, and representatives from affected communities, including children, caregivers, and educators, and community-based organizations.

The consultations that informed the development of this Request for Proposals aimed to identify the most pressing barriers and funding gaps affecting children in polycrisis settings that could be addressed through innovation. The Aga Khan University's (AKU) Institute for Human Development (IHD) and Institute for Education Development (IED) led the research and consultation process in all four countries of focus (Kenya, Uganda, Jordan, Lebanon) and guided the prioritization of focus areas for the funding call. E&K Consulting and Edvise me, consulting firms with local expertise in the countries of focus, supported AKU during the scoping review and stakeholder engagements. Based on AKU's analyses, Grand Challenges Canada convened a workshop with global and regional experts from all four countries to validate the findings and further define the scope and priorities of the funding call.

Technical leadership and operational capacity

In addition to distributing innovation funding, we aim to build a community of practice, through which project teams can share and learn from each other's challenges and successes. An innovator support platform will be available to project teams, offering a unique opportunity to collaborate with a community of ECDiE and EiE technical experts and innovators, and to foster partnerships with key stakeholders in the sector. The platform is equipped to provide technical support to innovators that will serve as a responsive resource to maximize the impact of funded projects and further boost the program's collective impact.

Technical support to innovators includes some or all of the following sub-activities, depending on the needs of successful applicants:

1. Assessments to identify the needs of innovators;
2. Innovation Workshops tailored to the stage of innovation (i.e., Transition to Scale or Proof of Concept), geographic region, and focused topics identified by the innovator cohort themselves;
3. Innovation Showcase Events: coaching opportunities for innovators to present their work to external audiences, such as other actors and/or donors within the humanitarian space, with a view towards establishing new partnerships with key EiE/ECDiE stakeholders and securing additional donor resources to expand their work;
4. Mentorship services/1:1 Advisory Support: a roster of regionally-based experts and mentors who offer 1:1 support to innovators;
5. Learning Platform: a platform with relevant resources and materials as well as spaces to connect online with peers;
6. Access to GCC's Saving Brains support network: an integrated platform of global experts aiming to accelerate and track progress towards measurable improvements in child development; and
7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning support, business model and costing advisory, institutional capacity support, stakeholder engagement, and more.

In addition to the support provided by the innovator platform, we are working to provide tailored and country-focused operational support. Support includes venture advisory services to help social entrepreneurs develop key organizational capacities through training, coaching, and mentorship support.

2.2 IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

Polycrisis settings

The [World Economic Forum](#) defines 'polycrisis' as a "cluster of related global risks with compounding effects, such that the overall impact exceeds the sum of each part." Polycrisis spans settings that impede access to quality and enriching learning environments for children, including, though not limited to, exposure to conflict zones, situations of forced displacement, refugee camp and non-camp settings, marginalized host communities, remote and/or coastal communities, communities without access to water and sanitation, and/or communities that experience exposure to violence, poverty, disease, environmental hazards and natural disasters.

We intentionally define polycrisis broadly, recognizing context-specific social, political, economic, and environmental factors.

Play-based solutions

Play-based learning is a powerful approach that promotes healthy growth and fosters the acquisition of knowledge, thinking skills, and essential personal characteristics needed to navigate an ever- changing future. Play takes many forms and may be differently defined across diverse cultures and contexts.

In early development (birth to three (3) years old), playful experiences facilitate supportive interactions with caregivers, building healthy brain connections. As children progress from ages 3 to 12, connecting play to real-world examples enriches their understanding, enabling them to apply knowledge in various contexts and spark new ideas. For older children, play cultivates collaboration, innovation, and problem-solving skills essential for thriving in uncertainty.[15] Research shows that playful learning experiences are particularly effective in developing a broad range of skills and understanding academic concepts, positively influencing social-emotional, cognitive, and linguistic development, while also fostering relationship-building among peers, families, and communities.[16] Aligning with global research, we will consider playful experiences as activities that have the following characteristics:

When an activity:

1. is experienced as joyful and generates feelings of enjoyment, motivation and thrill;
2. helps children find meaning in an experience or make sense of the world around them;
3. involves active engagement, often combining physical, mental and verbal engagement;
4. as well as iterative thinking through practicing skills, tries out possibilities, revises hypotheses or discovers new challenges, and;
5. is socially interactive, paving the way for children to understand others and build relationships.[17]

Please refer to Appendix A for illustrative examples of how play can be integrated into ECDiE and EiE programs.

'Whole Child' focused

We aim to support innovations that follow a 'whole child' focused approach, recognizing the connection between children's social, emotional, cognitive and academic development, as well as their physical and mental health. This is with the understanding that students' education and life outcomes are dependent upon their access to safe and welcoming learning environments and rich learning experiences both in and out of school.[18]

Hardest to reach/Traditionally excluded or underrepresented populations

We aim to support innovators to create more robust support systems for all children from birth to 12 years of age in polycrisis settings, with a focus on those who are left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met.

By "hardest to reach and traditionally excluded or under-represented", we refer to children with protection risks, refugees and displaced children, girls and adolescent mothers, children with special needs and disabilities, children with mental health and psychosocial support needs, children living in remote areas (such as rural and/or coastal communities), children living in host communities, urban refugees, child-headed households, and children from minority groups and identities.

2.3 GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

In this funding call, we will invest in innovations that support children's education and development and further strengthen their support networks across two regions: the Middle East (in Jordan and Lebanon) and East Africa (in Uganda and Kenya).

We acknowledge the difficulty in prioritizing countries and regions to support, recognizing that humanitarian crises and emergencies are multi-faceted and often transcend borders. The four focal countries in this funding call each represent polycrisis settings, spanning different types and stages of crisis.

KENYA

Over the last two decades, Kenya has experienced multiple, severe crises, including climate-related disasters, such as recurrent drought and floods, epidemics, as well as political violence and inter-ethnic conflict. In 2023, there were almost 650,000 internal displacements reported, most of which were triggered by floods.[19] Kenya is home to many refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from neighbouring countries experiencing persistent conflicts, such as Ethiopia, South Sudan and Somalia. As of April 2024, the largest refugee camps in Kenya, Dadaab and Kakuma, were together hosting over 500,000 refugees.[20]
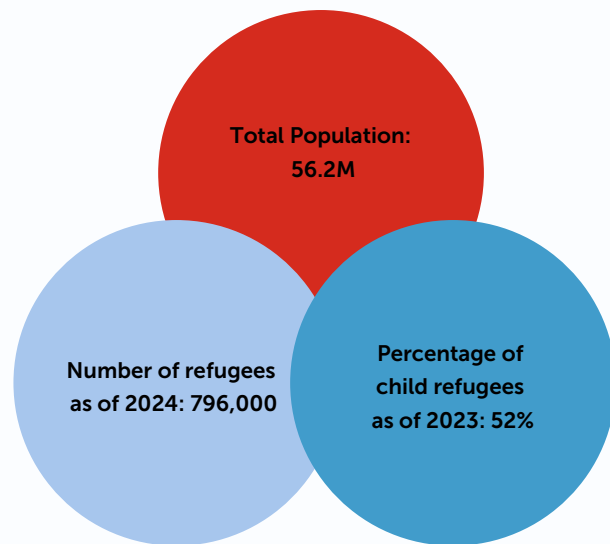
The polycrisis in Kenya has wide-reaching impacts, particularly on children. More than 16 million children, accounting for 67% of children in the country, are impacted by poverty, conflict, and climate-related risks.[21] In 2022, 22% of children between the ages of two and five were behind in terms of their overall health, learning, and psychosocial development.[22] Isolated studies indicate that refugee children are at an increased risk of falling behind, with 91% of students in grade 3 falling far below grade 2 benchmarks for reading fluency.[23]

Total Population: 56.2M

Number of refugees as of 2024: 796,000

Percentage of child refugees as of 2023: 52%

Figure 1: Source for top circle; Source for left circle; Source for right circle. The contextual information above was provided by Aga Khan University (AKU)

UGANDA

Fueled by ongoing conflicts in neighbouring countries, Uganda has one of the fastest-growing refugee crises in the world and is home to the fourth-largest number of refugees worldwide. Uganda hosts more than 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers, 850,900 of whom are children primarily from Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.[24] The country has also witnessed severe climate induced shocks, including chronic drought and food insecurity, flooding and disease outbreak, alongside other geopolitical crises and displacements.[25]

Children's ability to access early childhood education has been hindered. While the enrolment rate for primary school stands at 96% in the 13 refugee-hosting districts, current estimates suggest only half of three (3)- to five (5)-year-olds can access early childhood education.[26]

Total Population as of 2024: 50.5M

Number of refugees as of 2024: 1.5M

Percentage of child refugees as of 2023: 61%

Figure 1: Source for top circle; Source for left circle; Source for right circle. The contextual information above was provided by Aga Khan University (AKU)

Lebanon has the highest number of refugees per capita and per square kilometer in the world. As of 2024, 1.5 million Syrian refugees reside in Lebanon, 50% of whom are under the age of 18 years old.[27] After a dramatic escalation in conflict in September 2024, over one million people in Lebanon have already been displaced from their homes,[28] including 546,000 children.[29] In addition to being displaced, many children have been injured and live with heightened fear of ongoing destruction and uncertainty.

The severe economic crisis in the country has contributed to over half of the population living without adequate access to food, healthcare, education, and other basic services.[30] As the vast majority of services in Lebanon are privatized, including over 50% of schools, access to quality education and learning outcomes for children depend on the ability of families to afford private schooling; consequently, 37% of children under 14 years are out of school.[31] This percentage of children out of school is expected to increase with the recent escalations, as an estimated 75% of schools have already been closed indefinitely, with half now operating as shelters for communities displaced by war.[32]

Deep social inequalities persist for Syrian refugees. Within the general population, children from 26% of households cannot attend school, compared to 52% of children from Syrian refugee households. One study found that refugee children have higher rates of behavioural and communication challenges, as well as socio-emotional difficulties linked to elevated rates of stress and trauma.[33]

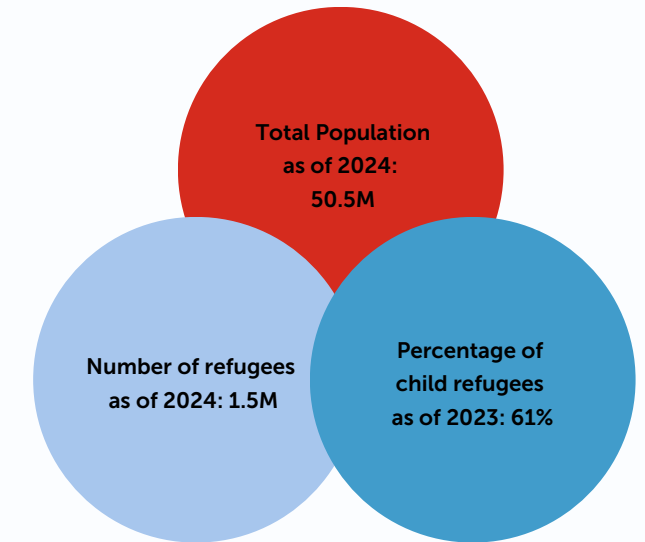*Figure 1: Source for top circle; Source for left circle; Source for right circle. The contextual information was provided by Aga Khan University (AKU)*

Jordan's infrastructure, economy, and social services have been heavily impacted by the influx of refugees, primarily from Syria since 2011. There has been a heightened recovery response throughout the country which has focused on integrating refugees and displaced children in its national systems. School readiness programs for young children have been developed with an aim to universalize access to the final kindergarten year before entry into primary school. Despite expansion efforts, in 2020, only 38% of children in Jordan attended pre-primary school (birth to 5 years old), while 62% remained out of school.

The situation is often worse for refugees; in fact, pre-primary attendance rates are lowest for Syrian girls (at 12%). An estimated 112,000 children between the ages of 6 and 15 do not have access to basic education, and of these, 50% are Syrian refugee children. There are large disparities in enrolment between regions and governorates, with the lowest enrolment seen in the north and central regions of the country, corresponding to the location of large Syrian refugee camps, Za'atar and Azraq.[34][35] An evaluation of children's foundational literacy and numeracy skills in a sample of Syrian refugee camps found that over 75% of Grade 5 and 6 students were unable to read at a grade 3 level, increasing their risk of dropping out.[36] Another study of 3,645 children found that Syrian refugee children in Jordan showed elevated psychosocial difficulty and increased emotional symptoms than their Jordanian peer counterparts.[37]

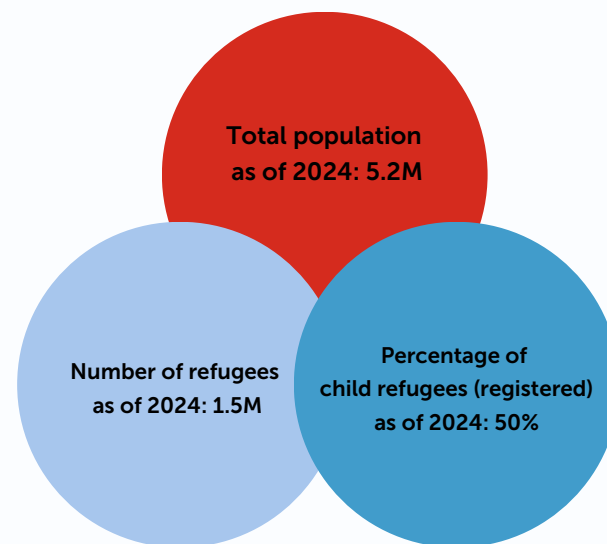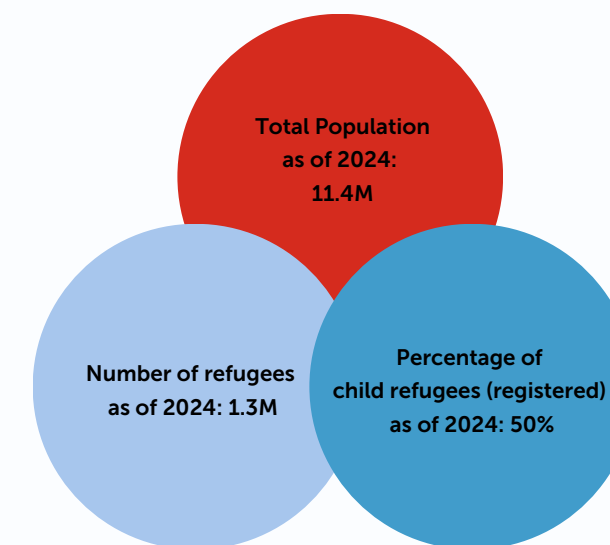*Figure 1: Source for top circle; Source for left circle; Source for right circle. The contextual information was provided by Aga Khan University (AKU)*

2.4 AREAS OF FOCUS

The following general areas of focus must be reflected in all project proposals in order to be considered for funding:

- Innovations should either focus on:

  a. Strengthening children's education and/or development (from birth to 12 years of age), with a focus on those who have been left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met; OR
  b. Strengthening the capacity and/or wellbeing of the support networks around children, including though not limited to, their educators, caregivers, community care providers, etc.; OR
  c. Supporting children AND their support networks. While we would encourage and consider proposals that only focus on one of the first two options, preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate a dual focus on children and key figures in their support networks.

- Innovations should integrate play-based solutions in their programmatic concept (see Appendix A for illustrative examples of play-based solutions).

- Preference will be given to proposals that align with the sub-themes listed in Appendix B. Please note that we would still encourage and consider proposals that do not explicitly focus on these sub-themes, so long as they align with the other general areas of focus described in this section.

- Innovations should be culturally sensitive and community driven, accounting for the complex social, cultural and environmental drivers contributing to children's early learning and development in at least one of the four priority countries.

- Project teams must be led by effective, results-driven leaders, capable of developing, testing and refining these initiatives and their delivery. The team must be involved in project implementation directly.

- Finally, we encourage innovations that are whole child focused (see Section 2.2), understanding that children's access to safe and supportive learning environments, both in and out of school, affects their overall development and growth outcomes.

2.5 FOCUS ON RESULTS

Play Learn Thrive seeks bold ideas that will improve the development and learning outcomes of children from birth to 12 years of age affected by crisis in the priority countries. As an impact-first investor, Grand Challenges Canada requires all funded projects to report on the activities, outcomes and impact resulting from their innovation, and that an appropriate and rigorous approach to monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) is used to measure results, evaluate outcomes, document key lessons and maximize impact.

Proposals should include a clear plan to monitor and evaluate key outcomes over the life of the project, using culturally appropriate and contextually validated tools and approaches when available. Specifically, in addition to tracking reach, attendance and engagement of children and/or their support systems, all proposals (both POC and TTS) should incorporate at least one of the following Priority Outcomes into their MEAL plans (see Appendix C for more details):

PRIORITY OUTCOME #1: CHILD DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES
This includes cognitive development, language and linguistic development, socio-emotional development, physical development and motor skills development. In alignment with a 'whole child approach', these indicators should be assessed holistically, recognizing the interdependencies between these different domains of development.

PRIORITY OUTCOME #2: CHILD EDUCATION OUTCOMES
This includes assessment of foundational learning/education competencies, with a prioritization of literacy (e.g. reading comprehension and decoding skills) and mathematics (e.g., basic numeracy and number knowledge) skills. Innovators must exercise careful consideration in selecting assessment tools and approaches that are contextually appropriate and reflect the curricula expectations of the local context.

PRIORITY OUTCOME #3: EDUCATION AND CAREGIVER WELLBEING AND CAPACITY
This can include mental health and wellbeing outcomes of caregivers and educators (or other key figures in children's support network), and metrics of knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to positive parenting, and nurturing care, and the creation of supportive learning spaces. [Innovators assessing impact against Priority Outcome #3 will also be encouraged to incorporate plans to monitor progress against either Priority Outcome #1 or #2].

While not required, it may also be relevant for innovators to monitor mental health and psychosocial outcomes of children. This includes indicators of 'positive' mental health (such as improvements in measures of mental wellbeing, capacity for coping, prosocial behaviours, connectedness and resilience) and 'negative' mental health indicators (such as decreases in anxiety, depression and psychological distress). It is important that innovators choose mental health assessment tools that are culturally appropriate and locally validated when available, recognizing that cultural norms, beliefs and expressions of mental health can vary across different contexts and populations.

In addition, a priority of the program is to support innovations that foster inclusion and accessibility. Innovators will be supported by GCC to incorporate approaches that facilitate ongoing monitoring of the innovation's inclusivity and accessibility to groups that may traditionally face barriers to access. At a minimum, both POC and TTS innovators will be required to report data on participation and access that are disaggregated by sex and (dis)ability status. Innovators should also consider in their design, how their project could promote gender equality, including in their approach to measurement, evaluation, accountability and learning.

Finally, innovators should demonstrate a commitment to sharing learning with the broader ECDiE and EiE ecosystems – including both successes and challenges. Depending on funding, we aim to bring innovators together to share lessons learned on a regular basis and will encourage innovators to develop clear plans for knowledge dissemination, translation, and learning.

3. Program Scope

3.1 AVAILABLE FUNDING

There are two (2) types of available funding opportunities:

1. **Proof of Concept (POC) (see Section 4 for detailed information)**
2. **Transition to Scale (TTS) (see Section 5 for detailed information)**

Proof of Concept grants support early-stage innovations to test novel ideas and approaches to early childhood development and learning in polycrisis settings. By the end of the funding period, projects that receive seed funding are expected to demonstrate measurable evidence (proof of concept), in a controlled or limited setting, that the proposed solution is effective or more effective than traditional approaches and that the innovation has the potential to progress towards scale.

Transition to Scale grants support tested innovations along their scaling journey. The goal of transition to scale funding is to support innovators to build out the evidence or attract additional capital and partnerships from local governments, multilateral institutions and/or private investors.

Awards

Through this Request for Proposals, successful applications will be awarded:

- Proof of Concept grants of up to CAD $250,000 CAD per project over a maximum of 24 months OR
- Early-stage Transition to Scale grants between $300,000-$1,500,000 CAD per project over a maximum of 24 months. Should your proposal be selected for funding, the awarded grant amount will be determined depending on the stage of the innovation.

We expect to award approximately nine (9) Proof of Concept and seven (7) Transition to Scale innovations in this funding call.

Through this Request for Proposals, we will only fund projects that will be implemented in at least one of four (4) priority countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Uganda, Kenya.

To be eligible for funding, applying organisations must:

1. Be not-for-profit organizations that are legally incorporated
2. Have an active presence in at least one priority country (Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda)
3. Be legally registered to do business in at least one of the four priority countries
4. Implement programming directly, in at least one of the four priority countries

3.2 WHAT WE WON'T FUND

In this funding call, GCC will NOT fund the following:

- Innovations that will not be implemented in at least one of the four priority countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda)
- For profit-entities
- Government institutions[39]
- Individuals
- Not-for-profit organizations that are not legally incorporated entities
- Not-for-profit organizations without active presence in at least one of the four priority countries
- Not-for-profit organizations that are not legally registered to do business in at least one of the four priority countries
- Not-for-profit organizations that are not implementing programming directly
- Proposals that do not align with the Areas of Focus listed in Section 2.4
- Proposals that involve POC and TTS innovations for which the core intellectual property rights are owned by a third-party institution, unless that third party:

    a) grants the applicant sufficient license rights to the innovation to permit eventual scaling in low and middle-income countries; and

    b) signs an undertaking to comply with Grand Challenges Canada's Sharing and Access for Impact Strategy.

*Public sector scaling paths are suitable for projects that are likely to compel host country government ministries and departments, multilateral donors or other public sector players to scale them. These should be aligned to, and have the ability to be incorporated into, the country's sub- national or national health plan or strategy.

3.3 DEFINING INNOVATION

We define innovation as bold ideas with the potential to fundamentally transform how life-saving and life-improving solutions reach and help the most vulnerable people affected by crisis. Innovation means approaching a problem in a substantially new and different way to existing efforts.

Our definition of innovation includes trying existing ideas in new contexts. Something that works in a stable context that has never been tried in a crisis or emergency setting could be considered for funding. In these cases, the solution must exhibit a demonstrable understanding of polycrisis settings and have the potential to address a specific, existing barrier that is limiting early child development and/or education, while maintaining humanitarian principles.

We encourage proposals for innovation in all forms: technologies, products, services, processes, business models, policy approaches and/or delivery mechanisms. Projects are encouraged to employ an Integrated Innovation® approach, which refers to the coordinated application of scientific/technological, social, and business innovation to develop solutions to complex challenges. This approach does not discount the singular benefits of each of these types of innovation alone but rather highlights the powerful synergies that can be realized by aligning all three.

Given that many of the barriers to ECDiE and EiE stem from a complex network of social, cultural, political, and economic factors, any comprehensive solution must similarly transcend these overlapping yet distinct spheres of influence.

For more information on Integrated Innovation®, please see: www.grandchallenges.ca/integrated- innovation

3.4 SCALE AND SUSTAINABILITY

For the new Play Learn Thrive portfolio, sustainability refers to the ability for successful innovations to be readily deployed in ongoing and future contexts, and scale refers to the ability for successful innovations to reach the highest number of people who will benefit as possible. We expect that the most successful innovations we fund will eventually be scaled up through public sector partnerships, and that scaling will be carried out with the goal of achieving meaningful impact for unserved and underserved populations in low- and middle-income countries.

Proposals should convincingly describe how their projects will progress towards scale and sustainability through public pathway(s), considering the following factors:

- the state of local infrastructure;
- social, political, and economic forces;
- the capacity of the institution and its leadership;
- potential strategic and implementation partners;
- available funding;
- and other potential barriers to scale.

Understanding the local context

To help ensure both impact at scale and sustainability, project teams need member(s) who understand that the needs of children in polycrisis settings are highly contextual. Local infrastructure and the social, political, and economic context, such as local cultures, traditions and societal beliefs must be fully understood to design and implement projects that are effective in a given country.

This should include an understanding of:
- how the innovation relates to local priorities (e.g., national/regional plans); and
- why the innovation would be preferred over alternatives.

Several factors can influence the quality and dynamics of the relationships that children experience and should be considered in project applications, including:

Power Dynamics: Project teams should understand the local power dynamics that children experience. Teams with deep contextual knowledge about child-adult power imbalances, particularly within the family, community, schools, and places of employment, will be well positioned to integrate these aspects into innovations and ecosystem-level engagement.

Gender Inequality: Gender inequality and context-specific gender norms have a significant impact on children's development and are often heightened in crisis and emergency settings. Demonstrating contextual knowledge of these dynamics will help the project teams ensure that their innovation(s) have a meaningful impact on young people's development and overall wellbeing.

Approach to Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities: Project teams should have sensitivity towards structural and user-related adaptations and accommodations required to improve accessibility and engagement for individuals with disabilities in crisis and emergency settings.

Stakeholder engagement

Children in polycrisis settings and those who will ultimately make decisions about the use and sustainability of the innovation are expected to be engaged at the outset and throughout the life of the project.

Early childhood development and education are influenced by multiple factors including:
- The family and dwelling
- Peers
- Local communities
- Socio-cultural norms
- Educational professionals
- Programs and settings
- Health and social programs and services and/or
- Regional, national and global environments.

Stakeholders should be engaged from the beginning (project design) to the end (results dissemination). Based on this, successful innovations will be guided and supported by:
- Families, peers
- Communities and community leaders
- Businesses
- Healthcare providers and institutions
- Teachers
- Policy makers
- Governments and/or
- International agencies

Team leadership

To achieve impact at scale, multidisciplinary and cross-sector project teams are strongly encouraged. Bold innovations need to be championed by effective, results-driven leaders with the capacity to convene and engage with key influencers. We encourage project teams to have experience in or engage relevant expertise in:
- ECDiE and/or EiE;
- Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL);
- Business and/or public sector engagement;
- Working in the implementation countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Uganda, Kenya)
- Lived experience in crisis and emergency settings.

Project proposals should indicate how their solution will be informed by, co-designed with and implemented either by or in partnership with affected communities and/or local responders. Our order of preference in terms of innovators' local connections to affected communities are as follows:

- **Affected community owned:** an organization whose leadership and governance teams are comprised mostly of individuals who identify as being part of the affected community they are reaching or are based in or around the affected region.
- **Affected community led:** an organization with at least one person in a senior management position who identifies as being from the affected community they are seeking to reaching. This may also include individuals who are part of the diaspora.
- **Affected community partnership:** organization has an active and local presence in the affected community, although no one from the leadership or governance team identifies as being from the affected community; instead, there is an active and equitable partnership with local community organization(s) in the affected area.

3.5 GENDER EQUALITY, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH

Grand Challenges Canada is committed to furthering the principles of environmental sustainability, gender equality and human rights and inclusion, as follows:

Environmental Sustainability: Grand Challenges Canada requires that applicants commit to ensuring that the innovation will not have significant adverse environmental effects including, but not limited to, long-term and cumulative effects. Applicants shall ensure that the management of environmental effects, including any analysis, is carried out in accordance with the environmental processes and requirements of Grand Challenges Canada. Where possible, applicants should incorporate having positive environmental effects throughout the project.

Gender Equality: Grand Challenges Canada is committed to furthering principles of gender equality in the innovations it funds and across the organization. Specifically, Grand Challenges Canada is supportive of the following objectives:

1. Advancing women, girls, boys, men, and people with diverse sexual and gender identities' equal participation as decision-makers in shaping the sustainable development of their societies;
2. Promoting the realization of the human rights of all genders; and
3. Reducing gender inequalities in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development. We believe that supporting gender equality is an important objective in and of itself, and that by using a gender lens in the sourcing and management of innovations, sustained impact will be bolstered.

Human Rights Based Approach: Grand Challenges Canada is committed to furthering a human rights- based approach. This includes the recognition that inequality and marginalization deny people their human rights, including the principles of participation, inclusion, equity, transparency, and accountability in an applicant's project.

For more information, see Grand Challenges Canada's Policy on Gender Equality, Environmental Sustainability, and Human Rights and Inclusion. Additional guidance about gender equality can be found in Grand Challenges Canada's Gender Equality Portal, and under Innovator Resources, particularly the Gender Analysis Brief.

3.6 PARTNERSHIP & CO-FUNDING

This RFP under our new Play Learn Thrive portfolio is funded by the LEGO Foundation, a Danish corporate foundation that works in countries globally to ensure children can thrive and develop holistic skills by learning through play (LtP). As a leader in education and early childhood development, the LEGO Foundation is committed to raising the quality of education, reducing inequality and exclusion, and helping children learn through play and grow up to thrive, building a future where learning through play empowers children to become creative, engaged lifelong learners.

The LEGO Foundation's vision for its work in crisis settings is for children (from birth to 12+ years of age) to thrive by experiencing the benefits of learning through play through context-driven approaches, while also laying the foundation for them to become creative, engaged, lifelong learners. Programming has a strong focus on children's thriving outcomes and holistic learning outcomes.

This includes ensuring children's learning and nurturing care from birth is prioritized and funded in humanitarian settings; supporting positive, sensitive, and responsive relationships with their caregivers and other adults; enhancing children's mental health, social-emotional skills, and overall well-being through play-based interventions; supporting the inclusion of refugees into national systems; testing innovations to improve access to quality educational opportunities; and scaling high-quality play-based teacher professional development.

3.7 INNOVATOR RESOURCES

Innovator Toolbox and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Applicants are encouraged to access Grand Challenge Canada's online Innovator Toolbox, which contains materials to help researchers and innovators develop their project proposals and plan how their innovation can be sustainably scaled and have global impact. Our Gender Equality Portal provides a set of gender equality tools. Please reference our "Frequently Asked Questions" document. Other questions about this Request for Proposals that are not addressed in the above FAQ may be submitted by email to playlearnthrive@grandchallenges.ca by April 15th, 2025.

4. Proof of Concept

We are offering Proof of Concept (POC) funding of up to $250,000 CAD for a maximum of 24 months. POC funding supports early-stage innovations to test and refine bold ideas. Our goal is to strengthen the pipeline of tested ECDiE and EiE innovations that focus on children from birth to 12 years of age in at least one of four countries (Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon, and Jordan).

4.1 POC GENERAL SCOPE

We are offering Proof of Concept (POC) funding of up to $250,000 CAD for a maximum of 24 months. POC funding supports early-stage innovations to test and refine bold ideas. Our goal is to strengthen the pipeline of tested ECDiE and EiE innovations that focus on children from birth to 12 years of age in at least one of four countries (Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon, and Jordan).

4.2 PROOF OF CONCEPT

- We seek Proof of Concept innovations that focus on:

  - Strengthening children's (from birth to 12 years of age) education and/or development, with a focus on those who are left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met; OR
  - Strengthening the capacity and/or wellbeing of the support networks around children, including but not limited to their educators, caregivers, community care providers, etc. OR
  - Supporting children AND their support networks. While we would encourage and consider proposals that only focus on one of the first two options, preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate a dual focus on children and key figures in their support networks.

- Integrate play-based solutions in their programmatic concept (please see Appendix A for illustrative examples of play-based solutions).

- Preference will be given to proposals that align with the sub-themes listed in Appendix B. Please note that we would still encourage and consider proposals that do not explicitly focus on these sub-themes, so long as they align with the other general areas of focus described in this section.

- Are culturally sensitive and community-driven, accounting for the complex social, cultural and environmental drivers contributing to children's early learning and development in at least one of the four priority countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda).

- Have project teams that are led by effective, results-driven leaders, capable of developing, testing and refining these initiatives and their delivery. The team must be involved in project implementation directly.

- That are whole child focused (see Section 2.2), understanding that children's access to safe and supportive learning environments, both in and out of school, affects their overall development and growth outcomes.

4.3 PROOF OF CONCEPT PRIORITY OUTCOMES

At the POC stage, innovators are not expected to have a previously established evidence base for their innovation but should provide a clear plan to monitor and evaluate outcomes related to children's development and early learning and/or their support networks. Successful applications will include at least one relevant priority outcome that the innovation will set out to achieve, with clearly defined targets and plans to measure and evaluate progress. See Section 2.5 and Appendix C for guidance on priority outcome definitions, measurement tools, as well as other key monitoring and evaluation requirements. POC innovators are also expected to report against any additional outcome and output indicators that are relevant to demonstrating success of their innovation.

4.4 ESTABLISHING PROOF OF CONCEPT

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) plans are critical for measuring the success of an innovation. All proposals should provide an overview of MEAL activities that will take place during the project period, including:

- How Proof of Concept is defined and will be assessed;
- Plans to monitor and evaluate the effects of the innovation on the targeted priority outcome(s);
- A strategy to identify shortcomings, challenges, and unexpected results.

Data collection plans should track the innovation's use, access and impact, as well as provide a brief overview of how the team will measure outcomes and evaluate results over the project's lifecycle. Specifically, applications must include short, medium and long-term indicators, and a description of how these will be monitored and evaluated over the life of the project. For innovations that are not able to demonstrate proof-of-concept, it is expected that innovators will be able to articulate why their innovation did not work in order to capture learnings and accelerate progress in the sector.

Projects are expected to demonstrate measurable change and may align with selected priority outcomes described in Section 2.5 and Appendix C, as well as other outcomes and outputs that are relevant to the innovation.

How we define success:

- ·Evidence with appropriate methodology (ideally from a controlled or limited setting) that the innovation improves one or more of the priority outcomes (see Section 2.5) amongst the most unserved and underserved children from birth to 12 years old and the support networks around them. The methodology should be designed so that outcomes can be attributed to the innovation.

- Feasible plans for how the innovation can be sustained in the target region and/or scaled across a larger region, and/or

- Evidence of demand for key stakeholders for ongoing implementation and scale.

Project teams will have the opportunity to access monitoring and evaluation technical support from the innovator support platform, as well as peer-to-peer learning with other funded projects in the ecosystem.

Communicating results is an important part of the project's accountability to the affected community, Grand Challenges Canada and other key stakeholders. Proposals should include a brief overview of how the project team plans to engage the community and relevant stakeholders to disseminate results, the different audiences they intend to reach, and how this dissemination will contribute to the project's impact, scale and sustainability. While communicating results through scientific publications is encouraged, this should not be the primary objective of any funded project without a well-articulated justification that publication is a critical path to impact and sustainability.

4.5 POC APPLICATION PROCESS & TIMELINE

POC applications will be accepted over a three-month period between January 21, 2025 and April 24, 2025.

The final application deadline is on April 24th, 2025, at 2 pm ET.

Language: While this Request for Proposals is translated in Arabic and French, only applications that are submitted in English will be reviewed. Applications in any other language will be rejected without review. Note that quality of the English language proposal will not play a factor in the evaluation of the proposal unless it significantly affects the clarity of the information.

Timeline: POC funding could take up to nine months to move through the application process from submission of the application to the start of the project.

Applications will be reviewed approximately 1-2 months after the application intake deadline and unsuccessful applicants will be notified within this timeframe.

Applications will involve a two-stage review process: screening (stage one) and external peer review (stage two). Only those applications that pass the screening stage will be invited to undergo external peer review.

Proposals that pass through the two-stage review process will be presented to the relevant body of Grand Challenges Canada for a final funding decision. Below is an overview of the review process.

STAGE ONE: SCREENING

Proof of Concept Eligibility Screen

Grand Challenges Canada will screen all funding applications on the basis of the eligibility criteria outlined below. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be removed from the review process. The eligibility criteria are listed below:

1. Eligible applicants include not-for-profit organizations that:
   - are formed and legally incorporated entities[40]
   - are legally registered to do business in at least one of the four priority countries (Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon, and Jordan)
   - have an active presence in at least one of the four priority countries
   - will be implementing the program directly in at least one of the four priority countries
   - can successfully perform activities in their technical area
   - can receive and administer funding

The following applicants are ineligible:
   - Individuals
   - For-profit entities
   - Sole proprietorships
   - Unincorporated trusts and partnerships
   - Government institutions[41]
   - United Nations country offices

*Social entrepreneurs that are interested in applying should ensure they have the legal capacity to enter into a contract with Grand Challenges Canada.

2. Projects must be implemented in at least one of the four (4) priority countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Uganda, or Kenya).

3. Your innovation must align with:
   - Section 4.1 POC General Scope
   - Section 4.2 POC General Areas of Focus
*Section 3.2 outlines what GCC will not fund.

4. The Project Lead(s) for each project must be affiliated with the applying organization. The Project Lead(s) will be the point of contact for Grand Challenges Canada.

5. A Project Lead can only be listed on one (1) application. Single institutions can submit multiple applications, but each needs a different Project Lead.

6. The Review Committee will only consider applications that include all required information and answers to all questions.

7. Applicants must obtain any legal and/or regulatory approvals, consents or reviews required to accept foreign grant funds and/or conduct the project activities, before concluding a funding agreement. Applicants are responsible for understanding and complying with these regulations and laws before receiving funding from Grand Challenges Canada.

8. Grand Challenges Canada may, at any time and at our sole discretion, change the eligibility criteria for applicants, Project Leads and/or eligible countries, as long as it does not substantially undermine the review process.

Please note:
   - Grand Challenges Canada must approve any change in Project Lead, applicant organization or country of implementation from the originally submitted application.
   - While it is not required, we do encourage applicants from outside of the priority countries of implementation to collaborate meaningfully with innovators from the priority countries of implementation.
   - Project Leads must get their affiliated institution's sign-off before submitting any application.

Proof of Concept Innovation Screen

Applications that are deemed eligible will move forward to the Innovation Screen. During this stage, the application will be scored against the criteria below, using responses to the questions in the "Project Summary" section of the application form.

Note: The innovation screen will not evaluate the feasibility or quality of the project plan. This will be evaluated at a later stage in the process. Proposals that lack innovation and relevance will be removed from the competition at this stage.

INNOVATION SCREEN CRITERIA:

1. INNOVATION
- Is the proposed innovation clearly articulated?
- Does the innovation represent more than an incremental improvement over current approaches and/or an innovative approach to the implementation or delivery of a known intervention?

2. RELEVANCE
- Is the proposed solution either aimed at:
  - Strengthening children's (from birth to 12 years of age) education and/or development in polycrisis settings, with a focus on those who are left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met; OR
  - Strengthening the capacity and/or wellbeing of the support networks around children in polycrisis settings, including though not limited to educators, caregivers, community care providers, etc; OR
  - Supporting children AND their support networks in polycrisis settings. While we would encourage and consider proposals that only focus on one of the first two options, preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate a dual focus on children and key figures in their support networks.

- Does the proposed solution incorporate play-based components, as captured in Section 2.2 and Appendix A?
- Does the proposed solution align with at least one of the sub-themes listed in Appendix B? Please note that we would still encourage and consider proposals that do not explicitly focus on these subthemes, so long as they align with the general areas of focus described above.
- Does the proposed innovation have the potential to meaningfully improve at least one priority outcome described in Section 2.5?
- Is the project team from/connected to the local community they seek to serve? Specifically, is the solution:

- **Community owned:** organization whose leadership and governance teams are comprised mostly of individuals who identify as being part of the affected community they are reaching and who are based in or around the affected region; OR
- **Community led:** at least one person in a senior management position identifies as being from the affected community they are seeking to reach. This may also include individuals that are part of the diaspora; OR
- **Community partnership:** organization has an active and local presence in the affected community, although no one from the leadership or governance team identifies as being from the affected community; instead, there is an active and equitable partnership with local community organization(s) in the affected area.

*Of note – while proposals that fall under any three of these categories will be eligible under this RFP, our order of preference in terms of innovators' local connections to affected communities are as follows: affected community owned > affected community led > affected community partnership.

STAGE TWO: EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW

Applications that pass the Eligibility and Innovation Screens will move forward to the External Peer Review stage. An independent expert peer review committee of innovators and global experts will advise on the merit of full applications and evaluate each one against the criteria below.

Based on the results of the Review Committee, GCC management will make a funding recommendation taking into account its reserved rights set out in Section 8.5 Rights of Grand Challenges Canada. Only projects rated as fundable by the Review Committee, and those that meet the LEGO Foundation's funding criteria, may be recommended for funding. Based on the results of the Review Committee, refinements to the proposed project plan, structure, amount, type of funding and oversight may be required during the negotiation of a funding agreement.

Evaluation Criteria

Boldness, Creativity, and Integrated Innovation
- Does the proposed solution have the potential to transform early child development and educational outcomes for children from birth to 12 years of age in polycrisis settings?
- How bold, novel and/or how much of an improvement is the innovation over current approaches? Innovative approaches to implement or deliver known interventions are welcome.
- Does the proposed solution apply to the most vulnerable and/or hard to reach children in crisis and emergency settings?
- Does the proposed innovation align with the general areas of focus (listed in Section 2.4)?
- How well does the proposed innovation incorporate play-based components in its program?
- How well does the proposed idea integrate scientific/technological, social and business innovation (see Section 3.3)?

Project Execution Plan
- Is the project technically sound and feasible within the funding amount and timeline?
- How well does the proposal ensure adherence to standard international best practice in early child development and education and Do No Harm approaches?
- Is there a rigorous assessment of project risks, corruption risks, risks of diverting aid, safety and security risks, and associated mitigation strategies? (This should include privacy and data privacy of affected people, where relevant, and consider staff, affected people, the wider community and any other stakeholders.)

Impact
- Could the innovation significantly impact one or more priority outcomes, in alignment with those listed in Section 2.5 and Appendix C?
- Is the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) plan sufficiently robust and designed to demonstrate the proof of concept of the idea within the time and resources provided? Does it identify a clear plan to assess outcomes that would demonstrate proof of concept of the idea by the end of the project period?

Leadership Capability to Champion Change
- To what extent is the Project Lead and/or team from/connected to the local community they seek to serve?
- Are the proposed Project Lead and/or key team members appropriately trained, experienced and positioned to carry out the proposed early child development/education work in polycrisis settings?
- Have the Project Lead and/or key team members demonstrated the ability to understand and meet the needs of affected people in the context?
- To what extent has the Project Lead and/or key members demonstrated the ability to engage with relevant stakeholders? (e.g., community members, humanitarian actors, local authorities)

Value for Effort
- Is the scope of the proposed work, the Project team's capacity, and the funds requested reasonable and commensurate with the proposed proposal goals?
- Does the proposal represent a particularly thoughtful and efficient use of resources?

Environmental Sustainability, Gender Equality, and Human Rights and Inclusion
- How well does the proposal take into account gender equality, environmental sustainability, and human rights and inclusion?

4.6 INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PORTAL, FLUXX

To apply for funding, applicants must use the online application, which is only accessible via the Grand Challenges Canada's Fluxx Portal <https://gcc.fluxx.io>.

See Appendix D for a detailed description of how to access Fluxx.

5. Transition to Scale (TTS)

We are offering Transition to Scale (TTS) funding of between $300,000-$1,500,000 CAD over a maximum of 24 months. TTS funding supports promising early-stage innovations that have achieved proof-of-concept or demonstrated initial positive results and have significant potential to achieve sustainable impact at scale or as they reach more people. Our goal is to support innovators to scale their ECDiE and EiE innovations that focus on children from birth to 12 years of age in at least one of four countries (Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon, and Jordan).

5.1 TTS GENERAL SCOPE

At Transition to Scale (TTS), we will support promising early-stage innovations that have achieved proof-of-concept or demonstrated initial positive results of the innovation and have significant potential to achieve sustainable impact at scale or as it reaches more people. Our goal is to support innovators to scale their projects, with funding offered between $300,000-$1,500,000 CAD over a maximum of 24 months.

Should your proposal be selected for funding, the awarded grant amount will be determined depending on the stage of the innovation.

There are different possible objectives or purposes for TTS funding based on the stage of development of the innovation, such as:

- Generate additional evidence of impact needed for scale-up, and/or address gaps in existing evidence (e.g. through validation studies);
- Advance planning for scale and sustainability (develop or validate a viable plan, business model, etc.);
- Build organizational capacity and strengthen partnerships needed to scale

Innovators must identify the purpose(s) of their TTS project and the amount of funding requested in their application.

Grant Instruments

Grand Challenges Canada aims to provide grant funding that is patient, allowing innovators the room to fail fast and repeat along a non-linear path to scale, while also encouraging accountability through having project objectives (milestones) during the funding period, with funding provided in stages upon meeting the milestones. Grand Challenges Canada reserves the right to negotiate funding agreements and to make limitations on the time, scope and amount of funding provided, at its own discretion.

Strategic Partnerships & Match Funding

Grand Challenges Canada assumes that to scale sustainably beyond our funding, innovators need support from strategic partners that provide money and critical 'more than-money' access to resources, networks, markets, and expertise.

All innovators are encouraged to secure co-funding in addition to Grand Challenges Canada's grant. Other funding from GCC or in-kind donations without a clear cash equivalent do not qualify as matching funds.

For early-stage Transition to Scale grants, match requirements may be waived on a case-by- case basis. For later stage grants, innovators are encouraged to secure 1:1 match funds (minimum of 1:1 cash-based match to Grand Challenges Canada funds) through strategic funders and partners. At its option, Grand Challenges Canada may require more than 1:1 match funds based on the stage of the innovation.

Though it is preferred, innovators may not be required to secure a commitment of match funds at the application stage.

5.2 TTS GENERAL AREAS OF FOCUS

We seek TTS innovations that focus on:

- Strengthening children's (from birth to 12 years of age) education and/or development, with a focus on those who are left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met; OR

- Strengthening the capacity and/or wellbeing of the support networks around children, including though not limited to their educators, caregivers, community care providers, etc. OR

- Supporting children AND their support networks. While we would encourage and consider proposals that only focus on one of the first two options, preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate a dual focus on children and key figures in their support networks.

- Integrate play-based solutions in their programmatic concept (please see Appendix A for illustrative examples of play-based solutions).
- Preference will be given to proposals that align with the sub-themes listed in Appendix B. Please note that we would still encourage and consider proposals that do not explicitly focus on these sub-themes, so long as they align with the other general areas of focus described in this section.
- Are culturally sensitive and community driven, accounting for the complex social, cultural and environmental drivers contributing to children's early learning and development in at least one of the four priority countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda).
- Have project teams that are led by effective, results-driven leaders, capable of developing, testing and refining these initiatives and their delivery. The team must be involved in project implementation directly.
- That are whole child focused (see Section 2.2), understanding that children's access to safe and supportive learning environments, both in and out of school, affects their overall development and growth outcomes.

5.3 TTS PRIORITY OUTCOMES

TTS project plans should include priority outcomes and tools that are relevant to demonstrating success of the proposed innovation. See Section 2.5 ('Focus on Results') and Appendix C for guidance on priority outcome definitions, measurement tools, as well as other key monitoring and evaluation requirements. TTS innovators are also expected to report against any additional outcome and output indicators that are relevant to demonstrating the success of their innovation.

5.4 TTS MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY & LEARNING

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) plans are critical for measuring the success of an innovation. All funding proposals need a monitoring and evaluation plan and approach to ensure they are able to:
- Measure the effects and demonstrate evidence of effectiveness of the innovation on improving the early development and learning outcomes of children, and/or the wellbeing and capacity of the support networks around children;
- Monitor outcomes that ensure the positive benefits are maintained as the innovation scales and is more widely adopted;
- Monitor and report on progress towards achieving the intended outcomes;
- Leverage data and feedback to inform and facilitate ongoing adaptation, iteration and refinement of their innovation, to maximize their long-term impact;
- Identify shortcomings, limitations, and other lessons learned.

For TTS, data collection plans should track the innovation's use, access and impact, as well as provide a brief overview of how the team will measure outcomes and evaluate results over the project's lifecycle. In addition to reporting on selected priority outcome(s) (see Section 2.5 and Appendix C for a description of priority outcomes), proposals must include short, medium and long-term indicators, and a description of how these will be monitored and evaluated over the life of the project.

How we define success:

- Evidence with appropriate methodology (ideally from a controlled or limited setting) that the innovation improves one or more of the priority outcomes (see Section 2.5) amongst the most unserved and underserved children from birth to 12 years old and the support networks around them. The methodology should be designed so that outcomes can be attributed to the innovation.
- Evidence the innovation can be feasibly implemented, sustained, and financially supported at scale in the target setting(s) or region(s), and/or
- Demonstrated interest, financing, and/or commitments from key stakeholders, influencers and partners for scaling up and sustaining the innovation.

Projects will have the opportunity to access monitoring and evaluation technical support from the innovator support platform, as well as peer-to-peer learning with other funded projects in the ecosystem.

Communicating results is an important part of the project's accountability to the affected community, Grand Challenges Canada and other key stakeholders. Proposals should include a brief overview of how the project team plans to engage the affected community and relevant stakeholders to disseminate results, the different audiences they intend to reach, and how this dissemination will contribute to the project's impact, scale and sustainability. While communicating results through scientific publications is encouraged, this should not be the primary objective of any funded project without a well-articulated justification that this is a critical path to impact and sustainability.

Those invited to submit a full application (stage two) will undergo an external peer review process, followed by extensive due diligence on potential for impact, operations, finances, technical parameters, intellectual property, partnerships, gender equality, environment sustainability, and human rights and inclusion.

Final funding decisions are made by Grand Challenges Canada's management, Investment Committee and/or Board of Directors depending on the level of TTS funding, taking into account the reserved rights set out in Section 8.5 Rights of Grand Challenges Canada. Recommendations for funding to the Board of Directors are made by the Investment Committee after review of staff recommendations (based on review of the application documents provided by the innovator and further due diligence) and other available information, such as brief interviews with the innovator.

TTS FUNDING APPLICATIONS WILL TAKE APPROXIMATELY 9-12 MONTHS TO MOVE THROUGH THE APPLICATION PROCESS FROM STAGE TWO APPLICATION SUBMISSION TO PROJECT START.

5.5 TTS APPLICATION PROCESS & TIMELINE

Language: While this Request for Proposals is translated in Arabic and French, only applications that are submitted in English will be reviewed. Applications in any other language will be rejected without review. Note that quality of the English language proposal will not play a factor in the evaluation of the proposal unless it significantly affects the clarity of the information.

Timeline: Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis between January 21st, 2025, and November 27th, 2025, and will involve a two-stage process: completing a screening questionnaire and project summary (stage one) and then submitting a full project application (stage two).

TTS Application intake deadlines

Application Submission Deadline #1: April 24th, 2025, at 2 pm ET

*Please refer to the FAQ for the additional application submission deadlines throughout 2025.
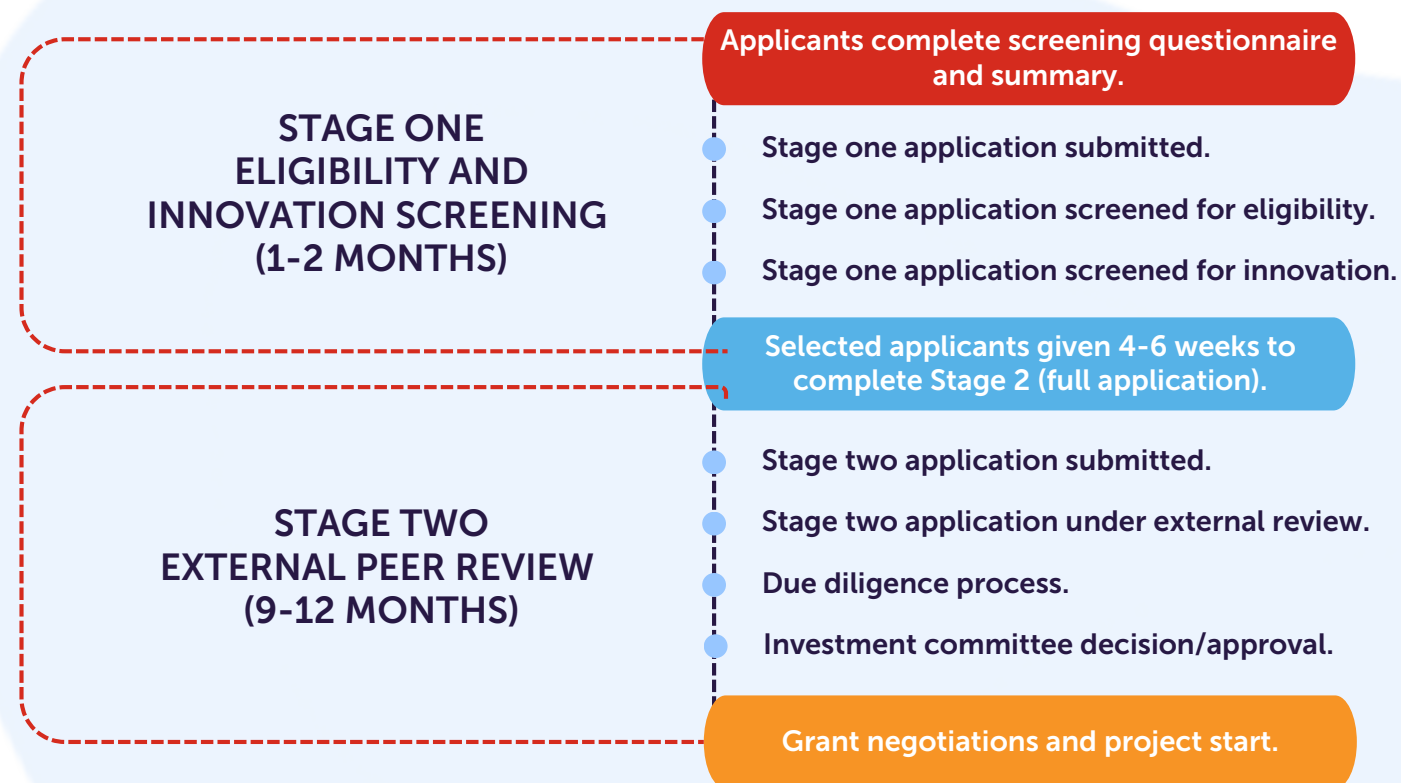
Review Process

Only those applications that pass stage one will be invited to submit a full application (stage two). Stage one applications will be reviewed approximately 1 - 2 months after the application intake deadline and unsuccessful applicants will be notified within this timeframe.

Successful applicants that are invited to submit a full application will be given approximately 4 - 6 weeks to complete their stage two application before undergoing external peer review.

STAGE ONE ELIGIBILITY AND INNOVATION SCREENING (1-2 MONTHS)

Applicants complete screening questionnaire and summary.
- Stage one application submitted.
- Stage one application screened for eligibility.
- Stage one application screened for innovation.

Selected applicants given 4-6 weeks to complete Stage 2 (full application).

STAGE TWO EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW (9-12 MONTHS)
- Stage two application submitted.
- Stage two application under external review.
- Due diligence process.
- Investment committee decision/approval.

Grant negotiations and project start.

STAGE ONE: SCREENING

TTS Eligibility Screen

Grand Challenges Canada will screen all funding applications based on the eligibility criteria outlined below. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be removed from the review process. The eligibility criteria are listed below:

1.Eligible applicants include not-for-profit organizations that:
- Are formed and legally incorporated entities[42]
- Are legally registered to do business in at least one of the four priority countries (Kenya, Uganda, Lebanon, and Jordan)
- Have an active presence in at least one of the four priority countries
- Will be implementing the program directly in at least one of the four priority countries
- Can successfully perform activities in their technical area
- Can receive and administer funding

The following are ineligible:
- Individuals
- Sole proprietorships
- For-profit entities
- Unincorporated trusts and partnerships
- Government institutions[43]
- United Nations country offices

*Social entrepreneurs that are interested in applying should ensure they have the legal capacity to enter into a contract with Grand Challenges Canada.

2. Projects must be implemented in at least one of the four (4) priority countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Uganda, or Kenya).

3. Your innovation must align with:
- Section 5.1 TTS General Scope
- Section 5.2 TTS General Areas of Focus
*Section 3.2 outlines what GCC will not fund.

4. The Project Lead(s) for each project must be affiliated with the applying organization. The Project Lead(s) will be the point of contact for Grand Challenges Canada.

5. A Project Lead can only be listed on one (1) application. Single institutions can submit multiple applications, but each needs a different Project Lead

6. The Review Committee will only consider applications that include all required information and answers to all questions.

7. Applicants must obtain any legal and/or regulatory approvals, consents or reviews required to accept foreign grant funds and/or conduct the project activities, before concluding a funding agreement. Applicants are responsible for understanding and complying with these regulations and laws before receiving funding from Grand Challenges Canada.

8. Grand Challenges Canada may, at any time and at our sole discretion, change the eligibility criteria for applicants, Project Leads and/or eligible countries, as long as it does not substantially undermine the review process.

Please Note:
- Grand Challenges Canada must approve any change in Project Lead, applicant organization or country of implementation from the originally submitted application.
- While it is not required, we do encourage applicants from outside of the priority countries of implementation to collaborate meaningfully with innovators from the priority countries of implementation.
- Project Leads must get their affiliated institution's sign-off before submitting any application.

TTS Innovation Screen

Applications that are deemed eligible will move forward to the Innovation Screen. During this stage, the application will be scored against the criteria below, using responses to the questions in the "Project Summary" section of the application form.

Note: The innovation screen will not evaluate the feasibility or quality of the project plan. This will be evaluated at a later stage in the process. Proposals that lack innovation and relevance will be removed from the competition at this stage.

INNOVATION SCREEN CRITERIA:

1. INNOVATION
- Is the proposed innovation clearly articulated?
- Does the innovation represent more than an incremental improvement over current approaches and/or an innovative approach to the implementation or delivery of a known intervention?
- Is there evidence that demonstrates that the innovation is ready to transition to scale?

2. RELEVANCE
- Is the proposed solution either aimed at:
  - Strengthening children's (from birth to 12 years of age) education and/or development in polycrisis settings, with a focus on those who are left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met; OR
  - Strengthening the capacity and/or wellbeing of the support networks around children in polycrisis settings, including though not limited to educators, caregivers, community care providers, etc; OR
  - Supporting children AND their support networks in polycrisis settings. While we would encourage and consider proposals that only focus on one of the first two options, preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate a dual focus on children and key figures in their support networks.
- Does the proposed solution incorporate play-based components, as captured in Section 2.2 and Appendix A?
- Does the proposed solution align with at least one of the sub-themes listed in Appendix B? Please note that we would still encourage and consider proposals that do not explicitly focus on these subthemes, so long as they align with the general areas of focus described above.
- Is proof of concept evidence provided that demonstrates meaningful improvements in priority outcomes described in Section 2.5, including in the early development and/or learning outcomes of children and/or the capacity and wellbeing outcomes of the support networks around them?
- Is the project team from/connected to the local community they seek to serve? Specifically, is the solution:
  - Community owned: organization whose leadership and governance teams are comprised mostly of individuals who identify as being part of the affected community they are reaching and who are based in or around the affected region; OR
  - Community led: at least one person in a senior management position identifies as being from the affected community they are seeking to reach. This may also include individuals that are part of the diaspora; OR
  - Community partnership: organization has an active and local presence in the affected community, although no one from the leadership or governance team identifies as being from the affected community; instead, there is an active and equitable partnership with local community organization(s) in the affected area.

  *Of note: While proposals that fall under any three of these categories will be eligible under this RFP, our order of preference in terms of innovators' local connections to affected communities are as follows: affected community owned > affected community led > affected community partnership.
- Has a realistic and sustainable path to achieve scale been defined? Or have components of a plan been defined?

STAGE TWO: EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW

TTS Full Application

Applicants who pass the stage one screening will be invited to submit a full application, which will be evaluated through an external peer-review process overseen by Grand Challenges Canada and conducted by independent subject matter experts based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria

Boldness, Creativity and Integrated Innovation
- Does the proposed solution have the potential to transform early child development and educational outcomes for children from birth to 12 years of age in polycrisis settings?
- How bold, novel and/or how much of an improvement is the innovation over current approaches? Innovative approaches to implement or deliver known interventions are welcome.
- Does the proposed solution apply to the most unserved and underserved children in crisis and emergency settings?
- Does the proposed innovation align with the general areas of focus to be considered for funding (listed in section 5.2)?
- How well does the proposed innovation incorporate play-based components in its program?
- How well does the proposed idea integrate scientific/technological, social and business innovation? (see section 3.3)
- To what extent does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the overarching ECDiE or EiE landscape and where innovation is situated within it?

Project Execution Plan
- Is the project technically sound and feasible within the funding amount and timeline?
- Is there a rigorous assessment of project risks, corruption risks, risks of diverting aid, safety and security risks, and associated mitigation strategies? (This should include privacy and data privacy of affected people, where relevant, and consider staff, affected people, the wider community and any other stakeholders.)

Impact
- Proof of Concept: Has the innovator presented enough convincing evidence to support the impact of their idea on selected priority outcome(s) (See Section 2.5 'Focus on Results' and Appendix C for more details) and the meaningful reduction of significant barriers to early development and education in a controlled or limited setting?
- Potential for impact: Is the innovation designed to substantially improve the development and education outcomes of unserved and underserved children from birth to 12 years of age? And if the innovation reaches these children, will it have a significant or transformational impact on their lives?
- Monitoring and evaluation: Does the innovator describe a clear learning agenda and robust MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning) plan for the innovation? Is their MEAL plan strong enough to draw the appropriate conclusions by the end of the funding period?

Scale and Sustainability
- Is the proposed solution appropriate for wider implementation and scaling in crisis and emergency settings?
- Does the proposal reflect a well-developed plan for scale and sustainability, including commitments from key stakeholders and partners needed to proceed along a long-term path to scale and sustainability?
- Will the activities outlined in the proposed scope of work allow the innovator to achieve significant progress on its path to scale and sustainability?
- Does the proposed scope of work enable the innovator to reach significantly more people and/or have greater impact on each person reached?

Leadership Capability to Champion Change
- To what extent is the Project Lead and/or team from/connected to the local community they seek to serve?
- Are the proposed Project Lead and/or key team members appropriately trained, experienced and positioned to carry out the proposed work in polycrisis settings to achieve impact, sustainability and scale?
- Have the Project Lead and/or key team members demonstrated the ability to understand and meet the needs of affected people in the context?

The External Peer Review will result in a ranked list of applications scored as fundable. Based on the outcomes of the external Peer Review, Grand Challenges Canada will initiate an extensive Due Diligence process to investigate the innovator organization.

5.6 INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PORTAL, FLUXX

To apply for funding, applicants must use the online application provided, which is only accessible via the Grand Challenges Canada's Fluxx Portal (https://gcc.fluxx.io).

See Appendix D for a detailed description of how to access Fluxx.

6. Post-Application: Next Steps and Resources

6.1 FUNDING DECISIONS

Following the Due Diligence Process, Grand Challenges Canada will present the innovation to management or the Investment Committee to make a final recommendation to the Board of Directors on whether a grant will be awarded, depending on the stage of TTS funding being awarded.

Refinements to the proposed project plan, structure, amount and oversight may be required before a funding agreement is finalized.

6.2 ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

Funded projects will be expected to engage in the following activities and provide the specific deliverables listed below:

1. Performance reporting, focused on use of funds and outcomes achieved. Reporting will be every three or six months, depending on our assessment of project and institutional risk.

2. Robust monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL). As an impact-first investor, Grand Challenges Canada requires all funded projects to report on the activities, outcomes and impact resulting from their projects. The Grand Challenges Canada team works with project teams to ensure an appropriate and rigorous approach to MEAL is used to measure results. Twice a year, innovators report quantitative and qualitative results to Grand Challenges Canada.

3. Access to the funded innovation, creating and putting into action an "Access Plan" to provide access to the funded innovation to target end users (which will be defined in the funding agreement) who are most in need within applicable low- and middle-income countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Uganda, and Kenya) including specifically those who are underserved or unserved and most in need in low-resource settings (See section 2.2).

4. Dissemination of project knowledge, creating and putting into action a "Sharing Plan", including sharing with other organizations, and through social media, open access publications, depositing of data into publicly accessible repositories, press releases, conferences and other public engagement activities including stakeholder engagement, and contributing to the learning agenda for specific challenges, including through participation in meetings (e.g., Grand Challenges Annual Meeting, panel discussions) with other Grand Challenges Canada innovators.

5. A final report that accounts for financial spending and that captures a clear assessment of the impact of the project, including progress towards ensuring access to innovations to those most in need of the innovation and widespread dissemination of knowledge. Instructions for reporting will be provided to successful recipients. Please note that a 5% hold back of funds will be applied to all funding under this program, to be released to teams upon project completion and full justification of costs and a satisfactory final report.

6. Continued post-investment updates on management of intellectual property rights in supported innovations and on progress in implementing Sharing and Access Plans.

The full list of activities and deliverables will be reflected in the grant agreement with Grand Challenges Canada.

Funded projects must retain supporting project documentation for seven (7) years after the end of the Grant Agreement, including financial records, and may be audited by Grand Challenges Canada or any funders of this initiative.

7. Financial Terms and Eligible Costs

This section reflects a high-level outline of Grand Challenges Canada's guiding principles and terms of funding. If selected for funding, project teams will be required to comply with the related policies. These policies may be updated from time to time and can be found on the on the Grand Challenges Canada Website – see Innovator Resources.

7.1 ELIGIBLE COSTS

The following provides a high-level overview of costs directly related to the implementation of the Project which are eligible under Grand Challenges Canada funding. For more information, please refer to the Grand Challenges Canada Cost Directive.

Remuneration – Funding Recipient's Employees

Remuneration includes salary, benefits (in accordance with internal policies), and daily wage rates paid to employees for work directly related to the Project. Salary and wage rates should be comparable to the local market for similar types of work.

Salaries paid by the Innovator to its employees may be increased in accordance with Global Affairs Canada's Policy on Salary Increases Under Contribution Agreements for the Delivery of International Development Assistance found at:
Policy on Salary Increases under Contribution Agreements for the Delivery of International Development Assistance

Innovators should be able to support remuneration charged to GCC using a timesheet or other time management system. Innovators without a time management system nor the capacity to manage timesheets should follow the guidance by Global Affairs Canada found here.

Subcontractor Fees

Subcontractors are external individuals or groups who are engaged by an Innovator to provide goods and/or services as part of the Project. Payments are made under a subcontract agreement. The Innovator and the subcontractor must have an arm's length relationship to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Individual rates or amounts negotiated under a subcontract agreement must comply with the requirements of GCC's Procurement Policy, and shall not exceed the fair market value for the service or good in question. Contracts over $25,000 CAD for goods and over $40,000 CAD for services in each fiscal year, should be tendered competitively, unless there is a valid reason not to, which would require prior approval from GCC.

Where multiple contracts are signed with the same vendor, the cumulative value of these contracts should be considered when applying the thresholds noted in the Procurement Policy.

Legal fees related directly to the Project are eligible subcontractor costs.

Subcontractor costs are subject to the same eligible and ineligible expense requirements applicable to the Innovator.

Travel Costs

Actual and reasonable travel costs directly related to the implementation of the Project and incurred by the Innovator's employees in accordance with the provisions of GCC's Travel Policy are eligible expenses.

Goods and Supplies

Actual and reasonable costs arising from the purchase, rental, maintenance, transportation, and installation of goods, assets and supplies directly related to the Project, provided that such costs do not exceed the fair market value and are eligible expenses. Office administration expenses should be included in 1.6 Project Administration Costs.

Equipment Costs

"Equipment" is defined as a good with a useful life of more than one year and costs more than $1,000 CAD per unit. The price paid for this expense must be reasonable compared to alternative options in the market. Costs may include the basic purchase price, freight, and installation of the equipment.

Innovators are required to submit a Disposal of Assets plan at the end of their Project. If equipment purchased for the project is still valuable at that time but will no longer be used towards project activities, GCC can request that the Innovator sell the equipment at fair value and refund GCC the proceeds from that sale.

Equipment which costs more than $25,000 CAD in a given fiscal year should be tendered competitively in accordance with GCC's Procurement Policy, unless there is a valid reason not to, which requires prior approval from GCC.

Project Administration Costs

Examples of actual and reasonable administrative costs directly related to the implementation of the Project include:
- Telecommunication expenses (internet, fax, cellular), mail and courier costs;
- Translation and word processing costs, printing and production costs associated with Project reporting and production of reading material;
- Meeting, workshops, conference costs (includes; meal and travel costs for participants);
- Bank transfer fees;
- Costs related to office space and associated utilities, required to implement the Project;
- Publication fees during the funding period;
- Purchase of advertisement space to promote project activities;
- Hosting services, such as servers or databases required to implement the Project;
- Software subscription services directly required to implement the Project;
- Ethical approvals and review board costs;
- Patent costs required to implement the Project, as deemed reasonable by GCC;
- Other administrative type of expenditures relating directly to project activities.

Sub-grants

A sub-grantee is defined as an external organization that acts like a partner to provide key services required to complete the Project and cannot be easily replaced by a vendor or supplier. Sub-grantee costs are eligible expenses if the following requirements are met:
- Sub-grantees must be able to enter into legal agreements.
- Sub-grantees are subject to the same eligible expense requirements and policies as the Innovator.
- Sub-grantees must keep track of expenses incurred in a detailed general ledger and may be required to submit this detailed general ledger to GCC (where applicable). Refer to your funding agreement for details.

Indirect Costs

Innovators are entitled to up to 10% of its Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) to cover indirect costs. MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and

supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $30,000 CAD of each subaward. MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $30,000 CAD. The Innovator must consistently charge its costs as either indirect costs or direct costs but must not double charge or inconsistently charge the same cost, or categories of costs, as both.

Examples of costs that could be considered as indirect under the Innovator's Project include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Amortization/Depreciation;
- Board activities;
- Business development activities (non-project specific);
- Bank charges (non-project specific);
- Gratuities/tips;
- Internal or external audits of the organization;
- Logistics and procurement;
- Office supplies and equipment of the Organization's office(s) (non-project specific);
- Rent and utilities for shared office space (head office);
- Repairs and maintenance expenses (except those related to budgeted goods & supplies);
- Computer maintenance expenses;
- Travel (non-program/Project specific);
- Membership fees;
- Merit based salary increases;
- Maternity/paternity leave;
- Severance;
- Bonus payments, remuneration or fees that include profits;
- Recruitment fees;
- Salaries and fringe benefits relating to the administration of the organization;
- Strategic planning activities;
- Administrative IT System (e.g. financial or HR system) (non-project specific);
- Workstations of indirect staff, including computers;
- Immunizations and medications;
- Costs related to obtaining passports;
- Other indirect/overhead type of expenditures relating to the organization's office;
- All other costs that GCC considers indirect cost elements.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible costs are costs that are not Eligible Costs and include but are not limited to the following:

- Costs incurred before and after the effective date of the funding agreement for the Project;
- Entertainment expenses;
- Foreign exchange gain/loss and inflation adjustments;
- Alcohol and Cannabis;
- Gifts (non-project specific);
- Insurance (e.g. office, board of directors, liability, vehicle, travel);
- Interest on borrowed capital;
- Costs related to non-authorized accompanying family members;
- Costs specifically disallowed under the Travel Policy included in section 1.3, above;
- Retainer fees (non-project specific);
- Debt repayments;
- Fundraising costs;
- Advocacy costs;
- Contingency or risk premium costs;
- Marketing/promotional communications that don't directly contribute to project objectives;
- Refundable taxes;
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties;
- Bad debts;
- Payments for unfair dismissal or other compensation;
- To replace or refund any funds lost to fraud, corruption, bribery, theft, terrorist financing or other misuse of funds;
- Military equipment;
- Surveillance equipment;
- Commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities;
- Abortion equipment or services;
- Luxury goods and gambling equipment;
- Weather modification equipment;
- Ammunition and weapons;
- Expenses previously paid for by another funder or another source of funds;
- Any other costs that GCC considers ineligible cost elements.

7.2 TERMS OF DISBURSEMENT

1. Advance Disbursement: Grand Challenges Canada will make an initial advance of funding equal to the estimated cash flow requirements for eligible costs forecasted by the innovator for the first period upon signature of the funding agreement. Subsequent payments will be made through quarterly or bi-annual advances based on the estimated cash flow requirements for Eligible Costs. Funding advances will be subject to a 5% holdback on the amount forecasted.

2. All funding advance requests and financial reports submitted by the innovator must be signed by a qualified finance professional (finance officer), whose qualifications shall be reviewed and approved by Grand Challenges Canada during project negotiations. Any changes to this qualified finance professional (finance officer) must be reviewed and approved by Grand Challenges Canada.

3. Outstanding Advances: Advance Disbursements are limited to covering a maximum of 6 to 9 months of forecasted expenditure, depending on the reporting frequency.

4. You must maintain any Grant funds provided by GCC in a bank account that tracks such Grant separately from any other monies. You may be required to open a separate bank account to receive and maintain Grant funds from GCC for the Project prior to their use to fund Project activities. You must report the amount of any interest or foreign exchange gains generated by the Grant funds in the Grant Bank Account, and must only use any such interest or exchange gains to fund the Project.

5. Final disbursement: Grand Challenges Canada will release the final amounts of funding, such as the holdback payment and any other outstanding payments once the following conditions are met:
   - The project is completed in accordance with the funding agreement; and
   - Grand Challenges Canada has received and accepted all final reports, including completion and submission of any outstanding milestones and documentation due under the grant agreement.
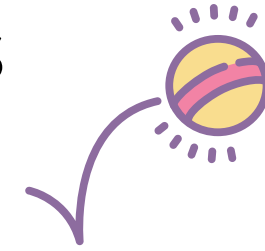
7.3 AUDIT

Funded projects must retain supporting project documentation for seven (7) years after the end of the Grant Agreement, including financial records, and may be audited by Grand Challenges Canada or any funders of this initiative.
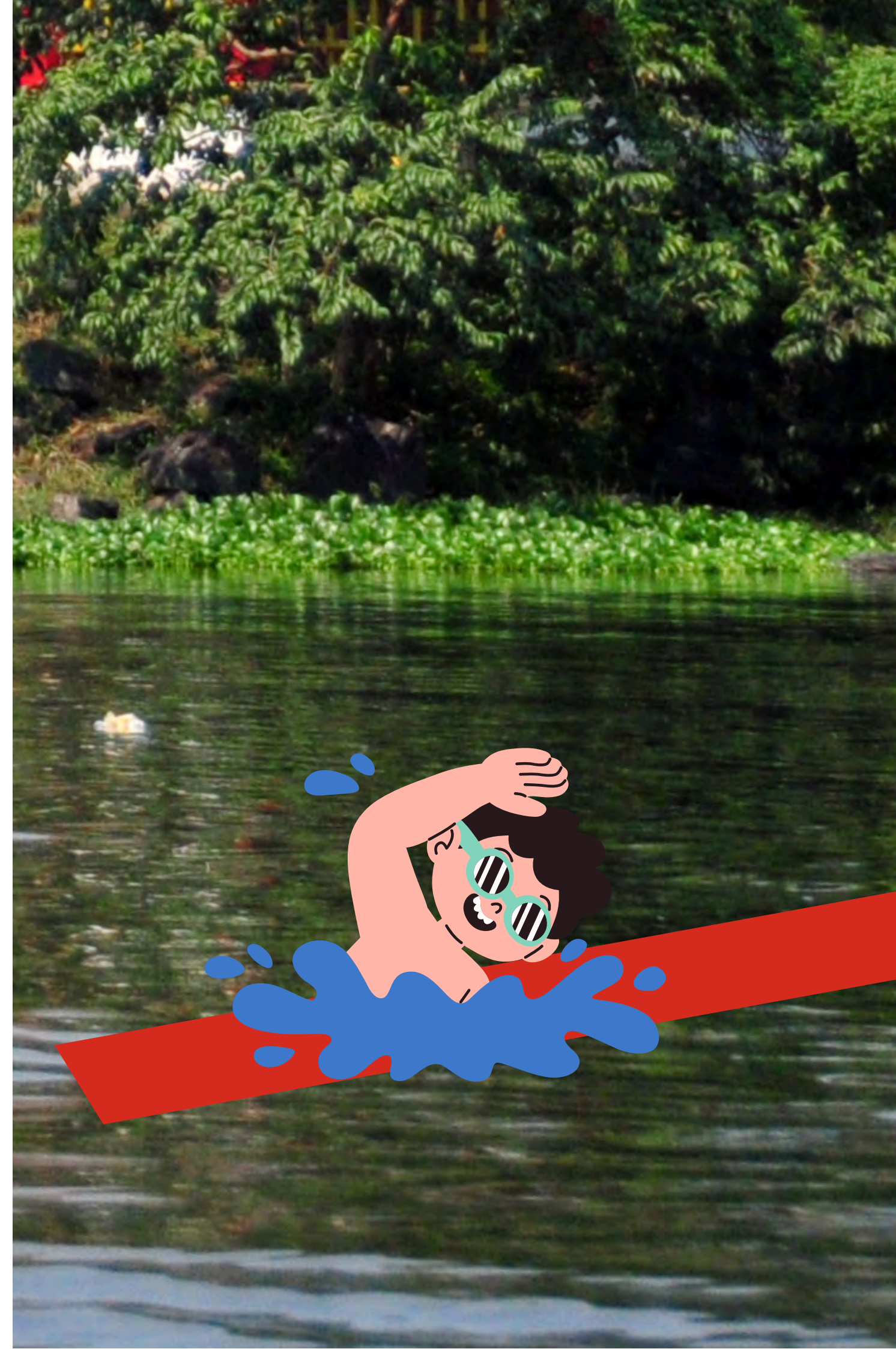
8. General Policies and Terms

8.1 SUBMISSION MATERIALS AND PRIVACY NOTICE

To help us in the evaluation and analysis of projects, all proposals, documents, communications, and associated materials submitted to Grand Challenges Canada (collectively "Submission Materials") may be shared with LEGO, and/or with other funding partners, and may be publicly disclosed. By submitting any Submission Materials to Grand Challenges Canada, each applicant thereby grants to Grand Challenges Canada and LEGO) a worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive, non-commercial, free of charge and royalty free license to use, reproduce, adapt, modify, improve, develop, translate, publish, disseminate, distribute, communicate to the public by telecommunication and display the Submission Materials, in whole or in part, in any form, media, or technology now known or later developed, including the right to authorize others to do such acts and the right to sublicense such rights to others, on the same terms. Each applicant also thereby waives any and all moral rights that it has in the Submission Materials in favour of Grand Challenges Canada, LEGO and other funding partners, and each of their sub-licensees, successors, representatives, assigns, employees, and agents.

The proposals will be subject to external review by independent subject-matter experts, advisors, and potential co-funders (the results of which will be confidential), in addition to analysis by our staff. Please be advised that a copy of the external reviews for each submitted proposal will be shared with Grand Challenges Canada staff and may be disclosed to Grand Challenges Canada's Investment Committee and Board of Directors.

Please carefully consider the information included in the Submission Materials. If you have any concerns about the disclosure of confidential or proprietary information (including information related to inventions), please advise us as soon as possible and in any event prior to disclosure of such materials to Grand Challenges Canada. We also recommend you consult with your legal counsel and take any steps you deem necessary to protect your intellectual property. You may wish to consider whether such information is critical for evaluating the submission and whether more general, non-confidential information may be adequate as an alternative for these purposes.

Grand Challenges Canada will attempt in good faith to respect the confidentiality of information that is received in Submission Materials, if it is clearly marked "Confidential". Nonetheless, notwithstanding your characterization of any information as "Confidential", Grand Challenges Canada reserves the right to disclose all information contained in Submission Materials as may be required by law and as is necessary to potential co-funders, advisors, and external reviewers (such as government entities) to evaluate them and the manner and scope of potential funding, consistent with appropriate regulations and their internal guidelines and policies. Grand Challenges Canada expressly disclaims any and all liability that may arise from disclosure of confidential information contained in Submission Materials. Upon signing a grant agreement, successful applicants will have the option to keep their name and/or project confidential.

Privacy Notice

In order to conduct due diligence and audits, and to manage and monitor the performance of a grant agreement, Grand Challenges Canada may collect personal information (such as names, addresses, employment history, criminal and other legal checks where legally permissible) about some of a successful applicant's directors and officers, employees, project lead(s), and others engaged on the project before and during the course of the grant agreement. Some of this personal information is collected for the purpose of complying with applicable legal and policy requirements that apply to Grand Challenges Canada and our funders in order to provide the funding and services by Grand Challenges Canada under a grant agreement. Refusing to provide information that Grand Challenges Canada needs in order to conduct required legal and contractual due diligence may impact Grand Challenges Canada's ability to provide such funding and services and may result in not being able to enter into a grant agreement with you or early termination of a signed grant agreement. Grand Challenges Canada's Privacy Policy explains how Grand Challenges Canada collects, use, discloses, and protects the personal information that it collects and receives. By submitting any personal information about others, you represent and warrant that you are authorized to do so. If applicable law allows or requires you to supply the information without authorization, you represent and warrant that you have abided by that law and that it allows Grand Challenges Canada to receive and disclose the information under the Privacy Policy without any further action on the part of Grand Challenges Canada. You agree to indemnify and hold harmless Grand Challenges Canada against any failure by you to comply with the requirements set out here.

8.2 WARRANTY

By providing any Submission Materials, applicants represent and warrant to Grand Challenges Canada that they have the right to provide the information submitted.

8.3 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND SHARING AND ACCESS FOR IMPACT STRATEGY

Grand Challenges Canada is not able to fund projects for which the core intellectual property rights are owned by a third-party institution, unless that third party; (i) grants the applicant sufficient license rights to the innovation to permit eventual scaling in low- and middle-income countries; or (ii) signs an undertaking to comply with Grand Challenges Canada's Sharing and Access for Impact Strategy and the Grant Agreement.

The solutions supported by this program comprise innovative technologies, services, business models, knowledge and/or products to promote global health in LMICs. The successful development and deployment of these solutions in order to ensure meaningful access for target beneficiaries in LMICs may require involvement by, support of, and/or collaboration with multiple organizations, including the private sector, government, and academic and/or non-profit research institutions. Accordingly, it is the intent of this program to support the formation of appropriate partnerships that are essential to meet these urgent global health needs. Successful applicants retain ownership of intellectual property rights in supported innovations, including those rights that arise in outputs of funded projects. Grand Challenges Canada aims, however, to ensure that any such intellectual property rights are utilized and managed in a manner that is consistent with achieving the goals of this program. Grand Challenges Canada's Sharing and Access for Impact Strategy guides the organization's approach to intellectual property and all applicants are urged to consider their willingness to submit an application in compliance with Grand Challenges Canada's Sharing and Access for Impact Strategy, which includes a respect for the inherent right to self-determination and sovereignty of Indigenous and other communities around the world.

The purpose of the Strategy is to outline how Grand Challenges Canada will work with innovators to:

(1) help innovators achieve the greatest possible impact through sustainable, affordable, and as widespread as is appropriate, access to their innovations for the public good; and

(2) enable responsible sharing of new knowledge and data they generate, in a manner that enables scale and sustainability, addresses (rather than perpetuates) inequities and power imbalances, and honours the diverse needs, priorities and values of self-determination of innovators and their communities.

Successful applicants will be required to commit to compliance with the Grand Challenges Canada Sharing and Access for Impact Strategy; to develop an Access Plan for making their innovations meaningfully accessible to target beneficiaries in LMICs, meaning broadly and quickly available at costs that are reasonable in the context; and to sign a Sharing and Access for Impact Agreement with Grand Challenges Canada, in line with the guiding principles, applicable to the innovative solutions and project outputs supported by this program.

The Sharing and Access for Impact Agreement may provide to Grand Challenges Canada a non-exclusive license to intellectual property rights in supported innovations (including background intellectual property) and/or an agreement for distribution and supply of products, in each case permitting Grand Challenges Canada and its sub- licensees to implement and disseminate products, processes, knowledge, or solutions in low- and middle-income countries in which applicants or their partners are unable to achieve meaningful accessibility.

The Sharing and Access for Impact Agreement will require all applicants to enter into covenants:

(1) to employ best efforts and endeavour in good faith to provide widespread, affordable and equitable access to the supported innovations to achieve the greatest possible impact for those most in need;

(2) to employ best efforts and endeavour in good faith to (i) openly and publicly disseminate results and conclusions of the project, whether positive, neutral, or negative, within 12 months of project completion; (ii) make publications arising from the project immediately openly discoverable and accessible online under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) or equivalent license; and (iii) deposit data outputs into a relevant open access repository within 12 months of project completion or immediately upon publication, whichever is sooner; and

(3) to acknowledge Grand Challenges Canada in all publications arising from the project.

Applicants will be required to develop and submit an Access Plan and a Sharing Plan that specify when and how the those most in need will be afforded access to the supported innovation, findings and publications will be made openly accessible, data access will be implemented, and the timeframe for data release, while respecting the inherent right to self-determination and sovereignty of Indigenous and other communities around the world.

At a minimum, 'data' refers to final, annotated quantitative and qualitative datasets, and accompanying information, such as metadata, codebooks, data dictionaries, questionnaires and protocols.

Grand Challenges Canada recognizes the value of intellectual property and commercialization, and the benefits of first and continuing use of data, but not prolonged or exclusive use. In some cases, intellectual property protection, laws or regulations may delay or preclude access to data. In cases where an adequate justification has been provided, Grand Challenges Canada may grant a partial or complete waiver of the data access requirement.

Applicants should note that the above sharing and access for impact commitments survive the end of project activities.

8.4 RESEARCH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY POLICY

It is the policy of Grand Challenges Canada that research involving human subjects, research with animals, and research subject to additional regulatory requirements must be conducted in accordance with the highest internationally recognized ethical standards. In order to receive funds from Grand Challenges Canada, initially and throughout the course of a research project, researchers must affirm and document compliance with the guiding ethical principles and standards outlined below.

1. Research involving human subjects is subject to additional regulations and will require appropriate research ethics approval by an agreed-upon, independent research ethics board and/or research ethics process. Innovators are responsible for identifying the relevant ethical requirements and developing a plan to align with them. To support this, we recommend that innovators include the anticipated costs associated with implementing high-quality and ethical research activities in their requests for funding and ultimate budgets.

2. Research involving animals must be conducted in a manner that ensures their humane care and treatment.

3. Certain research endeavors, including but not limited to research with recombinant DNA, biohazards, and genetically modified organisms, may be subject to enhanced regulation and oversight.

While not necessary for this application and as applicable to the individual project, Grand Challenges Canada will require that, for each venue in which any part of the project is conducted either by the applicant organization or a sub-grantee or sub-contractor, all legal and regulatory approvals for the activities being conducted will be obtained in advance of commencing the regulated activity. We will further require you to agree that no funds will be expended to enroll human subjects until the necessary regulatory and ethical bodies' approvals are obtained. All applicants are strongly advised to review the Grand Challenges Canada Ethics policy.

8.5 RIGHTS OF GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA

This Request for Proposals is part of a discretionary granting program. Submission of an application does not create a contractual relationship between the applicant and Grand Challenges Canada to advance a grant to any applicant and/or enter into any contractual relationship.

Furthermore, all applicants acknowledge that the program may evolve and that all terms in this Request for Proposals are subject to change. In particular, Grand Challenges Canada reserves the right, in its sole discretion and without notice, to:

1. Cancel this Request for Proposals at any time and for any reason.

2. Amend and re-issue the Request for Proposals at any time and for any reason. This Request for Proposals is valid commencing on January 21st, 2025, and supersedes any previous Request for Proposals of this nature. The terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals apply to all applications submitted from January 21st, 2025, going forward and may be replaced by a revised Request for Proposals in the future. Grand Challenges Canada recommends checking for any revisions to the Request for Proposals and/or the FAQs prior to the submission of your application materials.

3. Accept or reject any application that is non-conforming because it does not meet the eligibility criteria, does not comply with the application instructions and/or does not comply with the instructions for allowable costs.

4. Not award an application based on performance on a previous Grand Challenges Canada grant or project or based on the award of a grant to the applicant for the same or similar research by one of Grand Challenges Canada's partners or collaborating institutions.

5. Disqualify any application at any stage where there is an indication that the proposal was, in any way, plagiarized.

6. Accept or reject any or all applications, regardless of an application's rating based on the evaluation criteria, with or without providing an explanation.

7. Award fewer awards than expected.

8. Award applications with different funding amounts, different durations and/or different conditions than set out in this Request for Proposals.

9. Verify any information provided by applicants through independent research or by contacting third parties deemed to be reliable by Grand Challenges Canada and use that information to inform Grand Challenges Canada's funding decision.

10. Modify eligibility and evaluation criteria, including but not limited to criteria assessed at the triage stage, at any time.

11. Use photos, video or other visual representations submitted by applicants on Grand Challenges Canada's Fluxx portal or otherwise for public engagement.

12. Not provide critiques or feedback regarding the reasons a proposal was or was not selected.

13. Design grant awards to link to possible funding partners, including private sector investors.

8.6 COSTS

No payment will be made for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application in response to the Request for Proposals. Costs associated with preparing and submitting an application, as well as any other costs incurred by the applicant associated with the evaluation of the application, are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

8.7 GOVERNING LAW

This Request for Proposals and any resulting agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Province of Ontario and the federal laws of Canada applicable therein. Each applicant agrees that this any and all disputes, actions or proceedings relating to this Request for Proposals whether as to interpretation, validity, performance or otherwise, shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the Province of Ontario and each applicant and Grand Challenges Canada irrevocably attorn to the jurisdiction of the courts of such province.

8.8 RISK MANAGEMENT, SAFETY, ANTI-TERRORISM, ANTI-CORRUPTION, AND ANTI-BRIBERY

Proposals must comply with all relevant Canadian legislation, as well as any applicable international anti-bribery and anti-terrorism legislation. Any person or organization named in Canadian or United Nations Security Council sanctions will not be funded. We may add to this list as more partners join the challenge.

Innovators are to manage material risks.

Proposals for projects that include work in insecure locations, must detail how they will manage the safety and security risks faced by people and assets. If selected for funding, during

negotiations innovators will be required to explain how they will avoid corruption and the diversion of funding from its intended purpose.

For example, during negotiations innovators will be asked to provide a description of the organization's policies and procedures to address conflicts of interest and financial or other irregularities, including without limitation, adequate procedures:

- Requiring the organization and its representatives to declare any personal or financial interest in any matter concerning the funded activities, and exclude that individual from the matter concerned
- Identifying steps to investigate an irregularity
- A timely and appropriate plan of action to recover any funds that have been subject to proven fraud.

During negotiations, innovations will also be required to include a description of the organization's policies and procedures to adequately implement internal controls for preventing bribery, corruption, fraud, and other situations of misuse of funds.

8.9 FUNDER COMPLIANCE TERMS

Some or all of the grant funds advanced to a successful Applicant have been made available to Grand Challenges Canada in connection with grant agreements between Grand Challenges Canada and the LEGO Foundation. The Grand Challenges Canada Grant Agreement with a successful applicant will flow down certain of these funders' compliance obligations that apply to all recipients of funds, including any innovators. The Applicant will be required to acknowledge that it has read and understood these funder compliance obligations and will make the representations, warranties, declarations, and guarantees, and agree to comply with the terms and conditions, contained in the applicable funder compliance terms as a condition of receiving grant funding from Grand Challenges Canada. If other funders contribute funding to the grants offered under this Request for Proposals, their compliance obligations will also apply to any grant awarded with their funding.
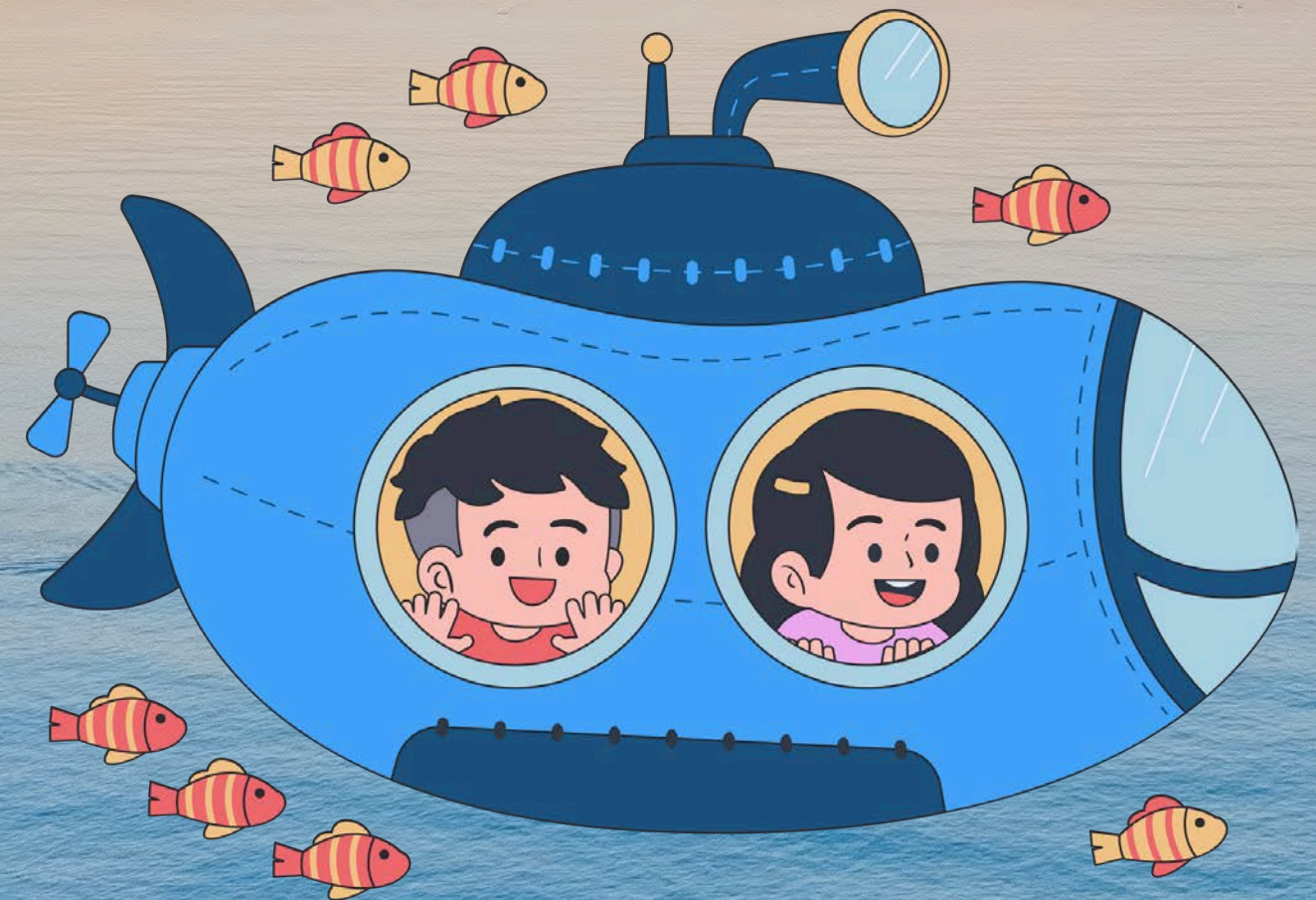
Appendices

Appendix A: Illustrative Examples of Play-Based Solutions

Based on the definition of "play-based solutions" that is detailed in Section 2.2 of the RFP, here are a few illustrative examples of what play-based solutions can look like. This list is by no means restrictive, and we encourage other programmatic solutions that still adhere to the definition of play outlined in Section 2.2.

EXAMPLES OF PLAY-BASED SOLUTIONS:

General Solutions:
- Providing continued support to caregivers to care for their children and improve their own mental health and well-being, which could also include responsive caregiving and incorporating play-based activities to promote healthy brain development.
- Developing or improving access to high-quality playful early learning programs
- Developing or improving access to playful parenting programs that support parents and caregivers to form strong bonds and relationships with young children, and their wellbeing through play (could be home visits, centre-based, digital, programs, etc.)

Play-based Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)
Programming in formal and non-formal primary education spaces and across the early years that may include:
- Basic safety and security activities (e.g. playful nurturing care, safety in the home and schools),
- Family and community support (e.g. play-based social-emotional learning, free play, playful parenting),
- Focused care (e.g. play group sessions for children with non-clinical needs)

School based play solutions:
- Teachers/facilitators in the school/centre participate in training on Learning through Play (LtP) methods and practices.
- School/education centre management committees participate in training on how to build a positive school environment and engage school communities in LtP.
- Head teachers and other lead teachers are supported to lead and promote continuous professional development activities on LtP, including supportive supervision, coaching, peer learning, and supportive messaging.
- Members of the school community actively participate in supporting learning through play activities.
- Teachers and pupils are provided with basic teaching and learning materials for LtP.

Non-formal education play-based solutions:
- Out of school children or children at risk of dropping out are supported with play-based accelerated learning and/or catch-up programs.
- Child-friendly playful learning environments are established.

Appendix B: Thematic Guidance for Consideration

In addition to addressing the general criteria for all four countries (see section 2.4), we encourage proposals to incorporate at least one of, though not limited to, the following sub-themes. Please note that we would still encourage and consider proposals that do not explicitly focus on these sub-themes, so long as they align with the general areas of focus in Section 2.4.

We encourage innovations that:
- Focus on strengthening informal education and development opportunities (outside of the formal, government-run education system, such as at home, community centres, refugee-led organizations, and more) to improve access for children who are being left behind, including though not limited to refugees, children from host communities, young girls/adolescent mothers, children with disabilities, and those who live in remote/coastal areas; AND/OR
- Consider gender-related disadvantages for educators or caregivers, and also for young girls who will ultimately benefit from the proposed innovation; AND/OR
- Consider positive mental health and wellbeing, using trauma-informed approaches, Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) with Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) for educators and/or caregivers living in polycrisis settings, and also for children who will ultimately benefit from the proposed innovation; AND/OR
- Leverage digital technologies and resources to increase access and/or use of the proposed innovation; AND/OR
- Consider father's involvement in children's education and development.

Appendix C: Key Indicators for POC & TTS

KEY INDICATORS
If your project is funded, you will be required to report on a number of outcomes and outputs, including those summarized below; note that this is not a complete list, and the outcomes and outputs will be determined by the project team in consultation with GCC.

ULTIMATE OUTCOMES
The ultimate outcomes are the long-term impacts resulting from the innovation. Ultimate outcomes should be achievable and measurable by the end of the funding period.

Play Learn Thrive ultimately aims to ensure that children from birth to 12 years old, living in polycrisis, experience measurable and meaningful benefits to their early development and education outcomes; and/or that their caregivers and educators or other key figures in their support network, experience measurable and meaningful improvements to their well-being and capacity to provide nurturing care and supportive learning environments. Innovators should use culturally appropriate and locally validated tools and approaches to assess these outcomes, when available.

Accordingly, and as described in Section 2.5, innovators will be expected to report on at least one of the following PRIORITY OUTCOMES on a semi-annual basis:

Priority Outcome #1:
Number of children demonstrating improved development outcomes, including children that are developmentally on-track in meeting age-defined milestones across the following domains:
- Cognitive development
- Language and linguistic development
- Social-emotional and behavioural development
- Physical development including gross/fine motor skills

*In alignment with a 'Whole Child' model that recognizes the interdependencies of these different developmental domains, innovators should employ a holistic approach by monitoring outcomes across each of these areas.

Priority Outcome #2:
Number of children with measurable improvements in foundational learning/education competencies, including those meeting age-defined minimum proficiency levels for:
- Literacy skills, including reading comprehension, vocabulary, phonological awareness, and decoding skills
- Mathematic skills, including basic numeracy and number knowledge, operations, measurement, problem solving and reasoning

*Innovators must exercise careful consideration in selecting assessment tools and approaches that are contextually appropriate and reflect the curricula expectations of the local context.

Of note, children affected by crisis bear a cognitive load that is greater than that of their peers, which could disadvantage them on standardized tests normed on populations that have not faced the same level of difficulties. Adversity and trauma may also have negative impacts on socio-emotional and mental health, which may affect academic performance as well. There is also a risk that administering assessments could therefore cause frustration and anxiety in some children. As a result, innovators should consider these limitations when deciding to either use an existing tool, adapt an existing tool, or develop their own. Innovators should also consider procedures and resources that can be put in place to ensure that children feel safe and supported during the assessment process.

Priority Outcome #3:
Number of caregivers and/or educators or other individuals that are part of a child's support network, that demonstrate improved mental health and well-being outcomes and improved capacity to provide nurturing care and create supportive learning environments for children in polycrisis. This includes:
- Measurable improvements in mental health and well-being indicators, as assessed using culturally validated tools and approaches. This can include improvements in outcomes related to positive mental health (e.g., improved coping, resilience, social connectedness) and reductions in negative mental health symptoms (e.g., anxiety, depression, psychological distress)
- Measurable improvements in KAP – knowledge, attitudes, and/or practices related to positive parenting, providing nurturing care and creating supportive learning environments for children affected by crisis.

Innovators who are proposing to measure progress against Priority Outcome #3 will also be encouraged to incorporate plans to monitor and assess progress against either Priority Outcome #1 or #2.

While not required, it may also be relevant for innovators to monitor mental health and psychosocial outcomes of children. This includes indicators of 'positive' mental health (such as improvements in measures of mental wellbeing, capacity for coping, prosocial behaviours, connectedness and resilience) and 'negative' mental health indicators (such as decreases in anxiety, depression and psychological distress). It is important that innovators choose mental health assessment tools that are culturally and age appropriate and locally validated when available, recognizing that cultural norms, beliefs and expressions of mental health can vary across different contexts and populations.

For each of the priority outcomes, innovators will be expected to provide data that is disaggregated by age, sex, and (dis)ability status.

Moreover, when safe and ethical to do so, TTS innovators will also be expected and supported to integrate children's voices in their MEAL plans, by directly capturing children's voices to understand their views, experiences and perceived impact of the program on their lives. This can be achieved through multiple approaches, including art-based and qualitative methodologies. In some cases, it may be feasible and appropriate to engage children more deeply, such as through

consultation, collaboration or child-led participation in the design and monitoring of an innovation. Children should only ever be engaged in program design and MEAL when the planned approaches have been assessed as being ethical, appropriate and rigorous, with adequate safeguards being put in place to protect, respect and reflect the capacities of children involved.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Intermediate outcomes are the medium-term changes resulting from the innovation. These outcomes should be achievable and measurable within the time and resource constraints of the project, and directly linked to the project's outputs, such as:

- Number of children between birth to 12 years old using the innovation to improve their development or education outcomes. This can include:
  - Number of children with improved access to high quality education or supportive learning spaces where previously disrupted or not consistently available
  - Number of children experiencing an improved care context, including protection against abuse and exploitation, or a safer and more nurturing environment for healthy development and learning
- Number of caregivers, educators, community care providers, religious leaders, or other individuals that are part of a child's support network, using the innovation to improve their mental health and well-being, and improve their capacity to provide nurturing care and create supportive learning environments.

IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Immediate outcomes are the short-term changes resulting from the innovation. These outcomes should be measurable and achievable relatively soon after the project is implemented, and should be directly linked to the project's outputs such as:

- Number of facilities/sites implementing the innovation
- Number of intermediaries that are implementing an innovation designed to improve child development and learning outcomes or to strengthen the capacity and/or wellbeing of support networks around children
- Number of intermediaries engaged through 'train the trainer' (ToT) models

OUTPUTS

Outputs are the products or services that are directly produced, developed or implemented as part of the innovation, including:

- Number of jobs created as a result of the innovation
- Number of project outputs, peer reviewed papers, or patents filed (if applicable)
- Activities, milestones and results related to the engagement of key stakeholders and strategic partners supporting the scale-up of the innovation
- Activities and results related to adoption/implementation of policies, plans, regulations or legislation by local governments

Appendix D: Instructions For Application Portal, Fluxx

To apply for funding, applicants must use the online application provided, which is only accessible via the Grand Challenges Canada's Fluxx Portal (https://gcc.fluxx.io).

1. Go to https://gcc.fluxx.io

EXISTING USERS:
- If you have applied for funding in the past, you already have an account and do not need to register for a new one.
- If you do not remember your password, you can reset it and gain immediate access to the Portal, simply click on the "Forgot Password?" link.
- If your email address or organization affiliation has changed since you last registered, you will need to register for a new account.

NEW USERS
- Click the 'Create an account now' button. Be sure to do this as soon as possible, so you have sufficient time to review and complete the application.
- Fill out the online form with your information. To ensure your account is set up correctly, please enter the name and information of the Project Lead (applicant) and applying organization. The information you register with will automatically appear on the application and cannot be changed without contacting Grand Challenges Canada.

2. Once you Submit your registration information, you will be emailed a verification email. If you do not receive the verification email, check your junk/spam folder. Click on the URL link provided in the email to select a password of your choice.

3. Once you have your account details, input your username (your email address) and password. Click Sign in.

4. Click on the Welcome/Bienvenue link on the left menu, scroll down to the Play Learn Thrive funding opportunity, and click on the Start New Application button.
·You can Save your work at any time and return to it later by logging into your account and clicking on Drafts / Ébauches, then clicking on Edit.
·When you are done editing, save your form and click the Submit button. Once you submit, you will no longer be able to edit.

ENDNOTES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[1] Incorporated means legally formed or its equivalent in order to be a juridical person. Individuals are not eligible.

1. INTRODUCTION

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3. PROGRAM SCOPE

[38] Incorporated means legally formed or its equivalent in order to be a juridical person. Individuals are not eligible.

[39] While a government institution cannot be the lead applicant, not-for-profit applicants may collaborate with a government department.

[40] Public sector scaling paths are suitable for projects that are likely to compel host country government ministries and departments, multilateral donors or other public sector players to scale them. These should be aligned to, and have the ability to be incorporated into, the country's sub-national or national health plan or strategy.

4. PROOF OF CONCEPT (POC)

[41] Incorporation means legally formed or its equivalent in order to be a juridical person. Individuals are not eligible.

[42] While a government institution cannot be the lead applicant, not-for-profit applicants may collaborate with a government department.

5. TRANSITION TO SCALE (TTS)

[43] Incorporation means legally formed or its equivalent in order to be a juridical person. Individuals are not eligible.

[44] While a government institution cannot be the lead applicant, not-for-profit applicants may collaborate with a government department.