SDG 8.7 Innovation Challenge

Digital Information Systems for collaborative work to end child labour, forced labour and human trafficking

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Context and scope

Alliance 8.7 is an inclusive global partnership committed to achieving Target 8.7 of the SDGs. This Target calls for States to: take immediate action and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030 and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms. The strategic objectives of the Alliance 8.7 are: 1) Accelerating action; 2) Conducting research and sharing knowledge; 3) Driving innovation and leveraging resources

An integral part of Alliance 8.7 are **Pathfinder Countries**. These are countries that commit to going further and faster to achieve the objectives of SDG Target 8.7. They are committed to accelerating efforts and willing to try new approaches from which others can learn to support Target 8.7's urgent deadlines.

The ILO is currently the Secretariat of Alliance 8.7 and is the leading UN agency on the elimination of child labour and forced labour. Decades of development cooperation programmes to support Member States in implementing relevant conventions[1] resulted in tremendous achievements. For example, the last **Global Estimates on Child Labour** show that more than 90 million children have been successfully withdrawn from child labour and referred to education, vocational training or other services.

The fight, however, is not over: 160 million children are still trapped in child labour and 40 million people are victims of modern slavery, as indicated in the **ILO Global Estimates on Forced Labour**. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this situation and there is a real risk that years of progress in the fight against child labour could be reversed. .

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[1]   These Conventions are binding and provide minimum standards for Member States that ratify them. The relevant conventions for this challenge include: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (C182), Minimum Age Convention (C138), Forced Labour Convention (C29) and Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (C105)

Within this context, it is paramount to identify new solutions to meet the SDG Target. It is important to involve in the process existing and new actors and leverage their talent and ideas and the use of new technologies.

Alliance 8.7, supported by the Accelerator Lab 8.7 programme, is thus inviting the innovators community to participate in the **SDG 8.7 Innovation Challenge** to bring new ideas to create **Digital Information Systems for collaborative work to end child labour, forced labour and human trafficking**.

Alliance 8.7 partners and other innovators that have a passion for creating social impact by bringing new ideas that will break the status quo and accelerate the achievement of SDG Target 8.7 are therefore invited to take part of this Innovation Challenge.

The challenge **focuses on pathfinder countries as beneficiaries; however, proposals with innovative solutions can come from all over the world**. Pathfinder countries have been selected as the target because they have shown a strong political commitment of decision makers and have established a roadmap with specific priorities to achieve SDG Target 8.7, all of which should guarantee a smooth process and replicability of the solutions identified. (Please see the Annex for the full list of pathfinder countries.)

To promote the development, implementation, uptake and scaling of award winning innovation proposals, the selected candidates will be invited to present their project during one of a series of Regional Innovation Sandbox events. The Regional Innovation Sandbox events are a series problem-solving workshops for stakeholders to explore ways to generate new research and policy solutions and tackle resourcing challenges to enhance policy action. The featured project will benefit from the input, guidance and support of a diverse international multistakeholder community composed of private sector, governmental, research and field experts within the respective region. Participants will convene for discussion on how to take the project to the next level (whether testing, replication, etc). The meetings will be designed to bring the winning project team to connect to a network of new partnerships to offer a greater foundation of support for further substantive and methodological development of the idea and also potential resourcing partners to support scaling up.

Description of the Challenge

The fight against child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking includes a wide array of stakeholders including different government institutions, such as Ministries of Labour, Education, Social Development, Statistics Offices, protection and prevention programmes, workers' and employers' organizations, civil society organizations, among others. Effective responses to end these human rights violations require a great deal of coordination between all these stakeholders.

The process to become an Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country starts by a strong political commitment and by bringing all these actors together to agree on specific priorities and a roadmap to accelerate action towards SDG Target 8.7. The purpose of this process is to create synergies, avoid overlap between the efforts of each of these stakeholders, work together towards a common goal, and therefore make better use of resources.

These countries have set ambitious goals that have been affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The root causes of child labour and forced labour – including poverty, limited access to decent work opportunities for those of legal working age, social marginalization, discrimination, the lack of universal quality education, the prevalence of the informal economy and weak social dialogue – are likely to be exacerbated. In this context, the need for reliable and real time data and coordination has gained even more importance.

A survey was conducted among pathfinder countries to identify common challenges in the implementation of their roadmaps. One of the common concerns identified relates to the need for **greater coordination** between stakeholders and for **effective information systems** to prevent and tackle child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking. Enhanced information and coordination mechanisms would allow **cross-referencing between relevant institutions** for prevention and protection programmes to provide the necessary **information for decision-making** at all levels.

What are pathfinder countries looking for that could be addressed through digital solutions?

– Have access to real time data on child labour, forced labour and human trafficking cases even in areas with limited connectivity.

– Reduce the amount of time between the identification of child labour, forced labour and human trafficking cases and the referral to protection systems or programmes.

– Promote coordination and information sharing between national and subnational stakeholders

– Information systems/frameworks that allow the involvement of multiple actors and provide means to make different information systems complementary and compatible.

– Cross-border information sharing to tackle human trafficking.

– In countries that are close to eradicating child labour, digitalised case management with cross reference to relevant stakeholders to allow identification and early prevention of children at risk of exploitation

– Some countries have set themselves the challenge to integrate all topics under SDG Target 8.7, including child labour, forced labour and human trafficking under one single framework: this involves an even wider array of stakeholders and systems to coordinate.

– Relevant and real time data that allows for improving the design and therefore effectiveness of public policy.

– Information management systems/frameworks that reinforce identification and prevention by triggering alerts for areas at higher risk, thus facilitating decision making and the prioritization of resources.

– Present evidence on 'what works or what does not', in terms of monitoring the impact of national and local government policy intervention on fighting against child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking;

– Monitor and assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on child labour, forced labour, or human trafficking;

– Leverage the role of technology and AI in combatting child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking (e.g. monitoring and measurement).

What should be taken into account in the design of the digital solutions?

– **Replicability:** the aim is to create solutions that can benefit more than one country; pathfinder countries are at different stages in the path towards SDG Target 8.7 and they have also different levels of digital readiness. Proposed solutions can target a specific country or region; they should, however, take into account the aspect of replicability.

– **Modular/progressive implementation:** Consider creating modular and progressive solutions that countries at different development stages can implement depending of their specific context, or that can be implemented in phases depending on the availability of funding.

- **Flexibility in terms of design**, so that it can be adapted in the future, for example including new actors or topics.
- **Financial sustainability:** solutions that involve a financial sustainability strategy are highly encouraged. Innovative financing mechanisms to sustain the proposed solution can be explored.

Eligibility Criteria

Alliance 8.7 welcomes applications from its partners and from any individual or any formally constituted and registered organization/company. By organizations, we mean government agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations, public and private enterprises, regional and sectoral bodies and research organizations, cooperatives, education and training institutions including universities.

The idea to be submitted can be a joint collaborative effort by several stakeholders of those described above: in such cases, a project leader should be identified to coordinate with the ILO as the Secretariat of Alliance 8.7.

Applicants are expected to include, among their team members or organization, individuals who have knowledge of and experience in the different areas necessary to implement the proposal.

Ideas and solutions at any stage of development are welcome. These can be innovations at an early stage or at a more advanced stage.

Solutions can come from any country in the world; they should, however, target pathfinder countries. These can focus on a single country solution or have a regional/subregional approach.

NGOs and civil society organizations, private enterprises, research organizations, cooperatives, education and training institutions including universities participating to the global challenge are eligible and encouraged to include a proposal for innovative financing mechanisms.

The Alliance 8.7 reserves the right to carry out reasonable due diligence, including through the contacting of references and other third parties to confirm eligibility of participants and may refuse to award the grant to a participant should there be a suspicion of any irregularities, fraudulent activities, etc.

Application process

Before submitting a solution, carefully read this guidelines and make sure you meet the eligibility criteria.

Submit your solution on the ILO Innovation Platform by 15 August 2021 (11:59 Geneva time). After this time, applications will be closed. To submit an idea, please go to the **Challenge page**. The applicant will have to sign in using a Microsoft, Facebook or Google account or creating a new account on Teams Ideas by clicking on "sign up now".

Proposals can be submitted in **English, French and Spanish**. No fee is required to participate in the SDG 8.7 Innovation Challenge. Applicants will receive a confirmation email that their application has been received. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Evaluation criteria

Demand driven: serves specific needs of pathfinder countries described in these guidelines.

Sustainable: adapted to the country's context and develops the right sets of skills for the countries to own and sustain the initiative. There is a strong likelihood for the benefits (and/ or activities) of the solution to continue beyond Alliance 8.7 support. NGOs and civil society organizations, private enterprises, research organizations, cooperatives, education and training institutions including universities participating to the global challenge are eligible and are encouraged to include a proposal for innovative financing mechanisms. Solutions from these set of actors that include innovative financing mechanisms to sustain the operationalization, implementation and scalability in the long-term of the proposed idea are highly encouraged.

Scalable & replicable: Can be adapted to different contexts/challenges. Solutions that can benefit more than one country; take into account pathfinder countries' different stages in the path towards SDG Target 8.7 and different levels of digital readiness.

Flexible design: Considers a modular/progressive implementation or similar approach that gives the flexibility to implement depending on availability of funding or depending on countries' specific contexts; it can be adapted in the future, for example including new actors or topics.

Measurable: Defined, with specific milestones and objectives.

Innovative: The proposal focuses on issues of an urgent nature or that have not been explored before. It is substantially different and creative (i.e. through new approaches, tools, or methodologies), leverages the use of new technologies, and/or adds value to existing solutions through digital technologies.

Inclusive: Involvement of all stakeholders.

Prize

There will be up to 3 winners

– **Financial Support:** USD 30,000 to develop and implement the proposed solution. One winning digital innovation proposal will be chosen to receive additional support from the from **Research to Action Project** to implement their project of up to USD 20,000 if it includes a compelling plan for innovative financing or shows the greatest potential for scaling up to other national contexts, through innovation financing mechanisms.

– **Access to Technical Support:** winning proposals will receive technical support to turn their ideas into ready-to-implement prototypes.

– **Pilot:** Once the prototype is developed, innovators and partners will test the solution through a pilot test in selected countries.

– **Visibility:** winning proposals will benefit from global communication efforts including an invitation to a global event at the end of the year where the innovative idea will be presented to a wide range of stakeholders and to the next Global Conference on Child Labour in May 2022.

– **Access to a wide network of experts in the area:** winning ideas and shortlisted proposals will be invited to join an Innovation Network including a series of Regional Innovation Sandbox events. Through the network, members will have the opportunity to exchange with other innovators, to share their solutions with Alliance 8.7 partners, and hold regular discussions about different SDG Target 8.7-related challenges that could act as a basis for future innovation challenge calls for proposals, hackathons, and other innovation initiatives. The regional innovation sandbox workshops will respond to problems faced by countries in the effort to fill in gaps and tackle resourcing challenges to enhance policy action.

Resource pack

Global Estimates of Child Labour

Global Estimates of Modern Slavery

Alliance 8.7 Website

Pathfinder Countries profiles on Alliance 8.7 website

Annex

Alliance 8.7 - Pathfinder Countries

Countries that have sent a written expression of interest to become Pathfinder Countries

1. Albania
2. Cameroon
3. Chile
4. Costa Rica
5. Côte d'Ivoire
6. Democratic Republic of Congo
7. Ethiopia
8. Fiji
9. France
10. Ghana
11. Guatemala
12. Honduras
13. Madagascar
14. Malawi
15. Mauritania
16. Mexico
17. Morocco
18. Nepal
19. Netherlands
20. Nigeria
21. Peru
22. Sri Lanka
23. Tunisia
24. Uganda
25. Vietnam