



GSMA mWomen Innovation Fund Grants Overview of Round Three: NGO Grants

April 2013

Introduction

The GSMA mWomen Programme is pleased to announce the launch of the first round of Innovation Fund grants for NGOs. Please note that the term “NGOs” includes for-profit social enterprises which have a strong focus on delivering social impact.

This round comprises three grants, valued up to US\$ 140,000 for projects up to ten months long. The grants are intended to provide seed funding for NGOs to design and launch an economically sustainable product/service, distribution model or marketing campaign (an ‘offering’) that increases women’s access to and use of mobile phones and value-added services (‘VAS’). There are two main ways of doing this:

1. Develop content or a service that is life-enhancing for resource-poor women, which can be widely disseminated via mobile. This could take place in the domain of health, agriculture, access to finance, entrepreneurship, education, etc. OR:
2. Support a mobile network operator (“MNO”) in the design and launch of an offering that will increase resource-poor women’s access to and use of mobile. The NGO’s contribution could be done through generating consumer insights, using grassroots networks to access the target communities, running educational campaigns, etc.

In both cases, it is required that the NGO partners with an MNO. The concept note should, at the minimum, contain a clear plan and strategy for the operator partnership, outlining who the key operator target(s) are. By application stage, the operator partnership must be in place. Please note that applicants who have a partnership with a mobile operator by the time of application submission are likely to be considered more competitive by the Selection Panel than those who do not.

Please find below highlights about the Innovation Fund and this round of grants, including key dates and instructions on what to do next. Note that the next round of Innovation Fund grants for both NGOs and MNOs will be launched in the second half of 2013.

GSMA mWomen Innovation Fund introduction and objectives

The goal of the GSMA mWomen Programme is to promote greater mobile access and usage by resource-poor women in low- and middle-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, and Asia Pacific¹. The programme does so by encouraging industry to serve women, increasing availability of life-enhancing value-added services and promoting solutions to women’s technical and cultural barriers to adoption.

The objectives of the Innovation Fund for NGOs are to provide seed funding in order to:

- Accelerate the use of mobile technology to achieve development-related goals, specifically the empowerment of resource-poor women
- Provide solutions to the barriers to women’s adoption and use of mobile phones and VAS
- Generate lessons and models of success which can be shared with the wider development community, as well as mobile operators
- Stimulate productive partnerships between NGOs and mobile operators in order to achieve these objectives at scale

¹ Please note that there will be a separate round of applications for both NGOs and mobile operators in the Pacific region which is scheduled to take place in the second half of 2013.

There are two streams of grants, both aiming to provide seed funding for the design and launch of an offering to increase women's access to and use of mobiles. The first stream is comprised of seven matching grants for mobile operators, each with a value up to US\$ 70,000, for use during a three to nine month-long project delivered with or without partners. The second stream is comprised of seven non-matching grants up to US\$ 140,000 for NGOs working in conjunction with industry in projects up to ten months long.

The definition of success for the Innovation Fund is:

- An increase in the number of women who have access to mobile services
- An increase in the availability of relevant, life-enhancing VAS for women
- A larger set of proven approaches for addressing the needs of resource-poor women and reducing the barriers to the adoption of mobile phones

The definition of success for a grant-supported project is:

- Design and launch of an economically sustainable product or service, distribution model or awareness campaign (an 'offering') that increases women's access to and use of mobile phones and VAS
- Generation of evidence of the social and economic value of the offering which can be shared
- Generation of insights into how to reduce women's barriers to adoption on a large scale

Determining whether a grant makes sense for your project

- Grants are intended to serve as seed funding for innovative projects that will ultimately increase resource-poor women's uptake of mobile and lead to life-enhancing outcomes. The objective is that the grants should enable NGOs to either:
 1. Test new methods of using mobile technology as a way to better serve resource-poor women on a large scale; OR
 2. Support an MNO's launch of an offering targeted at resource-poor women (e.g. a new tariff plan, a distribution mechanism, a marketing campaign, etc.) by offering consumer insights, access to the target population, organising an awareness campaign, etc.

Key attributes: economically sustainable, at scale and replicable

Given that the Fund aims to build evidence about sustainable models for serving women, each project should not only generate evidence of social value, but also demonstrate a clear plan for sustainability beyond the grant period. Applicants must hence outline the following:

1. The operator's economic incentive for participation in the project (for example, through revenues generated by mobile money transfers or the sending of SMS messages)
2. The NGO's funding model for the underlying services it provides (for example, private donors, government)

It is also crucial that projects have the potential to reach resource-poor women at a large (i.e. regional, national or global) scale and contain elements which can be replicated in other geographies.

The application process

The Fund employs a two-stage application process:

1. Concept Note Stage
The first stage includes preparation of a three-page concept note describing an applicant's current mission and programmes and/or interventions, the specific project objectives, definition of success, high-level approach, anticipated deliverables and outcomes, internal participants and external partners. An independent Fund Manager then reviews concept notes to consider their alignment with Fund objectives and fulfilment of project and organisation eligibility requirements. A small number of applicants are then invited to the Selection Panel stage to prepare full applications, containing comprehensive details about the project.
2. Application Stage
An independent Selection Panel evaluates these applications and awards grants to those best positioned to deliver on the Fund objectives. Historically, applicants who worked closely with the GSMA mWomen team to develop their applications have been considered more competitive by the Selection Panel than those who did not.

Please read the term sheet for full details of the Innovation Fund objectives and the organisation and project eligibility requirements, as well as management, data and knowledge sharing, and performance monitoring requirements.

The GSMA mWomen team is available to provide advice and support to all applicants during the concept note stage, as well as to provide more in-depth support to those organisations invited to submit applications. The team also will provide ongoing support and oversight during grant implementation.

GSMA mWomen will host a webinar to provide additional detail about the Innovation Fund and to answer questions about how to design a project and prepare concept notes and applications.

Next steps and key dates

Key dates for this round are as follows:

Concept notes due:	Wednesday, 12 th June 2013
Invitations to submit applications distributed:	Friday, 21 st June, 2013
Applications due:	Friday, 16 th August, 2013
Grant awards announced to applicants	mid-September 2013
Grant agreements signed:	early October 2013

Please refer to the Innovation Fund for NGOs term sheet for more details. Don't hesitate to contact the team at mWomengrants@gsma.com with any questions and/or to enquire about support during the application process. We look forward to hearing from you!