

CONCEPT NOTE

UN STI Forum Call for Innovations

The UN STI Forum Call for Innovations is a global platform designed to inspire innovation by showcasing successful technology implementations in challenging environments, encouraging engagement from UN Member States and other stakeholders in contributing to similar initiatives. The platform engages diverse STI networks to serve as a collaborative hub for knowledge exchange and promoting a more effective and coordinated approach to highlight innovative solutions tailored for the unique needs of low-resource settings, while also contributing to capacity building of the diverse stakeholders.

THE SEARCH FOR INNOVATIONS INTENDS TO:

- Showcase successful technology implementations in challenging environments to inspire further innovation and encouraging developers, communities, and organizations to engage in similar initiatives.
- Highlight innovative solutions for challenges in low-resource settings, fostering problem-solving and the development of tailored technologies for unique community needs.
- Serve as a collaborative hub for knowledge exchange among stakeholders, fostering a more effective and coordinated approach to sustainable development through the sharing of best practices, expertise, and resources.

SHOWCASE HIGHLIGHTS



FORUM THEMATIC SESSIONS

Each thematic session begins with lightning talks, where winners showcase solutions aligned with the SDG under discussion.



INNOVATION SHOWCASE

During the Forum, innovators will have a space in an open area to showcase their solutions and interact with participants.



INNOVATION ROUNDTABLES

Innovators join experts and the 10-Member Group in roundtables to enhance STI roadmap discussions.

2024 INNOVATORS

Lightning Talks and Showcase

The 2024 UN Innovation Competition addressed SDG1 (No Poverty), SDG2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) through a climate-focused lens, targeting low-resource settings and humanitarian challenges.

KEY FEATURES OF THE SHOWCASED INNOVATIONS:

- *Diverse Solutions:* Innovations include both hardware and software technologies, offering scalable solutions.
- *Prototypes with Real-World Applicability:* Each innovation had a tested prototype, demonstrating practical use in resource-constrained environments.
- *Validated Impact:* Technologies underwent testing, with documented outcomes ensuring effectiveness and feasibility.

INNOVATORS FROM 2024:

[The Spiral Water Wheel Pump](#) harnesses kinetic energy from flowing water to provide affordable, sustainable irrigation in remote areas.

[The Solar Ice Block Machine](#) stores solar energy in ice, providing cooling solutions for agriculture and reducing food waste in Sub-Saharan Africa.

[Safi](#) offers an off-grid milk pasteurization system that ensures safe milk and improves transparency in East Africa's dairy supply chain.

[Unnati's solar-powered silk reeling machine](#) boosts productivity and improves rural women's lives in East India's silk industry.

[The Union Island Environmental Alliance](#) fosters grassroots environmental conservation and resilience, focusing on climate adaptation and sustainable tourism.

[Open Seneca](#) deploys low-cost air quality sensor networks driven by citizen science to monitor pollution and raise awareness in cities.

[Information Ghana](#) connects local communities to essential health, education, and social services information through an interactive platform.

[Atuservicio Bogotá](#) is a digital platform developed by Wingu to enhance access to municipal services and improve resilience in low-resource settings.

[Bboxx](#) provides innovative solutions to democratize access to vehicle ownership and electric mobility, driving clean energy adoption and economic growth across Africa.

[No Taka Tanzania](#) uses geospatial technology to create climate adaptation solutions for vulnerable populations, focusing on food security and migration.

[Burn Design Lab's Shea Roaster](#) reduces firewood use and emissions, improving health and sustainability for women in Ghana's shea butter industry.

[Ampersand](#) delivers clean, affordable electric transportation with Africa's largest e-motorcycle fleet and battery-swapping network, doubling drivers' incomes while advancing a zero-carbon future.

[SHE in STI:](#) The "She in STEM 2024" report spotlights women's contributions to science, technology, and innovation in driving sustainable development and addressing global challenges.



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Wingu

Ms. Upsana Jain
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2024 ROUNDTABLES Innovation Ecosystem

Engineering for Change and UNDESA, with the UN 10 Member Group, hosted a roundtable at the UN STI Forum 2024 to strengthen regional ecosystems for social innovation, focusing on aligning resources and expertise to support hardware-led entrepreneurs and drive sustainable, locally embedded innovation.



CORE THEMES IDENTIFIED

- **Funding & Financial Flexibility:** Entrepreneurs need flexible, milestone-based funding to adapt to project stages, bridge the "missing middle" in financial support, and secure "takeoff capital" to scale solutions.
- **Building Local Connections & Trust:** Early and inclusive engagement with local communities is essential to build trust, align innovations with local needs, and foster cultural understanding through community-driven design and trust-based relationships.
- **Public-Private Partnerships & Ecosystem Support:** The shift in Official Development Assistance (ODA) towards a two-way knowledge exchange underscores the need for partnerships to secure long-term resources and ensure alignment with community priorities.
- **Socioeconomic Preparedness:** Innovators must understand social justice, labor rights, and power dynamics while bridging educational gaps in emerging technologies and sustainability to succeed in diverse contexts.

- **Addressing Regulatory and Market Barriers:** Clear regulatory pathways, local government procurement opportunities, and "charity begins at home" policies can reduce barriers, integrate social innovators into procurement, and support risk mitigation for investors.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2025 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS:



Governments as Ecosystem Builders:

How can governments create policies and frameworks that nurture self-sustaining, resilient social entrepreneurship ecosystems aligned with STI for SDGs?



Capacity Building Needs:

What capacities do governments need to identify and support social entrepreneurship, and how can STI Roadmap partners help build them locally?



Strengthening Regional and Local Networks:

How can governments leverage regional networks to address local ecosystem gaps?