

DAC PRIZE

Taking Development Innovation to Scale

The last decades have seen unprecedented development progress in all regions of the world. The eradication of extreme poverty looks set to be a central development goal for the post-2015 period, as mankind has the resources and technologies to achieve this goal for the first time in human history.

A key contribution in closing remaining development gaps will have to come from innovative solutions that can be taken to scale. Aware of this, many development partners have increased their focus on and support for innovation that can offer solutions for development challenges. A wealth of innovative ideas have been conceived, developed and trialed over the last years.

Objective of the Prize

The DAC Prize for Taking Development Innovation to Scale is awarded for taking an innovative approach, instrument, mechanism beyond the pilot phase to a wider application.

The objective of the Prize is to promote the scaling-up of innovations that address important development gaps. Scalability is usually a key criterion for support to innovation by development partners. So far, however, there has been very limited uptake of such innovative solutions beyond the pilot or trial phase and little discernible systematic effort to take them to scale.

With this prize, the DAC wants to acknowledge development actors who take the step from supporting innovation to using it systematically and strategically to address development challenges, by taking it to scale. We hope that this will motivate the more systematic use of innovative development solutions which have proven that they work. Ultimately, the prize should help scalable, innovative solutions to gain broader traction in the development community and encourage donors and other development stakeholders to increase their support. Fundamentally, this is about investing into what works, and encouraging more of this.

Nature of the prize

The prize will take the form of a public award that bestows visibility and official recognition on the winning entries. It does not include a monetary or material reward. At the same time, the prize may contribute to mobilizing additional resources for the development solutions highlighted by the winning entries.

Award criteria and selection

Submissions should cover two basic dimensions:

1. An innovation that addresses a concrete development challenge or that fills a specific gap in the development toolkit. This innovation can take any form that is relevant in the development context – technology, services delivery, connecting and empowering development actors and facilitating partnership, mobilizing additional resources for development, etc.
2. Submissions for the award should relate to activities that have demonstrated their practical applicability in a development context AND the application of the innovation should have been taken beyond the pilot stage to a broader application. It is not required for a full implementation cycle at scale to have been undertaken, however, a decision to scale up should have been taken and work on implementation should have started.

A prize jury will select the top five submissions. The jury will be composed of individuals with recognized leadership and experience in either innovation or development policy and operations, from donor and developing countries, the research community, the private sector, international organisations, and development foundations or civil society. Depending on the number of total proposals submitted, a pre-selection of the most compelling submissions will be made. In selecting the prize, the jury will consider in particular:

1. The relevance of the challenge or gap addressed, in relation to officially recognized development goals.
2. Evidence of impact in an applied development context, in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.
3. Demonstrated action/commitment to scale-up the innovation.
4. Prospects for further scalability, including opportunities for broadening investor/contributor base.

Process and eligibility

The prize is open to all entities that have provided funding for proposals that meet the award criteria. This includes official donors from DAC members or other nations, private charities and development foundations, civil society organizations, as well as private businesses. Up to two proposals for the prize may be put forward per submitting entity.

2014 Timeline

1. 31 March 2014: *Deadline for submission of proposals*
2. 15 May 2014: *Selection of winning proposals*
3. 7-8 October: *Announcement ceremony at the occasion of the Senior Level Meeting of the OECD Development Assistance Committee*