



Eleventh Annual Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

6-7 May 2026

Theme: Transformative, equitable and coordinated science, technology and innovation for the 2030 Agenda and a sustainable future for all

Guidelines for Side Event Proposals

Background

The eleventh annual Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals ([STI Forum](#)) will be held on Wednesday, 6 May and Thursday, 7 May 2026, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Forum will be convened by the President of ECOSOC and the meetings of the Forum will be co-chaired by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations and the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations. As per its mandate, the Forum is prepared by the [UN interagency task team on STI for the SDGs \(IATT\)](#), convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the [10-Member Group of High-Level Representatives](#) appointed by the Secretary-General.

In line with the 2026 theme of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) convened under the auspices of ECOSOC in July, the Forum will focus on “Transformative, equitable and coordinated science, technology and innovation for the 2030 Agenda and a sustainable future for all”. Special focus will be given to the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the HLPF, namely: SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. The

Forum will also consider how science, technology and innovation can be harnessed to accelerate progress across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and support follow up to the Summit of the Future and its Pact for the Future.

In connection with the 2026 STI Forum, **a limited number of side events** can be organized by Member States, the UN system, Intergovernmental Organizations and accredited non-governmental stakeholders. Side events will be an opportunity to share knowledge and science, technology, and innovation solutions to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, identify new and emerging issues around STI, exchange national and local experiences and practices, and showcase voluntary commitments in the areas of science, technology and innovation that can help to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The side events will serve as a gateway to the STI Forum and will primarily take place virtually and off-site though there are a limited number of opportunities for on-site side events at the margins of the STI Forum.

Eligibility

Member States, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), UN entities, and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) can apply to organize a side event. Submissions by universities, laboratories, and scientific and engineering organizations, partnerships and initiatives without consultative status will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All interested parties are strongly encouraged to partner with others to organize a side event.

Format

- Side-event sessions should be planned for a duration of **a maximum of 75 minutes**.
- Side events can be organized either in-person inside the UNHQ premises, in-person at off-site locations or in a virtual format. Due to limited availability of space for in-person side-events inside the UNHQ, side-event organizers are **highly encouraged to hold their events virtually**.
- Only registered and approved participants of the 2026 STI Forum may attend side events held within the UNHQ premises.
- In-person side events inside the UNHQ premises can only be held in English. Interpretation services will not be available for side events.
- Organizers are encouraged to make the side events as interactive and multi-segmented as possible, including by allocating sufficient time for dialogue with participants.
- Charging a fee for participation in side events is strictly prohibited.

Criteria for the selection of side events

The following principles will guide the selection of side events:

- Proposed side events must be closely related to the theme of the 2026 STI Forum.
- Side events should ensure gender and geographic balance and strive for meaningful participation of stakeholders, including civil society, women, youth, indigenous peoples, academia, persons with disabilities and others.

- Side events should highlight concrete success stories and examples of innovations, scientific breakthroughs, solutions and technologies that support the implementation of one or more SDGs, especially those under review in 2026 (SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17).
- Preference will be given to side events that suggest new, innovative formats for engagement and that have a clear event outcome vision, including announcements, commitments and specific follow-ups.
- Preference will be given to side events that are organized by coalitions of actors including UN Member States, UN entities and/or relevant Intergovernmental Organizations and recognized stakeholder networks, associations, Major Groups or other stakeholder constituencies. Only one organization should submit the application for any jointly organized side event.

Responsibilities of side event organizers

- Side event organizers will be responsible for covering all costs related to hosting their sessions.
- For in-person side event at UNHQ, **conference rooms will be allocated exclusively by the STI Forum Secretariat**. Organizers are therefore kindly requested not to contact DGACM directly to book rooms separately.
- Organizers of side events hosted inside the United Nations should NOT plan any physical, technical, or structural changes to the assigned Conference Rooms.
- Side event organizers' responsibilities include – but are not limited to – the invitation and travel arrangements for speakers, including visa and security clearance; checking registration status of speakers as needed; the oversight of the “run of show” and moderation of the event, including strict time management and note taking.
- Side-event organizers are responsible for promoting their events through their respective online and social media channels. The Secretariat will not produce fliers, distribute notices, or make any publicity effort for side events. The Secretariat will advertise the overall programme for the side events but not specific side events.
- Side-event organizers are required to submit a short summary of key recommendations and messages (maximum one page) to the UN Secretariat within two working days after the completion of the side event for publication. The Secretariat reserves the right to not post materials that are deemed inappropriate.

Application process

- Side events applications should be submitted for consideration through the dedicated form here: <https://forms.office.com/e/WADRUwF5Lh>
- Deadline for application is **6pm, 16 March 2026 (EST, New York Time)**.
- Applications should be limited to ONE per entity.
- Application of joint side event should be submitted by ONE entity only.
- UN Member States should apply through their Permanent Missions in New York.

Selection process

- The Secretariat will work with the Co-Chairs of the Forum to select side events, based on the above-mentioned criteria. Organizers of approved applications will be notified by email in late March 2026.
- Considering the high number of requests for events to be held in person at the UNHQ, the Secretariat may request that proposals addressing similar themes be merged.
- Following the selection of the proposals, the Secretariat will assign a meeting room and a timeslot for each approved in-person event inside of the UN Headquarters.
- The final side events programme will be posted on [the STI Forum 2026 website](#).

Further information

Please visit the 2026 STI Forum website for additional information about the Forum.

Should you have any questions regarding side events, please contact Ms. Nadine Salame (salame1@un.org), or Ms. Xinyi Zhang (xinyi.zhang@un.org) at the Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UNDESA, with the subject line "2026 STI Forum Side Events".