

# Digital X Frequently Asked Questions 2022



In collaboration with:



From  
the People of Japan

**Digital X is a partnerships programme  
to find, match, and scale proven  
and innovative digital solutions around  
the world to accelerate impact  
— where it is needed the most.**

**APPLY NOW  
— MAY 31, 2022!**

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[digitalx.undp.org](https://digitalx.undp.org)

## **Common questions and some answers below**

- 1. What is Digital X?**
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## What is Digital X?

Digital X is a Partnerships for Scale Programme that helps innovative #tech4good scale globally. This initiative is designed to connect UNDP and Governments with proven, ready-to-scale solutions to meet urgent digital needs.

## What do you mean by ‘proven’ or ‘ready to-scale’ digital solutions?

1. **‘Proven’:** the digital solution is mature in its product development, has significant ‘results in the real world’, and has measurable and meaningful high-impact indicators linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. **‘Ready-to-scale’:** the digital solution is safe to use by thousands of users and can be deployed in a new country with minimal adaptation or effort, if the conditions for scale are met (like genuine government buy-in and language needs met).

Indicators of proven or ready-to-scale digital solutions could include (but not limited to):

- Takes guidance from or meets many of the [Principles for Digital Development](#)
- Used widely by large populations of the target audience in at least one country (and is still being actively used)
- Has been successfully used by a government (and is still being actively used)
- Has a full-time team – with a CTO and/or Product Manager – owns the project with plans to continue ownership for next three years
- Has a funding runway of at least one additional year (from date of application) and a healthy pipeline for further funding and/or revenue

While there is clear value in creating new digital solutions and piloting digital concepts, Digital X will not be supporting ideas or very early-stage solutions at this time. If you have an early-stage digital solution and would like support, please read more about our partner programmes below (see ‘Digital X Network’).

## What problems is Digital X trying to solve?

Since the creation of UNDP's Chief Digital Office (CDO) in 2019, we have observed hundreds of digital projects and challenges faced by UNDP, governments, and our partners. Based on discussions with UNDP Country Offices and teams from around the world, we have designed Digital X to focus on the following problems:

- 3. Governments and UNDP global network urgently need digital solutions.**  
A well-designed digital solution can impact millions of lives and support populations in new and innovative ways.
- 4. Building digital solutions from nothing rarely works.** Most digital solutions built by development professionals either reinvent the wheel, fail to adhere to the Principles for Digital Development, or fail to achieve meaningful impact.
- 5. Lack of scaling what already works.** The good news is that proven and ready-to-scale digital solutions – that have scaled nationwide or across multiple countries – do exist. In addition to being much faster to implement, utilizing an existing digital solution can result in an average 40% cost reduction (DIAL). The problem is that proven solutions are often disconnected from the needs of UNDP and governments.

## How does Digital X work?

### PHASE 1: Global call for applications launched and solutions featured in Digital X Solutions Catalogue

**Step 1:** Digital X Global Challenges launches to the public. The Digital X global call for applications period begins April 20, 2022 and lasts until May 31, 2022.

**Step 2:** UN teams, social enterprises, private sector companies, academic teams, NGOs, and nonprofits can apply. Only proven digital solutions that are relevant to the Global Challenges should apply. We do not accept concept notes or early-stage solutions.

**Step 3:** Proven, ready-to-scale solutions listed in Digital X Solutions Catalogue. Vetted solutions will be featured in the Digital X Solutions Catalogue and promoted to UNDP Country Offices and governments around the world.

### PHASE 2: Funding and Implementation

**Step 4:** Matchmaking and funding of up to \$100,000 per solution. The Digital X team brokers calls between proven, ready-to-scale digital solutions and UNDP Country Offices as well as other partners to create an implementation and funding plan that offers deployment support.

## What are the Digital X Global Challenges and where can I find them?

In the Digital X Global Challenges you will find several examples of the type of digital solutions UNDP is looking for as well as general problem statements. The Global Challenges are based on the digital needs that have been prioritized by the UNDP Global Policy Network, partners, and governments. The details of each challenge are available at [digitalx.undp.org](https://digitalx.undp.org).

## What are the benefits of being included in the Digital X Solutions Catalogue?

Teams with digital solutions who apply to a Digital X Global Challenge by May 31, 2022 are eligible to be included in the first round of the Digital X Solutions Catalogue.

Projects selected\* in the Digital X Solutions Catalogue will have:

- The potential to work with UNDP and governments in the 170 countries where UNDP operates.
- The possibility to impact hundreds of thousands or even millions of lives.
- Greater credibility to talk with governments, UNDP Country Offices, and impact investors.
- Global exposure with UNDP partners.
- Support in adapting the product to become Open Source, a Digital Public Good, or a white-labeled UNDP digital product, which can create new revenue models or new paths to scale.
- Optional introductions to UNDP field experts and technical advisors as well as matching with mentors from the DIGITAL X Network (for more on this see below).
- Invitation to matchmaking calls with UNDP Country Offices to develop proposals and apply for funding together, including up to \$100,000 with Digital X funds.

*\*Note that being selected in the Digital X Solutions Catalogue does not guarantee funding.*

## Can you give more details on the timeline?

Our timeline and key activities are split into two parts:

**Phase 1: Call for applications for Digital X Global Challenges and Digital X Solutions Catalogue**

**Phase 2: Matchmaking, funding, and project implementation**

For more details, see the timeline below.



## Who can apply to the Digital X Global Challenges and be included in the Digital X Solutions Catalogue?

### What are the selection criteria?

Any team with a proven, mature digital solution can apply to a Digital X Global Challenge. This includes UNDP or UN teams with digital solutions, registered social enterprises, universities, private sector companies, NGOs, and nonprofits.

All applications will have the opportunity to be listed in the Digital X Solutions Catalogue. In addition to being proven and ready-to-scale as defined above, the selection committee will assess and evaluate the solutions against the criteria below:

- 1. The digital solution solves a problem relevant to UNDP with an easy-to-understand solution and clear benefits.**
- 2. The solution meaningfully bridges the digital divide and deeply understands the needs of the user.**
- 3. The solution is innovative – it solves a problem in a unique way and/or does so better than what exists.**
- 4. The digital solution has achieved a high-level of impact that is measured with indicators linked to an SDG.**
- 5. The digital solution is safe to use technically from a code, data privacy, and cyber security perspective.**
- 6. The team has strong experience and long-term ownership over the solution.**

**Not required, but desirable:**

- Digital solutions that are Open Source, SaaS, Digital Public Goods (DPGs), or owned by UN.
- Teams from social enterprises or nonprofits with digital solutions that are interested in adapting the solution to become Open Source, a Digital Public Good, or a UNDP white-labeled product.
- Teams with experience working with UN agencies or governments.

**We will not consider:**

- Ideas, concepts, or very early-stage digital solutions.
- Solutions that risk or ignore data privacy of users.
- Proposals that do not have a clear ‘runway’ of funds available or ability to operate without UNDP funding.
- Digital solutions without a clear owner or full-time team behind implementation.

## Who can apply for funding?

Only UNDP Country Offices can apply for funding (either individually or multiple Country Offices can apply together).

While funding will go directly to UNDP teams, they can apply in a partnership with a digital solution managed by a social enterprise, academia, CSO, nonprofit, or the private sector.

If a UNDP team chooses to disburse funds to an outside organization, the Country Office team is responsible for working with procurement to find the appropriate funding modality for their situation.

### **Digital X will fund:**

1. UNDP teams who partner or utilize a proven, ready-to-scale digital solution that meets the criteria and is featured in the Digital X Solutions Catalogue. In this regard, UNDP teams are encouraged to ensure that the digital solutions they plan to utilize have applied during Phase 1 to be featured in the Digital X Solutions Catalogue.
2. UNDP teams with a clear and compelling UNDP proposal approved by their senior leadership, outlining how the UNDP team will utilize or partner with a digital solution, how funds will be used, a work plan, and expected outputs.
3. UNDP teams who know which specific funding modality they will use to disburse funds and have this modality approved by their procurement team.

### **While not required, we have a strong preference for supporting:**

1. Proposals where UNDP will work with a government to implement a digital solution or service.
2. Proposals where UNDP will support a digital solution to become Open Source, SaaS, meet the requirements/apply to become a Digital Public Good, or a UNDP white-labeled product either to be implemented immediately or in preparation for a wider rollout to multiple countries.
3. Proposals supporting a larger multi-country rollout of a digital solution.

**Funding can be applied towards:**

1. Hiring consultants (such as UNDP consultants to manage implementation of a solution or developers to adapt a digital solution to become Open Source, SaaS, a Digital Public Good, or white-labeled product for UNDP).
2. Payment of services or a clear scope of work from a digital solution provider (such as a social enterprise, nonprofit, university, etc.).
3. Purchase cutting edge technology that enables scaled rollout of a proven digital solution.
4. Other items depending on need.

**We will not consider funding:**

- Ideas, concepts, or early-stage digital solutions.
- Solutions that risk or ignore data privacy of users.
- Digital solutions without a clear owner or full-time team behind it.
- Digital solutions that are not vetted or do not meet the same criteria for the Digital X Solutions Catalogue.

## What type of projects did Digital X fund in the past?

For an overview of our first round of Digital X, please see this [video](#) or [blog post](#).

## Is it possible to apply for different Digital X Global Challenges?

If your team or office owns multiple digital solutions, yes, you can apply to different challenges, however you must complete a separate application for each product.

If you own a single digital solution that you believe can answer to multiple thematic challenges - for example your solution is fit for the Crisis Response and Inclusive Growth challenges - please select the one challenge area you believe your application is most suited for and note the other use cases in your application.

## How is Digital X different from other accelerators in UNDP?

This second round of Digital X has pivoted to become a matchmaking or partnership programme, rather than an accelerator. Now, we work with existing accelerators to support the teams in their programmes through the Digital X Network. The Digital X Network comprises a mix of UN programmes/ accelerators, external accelerators, and foundations. They help us source digital solutions and amplify the call for applications.

Our growing Digital X Network includes but is not limited to:

- UNDP AcclLabs
- UNDP ImpactAim Accelerator
- UNDP Boost Acceleration Programme
- WFP Innovation Accelerator
- Digital Public Goods Alliance
- Google Startup Advisors
- Unreasonable Group
- Impact Hub

If you know an accelerator, programme, or foundation who would like to recommend proven digital solutions to UNDP and our partners, please contact us at [digital.x@undp.org](mailto:digital.x@undp.org)

## Can I launch a need-based Digital X Global Challenge jointly with CDO?

Yes. If you are a funder or UNDP Global Policy Network team looking for proven digital solutions, you are welcome to join us as a partner. Please contact us at [digital.x@undp.org](mailto:digital.x@undp.org) to start the conversation.

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