



# Concept Note Guidelines

The Concept Note provides small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) the opportunity to briefly describe/pitch an innovative solution to advance gender equality and empower women and girls in the Global South. FIT will review Concept Notes and invite SMOs with the most promising innovative solutions to submit a Proposal for potential funding.

- Due date is **Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at 1pm, Central Time.**
- Approximately 5 pages in length. Arial 11 Font. Single-spaced.
- Online submission only (no emailed submissions accepted). Refer to the instructions on the “[Concept Note](#)” page to create your user account for this intake period.
- Include the 5 sections below (Background/Context, Innovative Solution, People/Expertise, Financials, Other) in your Word file submission. Copy and paste each section of your Concept Note in the Concept Note Details tab of your online account (this information must correspond exactly to your 5-page Word document).
- Please note document saving standards provided in the online application system.
- Upload your organization’s Articles of Incorporation and Financial Statement from the most recent fiscal year.
- Online application includes additional questions not mentioned in these guidelines.

**1 BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:** Briefly describe the local context including key gender issues existing in your testing location. Describe the problem/development challenge you are trying to address. How was the problem identified and by whom? Describe existing practices/approaches including what other actors are doing to address this problem/development challenge in the region or other parts of the world.

**2 INNOVATIVE SOLUTION:** Explain the innovative solution you are proposing to test over a 6-10 month period. What makes it unique and how it is innovative? How was the solution conceived? How have women and girls been included in the design of your proposed innovative solution? How will your idea advance gender equality and/or empower women and girls?

What is the intended impact of your innovative solution? Who are your target participants/beneficiaries? Approximately how many direct participants/beneficiaries (women/men/girls/boys) are you aiming to reach during testing?

Briefly describe the methodology you will use to test your innovative solution. Provide an overview of a few risks that could impact the testing of your innovation and include potential mitigation strategies.

**3 PEOPLE/EXPERTISE:** Which staff in your organization (Canadian SMO) will be involved in the testing and how is their expertise relevant/suitable to testing your innovative solution? Keep brief and general – description/bio will be required at the proposal stage.

Who will you be partnering with in your testing location and why have you chosen to work together? What will their role be in the testing, and what is their relevant expertise? Are you planning on partnering with any local women's organizations?

If you do not have the necessary expertise (e.g. gender, MEL or testing experience), describe your plan to bring in the appropriate skills and experience. Tell us about your local partner’s experience and why you’ve chosen to work with them.



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- 4 FINANCIALS:** What is your funding request and proposed testing timeframe? Funding requests range from \$150K-\$175K. Use the [budget template](#) to provide a budget break down by in-country and/or in Canada costs for the testing period (e.g. personnel, travel, testing, materials, etc.). Provide explanations on each line item to describe the calculation of the costs.

Include a narrative in the Concept Note to explain the rationale behind the numbers presented in the budget such as: expertise required from staff or contractors to test and report in a gender sensitive way, additional funding sources, rationale for large costs, and anything else that could support your budget decisions.

\*Note that FIT does not fund any activities involving construction or renovation.

- 5 OTHER:** SMOs who advance to the Proposal stage will need to detail testing and evaluation plans, impact on gender relations in the community, environmental management plans, policies on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), any security issues, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic or other. These are not required in your Concept Note; however, this section is an opportunity to briefly explain where you are in the process or how you intend to address them as part of your planning. This section could also include any information you think might be important for us to know at this stage that may make your Concept Note stand out.

#### KEEP IN MIND

- Be sure to do the [online eligibility](#) check before you submit your application!
- Create your user account in the online application system ahead of submission.
- FIT is a competitive program.
- FIT supports the testing of innovative ideas; it does not provide funding for new or general programming.
- Review the [Concept Note Webinar](#) and the [SPUR Change Financial Statement Webinar](#).
- Refer to the [Resource page](#) on FIT's website: [Whistler Principles to Accelerate Innovation for Development Impact](#), [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#), [Global Affairs Canada's definition of innovation](#), [FIT Rapid Gender Scan](#), [Developing Your Testing Framework](#), [Fishbone Diagram](#), [Stakeholder Analysis](#), etc.
- Sign up under "Stay Connected" on the FIT website to receive program updates about webinars, resources and other opportunities.