



Question and Answers

SBIR DM “Digital solutions to improve access to healthcare and education services for remote groups in the Middle East and North Africa”

Version 2, 23 February 2021 (replaces version 1)

This document contains questions and answers during the information webinar(s) and which were received by e-mail.

SBIR Questions

	Questions	Answers
1.	Many examples and solutions you mentioned focus on the development in the field of applications and (online) educational programs. Does this call also support the development of medical products that better match the needs of developing countries as a means to improve access to healthcare? (such as non-disposable, intuitive to use, affordable etc.)	The SBIR allows a big range of solutions to address the problem. By addressing the problem properly as denoted in the call try to convince us that it fits. You should address your target group and explain how they are remote (physically, economically, geographically) and how your innovation contributes to a solution. If you develop a general product of improvement this does not fit within the SBIR call.
2.	Why is SBIR used?	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs finds it important to use the innovative power of Dutch entrepreneurs for challenges in developing countries and directly involve them in cooperation with local companies, besides big programs run by NGO's.
3.	Is there already a preference for a certain country? And is it desirable if the innovation can be scaled up in other countries?	No, you can choose one of the 11 countries, there is no preference for a country specifically. The Ministry would like to see scalability, and it may be interesting to roll out the solution to another country but start first in one country to test the innovation.
4.	What is the role of the embassy?	The embassy can support with local contacts and their networks and have mainly information on the formal networks, know the systems and public authorities, regulations, etc.

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5.	What is the roll of the Orange Corners?	The Orange Corners are local incubators who have local networks. The Orange Corner programme is managed by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They work closely together with the Dutch embassies and local partners in each programme country. In the following MENA countries there are Orange Corner activities: - Algeria - Egypt - Iraq - Morocco - Sudan - Lebanon - Jordan - Palestine Territories The experience in other SBIR calls is that the networks of OCs can be helpful to find partners in the local ecosystem. More information https://www.orangecorners.com/ or through sbir@rvo.nl.
6.	In theme 3 improved quality of and access to education and skills training for remote groups only the pupils and students are mentioned. Can teachers be the target group for new (digital) technologies?	Yes, teachers are also an important target group .
7.	Are solutions which already have been validated in countries outside the target countries eligible? Especially if they can be easily developed elsewhere?	Yes, solutions that have been validated in other countries are eligible. We ask the solution to be new for the target country where you want to implement it. Keep in mind it has to be an R&D project with a certain chance of failure.
8.	Do you need to choose 1 country or is it possible to choose multiple countries?	You need to choose 1 target country, see 3.
9.	Is this eligible: an existing innovation that we want to adapt for the healthcare setting?	Yes, it is. It could mean that you can build on existing systems which could be a plus.
10.	Are solutions geared towards private healthcare facilities included?	Yes, they are.
11.	What if you have a gender-neutral innovation?	We encourage to take into account that fifty percent of your target group will consists of women. Make sure that they are included in (the use of) the innovation.
12.	Does the innovation need to be developed in the Netherlands?	No, it does not.
13.	Are the costs for technology adaptations in pilot and testing phase also included in the second phase?	Yes. Technology adaptations and testing are part of Phase 2, so the costs are included.

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14.	In the presentation digital solutions were mentioned, but one should realize that internet coverage in some countries is very low. Are there any requirements about the % of end users that have to be reached?	We do ask for digital solutions. On the one hand we believe you can reach a lot of people through digital means. However, it has also a limit when there is no internet coverage. There is a requirement on local impact but not on the amount of end users to be reached.
15.	Who can we contact at the embassy?	At this point we rather not encourage you to contact the embassy staff. They are very busy with the present situation and we do not want to give them more work at this point of the process. Please note that the project idea you have to provide does not yet requires a detailed analysis of the situation you want to address.
16.	Does the local partner need to be an NGO or a business?	It doesn't matter as long as local impact will be generated. Please note that NGOs might be expensive as they do not generate income themselves.
17.	Do you need to have formal commitment from local partners before submitting your proposal?	No, it is up to you, it is not a requirement for the expression of interest phase nor for the bid Phase 1.
18.	If you have your own subsidiary in a country, do you consider it as a partner?	You have to be convincing in creating local impact and be able to show that you have the right contacts in the target country to make it work. We do not prescribe the way you cooperate with local entities. So yes, it can be a subsidiary.
19.	Can partnerships with country governments be okay? Being that this assures sustainability in terms of budgetary allocation.	Yes they can.
20.	A solution that has been tested and local countries are excited about it, it answers to this call in totality but is in the process of being launched. Would that be eligible?	Probably not, this call is focusing on research and development, not on marketing of a finished product or service.
21.	How about data protection?	It's important to pay attention to personal data because personal data can only be used for the purposes of the process. Yes, see Digital Principles document (www.digitalprinciples.org)
22.	Are services also eligible? the emphasis is now very much focused on products, but I seem to remember that saw in the call "products and services"	Yes, we look at products and services or even combinations.
23.	Can I combine two themes?	Yes, that is possible.
24.	Can we implement our plan in more than one country?	Yes, that is possible. But stay focussed.

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25.	Do you have to choose a specific country by 1 March? Or is it possible to decide later?	You need to choose 1 target country, but it is possible to change the country before or during phase 1 if you think the innovation is not feasible in the chosen country.
26.	Can donors, like iNGOs and the World Bank, be clients or only local companies?	Yes, they can be clients.
27.	Can companies submit an idea with innovative software platforms that can contribute the solution?	That may be possible, you need to explain how your innovation will contribute to the challenge and convince us how you will reach remote groups with your innovation.
28.	Can two Dutch companies/organizations send in a concept together and then find partners to test the idea?	Yes, that is possible. One company is the main contractor, the other, the subcontractor. In phase 1 you can find reliable partners for phase 2. But you need to have a plan how you are going to find these partners.
29.	Can we count on your support to find local partners?	We may connect you to our networks, but we cannot give a guarantee that you will find a partner this way.
30.	Who can we contact? Is there a list? Can we contact RVO to find out your network?	We do have local networks, through for instance our embassies and Orange Corners. It might be helpful to contact them and see whether they have partners in their networks you could cooperate with. For this phase you do not have to identify yet your local partner, but in the next phase this will become important.
31.	Innovation is a relative concept. I can imagine that a certain technical educational innovation is already standard for NL, but not yet in one of the target countries. Do you look at this that way?	A product, technique or service is innovative if: ➤ the product or service is new to the target country; ➤ it comprises a new technology; or ➤ it comprises a new organisational method. The innovation can be hardware, software, a service or a new way of organizing things. This also includes making existing products and services in another country suitable for the target country in an innovative way. Obviously, this still requires R&D and there is a reasonable chance that it is not technically or economically feasible.
32.	How do you see scalability? Do you have an example?	It is important to think of scalability of your innovation in order to come to impact. However, in R&D you start rather small and after prototyping you could scale. In the present SBIR calls we have not reached the end phase to have clear experiences with scalability. However, mapping clients and end-users will be the first step for scaling eventually.

Procedural questions

	Question	Answer
1.	What language is required for the proposal, English or in Dutch?	You can choose to submit the webform in English or Dutch. Considering that you need to have local partners, English would be better.
2.	Can you postpone submission of your project idea?	No, we cannot.
3.	Can foundations and non-profit organisations registered in the Netherlands submit a proposal or does it have to be a business?	Yes, all entities with an organization registration number in the EU are eligible and may send in an expression of interest. We will assess if you may create local impact and embed your innovation locally. This includes long term financial perspective. If all partners depend on short term donor funding this might be considered as not economically feasible.
4.	Can you apply as proprietorship (eenmanszaak)?	Yes, one needs to be registered in Chamber of Commerce (KvK) and have an organization registration number.
5.	Is it possible to submit more than one project?	Yes, it is possible do so. Keep in mind that you need enough resources (capacity and financially) to handle more projects at the same time.
6.	Is the next meeting on 22nd of February a follow up meeting?	No, it is not. We will present the same information. After visiting this information meeting, you might have some question left. You can either join the next meeting or send your question to SBIR@rvo.nl .
7.	For our innovation, we have established recently a start-up entity. Would it be better to submit through the start-up entity (without track record), or one of the founding parties (with a track record)?	It is up to you to convince us that you as a company are able to make a success of the innovation.
8.	Do we need to have a certain business identity? Moeten we een bepaalde bedrijfsvorm hebben?	All SBIR competitions are aimed at companies with research and development capacity. Foundations, associations, corporations and starting entrepreneurs (private persons) can also participate. For starting entrepreneurs, the company does not have to be established yet when the expression of interest or the bid is submitted.
9.	What criteria are used to select who can send in a bid for phase 1? Welke criteria hanteren jullie voor de selectie? Wie dus wordt uitgenodigd om een projectvoorstel uit te werken	Does the proposed innovation - fit within the call and - does it seem promising.
10.	Who/ how will be assessed if you can send in a bid for phase 2? Wie/hoe wordt beoordeeld of je in fase 2 een offerte in mag dienen?	If your conclusion after phase 1 is that it is feasible, you can send in a bid for phase 2 together with the feasibility report (end report phase 1). Als uw conclusie is, het is haalbaar, dan kunt u offerte fase 2 indienen, tegelijk met eindrapport fase 1

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11.	Can NGOs submit an expression of interest? And does the business form influences your assessment? Mogen NGOs concepten ook indienen of enkel BVs (heeft de bedrijfsvorm dus invloed op jullie keuze)?	SBIR in Developing Market Challenges focuses on businesses with R&D capacity. NGOs can submit an expression of interest but need to motivate more strongly why they are the right party to develop and successfully market the innovation. All organisations, also the not for profit organisations, have to elaborate how they will market the results of the SBIR project (licensing, set up a company, etc.). The challenge is only open to legal entities that are registered in one of the EU member states. Subcontractors/Partners in a project don't need to be registered in one of the EU member states. An NGO can be a subcontractor in a project.
12.	Will 100% of the costs be reimbursed? Can we use our own rates? (integral costprice) Misschien heb ik het gemist, maar wordt 100% van de project kosten vergoed? Mogen we eigen tarieven hanteren (integrale kostprijs)	When determining the price for your bid, keep in mind that the intellectual property rights (IPR) remains with you and you will be able to exploit that IPR in future. So we expect you not to use commercial hour rates.
13.	Can we as a knowledge institute participate in more than one proposals? Mogen wij als kennisinstelling in meer dan een voorstel meedoen als partner? Wij mogen geen trekker zijn begrijp ik	It is possible to participate and with enough capacity also in several proposals.
14.	Can a knowledge institute submit an expression of interest?	Yes, that is possible. SBIR in Developing Market Challenges focuses on businesses with R&D capacity. Knowledge institutes can submit an expression of interest, but need to motivate more strongly why they are the right party to develop and successfully market the innovation. All organisations, also the not for profit organisations, have to elaborate how they will market the results of the SBIR project (licensing, set up a company, etc.).

Partner requests

Van Lilian Jacobs aan iedereen:

Wij hebben een bedrijf met een flexibel trainingsplatform en wij zoeken partners op het gebied van partners in deze regio. ljacobs@playmaxgroup.com

Van Mishka Stuip aan iedereen:

IHE Delft Institute for Water Education wij zijn ook actief in MENA regio met training en cap dev m.stuip@un-ihe.org

Van Eline Primowees aan iedereen:

AppsForce biedt kennis en ervaring in web/platform-ontwikkeling en innovatie, alsmede interne kennis in Tunesië, en achtergrond in gezondheids-interventie/disseminatie. Appsforce.org!

Van Jaap Koelewijn aan iedereen:

We (at Helpr.ai) have the software solution for micro learnings. I'm looking for a partner. Can you help finding one?
jaap@helpr.nl

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