GSMA

The GSMA Innovation Fund for AI-Enabled Financial Health

Terms and Conditions

Contents

01.	Objectives	2
02.	Focus of the Fund	3
03.	Eligibility to apply to the Fund	5
04.	Downstream partners	7
05.	Impact	8
06.	GSMA support available from the Fund	8
07.	Commitments from applicants/grantees	9
08.	Application process	10
09.	Questions?	10

01. Objectives

Over the past decade, digital financial services (DFS) have significantly expanded financial inclusion across low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), supported in large part by the growth of mobile money. As digital financial ecosystems mature, the challenge is shifting from account ownership to improving financial health outcomes. This includes enabling individuals and households to be more resilient to shocks, make better financial decisions, increase financial security and create more stable and sustainable livelihoods.

Recent advances in AI have created new opportunities to support this shift, including by improving the accessibility, relevance and delivery of services and information, and enabling more responsive and data-driven approaches. However, the evidence remains uneven, particularly in terms of which approaches deliver meaningful improvements in financial health, for whom and under what conditions.

The **GSMA Innovation Fund for AI-Enabled Financial Health ("the Fund") aims to test and scale commercially viable AI-enabled innovations that strengthen financial health for underserved populations in LMICs, while generating evidence on where and how AI can deliver additionality and meaningful impact**. The Fund will provide grants and venture-building support (see section 6) to small and growing enterprises,[1] particularly where grant funding can unlock additional impact, evidence or learning that commercial finance alone may not.

The Fund has complementary objectives:

1. To accelerate the development and scale of responsible and inclusive AI-enabled innovations that strengthen financial health for underserved populations in LMICs, supporting solutions with the potential for sustainable impact and scale.

2. To generate lessons on the role and added value of AI in strengthening financial health, including which approaches are effective, for whom and under what conditions.

3. To translate lessons from the portfolio into practical insights and guidance to inform the responsible development and scale of AI-enabled solutions that strengthen financial health in LMICs.

The Fund is funded by UK Aid from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) through its Global Research and Technology Development Portfolio and is supported by the GSMA and its members. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the UK Government.

Global Research and Technology Development
Funded by UK Government

1. **Small and growing enterprises** refers to commercially viable for-profit organisations with up to 250 employees that have significant potential and ambition for growth. To be eligible for the Fund, applicants need to demonstrate that most of their income is derived from commercial activities or be able to demonstrate a reliable path to sustainability via commercial activities that generate revenue.

02. Focus of the Fund

The Fund is interested in supporting **AI-enabled innovations** that strengthen **financial health** for underserved populations (especially women and girls, as well as people with disabilities) in LMICs, focusing on specific financial health outcomes (see below).

Financial health is defined as an individual's ability to manage daily finances, meet future financial obligations, maintain financial resilience to shocks, pursue financial goals and feel confident about their financial future. More information and examples can be found in the *FAQs*.

The Fund is open to solutions from any sector or operating context. However, applications will **only be considered** where (1) the proposed solution drives long-term financial health as its ultimate outcome, moving **beyond** access to financial services as an end in itself to **meaningfully** improve people's financial livelihoods, **AND** (2) the proposed solution contributes directly to one or more of the following three financial health outcomes:

1. **Resilience and protection:** Helping people prepare for, manage and recover from unexpected financial shocks while reducing the financial harm these shocks can cause. This could include AI-enabled fraud detection and consumer protection, risk and early warning information or tools that connect people to timely support or emergency resources.

2. **Financial agency and control:** Helping people make informed financial and livelihood decisions, access meaningful options and feel more in control of their financial lives. This could include personalised, AI-enabled financial coaching, financial guidance in their local language, market and pricing information or other tailored information and advisory services.

3. **Long-term security and goals:** Helping people meet future financial needs, build greater financial security and make progress on longer-term goals, including through more stable or diversified incomes. This could include AI-enabled employment or market matching, livelihood and market advisory or personalised tools supporting saving and longer-term financial planning.

The Fund is open to AI-enabled solutions that directly serve low-income and vulnerable people, as well as deep-tech or ecosystem-level innovations such as local language models or edge or on-device AI. In either case, the applicant must clearly demonstrate how the proposed solution contributes to one or more of the financial health outcomes outlined above.

Solutions that meet the following conditions will be scored highly:

- Solutions that either demonstrate credible evidence of the effectiveness of their solution, or those that show a clear commitment to generating robust evidence as part of the GSMA grant, including how immediate benefits such as increased access, reach or usage contribute to improved financial health.
- Solutions that clearly demonstrate that AI provides a clear and justified value proposition compared with traditional digital or non-AI approaches to financial health, and where this additionality can be demonstrated.
- Solutions that operate in diverse contexts such as humanitarian, fragile and broader development settings, where these solutions address locally relevant challenges and demonstrate a clear pathway to scale and financial health (as described above).

- Solutions that target underserved individuals or households in LMICs as end users, including those who are financially excluded and those who are financially included but remain vulnerable. Solutions that focus on micro-, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) qualify when there is a direct link to the financial health of MSME owners, their households or livelihoods.
- Solutions that demonstrate a strong gender lens in their solution design, or where the organisation commits to work with the GSMA during the grant period to create a more inclusive solution that will strengthen inclusivity and better address the needs of women and girls. Applicants are also encouraged to adopt, where relevant, a disability-inclusive approach to ensure solutions are accessible and relevant to people with disabilities.

Applicants that meet the following characteristics will be scored highly:

- Organisation is female-founded and/or female-led and/or has good representation of women at all levels.
- Organisation is locally led or has a strong presence in the country of implementation, with a commitment to supporting, upskilling and promoting local staff.
- Organisation has a clear understanding of how its solution will have a positive socio-economic impact on vulnerable individuals and/or communities – especially women – and has proactively set targets and systematically measures progress.
- Organisation has a clear value proposition for mobile network operators (MNOs) and other technology companies that could help scale the business model in the short or long term.
- Organisation has partnerships with relevant local stakeholders (e.g. community-based organisations) to deliver the project.
- Organisation has not previously received UK Aid grant funding through the GSMA. Applicants that have received GSMA grant funding in the past will need to demonstrate the additionality of the new grant.

03. Eligibility to apply to the Fund

To be eligible to apply to the Fund, applicants must meet all the following criteria:

3.1 Leverage digital technology, especially mobile, to deliver solutions

- Be able to demonstrate how AI and other emerging technologies e.g. mobile big data, Internet of Things (IoT), remote sensing, computer vision, drones, in conjunction with mobile technology, will be used to deliver the solution described in section 2.

3.2 Entity type

- Be a for-profit, private-sector, small and growing enterprise in a low- or middle-income country (LMIC).
- Have active users and commercial revenue (users and revenue from any products or services) in at least one eligible country (see section 3.3 Geography).
- Be an existing entity registered and operating in the country of project implementation at the time of application (whether domestic or foreign-owned or a joint venture). In cases where responsibility for service delivery lies with a downstream partner (see section 4) rather than with the applicant (e.g. service delivery by a local government), it may be acceptable for the applicant to be registered in a country other than that of project implementation (see geographic restrictions in section 3.3).
- Applicants must demonstrate the sustainability of the project beyond the grant period.

  *Please note that only **one** organisation can apply for funding and become a grantee. It must be the organisation that is in charge of delivering most of the outputs of the proposed project.*

3.3 Geography

- Propose a project that is implemented in one country, or a maximum of two countries, eligible to receive official development assistance (ODA).
- *The list of eligible countries in these regions, and details on additional due diligence checks in certain countries, can be found in the FAQs.*
- *Please note that as a 501(c)(3) organisation, the GSMA Mobile for Development Foundation Inc. is obliged to comply with the sanctions, laws and regulations of the United States and other sanctions regimes as may be applicable. These sanctions and laws and other legal or regulatory regimes may restrict the GSMA from distributing grant funding to certain entities or regions as indicated in the FAQs.*

3.4 Current market presence

- Have an existing entity registered and operating in the country or countries of project implementation. The exceptions described under section 3.2, Entity type, may apply where responsibility for service delivery lies with an eligible downstream partner.
- *Please see the FAQs for additional eligibility information.*

3.5 Ability to receive grant funds

- Applicants must have a bank account capable of receiving payments in GBP. Generally, the account should be in the country of project implementation, but exceptions may be considered.

3.6 Matching contribution

- The Fund requires a matching contribution from the applicant to demonstrate interest and trust from the wider investor community. Acceptance of match funding is subject to approval by the Fund.
- Applicants must provide a matching contribution of **at least 25%** of the grant amount requested. *For instance, if an applicant is requesting GBP 200,000 from the Fund, a contribution of at least GBP 50,000 from other eligible matching contribution sources is required.*
- The matching contribution must be used towards the proposed project and spent in full across the 15- to 18-month project cycle.

  More information about the type of eligible matching contributions can be found in the FAQs.

3.7 Financial and audit compliance

- Be able to demonstrate adequate financial systems for regular financial reporting to the GSMA
- Be able to provide at least one year's unqualified audited financial statements/accounts prior to contracting.
- *If selected to proceed to due diligence, applicants will need to comply with an additional series of checks. More information can be found in the FAQs.*

3.8 Legal compliance

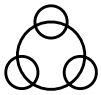
- Be fully compliant with relevant business licensing, taxation, employee and other regulations in all applicable countries of grant project operation.

3.9 The Fund will not support:

- The following types of organisations, which are **not eligible** to apply to the Fund:
  - Governments and government-owned agencies (or appointed government agencies)
  - Non-profit organisations
  - United Nations (UN) agencies
  - Mobile network operators (MNOs)
  - Universities or academic organisations
  - Start-up accelerators and incubators

  However, eligible applicants are encouraged to have partnerships with such organisations when it strengthens the value proposition of their application.
- Projects that focus solely on products and solutions for high-end devices (including iOS) not associated with low-income users.
- Projects solely with a research focus.

- The development or prototyping of any new hardware solutions. Where there is a proposal to use existing hardware solutions (e.g. IoT, remote sensing, computer vision, drones) as part of the project, applicants must be able to clearly demonstrate that all required approvals for wide-scale importation and use of the hardware exist prior to grant execution. In instances where there is assembly of completed pre-existing and previously used hardware components, this may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the GSMA. Applicants may be required to respond to additional due diligence requests from the GSMA, including disclosing relevant supply chains.
- Non-commercially sustainable distribution of assets directly to target populations, including the purchase and distribution of mobile phones, tablets or other communication devices to target populations/end users.
- The deployment of solutions, partnerships or models that are already proven and do not apply an innovative approach. Innovative adaptation of existing solutions will be considered, however.



04. Downstream partners

As defined in the GSMA Innovation Fund Downstream Partner Guidelines, downstream partners are defined as sub-recipients, consultants/sub-contractors/suppliers or project stakeholders/partners. *More information can be found in the FAQs.*

Where necessary, we encourage applicants to have meaningful partnerships with relevant **local** eligible stakeholders to deliver the project.

Focus on sub-recipients:

- As part of the application process, it is essential that the applicant names all sub-recipients of their project. **These sub-recipients will be subject to the same eligibility criteria as the applicant** (as listed in section 3), except as otherwise stated in this section.
- The following organisations are not eligible to be sub-recipients but are eligible to be consultants/sub-contractors/suppliers or project stakeholders/partners:
  - Governments and government-owned agencies (or appointed government agencies)
  - United Nations (UN) agencies
  - Mobile network operators (MNOs)
  - Universities or academic organisations
  - Start-up accelerators and incubators

05. Impact

All applicants to the Innovation Fund must demonstrate how their proposed project will contribute to improved financial health for underserved end users in LMICs. Projects should demonstrate a clear and measurable pathway between the proposed AI-enabled solution and outcomes for end users, including how it will strengthen people's capacity to anticipate and prepare for financial shocks, absorb and respond when shocks occur and adapt and thrive over the longer term through more stable and resilient livelihoods. Applicants should be aware of how their proposal intends to impact low-income individuals and other vulnerable groups, including women.

Shortlisted applicants will be required to develop a **roadmap** that shows how their activities will lead to specific impacts in the short and long term. If funded, the GSMA will work with grantees to develop a list of key performance indicators (KPIs), which will be reported regularly throughout the project and for two to five years after the end of the grant.

Grantees will report and provide evidence of their progress against targets every three months during the project.

Examples of KPIs include:

1. **Reach:** Direct users of grant-funded product and services, active users of grant-funded products and services and indirect beneficiaries of grant-funded product and services. Reach must be disaggregated by gender and low-income status.
2. **Project-specific impact:** End user behaviour changes, increased income or savings, new or improved access to services and additional value from the use of AI solutions.
3. **Climate impact:** If relevant, grantees may report on climate and/or environmental impact indicators, such as water quality and carbon capture.
4. **Scale and sustainability:** Revenue generated by grant-funded products and services, additional funding/crowding-in secured by applicants, number of technological innovations and innovative business models commercially launched by applicants and number of partnerships secured by applicants.

06. GSMA support available from the Fund

The Fund support package includes:

– **Grant funding:**

- The amount requested can be any amount between GBP 100,000 and GBP 250,000 for a grant that lasts between 15 and 18 months. Applicants are expected to justify the submitted budget amount.
- The grant awarded cannot contain any profit element and will be made on a cost-only basis.
- The Fund will not cover indirect costs. Applicants may allocate up to 10% of the grant for eligible direct overhead costs that are necessary to deliver the project.
- The Fund will closely oversee the monetary use of the grant and only disburse funding based on the achievement of milestones and satisfactory grant spending. Milestone-based payments will be dependent on the grantee providing proof that mutually agreed milestones/targets have been completed/achieved. Grantees should be prepared to receive reimbursement in arrears of incurred expenditure.

  More information can be found in the FAQs.

- Facilitation of **partnerships with MNOs** (where relevant and possible).
- **Tailored technical assistance and venture-building support** to build the grantee's capacity.
- Facilitation of **connections with investors** (where relevant and possible).
- **Participation in GSMA Innovation Fund Exchanges** (learning exchange programmes with grantees and alumni, capacity building and connections with investors and other ecosystem stakeholders).
- **Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) support** to assess the grantee's impact and theory of change (ToC).
- Opportunity to increase the grantee's **visibility and profile** to potential partners through features in GSMA publications, on social media and participation in industry-leading mobile connectivity events.



07. Commitments from applicants/grantees

Applicants that are shortlisted by the Fund must be committed to:

- Complying with due diligence requests and working with the GSMA to refine their budget and proposed project.
- Presenting their project proposal to the Recommendation Fund Panel virtually and support an in-person market due diligence visit.
- Applicants that are selected by the Decision Fund Panel must be committed to executing the GSMA's Grant Agreement without material modifications.

Applicants that are contracted (grantees) must be committed to:

- Adhering to mandatory financial and project reporting: monthly project progress reports, including regular meetings with GSMA staff in charge of the grantee; financial reports and spot-check reviews, including budgetary compliance.
- Taking steps to close any compliance gaps identified during the due diligence process and providing monthly progress updates.
- Adhering to mandatory impact reporting of mutually agreed KPIs and sharing other project data with the GSMA. This will be done in compliance with privacy and data protection requirements. Such data collection requirements will be in effect from the start of the funded project up to two to five years after the end of the grant period.
- Actively participating in monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) activities led by the GSMA.
- Using the Principles for Digital Development when designing their solutions.
- Identifying and managing material risks associated with their AI-enabled solution, including risks relating to accuracy, bias, fairness, privacy, security, transparency, accessibility and potential harm to users. Grantees must take reasonable steps to monitor, document and address such risks and cooperate with any Responsible AI assessments requested by the GSMA.
- Actively attending in-person or virtual grantee portfolio events (e.g. bootcamps) and learning sessions organised by the GSMA.
- Travelling to GSMA-organised events (bootcamps, MWC events) where relevant and possible. Part of the grant funding will be allocated specifically to cover event-related travel expenses.
- Cooperating with project audits (including mandatory final audit) or assurance reviews requested by the GSMA or its funders, including providing timely access to relevant financial and project records, supporting documentation, personnel and partners for interviews, and responding to auditor queries within the requested timelines.

08. Application process

All applications to the Fund MUST be submitted in English.

Stage 1 **Eligibility and Application**	**November–December 2026** The deadline for submitting your eligibility and application form: 17 December 2026 at 23:59 UTC (UK time)
Stage 2 **Project Evaluation**	**February–May 2027**
Stage 3 **Recommendation Panel**	**May 2027** Applicants must be available to pitch virtually.
Stage 4 **Project Appraisal**	**May-July 2027** Applicants must be available for an in-person visit from the GSMA.
Stage 5 **Selection Panel**	**August 2027**
Stage 6 **Contracting**	**August 2027-September 2027**
Stage 7 **Implementation**	**October 2027-up to March 2029**

09. Questions?

For any further questions related to the Fund, please see the *FAQs*.