USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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Kickstarting Funding for mWomen Projects

We recognize that an infusion of capital upfront might be needed to help unlock additional resources from within your organizations/companies.

Apart from the grants being offered through the GSMA mWomen Program (as discussed at these Working Group meetings), there are a variety of bilateral and multilateral agencies that offer grants and financial assistance resources to private sector entities.

There is an overwhelming belief these days that for international development assistance to be effective, particularly from a donor perspective, it requires the involvement of the private sector. In fact, compared to just 15 years ago, overseas (official) bilateral and multilateral development assistance is much lower; most foreign investment and assistance comes from private capital.

Donor agencies can leverage their shrinking dollars more when they partner with private sector firms, and can therefore be more successful in meeting their own development objectives. Given the growing opportunities that mobile technology affords in meeting development goals, the same applies to donor support of mobile operators. Donors want to see MNOs be successful because they are a primary conduit of information and network creation for many beneficiaries. Also, because their reach and infrastructure footprint transcends most other technologies, extending deep into rural and remote communities. The more beneficiaries can take advantage of the services and coverage offered by mobile operators, the more they can strengthen their livelihoods and generate new (economic) potential.

The following opportunities may not be solely for mobile technology initiatives but they may be for innovation, new means of entrepreneurship, gender equality and women's empowerment, science and technology or rural development just to cite a few common themes. That is to say that in order to be eligible for grants, your companies may need to be somewhat creative with wordsmithing and tailoring applications for funding. Being creative should not be construed with being complex – I don't want to dissuade you from crafting proposals to meet the required criteria. Hopefully you have someone in-house or easily accessible who can prepare the documents.

Here are a few current opportunities. Please keep in mind that many of these organizations (and their funding), particularly the bilateral donors, are tied to their fiscal years cycles. As such, you'll want to be cognizant of their application deadlines and rounds of funding throughout the year. Some of these opportunities may no longer be available, I must caveat, but they should offer an illustrative example (not exhaustive) of what's available.

1. DFID (UK Department for International Development)

DFID offers several different challenge funds tailored to the private sector.

More information is available at: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/work-with-us/funding-opportunities/business/.

a. One challenge fund is for Girls' Education:

The UK's Girls' Education Challenge will support NGOs, charities and the private sector who can find better ways to provide education opportunities to marginalised girls in the poorest countries in Africa and Asia.

b. Another is the Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund:

Focus of Scheme

The Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF) offers grants on a competitive basis to private sector companies to support new and innovative business models in Africa. It is a private sector fund backed by some of the biggest names in development finance. The fund aims to encourage greater participation by Africa's poor in markets, both as consumers, and as workers and producers. The fund provides grants and "non-resources" loans on a competitive basis to fund profitable business ideas that also have a developmental impact on the poor.

c. A third is the Business Innovation Facility:

Focus of Scheme

The Business Innovation Facility helps the development and uptake of inclusive business models by companies in developing countries. The term inclusive business refers to profitable core business activities that have high development impacts; creating jobs, integrating local farmers and entrepreneurs in international supply chains and providing quality and affordable services to low income consumers.

d. A fourth is the Business Call to Action:

Focus of Scheme

The Business Call to Action (BCtA) aims to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by challenging companies to develop innovative business models that offer the potential for both commercial success and development impact. These types of business models are often described as "pro-poor" or "inclusive", in that they seek to profitably engage low-income populations across company value chains, and meet the needs of these populations through the development of appropriate and affordable products and services.

2. SIDA (Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency)

SIDA is developing new relationships with the business community to reduce poverty, create more jobs and encourage growth: http://www.sida.se/English/Partners/Private-sector/ and http://www.sida.se/Global/Partners/Näringsliv/SIDA%20folder_eng.pdf.

Innovations Against Poverty Programme:

Innovations Against Poverty is now closed for new applications for grants. Next deadline for submissions is November 2012. You can apply for Sida's Guarantees at any time though.

Innovations Against Poverty has two parallel application processes; one for **small grants** (under €20,000) and one for **large grants** (€20,000 - €200,000). The process is of a competitive nature, where grants are awarded to the best business plans which meet the criteria of the programme. First, the companies need to meet the eligibility criteria (outlined in the Guide for Applicants) to be considered. Among those companies a selection process takes place which rates how well the criteria are fulfilled by the information provided in the application. Finally the applications are ranked against one another.

3. USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development)

The best way to partner with USAID is through its Global Development Alliance (GDA) mechanism, the same mechanism that is funding the GSMA mWomen Program. Private sector applications are encouraged to apply through the Annual Program Statement (APS) at http://idea.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/2012_GDA_APS.pdf. They may either apply with an implementing partner in mind or may choose to work with USAID to identify an implementing partner. This mechanism is USAID's primary way of engaging with the private sector. The objective is to work with new partners to address new ways of doing business to meet development goals. The GDA works on a leverage approach to funding. Entities must be able to show at least a 1:1 match of funding (which may include in-kind resources) with USAID. If concepts are accepted, USAID will work internally to identify financial resources.

4. AusAID (Australian Agency for International Development)

The Enterprise Challenge Fund for the Pacific and South-East Asia: http://www.ausaid.gov.au/business/other_opps/Pages/ecf.aspx and http://www.enterprisechallengefund.org/.

The ECF is a competitive opportunity for businesses to obtain grants to assist in commercialising business projects in ECF participating countries.

Grants of $A100 000 to $A1.5million will be awarded to business projects that can be sustainable within three years and that meet the eligibility criteria, including being able to contribute *a minimum* of 50% of the project funds required.

Currently closed to bidding.

5. Norwegian Trust Fund for Private Sector and Infrastructure

http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTWAT/EXTNTFPSI/0,,contentMDK:20673856~menuPK:1722797~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:606765,00.html

The Norwegian Trust Fund for Private Sector and Infrastructure (NTF-PSI) provides grant resources for World Bank Group activities aimed at mainstreaming the investment climate, providing technical assistance in areas related to governance and infrastructure services for the poor, and promoting structured cooperation on petroleum sector governance issues.

Half of the funds are earmarked for Africa. Progress and priorities are discussed and agreed upon at meetings in Norway and Washington, usually in May and November every year.

The window for FY11-12 Call for Proposals has closed.

6. IFC (International Finance Corporation)

http://www1.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/corp_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/about+ifc/about_ifc_financing

How to Apply for Financing
IFC offers a wide variety of financial products for private sector projects in developing countries.

To be eligible for IFC funding, a project must meet a number of criteria. The project must:

- Be located in a developing country that is a member of IFC;
- Be in the private sector;
- Be technically sound:
- Have good prospects of being profitable;
- Benefit the local economy; and
- Be environmentally and socially sound, satisfying IFC environmental and social standards as well as those of the host country

7. ADB (Asia Development Bank)

http://www.adb.org/site/private-sector-financing/overview

As a catalyst for private investments, ADB provides direct financial assistance to private sector projects. While ADB's participation is usually limited, it leverages a large amount of funds from commercial sources to finance these projects. Projects must also have clear development impacts and/or demonstration effects that go beyond the benefits captured in the financial rate of return.

8. The World Bank

Development Grant Facility:
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/EXTFININSTRUMENTS/EXTTRUSTFUNDSANDGRANTS/EXTDGF/0,,menuPK:64161791~pagePK:64161828~piPK:64161823~th

eSitePK:458461,00.html and http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/EXTFININSTRUMENTS/EXTTRUSTFUNDSANDGRANTS/EXTDGF/0,,contentMDK:20225973~pagePK:64161825~piPK:64161011~theSitePK:458461,00.html.

The Development Grant Facility (DGF) was established in 1997 to integrate the overall strategy, allocations, and management of Bank grant-making activities funded from the Administrative Budget under a single umbrella mechanism.

Grant Strategy:

The DGF establishes grant-making as an integral part of the Bank's development work and an important complement to its lending and advisory services. It sets out the overall Bank strategy of using grants to a) encourage innovation, b) catalyze partnerships, and c) broaden the scope of Bank services. In addition, all grants must meet sector and institutional priorities, be of high quality, and conform to eight DGF eligibility criteria.

Allocations & Governance:

The DGF allocation mechanism calls for each grant proposal to have a Bank sponsor, for it to be reviewed and prioritized within Sectors and Networks, and then be considered against institutional priorities through a Bank-wide DGF Council. The DGF Council is supported by a small DGF secretariat team which stands ready to provide assistance.