



OPTions Initiative Request for Proposals

Options for Pregnancy Termination Innovation Initiative, Round 3

REVISED - November 24, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Women's rights are human rights. This includes sexual and reproductive rights — and the right to access safe and legal abortions."

- Canada's *Feminist International Assistance Policy*

Every year, there are more than 25 million unsafe abortions, resulting in approximately 7 million women and girls being admitted to health facilities for complications and 22,800 to 31,000 deaths. Virtually all (97%) of these unsafe abortions occur in low- and middle-income countries and where pregnancy termination services and commodities are difficult to access¹.

Access to pregnancy termination is fundamental to gender equality and the empowerment of women, girls, and people with diverse sexual and gender identities². The right to choose when and if to have a child is linked to the ability to pursue education, build livelihoods, participate in society, and thrive. Limiting these abilities has countless implications for the wellbeing of women, girls, people with diverse sexual and gender identities, their families, and entire communities. Even where abortion is legal and technically available, access to information, products and services is often limited. Those who choose to terminate a pregnancy often face significant stigma stemming from social norms and cultural beliefs, which is made worse by a lack of user-friendly and youth-friendly services.

Historically, research in the area of pregnancy termination medications and procedures have been disincentivized, which limits the available options of abortion methods available. However, there is potential for discovery of a new method that is more easily administered, convenient, accessible, and economical ("next generation method"). In addition to new methods, innovation is needed to overcome persistent barriers that continue to limit where, when, and how a women, girl, or person with a diverse sexual or gender identity can terminate a pregnancy using current methods ("access interventions").

Access to safe and legal abortion is vital for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3: **Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**, and SDG 5: **Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**, specifically for the targets of ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and reducing the global maternal mortality ratio.

The goal of the **Options for Pregnancy Termination Innovation Initiative ("OPTions Initiative")** is to support **Bold Ideas with Big Impact**[®] for women's and girls' and people with diverse sexual and gender identities' access to safe abortion in low- and middle-

¹ Guttmacher Institute, *Abortion Worldwide 2017: Uneven Progress and Unequal Access* (March 2018)

² Compared with heterosexual women, sexual minorities are more likely to have teen and unintended pregnancies. Research suggests that, compared with heterosexual women, sexual minority women are more often exposed to risk factors (e.g., earlier sexual initiation for teen and unintended pregnancy; sexual minority women also have additional risk factors that are unique to their experiences).

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5819992/>

income countries. We seek innovative and transformative approaches that put women, girls and people with diverse sexual and gender identities in control of where, when, and how they terminate their pregnancy. The focus of this call is to support the development and testing of 1) **new approaches to increasing early access to existing abortion products and services**, and 2) **next generation methods of pregnancy termination, menses induction or conception interruption**.

Successful “Access” proposals will be awarded seed grants of up to \$250,000 CAD and Next Generation Methods” proposals will be awarded seed grants of between \$250,000 - \$400,000 CAD over 18 to 24 months to develop and test the proposed innovation. Assuming a sufficient number of proposals of merit are received, Grand Challenges Canada aims to award approximately 30 seed grants this round.

By the end of the seed grant, innovators are expected to have demonstrated proof of concept of their idea, developed a plan for scale and sustainability, and attracted interest from key stakeholders and partners needed to proceed along a path to scale and sustainability. Successful innovators may be invited to apply for Transition to Scale³ funding.

³ Transition to Scale (TTS) is a funding instrument open to innovators that successfully achieve proof of concept. TTS applications are on an invitation-only basis. The terms of TTS funding are described on the Grand Challenges Canada website.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Application deadlines will depend on whether the application is for the “access” or “next generation” funding stream. Please review the full Eligibility Criteria in Section 3.3 as there have been significant changes since the Round 1 & 2 Requests for Proposals.

Deadline	ACCESS APPLICANTS	NEXT GENERATION APPLICANTS
Registration	Due to processing times, registration for a Fluxx Portal account is suggested no later than August 1, 2021	Registration will be processed on a rolling basis. Early registration is preferred. Please register before starting the application process to ensure there are funds remaining.
Submission	August 11, 2021, at 12:00 P.M. EST	Full applications will be accepted on a rolling basis from June 16, 2021 until December 31, 2022 (or until funds are exhausted). Early submissions are advantageous as the call will be closed once funds have been spent.

To apply for funding, applicants **MUST** use the online application form provided, which is **ONLY** accessible via the Grand Challenges Canada’s Fluxx Portal (<https://gcc.fluxx.io>). (Please see Section 3.2 *Instructions for Application Portal, Fluxx*)

For access applicant questions that are not addressed in the FAQ, contact info@optionsinitiative.org or message on WhatsApp (+1 (437) 219-1614, QR code below) by July 16th, 2021. A refreshed FAQ document will be available on the OPTions Initiative website on July 20th, 2021. Next generation methods applicants may send questions at any time.



If you require technical assistance with registration or the online application, contact Grand Challenges Canada’s Fluxx Technical Support Team at <https://www.grandchallenges.ca/fluxxsupport/>

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA

Grand Challenges Canada's vision is: **A world in which innovation accelerates the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.** Our mission is: **To catalyze innovation that saves and improves the lives of the most vulnerable in Canada and low- and middle-income countries.**

Grand Challenges Canada is dedicated to supporting **Bold Ideas with Big Impact®**. With funding from a variety of government partners and organizations, including Global Affairs Canada, our mission is to support innovation that saves and improves the lives of the most vulnerable in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and Canada. Our vision is a world in which innovation accelerates the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

One of the largest impact-first investors in Canada, and with a feminist investment approach, Grand Challenges Canada has supported a pipeline of over 1,300 innovations in over 100 countries. Grand Challenges Canada estimates that these innovations have the potential to save up to 1.78 million lives and improve up to 64 million lives by 2030.

Grand Challenges Canada is hosted in Toronto at the University Health Network.

For more information, please see: <https://www.grandchallenges.ca/funding-opportunities/integrated-innovation/>.

See <https://www.grandchallenges.ca/> for information on our funding programs, and <https://www.grandchallenges.ca/who-we-are/discover-our-innovations-and-results/> to see what Grand Challenges Canada has funded to date.

1.2 THE OPTIONS INITIATIVE

The Options for Pregnancy Termination Innovation Initiative ("OPTions Initiative") is Grand Challenges Canada's investment program for safe pregnancy termination innovations.

The goal of the OPTions Initiative is to support women's, girls', and people with diverse sexual and gender identities' access to safe abortion in low- and middle-income countries. The OPTions Initiative seeks innovative and transformative approaches that put women, girls, and people with diverse sexual and gender identities in control of where, when, and how they terminate their pregnancy by investing in the development and testing of 1) new approaches to increasing early access to existing abortion products and services ("access" innovations), and 2) next generation methods of pregnancy termination ("next generation" innovations).

1.3 THE PROBLEM

The impact of unsafe abortion is profound. It is not only a significant cause of death and health complications in girls, women, and people with diverse sexual and gender identities, but has incalculable economic and social consequences. The Guttmacher Institute estimates that there are more than 25 million unsafe abortions annually. The vast majority of these abortions (about 97%) occur in the developing world. As a result, approximately 7 million women and girls are admitted to health facilities with complications and 22,800 to 31,000 die annually, making unsafe abortions one of the leading global causes of maternal mortality. Women in Africa and Latin America are disproportionately affected. In Africa there are 141 deaths per 100,000 induced abortions, and in Latin America there are 108. The global and the Asian average case fatality are roughly the same at 62 deaths per 100,000 induced abortions.⁴

Voluntary family planning, including access to safe and legal abortion, has been shown to improve maternal and newborn health outcomes, advance women's empowerment, and bring socioeconomic benefits. Healthier women with fewer children participate more in the workforce, resulting in economic benefits that extend to children who are better educated and able to be more economically productive, thus leading to a reduction in poverty. When children are healthier, the average number of desired children decreases, bolstering a virtuous cycle for continuing improvements in health and economic development and further reductions in poverty.

Limiting these choices has a myriad of implications for the wellbeing of women, girls, people with diverse sexual and gender identities, their families, and entire communities. And yet, even where abortion is legal and technically feasible, access to information, products and services can be limited due to a wide range of complex and intertwined barriers, and there is often limited choice in terms of the method of pregnancy termination. The most prominent limiting factors, include the following:

- Cost of products, services, and the transport required to access them
- Distance from a health centre, provider, pharmacy, or mobile connection
- Availability of quality user-friendly information
- Availability, accessibility and range of quality assured products and services
- Access to privacy, a mobile phone and/or method of online payment essential for remote self-administration of medical abortion with or without health professional accompaniment.
- Legal requirements such as mandatory waiting periods and/or third party or parental consent.
- Stigma stemming from sociocultural norms and beliefs
- Lack of user-friendly and youth-friendly services

⁴ Guttmacher Institute, *Abortion Worldwide 2017: Uneven Progress and Unequal Access* (March 2018)

A new addition to this list is **the effect of the coronavirus pandemic** on supply chains, service provision, communication channels, sexual and gender-based violence, and regulations and policy. In some countries, the pandemic has led to rapid implementation of delivery innovations and/or an “essential service” designation that has transformed and improved care for some people and has increased uptake of medical abortion. Despite this positive development, in other countries, there has been a constraining effect due to lockdowns, supply chain interruptions and stricter regulation. In all countries, clinical trials have suffered from delayed ethics approvals and strict physical distancing requirements limiting critical scientific discovery.

Innovation is needed to overcome persistent and new barriers that limit where, when, and how a woman or girl can terminate a pregnancy. To date, the OPTions Initiative has invested over CAD \$10.6 million in 38 early-stage innovations ultimately destined to avert the need of millions of women, girls, and people with diverse sexual and gender identities to resort to illegal, unsafe, or self-induced alternatives each year.

2. APPROACH

2.1 PURPOSE AND FOCUS

The goal of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to support women’s, girls’, and people with diverse sexual and gender identities’ access to safe abortion in low- and middle-income countries. We seek innovative and transformative approaches that put women, girls, and people with diverse sexual and gender identities in control of where, when, and how they terminate their pregnancy.

The focus of this call is to support the development and testing of 1) **new or improved approaches to increasing early access to existing abortion products and services**, and 2) **next generation methods of pregnancy termination, menses induction or conception interruption** (see Box 1). Grand Challenges Canada seeks bold ideas designed to be implemented in low- and middle-income originating from academic, non-profit organizations, or for-profit entities, as well as other recognized institutions. The following types of institutions are particularly encouraged to apply:

- Community based organizations and movements
- New and/or unusual entrants to the sexual and reproductive health and rights space that add value and bring new perspectives to the practice of safe abortion
- Institutions that are positioned to introduce novel ways of addressing the problem described in Section 1.3.
- Academic or research institutions (for next generation applicants)
- Youth, woman and/or LGBTQI+-led or serving organizations
- Feminist organizations

BOX 1. DEFINITION “Next Generation Methods”

OPTions refers to Next Generation Methods as the discovery and/or trial of any new or significantly improved abortifacients, conception interrupters or menses inducers or, equipment or procedures for interrupting pregnancy processes.

- Social enterprises and/or models demonstrating early potential for financial sustainability

Proposed innovations must be **bold, innovative, transformational and ‘outside-the-box’**, and must have the potential to represent a significant improvement over current access to or methods of safe abortion in either of the following two focus areas:

1. **ACCESS: Introducing or increasing early access to manual vacuum aspiration (MVA)⁵ and/or medical abortion (MA)⁶.** This includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Decentralizing and de-medicalizing abortion care
 - b. Reclassifying existing abortion methods to fit within relevant regulatory frameworks
 - c. Reframing and normalizing abortion to combat stigma
 - d. Increasing the number of trained providers and available safe services
 - e. Reducing economic barriers to accessing safe abortion
 - f. Improving access to information that will help a girl, woman, or person with a diverse sexual and gender identity to safely terminate a pregnancy

Note: Only institutions legally incorporated in a low- or middle-income country (see Appendix A) are eligible to apply to the ‘increasing access to existing methods of abortion’ focus area of the RFP.

2. **NEXT GENERATION METHODS: Introducing a next generation method of safe abortion** that provides one or more significant improvements over existing methods, including:
 - a. Equal or better effectiveness at terminating pregnancy over existing methods
 - b. Permissive within existing regulatory frameworks (e.g., it has other primary indications)
 - c. Ability for self-administration with greater autonomy and privacy
 - d. Cost effective relative to current safe methods
 - e. Ease of use/compliance (e.g., single pill administration)
 - f. Reduced side effects and pain
 - g. The ability to be effectively administered early or at later stages of gestation

Please note that this is the target product profile for next generation methods of safe abortion. Both pre-clinical and clinical stage proposals are eligible, and project objectives for the 18-to-24-month grant period will be tailored accordingly.

⁵ Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA) is a surgical method of abortion that removes pregnancy tissue from the uterus.

⁶ Medical Abortion (MA) uses mifepristone and misoprostol pills to induce abortion.

Note: Institutions from all countries, including high-income country institutions, are eligible to apply to the 'next generation methods of abortion' focus area of the RFP.

2.2 TARGET USERS

Innovations must ultimately benefit marginalized women, girls and/or people with diverse sexual and gender identities in eligible low- and middle-income countries (Appendix A). Applications that address the needs of people in humanitarian emergencies; in legally restrictive contexts; where abortion is highly stigmatized; and in remote and hard to reach areas, are particularly welcome.

2.3 ABORTION WHERE LEGAL

Proponents must address barriers that limit access to **safe abortion in countries where there are one or more legal grounds to support it**⁷. While prohibitive laws and policies are recognized as a key detriment to the uptake of safe abortion services, **legal reform is not an objective of this call**, though innovators are encouraged to increase awareness and understanding of local laws to ensure those who choose to have an abortion know their rights. Innovators must have a strong plan in place to mitigate risks of unintended negative consequences that could stem from increased awareness of safe abortion rights and services, such as the risk of more restrictive policies being implemented.

2.4 WHAT GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA WILL NOT FUND

Grand Challenges Canada will not fund the following:

- capacity-building initiatives;
- ongoing implementation of programs;
- ideas that are not applicable to marginalized women, girls and/or people with diverse sexual and gender identities in low- and middle-income countries; and,
- ideas that are not transformative, innovative, and do not push the field beyond current paradigms and assumptions.

Grand Challenges Canada will not consider funding projects that involve establishing proof-of-concept of innovations for which the core intellectual property rights are owned by a third party institution, unless either (a) the third party institution has granted the applicant sufficient license rights to the innovation to permit eventual scaling in low- and middle-income countries, or (b) the third party institution is willing to sign an undertaking

⁷ Guttmacher Institute, *Abortion Worldwide 2017: Uneven Progress and Unequal Access* (March 2018), Appendix Table 1 (pg. 50). The abortion legality continuum ranges from category 1, outright prohibition on any ground, to category 6, allowing abortion without restriction as to reason. The four intermediate categories permit abortion on progressively broader grounds: to save a woman's life, to protect a woman's physical health, to protect her mental health, and for socioeconomic reasons. Many countries permit abortion on at least one of the following three additional grounds: if the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest, or if the fetus has a grave anomaly.

to Grand Challenges Canada committing to comply with Grand Challenges Canada's [Global Access requirements](#).

Grand Challenges Canada will not consider funding innovations that are similar to innovations previously funded by Grand Challenges Canada. See our website for a searchable database of innovations funded by Grand Challenges Canada (<https://optionsinitiative.org/innovations/>). Note that these search results will not include innovations that have chosen to remain anonymous.

2.5 AVAILABLE FUNDING

Seed Funding

Successful "Access" proposals will be awarded seed grants of up to \$250,000 CAD and Next Generation Methods" proposals will be awarded seed grants of between \$250,000 - \$400,000 CAD over 18 to 24 months to develop and test the proposed innovation. Assuming a sufficient number of proposals of merit are received, approximately 30 seed grants will be awarded in this round.

Transition to Scale Funding

A limited number of innovations funded through this RFP will be invited to apply for transition-to-scale funding of up to \$3,000,000 CAD, to support the refinement, testing and implementation for scale of innovative solutions that have already achieved proof of concept. Transition-to-scale projects are expected to demonstrate large-scale, real-world impact on access to safe abortion and move towards scale and sustainability. Transition-to-scale projects require support from partners who bring both funds and the necessary skill sets to the innovations to operate sustainably at scale. Successful innovations may be invited to complete validation at Transition to Scale. Please visit <https://www.grandchallenges.ca/programs/transition-to-scale/> for further information on transition to scale funding.

While matching funds are not a requirement at the seed funding stage, all innovators are encouraged to secure co-funding. Initiating early strategic partnerships can improve the sustainability of an innovation by creating early buy-in and providing resources and expertise that may prepare teams for the transition to scale process, which requires matching funds through partnerships.

2.6 ESTABLISHING PROOF OF CONCEPT

The ultimate goal of the OPTions Initiative is to save and improve the lives of women, girls, and people with diverse sexual and gender identities by funding innovations with real-world impact on access to safe abortion care. The OPTions Initiative primarily funds seed innovations that are seeking to test and establish proof of concept. A successful proof of concept is generally defined as follows:

- **For Access Innovations:** (1) Evidence from a controlled or limited setting that the innovation improves access to safe abortion, and/or reduces significant barrier(s) to accessing safe abortion, and/or (2) Evidence that the innovation can

be feasibly implemented, sustained, and financially supported at scale in the target region(s)

- **For Next Generation Methods Innovations:** Evidence of pre-clinical or clinical success in demonstrating the effectiveness of a new medication, formulation, equipment, or procedure for safe abortion coupled with sufficient sample size (n) to move on the next phase of clinical study
- **For Access and Next Generation Innovations:** Demonstrated interest, financing and/or commitments for uptake of the innovation from key stakeholders, influencers, and partners needed to enable scale and sustainability

Applicants are expected to clearly describe (a) The proof of concept they are trying to establish within the timeframe of the grant, and (b) how they will demonstrate whether proof of concept has been achieved at the end of the grant period. For innovations that ultimately do not demonstrate proof of concept by the end of the funding period, it is expected that innovators will be able to articulate why their innovation did not work in order to accelerate progress in the sector.

2.7 RESULTS MEASUREMENT

The OPTions Initiative prioritizes funding innovations that lead to measurable changes in health outcomes amongst women, girls, and amongst people with diverse sexual and gender identities. As such, projects are expected to demonstrate measurable change in outcomes such as:

- **For Access Innovations:** Improved utilization and availability of high-quality safe abortion products, services, and information
- **For Next Generation Methods Innovations:** Scientific evidence of a new medication, formulation, equipment, or procedure for safe abortion that is a significant improvement over existing methods, as described in Appendix B.

To this end, all proposals should provide an overview of the monitoring, evaluation, and learning approach which will be undertaken to measure outcomes and identify shortcomings, including:

- Indicators that will be used to measure the impact of the innovation on access to safe abortion, such as improved utilization of safe abortion services, availability of services, quality of care, and safe abortion knowledge
- The data collection tools and methods (qualitative and/or quantitative) that will be used to measure results

Innovators will be expected to report against any indicators listed in **Appendix B** that are relevant to demonstrating the success of their innovation.

2.8 INTEGRATED INNOVATION

Projects are expected to take an Integrated Innovation approach, defined as the coordinated application of scientific/technological, social, and business innovation, to develop solutions to complex challenges. This approach does not discount the singular benefits of each of these types of innovation alone, but rather highlights the powerful synergies that can be realized by aligning all three. For more information, see: <https://www.grandchallenges.ca/funding-opportunities/integrated-innovation/>

Proposed solutions should therefore include a combination of:

- **Scientific/Technological Innovation:** Has a base in the psychological, natural, health or behavioural sciences or in engineering or economics; can be simple, i.e., there is no requirement for high-tech solutions.
- **Social Innovation:** Recognizes and/or addresses the broader social, structural and/or political determinants of health, with a particular focus on gender and intersectional inequalities; addresses local and/or cultural contexts that factor into implementation and scaling.
- **Business Innovation:** Maximizes the value, relevance, and unique quality of the solution to create demand and financial sustainability; addresses barriers to affordability and accessibility.

2.9 SCALE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Grand Challenges Canada expects that the most successful innovations it funds will eventually be scaled up through partnerships – either with the private sector, the public sector, or a combination of both, or through diffusion of information – and that such scaling will be carried out with the goal of achieving meaningful health impact for overlooked populations in low- and middle-income countries. Applicants should convincingly show in their application how and why they believe their projects will eventually be scaled by one or more of the following pathways:

- **Vertical scaling paths** are suitable for projects that aim to expand impact of an innovation through policy, regulatory or institutional reform at a higher organizational level.
- **Horizontal scaling paths** are suitable for projects that expand through diffusion and replication within or across regions. These may promote a decentralized, community-based approach, which may or may not benefit from enabling policies, and supportive institutions and government agencies.
- **Public sector scaling paths** are suitable for projects that are likely to compel host country government ministries and departments, multilateral donors, or other public sector players to scale them. These should be aligned to, and have the ability to be incorporated into, the country's national health plan or strategy.

- **Private sector scaling paths** are suitable for projects that are commercially viable or provide value to attract a private sector partner, either because production costs and sales prices are such that they are profitable, or users demand the innovation and are willing to pay for it themselves.

Grand Challenges Canada is looking for solutions that have the potential to be scaled up, as well as a willingness on the part of the project team to see the innovation realize impact at scale. A clear path to scale will take into account the following factors: the state of local infrastructure; social, political, and economic forces; the capacity of the organization and its leadership; available funding and revenue streams; and other potential barriers to scale. Projects are recommended to leverage local systems where this will lead to efficiencies and should engage young people with lived experiences to increase the likelihood of scale up.

Effective Leadership and Project Teams

To achieve impact at scale, bold ideas need to be championed by effective, results-driven leaders with the capacity to convene and engage with key influencers. Effective project teams need expertise, or a plan to engage relevant expertise, in:

- sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- data analysis and statistics; and
- working in the implementation region/country.

Multidisciplinary/ cross-sector teams are encouraged to ensure relevant scientific, social, and business expertise. Teams should demonstrate evidence of individual project members' input.

Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurs are strongly encouraged to apply to this Request for Proposals. Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems. Social entrepreneurs tackle major social issues, offer new ideas for wide-scale change, and seek a sustainable approach to achieve social returns to society. Grand Challenges Canada believes social entrepreneurship is a critical feature to enable scaling, sustainability, and the ultimate achievement of impact.

Social entrepreneurs interested in applying should ensure they have the legal capacity to enter into a contract with Grand Challenges Canada. Grand Challenges Canada does not fund individuals, sole-proprietorships, partnerships, unincorporated trusts, or any entity that does not have the legal capacity to enter into a contract.

Understanding of Local Context

To help ensure sustainable impact at scale, it is essential that project teams have an understanding of the local infrastructure and governance context (including relevant laws and regulations) and the social, political, and economic context. This includes local cultures, traditions and beliefs and the stigma and discrimination faced by women, adolescents, children and members of the gender and sexually diverse communities. This will help projects better understand the health status and needs of the community,

as well as identify risks to project success. Innovators are encouraged to work within priority areas identified by local or domestic governments. Where they exist, innovations should build upon local systems which are able to reach the target population that support health and/or development or address broader determinants of health. Determinants of health include poverty, inequality (including gender inequality), education and literacy, age, gender identification, race, and access to water and sanitation resources. Innovations should be relevant to low resource settings, and benefits of these innovations must target marginalized and vulnerable populations of low- or middle-income countries.

Access to safe abortion is influenced by multiple factors, including but not limited to: household power dynamics and gender equality broadly; financial access to services; legal frameworks; social norms and stigma; cultural and religious beliefs; availability of other sexual and reproductive health and rights services; and regional, national, and global political environments. As a result, it is anticipated that families, communities, healthcare providers, businesses, policymakers, governments, and international agencies can all play a role in guiding and supporting the project.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders, especially the women, girls and people with diverse sexual and gender identities who will ultimately make decisions about using the proposed solution, should be engaged at the outset and throughout the life of the project. This will help to ensure that the solution will be poised for adoption. Additionally, stakeholders can offer insight into their community and identify the factors necessary for project success.

2.10 GENDER EQUALITY, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH

Grand Challenges Canada is committed to furthering the principles of environmental sustainability, gender equality and human rights-based approach as follows:

Environmental Sustainability: Grand Challenges Canada requires that applicants commit to ensuring that the innovation will not have significant adverse environmental effects including, but not limited to, long-term and cumulative effects. Applicants shall ensure that the management of environmental effects, including any analysis, is carried out in accordance with the environmental processes and requirements of Grand Challenges Canada. Where possible, applicants should incorporate having positive environmental effects throughout the project.

Gender Equality: Grand Challenges Canada is committed to furthering principles of gender equality in the innovations it funds and across the organization. Specifically, Grand Challenges Canada is supportive of the following objectives: (1) advancing women, girls, boys, men, and people with diverse sexual and gender identities' equal participation as decision-makers in shaping the sustainable development of their societies; (2) promoting the realization of the human rights of all genders; and (3) reducing gender inequalities in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development. We believe that supporting gender equality is an important objective in

and of itself, and that by using a gender lens in the sourcing and management of development innovations, sustained impact will be bolstered.

Human Rights Based Approach: Grand Challenges Canada is committed to furthering a Human Rights Based Approach. This includes the recognition that inequality and marginalization deny people their human rights. This particularly includes the principles of participation, inclusion, equity, transparency, and accountability in an applicant’s project.

As part of their grant agreement, Transition to Scale innovators are required to comply with the Grand Challenges Canada policies regarding these cross-cutting themes.

3. APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals go through a multi-step review process before the Board of Directors of Grand Challenges Canada, makes a final funding decision.

SEED FUNDING SELECTION PROCESS



Questions

Please first reference our “[Frequently Asked Questions](#)” located on the OPTions Initiative website. For access applicant questions that are not addressed in the FAQ, contact us through info@optionsinitiative.org or by WhatsApp (+1 (437) 219-1614, QR code below) by July 16th, 2021. A refreshed FAQ document will be available on the OPTions Initiative website on July 20th, 2021. Next generation methods applicants may send questions at any time.



Language

Applications may be made in English or French language. Applications in any other language will be rejected without review. Note that quality of the English or French language proposal will not play a factor in the evaluation of the proposal unless it affects the clarity of the information.

Innovator Toolbox

Applicants are encouraged to access Grand Challenge Canada’s online [Innovator Toolbox](#), which contains materials to help researchers and innovators to develop their

project proposals and to plan for how their innovation can be sustainably scaled and have global impact. Our [Gender Equality Portal](#) provides a set of gender equality tools.

3.1 APPLICATION TIMELINE

There are two distinct application submission streams: one for Access innovations and one for Next Generation Methods innovations. Both Access and Next Generation applications **must be** submitted through Grand Challenges Canada’s Fluxx Portal (<https://gcc.fluxx.io>). Please see Section 3.2 for instructions for the application portal.

Access Applications

Key Dates	Event
June 16, 2021	Registration Opens
July 16, 2021	Deadline for RFP questions unrelated to technical issues.
August 1, 2021	<p>Deadline to register for a Fluxx account (https://gcc.fluxx.io)</p> <p>Note: If you have applied for funding in the past, you already have an account. If you do not remember your password, you can reset it and gain immediate access to the Portal, simply click on Create or reset password.</p>
August 11, 2021	Application deadline at 12:00 p.m. EST
January 2022	Notification of application status
March 2022	Anticipated start date of projects

Next Generation Methods Applications

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Applications submitted at an earlier date are preferred. Grand Challenges Canada will aim to provide a funding decision to applications within six months of submission.

Key Dates	Event
June 16, 2021	Registration Opens. Applicants must register for a Fluxx account (https://gcc.fluxx.io)

	<p>Note: If you have applied for funding in the past, you already have an account. If you do not remember your password, you can reset it and gain immediate access to the Portal, simply click on Create or reset password.</p>
<p>December 31, 2022</p>	<p>Application deadline at 12:00 p.m. EST or until funds have been spent. Please register before starting the application process to ensure there are funds remaining.</p>

3.2 INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PORTAL, FLUXX

To apply for funding, applicants must use the online application provided, which is only accessible via the Grand Challenges Canada’s Fluxx Portal (<https://gcc.fluxx.io>).

Grand Challenges Canada cannot provide application questions via email and proposals submitted through email will not be considered. Google Chrome is the recommended browser (DO NOT use Internet Explorer).

1. Go to **<https://gcc.fluxx.io>**.
 - If you have applied for funding in the past, you **already** have an account. If you do not remember your password, you can reset it and gain immediate access to Fluxx -- simply click on the [create or reset password](#) link.
 - If you are a **new** user (or the “forgot password” option does not work), click the create an account button. It will take up to three business days to receive your login credentials and may take longer during peak periods. Be sure to do this as soon as possible, so you have sufficient time to review and complete the application.
 - Once your information has been processed, you will be emailed a username and a URL link to set up a password of your choice. Click on the URL link provided in the email to select a password of your choice.
 - If registering for a new account on behalf of a colleague, you must enter all information (including the date of birth) of the applying Project Lead and the applying Organization. These names will display on the application form and cannot be changed without contacting Grand Challenges Canada.

2. Once you have access to an account, input your username and password. Click **Sign in**.

3. Click on the Welcome/Bienvenue link on the left menu, scroll down, click on the **Start an Application** button.
 - You can **Save** your work at any time and return to it later by logging into your account and clicking on **Drafts**, then clicking on **Edit**.
 - When you are done editing, save your form and click the **Submit** button. Once you submit, you will no longer be able to edit.

- **You must submit your application by no later than August 11, 2021 at 12:00pm EST.**

For more details on the steps above (including screen shots), see the [Fluxx Quick Reference Guide](#) which describes how to create a Fluxx account, how to reset the password on an existing account and other helpful tips on navigating Fluxx and the application form. If you require technical assistance with registration or the online application, contact Grand Challenges Canada's Fluxx Technical Support Team at <https://www.grandchallenges.ca/fluxxsupport/>.

3.3 REVIEW PROCESS

Both applications will undergo a three-stage review process, including: Eligibility Screen, Innovation Screen and External Peer Review.

Eligibility Screen and Criteria

Grand Challenges Canada will screen applications on the basis of the eligibility criteria outlined below. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be removed from the review process. The eligibility criteria is listed below:

1. Eligible applicants include social enterprises and other recognized institutions (e.g., non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and for-profit companies) that:
 - are formed and legally incorporated in an eligible country, as determined by the RFP focus area an institution is applying to
 - can successfully execute the activities in their respective technical area
 - are capable of receiving and administering grant funding
 - are not sole proprietorships⁸
 - are not United Nations country offices
2. Institutions must be incorporated as follows:
 - Access Applicants: Only institutions legally incorporated in a low- or middle-income country are eligible to apply to the 'increasing access to existing methods of abortion' focus area of the RFP.
 - Next Generation Methods Applicants: Institutions from all countries, including high-income country institutions, are eligible to apply to the 'next generation methods of abortion' focus area of the RFP.
3. A project can have only one (1) Project Lead, who must be affiliated with the institution from which the proposal is being submitted. The Project Lead should be the person with the highest level of responsibility working directly on the project and will be the point of contact for GCC.

⁸ This includes any business structure that places liability on an individual or individuals (i.e., limited liability partnerships or unincorporated trusts in certain jurisdictions) rather than an incorporated business entity or organization.

4. A Project Lead may only be listed on one (1) application for this Request for Proposals.
5. Each institution may only submit one (1) proposal per focus area of the RFP (i.e., one proposal for innovations that increase access to existing methods of abortion and one proposal for next generation abortion methods). For universities, one (1) proposal per focus area of the RFP will be accepted from each research center within the university.
6. Project Leads funded under OPTions Round 1 or 2 are ineligible to submit an application for Round 3; however, institutions funded under Round 1 and/or 2 are eligible to apply (if all eligibility criteria are met) with a different Project Lead.
7. Applications must include all required information. Only complete applications will be considered by the Review Committee.
8. Proposed ideas must be aligned with the Areas of Focus (Section 2.1) and the Target Users (Section 2.2). Anything that falls under What Grand Challenges Canada Will Not Fund (Section 2.4) is not eligible.
9. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain any necessary legal and/or regulatory approvals, consents or reviews required to accept foreign grant funds and/or conduct the project activities before applying for funding from Grand Challenges Canada. Applicants planning to conduct project activities in India that are required to register with the Ministry of Home Affairs under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act of 2020 (FCRA) must do so in advance of their application and submit either their organization's approval under FCRA including evidence of compliance, or a written certification that FCRA approval is not required. You should consult with your own legal advisors to determine whether FCRA applies to your organization as early as possible. Grand Challenges Canada will not accept applications from Indian entities without the above documentation.
10. Grand Challenges Canada may, at any time and at their sole discretion, modify eligibility criteria with respect to individual applicants, Project Leads and/or eligible countries, to the extent that such modifications do not materially undermine the review process.

Please note:

- Grand Challenges Canada must approve any changes in applicant organization, institution, country of implementation or Project Lead from the originally submitted application.
- Project Leads are required to seek and obtain sign-off from their affiliated institution before submitting their application.

- Next generation applicants from high-income countries are highly encouraged to collaborate with an innovator based in a low- or middle-income country, however, this is not a requirement at the proof-of-concept level of investment.

Innovation Screen

The project summary section of the application will be evaluated using the criteria below. Proposals that lack innovation and relevance will be removed from the competition at this stage. Note: The innovation screen will not evaluate the feasibility or quality of the project plan.

Innovation Screen criteria:

1. Relevance

- Does the proposed solution address the specific problem described in Section 1.3 and the OPTions Initiative as described in Section 1.2?
- Does it explicitly address, or aim to ultimately address, the needs of hard to reach and marginalized women, girls and/or people with diverse sexual and gender identities in low- and middle-income countries?

2. Innovation

- Is the proposed solution aimed at increasing access to safe abortion in low- and middle-income countries, or developing/testing next generation methods of pregnancy termination, innovative and clearly articulated?
- Does the innovation represent more than an incremental improvement over current approaches?
- Is a coordinated application of integrated scientific/technological, social, and business innovation clearly demonstrated, as defined in Section 2.8?

External Peer Review

Applications that are deemed relevant and highly innovative will move forward to the External Peer Review stage. At this stage, an independent expert peer review panel of external scientific, social, and business experts – including innovators (past and/or present) and people from low- and middle-income countries – will review the full application using the below criteria.

Evaluation criteria:

1. Impact, Innovation and Potential for Transformation

- How well does the innovation address the key barriers that limit access to safe abortion? Does the proposed innovation have the potential to fundamentally transform how a safe abortion challenge in low- and middle-income countries is addressed?
- Is the proposed innovation bold, novel and does it demonstrate more than an incremental improvement over current approaches?

- Does the proposed idea integrate scientific/technological, social and/or business innovation, as defined in Section 2.8?
- Is the proposal responsive, or aim to ultimately be responsive, to the expressed needs of hard to reach and marginalized women, girls and/or people with diverse sexual and gender identities in low- and middle-income countries?
- Is there a high potential impact from the proposed innovation?
 - **Access:** Impact on access to safe abortion, both in terms of number of people reached and impact per person?
 - **Next Generation Methods:** Does the innovation offer one or more significant improvements over existing methods, and is the idea viable?

2. Project Execution Plan

- Is the project designed to demonstrate proof of concept of the idea, as described in Section 2.6?
- Is the project clearly articulated, technically/scientifically sound and feasible within the seed grant funding and timeline?
- Does the proposal aim to address the gender equality, environmental sustainability, and human rights-based approach objectives, as described in Section 2.10?
- Does the project recognize potential risks and present potential mitigation strategies, for example, through safeguarding and quality of care standards?

3. Potential for Scale and Sustainability

- Does the plan clearly describe the potential for scale (depth or breadth) and sustainability beyond the proof-of-concept phase?
- How appropriate is the proposed innovation for future implementation and scaling in low- and middle-income countries?
- Will the evidence generated upon proof of concept have to potential to merit consideration for transition to scale funding?

4. Leadership Capability to Champion Change

- Are the Project Lead and key team members appropriately trained, experienced, and positioned to carry out the proposed work (i.e., medical, scientific, social and/or business expertise)? Do the proposed partnerships and composition of multi-disciplinary teams increase the likelihood of success?
- Does the institution add value and bring new perspectives to the safe abortion space, and is it positioned to introduce novel ways of addressing the problem defined in the proposal?

5. Value for Effort

- Are the scope of the proposed work and the funds requested reasonable and commensurate with the proposed proposal goals?

3.4 FUNDING DECISIONS

The External Peer Review will result in an independent score for all applications. Only the top scoring applications, in each category (Access and Next Generation Methods) will be recommended for funding to the Board of Directors of Grand Challenges Canada, which will make the final funding decisions at the Board's sole discretion, including its reserved rights set out in Section 5.7. Based on comments from the external peer review or the negotiations process, refinements to the proposed project plan, structure, amount, and oversight may be required before a funding agreement is finalized.

4. ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

Innovators funded under this program will be expected to engage in the following activities and provide the specific deliverables listed below in order to demonstrate project progress and success:

1. Performance reporting focused on utilization of funds, learnings and outcomes achieved. The frequency of reporting will be every three or six months, depending on GCC's assessment of project and institutional risk.
2. Dissemination of knowledge in a timely manner, including through:
 - a) social media
 - b) open access publications
 - c) depositing of data (with individual identities protected) into publicly accessible repositories
 - d) press releases
 - e) conferences
 - f) stakeholder engagement

Grand Challenges Canada must be acknowledged in any dissemination of knowledge activities.

3. A final report accounting for financial expenditures, that captures a clear assessment of project impact. Please note that a 5% hold back of funds will be applied to all funding under this program, to be released to innovators upon submission of a satisfactory final report and full justification of costs.
4. Continued post-grant updates on impact, global access, data access and management of intellectual property rights in supported innovations.
5. Participation in the OPTions Initiatives' advisory and support platform, designed to support innovator capacity building, network and fundraising objectives based on expressed needs⁹.

⁹ The delivery of the OPTions advisory and support platform is contingent on successful fundraising efforts and may not be offered to all innovators.

Instructions for reporting will be provided to successful recipients. Written progress reports and conversations via teleconference may be required to satisfy reporting requirements.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, innovators will be expected to:

- participate in safe public engagement activities; and
- contribute to the learning agenda for specific challenges, including participation in meetings such as annual Grand Challenges meetings, as requested.

Funded innovators must retain supporting project documentation until March 31, 2031 after the end of the Grant Agreement, including financial records, and may be audited by Grand Challenges Canada or any funders of this initiative. Associated requirements, as well as the full and detailed listing of activities and deliverables will be reflected in the Grant Agreement.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPALS AND ADDITIONAL TERMS

This section reflects a high-level outline of Grand Challenges Canada's guiding principles and terms of funding. If selected for funding, innovators will be required to comply with the related policies. These policies may be updated from time to time and can be found on the [Grand Challenges Canada website](#).

5.1 FINANCING TERMS

ELIGIBLE COSTS

The following provides a high-level overview of costs directly related to the implementation of the Project which are eligible under Grand Challenges Canada funding. For more information, please refer to the [Grand Challenges Canada Cost Directive](#).

Remuneration – Funding Recipient's Employees

Remuneration includes salary and daily wage rates paid to employees for work directly related to the Project. Salary and wage rates should be comparable to the local market for similar types of work. The following costs are considered remuneration: direct salaries and benefits in accordance with internal policies.

Subcontractor Fees

Subcontractors are external individuals or groups who are engaged by an Innovator to provide goods and/or services as part of the Project. Payments are made under a subcontract agreement. The Innovator and the subcontractor must have an arm's length relationship to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest. The total subcontracting shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total value of Grand Challenges Canada's contribution.

Individual rates or amounts negotiated under a subcontract agreement must comply with the requirements of GCC's [Contracting and Procurement Policy](#) and shall not exceed the fair market value for the service or good in question. Contracts greater than \$25,000

annually, must be tendered competitively, unless there is a valid reason not to, which would require prior approval from GCC.

Travel Costs

Actual and reasonable travel costs directly related to the implementation of the Project and incurred by the Innovator in accordance with the provisions of GCC's [Travel Policy](#) are eligible expenses.

Goods and Supplies

Actual and reasonable costs arising from the purchase, rental, maintenance, transportation, and installation of goods, assets and supplies directly related to the Project, provided that such costs do not exceed the fair market value and are eligible expenses.

Equipment Costs

“Equipment” is defined as a good with a useful life of more than one year and costs more than \$1,000 CAD per unit. The price paid for this expense must be reasonable compared to alternative options in the market. Costs may include the basic purchase price, freight, and installation of the equipment.

Equipment which costs more than \$25,000 annually, must be tendered competitively in accordance with GCC's [Contracting and Procurement Policy](#), unless there is a valid reason not to, which requires prior approval from GCC.

Project Administration Costs

Actual and reasonable administrative costs directly related to the implementation of the Project are eligible. These include:

- Telecommunication expenses (internet, fax, cellular), mail and courier costs;
- Translation and word processing costs, printing and production costs associated with Project reporting and production of reading material;
- Meeting, workshops, conference costs (includes meal and travel costs for participants);
- Costs related to office space and associated utilities, required to implement the Project;
- Publication fees during the Project period;
- Ethical approvals and review board costs; and
- Other administrative type of expenditures relating directly to project activities.

Sub-grants

A sub-grantee is defined as an external organization that acts like a partner to provide key services required to complete the Project and cannot be easily replaced by a vendor or supplier. Sub-grantee costs are eligible expenses as long as the following requirements are met:

- Sub-grantees must be legal entities, which can enter into legal agreements;
- Sub-grantees are subject to the same eligible expense requirements and policies as the Innovator; and

- Sub-grantees must keep track of expenses incurred in a detailed general ledger and submit this detailed general ledger to GCC with the Innovator's final financial report

Indirect/Overhead Costs

Innovators are entitled to indirect costs, calculated as 10% of all direct costs. Indirect costs are costs that cannot be directly traced to a specific project activity.

Innovators must consistently charge costs as either indirect or direct costs and must not double charge or inconsistently charge the same cost, or categories of costs, as both.

Please note: Only costs incurred during the project period are considered eligible. Any expenses incurred after the project end date cannot be allocated to Grand Challenges Canada's funding.

TERMS OF DISBURSEMENT

1. Advance Disbursement: An initial advance equal to the estimated cash flow requirements for Eligible Costs forecasted for the first period will be made following signature of the Grant Agreement and any agreed upon milestones. Subsequent payments will be made through quarterly or semi-annual advances based on the estimated cash flow requirements for Eligible Costs. Advances will be subject to a 5% holdback on the amount forecasted.
2. All advance requests and financial reports submitted shall be signed by a senior executive holding a certified professional accounting designation and the Project Lead.
3. Outstanding Advances: Advance Disbursements cannot cover more than two periods and at no time shall there be outstanding advances covering the cash flow requirements of more than two periods. For example, before an advance payment is issued for a third period, the first period must be accounted for.
4. Separate Bank Account and Interest Earned on Advance Disbursements: a separate bank account, bearing interest, shall be maintained for the project.
5. Final disbursement will be subject to the following conditions:
 - a. The Project is completed in accordance with the grant agreement; and
 - b. Grand Challenges Canada has received and accepted all Final Reports, including completion and submission of any outstanding milestones and documentation due under the grant agreement.

AUDIT

Project expenses will be subject to audit by Grand Challenges Canada until March 31, 2031 following the termination of the grant agreement between Grand Challenges Canada and the funding recipient.

5.2 SUBMISSION MATERIALS AND PRIVACY NOTICE

To help us in the evaluation and analysis of projects, all proposals, documents, communications, and associated materials submitted to Grand Challenges Canada (collectively “Submission Materials”) may be shared with Global Affairs Canada, and/or with other funding partners, and may be publicly disclosed. By submitting any Submission Materials to Grand Challenges Canada, each applicant thereby grants to Grand Challenges Canada and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (“Her Majesty”) a worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive, non-commercial, free of charge and royalty free license to use, reproduce, adapt, modify, improve, develop, translate, publish, disseminate, distribute, communicate to the public by telecommunication and display the Submission Materials, in whole or in part, in any form, media, or technology now known or later developed, including the right to authorize others to do such acts and the right to sublicense such rights to others, on the same terms. Each applicant also thereby waives any and all moral rights that it has in the Submission Materials in favor of Grand Challenges Canada, Her Majesty, and each of their sub-licensees, successors, representatives, assigns, employees, and agents.

The proposals will be subject to external review by independent subject-matter experts, advisors, and potential co-funders (the results of which will be confidential), in addition to analysis by our staff. Please be advised that a copy of the external reviews for each submitted proposal will be shared with Grand Challenges Canada staff and may be disclosed to Grand Challenges Canada Board of Directors.

Please carefully consider the information included in the Submission Materials. If you have any concerns about the disclosure of confidential or proprietary information (including information related to inventions), please advise us as soon as possible and in any event prior to disclosure of such materials to Grand Challenges Canada. We also recommend you consult with your legal counsel and take any steps you deem necessary to protect your intellectual property. You may wish to consider whether such information is critical for evaluating the submission and whether more general, non-confidential information may be adequate as an alternative for these purposes.

Grand Challenges Canada will attempt in good faith to respect the confidentiality of information that is received in Submission Materials, if it is clearly marked “Confidential”. Nonetheless, notwithstanding your characterization of any information as “Confidential”, Grand Challenges Canada reserves the right to disclose all information contained in Submission Materials as may be required by law and as is necessary to potential co-funders, advisors, and external reviewers (such as government entities) to evaluate them and the manner and scope of potential funding, consistent with appropriate regulations and their internal guidelines and policies. Grand Challenges Canada

expressly disclaims any and all liability that may arise from disclosure of confidential information contained in Submission Materials. Upon signing a grant agreement, successful applicants will have the option to keep their name and/or project confidential.

Privacy Notice

In order to conduct due diligence and audits, and to manage and monitor the performance of a grant agreement, Grand Challenges Canada may collect personal information (such as names, addresses, employment history, criminal and other legal checks where legally permissible) about some of a successful applicant's directors and officers, employees, project lead(s), and others engaged on the project before and during the course of the grant agreement. Some of this personal information is collected for the purpose of complying with applicable legal and policy requirements that apply to Grand Challenges Canada and our funders in order to provide the funding and services by Grand Challenges Canada under a grant agreement. Refusing to provide information that GCC needs in order to conduct required legal and contractual due diligence may impact GCC's ability to provide such funding and services and may result in not being able to enter into a grant agreement with you or early termination of a signed grant agreement. Grand Challenges Canada's [Privacy Policy](#) explains how Grand Challenges Canada collects, use, discloses, and protects the personal information that it collects and receives.

5.3 WARRANTY

By providing any Submission Materials, applicants represent and warrant to Grand Challenges Canada that they have the right to provide the information submitted.

5.4 GLOBAL ACCESS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IN FUNDED INNOVATION

The solutions supported by this program comprise innovative technologies, services, business models, knowledge and/or products to promote global health in low- and middle-income countries. The successful development and deployment of these solutions in order to ensure meaningful access for persons in low- and middle-income countries may require involvement by, support of, and/or collaboration with multiple organizations, including the private sector, government, and academic and/or non-profit research institutions. Accordingly, it is the intent of this program to support the formation of appropriate partnerships that are essential to meet these urgent global health needs. Successful applicants retain ownership of intellectual property rights in supported innovations, including those rights that arise in outputs of funded projects. Grand Challenges Canada aims, however, to ensure that any such intellectual property rights are utilized and managed in a manner that is consistent with achieving the goals of this program. Grand Challenges Canada's [Global Access Policy](#) (also see below) will guide our approach to intellectual property, and we urge all applicants to consider their willingness to submit an application in compliance with Grand Challenges Canada's [Global Access Policy](#), as it may be updated from time to time.

The guiding principles of **Global Access** are as follows:

1. Breakthrough solutions to global challenges are made accessible to those in need, particularly in low-resource settings. Accessibility relates to both price and availability.
2. Knowledge gained through discovery is broadly and, as promptly as possible, distributed between related projects and to the global scientific community.
3. Commercialization of resulting outputs is encouraged, as long as the first two principles are achieved.

Successful applicants will be required to:

- a. Commit to compliance with the Grand Challenges Canada [Global Access Policy](#);
- b. Develop an Access Plan for making their innovations meaningfully accessible to persons in low- and middle-income countries, and
- c. Sign a Global Access Agreement with Grand Challenges Canada, in line with the Guiding Principles, applicable to the innovative solutions and project outputs supported by this program. The Global Access Agreement may provide a non-exclusive license to intellectual property rights in supported innovations (including background intellectual property) and/or an agreement for distribution and supply of products, in each case permitting Grand Challenges Canada and its sub-licensees to implement and disseminate products, processes, knowledge, or solutions in low- and middle-income countries in which applicants or their partners are unable to achieve meaningful accessibility.

Applicants should note that the above global access commitments survive the end of project activities.

5.5 GLOBAL ACCESS AND DATA ACCESS

In addition to the above approach with respect to intellectual property in funded innovations, Grand Challenges Canada is committed to optimizing the use of data to translate knowledge into life-saving solutions. To fulfill this objective, data generated with Grand Challenges Canada funding must be made available widely and rapidly to the Grand Challenges Canada community and the broader global health community through ethical and efficient data access practices. In accordance with global access, data access represents an elaboration of the second guiding principle of the Global Access Policy, which states that knowledge gained through discovery is broadly, and as promptly as possible, distributed between related projects and to the global scientific community.

The guiding principles of **Data Access** are as follows:

1. Anonymized data will be shared as broadly and as promptly as possible to foster innovation and optimize prospects for the translation of knowledge into lifesaving solutions;
2. Respect for attribution, cultural diversity, scientific integrity, and the privacy of individuals and communities that contribute data will be appropriately considered in all data access activities;
3. Collection, production, sharing and use of data will be consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and standards of ethical research conduct; and

4. The individuals and communities who enable and support inquiry, particularly those in low- and middle-income countries, be they research participants or investigators, benefit from data to the extent possible.

Innovators are required (1) to commit to compliance with the above Global Access and Data Access policies, (2) to ensure that intellectual property rights, including those of third parties, do not impede meaningful access to innovations and widespread dissemination of knowledge, (3) to develop a specific plan for implementation of the Global Access Policy and Data Access Policy (the “Action Plan”), and (4) possibly to enter into separate agreements that grant Grand Challenges Canada rights in project data, as well as certain rights in innovations if meaningful access is not attained (the “Global Access Agreements”).

Applicants will be required to develop and submit an Action Plan that specifies when and how findings and publications will be made openly accessible, how data access will be implemented, and the timeframe for data release.

At a minimum, ‘data’ refers to final, annotated quantitative and qualitative datasets, and accompanying information, such as metadata, codebooks, data dictionaries, questionnaires, and protocols.

Grand Challenges Canada recognizes the value of intellectual property and commercialization, and the benefits of first and continuing use of data, but not prolonged or exclusive use. In some cases, intellectual property protection, laws or regulations may delay or preclude access to data. In cases where an adequate justification has been provided, Grand Challenges Canada may grant a partial or complete waiver of the data access requirement.

5.6 RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

It is the policy of Grand Challenges Canada that research involving human subjects, research with animals, and research subject to additional regulatory requirements must be conducted in accordance with the highest internationally recognized ethical standards. In order to receive funds from Grand Challenges Canada, initially and throughout the course of a research project, researchers must affirm and document compliance with the guiding ethical principles and standards outlined below:

1. Research involving human subjects must be conducted in a manner that demonstrates, protects, and preserves respect for persons, concern for the welfare of individuals, families and communities, and justice.
2. Research involving animals must be conducted in a manner that ensures their humane care and treatment.
3. Certain research endeavors, including but not limited to research with recombinant DNA, biohazards, and genetically modified organisms, may be subject to enhanced regulation and oversight.

While not necessary for this application and as applicable to the individual project, Grand Challenges Canada will require that, for each venue in which any part of the project is conducted either by the applicant organization or a sub-grantee or sub-contractor, all legal and regulatory approvals for the activities being conducted will be obtained in advance of commencing the regulated activity. We will further require you to agree that no funds will be expended to enroll human subjects until the necessary regulatory and ethical bodies' approvals are obtained. For further details, please see the Grand Challenges Canada [Ethics policy](#).

5.7 RIGHTS OF GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA

This Request for Proposals is part of a discretionary granting program. Submission of an application does not create a contractual commitment by Grand Challenges Canada to advance a grant to any applicant and/or enter into any contractual relationship.

Furthermore, all applicants acknowledge that the program may evolve and that all terms in this Request for Proposals are subject to change. In particular, Grand Challenges Canada reserves the right, in its sole discretion and without notice, to:

1. Cancel this Request for Proposals at any time and for any reason.
2. Amend and reissue the Request for Proposals at any time and for any reason. This Request for Proposals is valid commencing on June 16, 2021 and supersedes any previous Request for Proposals of this nature. The terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals apply to all applications submitted from June 16, 2021 going forward and may be replaced by a revised Request for Proposals in the future. Grand Challenges Canada recommends checking for any revisions to the Request for Proposals and/or the [revised FAQs](#) posted July 20, 2021, prior to the submission of application materials.
3. Accept or reject any application that is non-conforming because it does not meet the eligibility criteria, does not comply with the application instructions and/or does not comply with the instructions for allowable costs.
4. Not award an application based on performance on a previous Grand Challenges Canada grant or project or based on the award of a grant to the applicant for the same or similar research by one of Grand Challenges Canada's partners or collaborating institutions.
5. Disqualify any application at any stage where there is an indication that the proposal was, in any way, plagiarized.
6. Accept or reject any or all applications, regardless of an application's rating based on the evaluation criteria, with or without providing an explanation.
7. Award fewer awards than expected.
8. Award applications with different funding amounts, different durations and/or different conditions than set out in this Request for Proposals.

9. Verify any information provided by applicants through independent research or by contacting third parties deemed to be reliable by Grand Challenges Canada and use that information to inform Grand Challenges Canada's funding decision.
10. Modify eligibility and evaluation criteria, including but not limited to criteria assessed at the triage stage, at any time.
11. Use video or other visual representation submitted by applicants on Grand Challenges Canada's website for public engagement.
12. Not provide critiques or feedback regarding the reasons a proposal was or was not selected.
13. Design grant awards to link to possible funding partners, including private sector investors.

5.8 COSTS

No payment will be made for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application in response to the Request for Proposals. Costs associated with preparing and submitting an application, as well as any other costs incurred by the applicant associated with the evaluation of the application, are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

5.9 GOVERNING LAW

This Request for Proposals and any resulting agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Province of Ontario and the federal laws of Canada applicable therein. Each applicant agrees that this any and all disputes, actions or proceedings relating to this Request for Proposals whether as to interpretation, validity, performance or otherwise, shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the Province of Ontario and each applicant and Grand Challenges Canada irrevocably attorn to the jurisdiction of the courts of such province.

5.10 RISK MANAGEMENT, SAFETY, ANTI-TERRORISM, ANTI-CORRUPTION, ANTI-BRIBERY

Proposals must comply with all relevant Canadian legislation, as well as any applicable international anti-bribery and anti-terrorism legislation. Any person or organization named in Canadian or United Nations Security Council sanctions will not be funded. We may add to this list as more partners join the challenge.

Innovators are to manage material risks.

Proposals for projects that include work in insecure locations, must detail how they will manage the safety and security risks faced by people and assets. If selected for funding,

during negotiations innovators will be required to explain how they will avoid corruption and the diversion of funding from its intended purpose.

For example, during negotiations innovators will be asked to provide a description of the organization's policies and procedures to address conflicts of interest and financial or other irregularities, including without limitation, adequate procedures:

- requiring the organization and its representatives to declare any personal or financial interest in any matter concerning the funded activities, and exclude that individual from the matter concerned;
- identifying steps to investigate an irregularity; and
- a timely and appropriate plan of action to recover any funds that have been subject to proven fraud.

During negotiations, innovations will also be required to include a description of the organization's policies and procedures to adequately implement internal controls for preventing bribery, corruption, fraud, and other situations of misuse of funds.

APPENDIX A: COUNTRY ELIGIBILITY FOR ACCESS APPLICANTS

Access applicants incorporated in any of the countries listed in this Appendix are eligible to apply.

Least Developed Countries	Other Low-Income Countries (per capita GNI ≤ \$1 005 in 2016)	Other Lower Middle-Income Countries and Territories (per capita GNI \$1 006-\$3 955 in 2016)	Other Upper Middle-Income Countries and Territories (per capita GNI \$3 956-\$12 235 in 2016)
Afghanistan	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Angola	Albania
Bangladesh	Zimbabwe	Armenia	Algeria
Benin		Bolivia	Antigua and Barbuda
Bhutan		Cabo Verde	Argentina
Burkina Faso		Cameroon	Azerbaijan
Burundi		Congo	Belarus
Cambodia		Côte d'Ivoire	Belize
Central African Republic		Egypt	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Chad		El Salvador	Botswana
Comoros		Eswatini	Brazil
Democratic Republic of the Congo		Georgia	China (People's Republic of)
Djibouti		Ghana	Colombia
Eritrea		Guatemala	Costa Rica
Ethiopia		Honduras	Cuba
Gambia		India	Dominica
Guinea		Indonesia	Dominican Republic
Guinea-Bissau		Jordan	Ecuador
Haiti		Kenya	Equatorial Guinea
Kiribati		Kosovo	Fiji
Lao People's Democratic Republic		Kyrgyzstan	Gabon
Lesotho		Micronesia	Grenada

Liberia		Moldova	Guyana
Madagascar		Mongolia	Iran
Malawi		Morocco	Iraq
Mali		Nicaragua	Jamaica
Mauritania		Nigeria	Kazakhstan
Mozambique		Pakistan	Lebanon
Myanmar		Papua New Guinea	Libya
Nepal		Philippines	Malaysia
Niger		Sri Lanka	Maldives
Rwanda		Syrian Arab Republic	Marshall Islands
Sao Tome and Principe		Tajikistan	Mauritius
Senegal		Tokelau	Mexico
Sierra Leone		Tunisia	Montenegro
Solomon Islands		Ukraine	Montserrat
Somalia		Uzbekistan	Namibia
South Sudan		Vanuatu	Nauru
Sudan		Viet Nam	Niue
Tanzania		West Bank and Gaza Strip	North Macedonia
Timor-Leste			Palau
Togo			Panama
Tuvalu			Paraguay
Uganda			Peru
Yemen			Saint Helena
Zambia			Saint Lucia
			Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
			Samoa
			Serbia

			South Africa
			Suriname
			Thailand
			Tonga
			Turkey
			Turkmenistan
			Venezuela
			Wallis and Futuna

APPENDIX B: KEY RESULTS MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

Grand Challenges Canada is focused on innovations that lead to real-world impact. As such, funded projects will be required to report on a number of outcomes and outputs. These outcomes and outputs should be measurable and achievable by the end of the funding period.

The tables below provide an overview of the key outcome measures for the OPTions Initiative. This is not a complete list, and not every project must achieve all of them. If your project is funded, the final outcomes and outputs will be determined by the project team in consultation with Grand Challenges Canada.

Section A: Innovations Focused on New Approaches to Increasing Early Access to Existing Abortion Products and Services

Outcome	Potential Indicator(s)
Improved Utilization of Safe Abortion Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women, girls, and people with diverse gender and sexual identities who have successfully terminated a pregnancy • Number of women, girls, and people with diverse gender and sexual identities obtaining safe and legal abortion services (including a definition of the type of service obtained such as counselling, abortion [MVA or medical], complication management and/or post-abortion contraception)
Improved Availability of Safe Abortion Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of health facilities that are actively delivering safe abortion services as a result of the project • Number of intermediaries (such as health workers or service providers) implementing the innovation as a result of training provided by the project
Improved Safe Abortion Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people who experience a measurable improvement in knowledge on where and how to access safe abortion information, services and/or support
Quality of Care	The OPTions Initiative encourages innovators to develop indicators that measure the quality of services and products

	<p>offered through the project. This information can be useful for improving services, ensuring that services and products are responsive to client needs, and also for clients to make informed choices about where to seek care. Indicators that measure quality may look different for each innovation, but may largely focus on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client feedback, satisfaction, and recommendation rates • Preparedness of trained intermediaries (such as health workers or service providers) to provide services • Ability of intermediaries to meet minimum standards of care
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Section B: Innovations Focused on Development of Next Generation Methods of Safe Abortion

Outcome	Potential Indicator(s)
<p>Scientific evidence of a new medication, formulation, equipment, or procedure for safe abortion that provides one or more significant improvements over existing methods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to be effectively administered at later stages of gestation • Effectiveness at terminating pregnancy • Ability of women, girls and/or people with diverse gender and sexual identities to access and self-administer with greater autonomy and privacy • Ease of compliance (e.g., single pill administration) • Reduced side effects and pain • Stability profile and availability at decentralized locations • Permissive in context of restrictive regulatory frameworks (e.g., it has other primary indications) • Cost effectiveness