

## UNDP Uganda Innovation Challenge

### Circular Economy and Waste Management in Ugandan Cities

<b>ENTITY</b>	UNDP Uganda
<b>PROGRAMME</b>	Promoting Circular Economy and Waste Management in Cities
<b>DONOR</b>	UNDP Funding Windows
<b>Reference Number</b>	UNDP-UGA-CE-LVG-2026-01
<b>Issuance Date</b>	01st May 2026
<b>Submission Deadline</b>	31 July 2026, 5:00 PM (East Africa Time)

#### BACKGROUND

Uganda is facing a growing waste management crisis that threatens public health, environmental sustainability and economic development. With waste generation projected to increase by 70% by 2050, current systems are already overwhelmed. In Kampala, only 40% of waste is collected, with most ending up in open landfills – a pattern mirrored across the country, where open dumping and burning are widespread.

UNDP Uganda, with support from the UNDP Funding Windows mechanism, is implementing an 18-month programme entitled “*Promoting Circular Economy and Waste Management in Cities*” (January 2026 – June 2027). The programme aims to establish a national digital multi-stakeholder collaboration platform, develop a digital waste data hub, and catalyse innovative circular economy solutions through challenge prizes and city partnerships.

This Innovation Challenge is launched under Output 3 of the programme. We are calling on all innovators – individuals, businesses, non-profits, community groups, academia to propose pioneering solutions that can transform waste management practices in Uganda. This is not a grant. It is a competition where the best scalable and inclusive ideas will be awarded cash prizes to further develop or pilot their innovations.

#### THE CHALLENGE QUESTION

**How might we drastically reduce the amount of municipal waste that is openly dumped or burned, while unlocking economic opportunities for women, youth and marginalised communities in Ugandan cities?**

We are looking for solutions that:

- Address a clearly identified waste management or circular economy bottleneck in one or more of the seven pilot municipalities: Jinja, Mbale, Gulu, Arua, Hoima, Mbarara, or Kampala.
- Are innovative – the approach or technology is not already widely practiced or easily obtained through standard procurement.
- Have reached at least prototype, minimum viable product (MVP), or pilot-ready stage.
- Demonstrate how they can be scaled across other municipalities or regions.
- Explicitly integrate gender equality and social inclusion, showing concrete benefits for women, youth and marginalised groups.

We do not prescribe specific technologies. Your solution could involve digital tools, new business models, community organising, low-tech hardware, behavioural change methods, or a combination as long as it is novel, feasible, and delivers measurable impact.

#### ELIGIBILITY – WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

This Challenge is open to all entities, including:

- Women’s groups and associations
- Youth-led organisations
- Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
- Cooperatives (registered)
- Academic and research institutions
- Private sector companies (for-profit enterprises, sole proprietorships, limited liability companies, partnerships)
- Any other legal entity

There are no restrictions on the type of applicant. We welcome entries from those who traditionally do not work with UNDP.

### MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

All entrants must:

1. Be legally constituted and registered (in Uganda or elsewhere) and submit proof of registration.
2. Have the proposed solution at prototype, MVP, or pilot-ready stage (not just an idea on paper).
3. Propose activities that will be implemented within one or more of the seven pilot municipalities: Jinja, Mbale, Gulu, Arua, Hoima, Mbarara, or Kampala.
4. Have no overdue reporting or financial obligations to UNDP or any UN agency (if applicable).
5. Commit to collecting and reporting gender-disaggregated data and basic progress information if awarded a prize.
6. Accept the Intellectual Property and licensing terms set out in this Challenge (see Section 9).

### PRIZE AWARD AND CONDITIONS

<b>Total prize pool</b>	<b>USD 40,000</b>
<b>Number of prizes</b>	<b>Up to 4 (four), depending on merit</b>
<b>Maximum prize</b>	<b>USD 10,000 per prize</b>
<b>Prize type</b>	<b>Cash award (no repayment required)</b>
<b>Prize usage period</b>	<b>Winners must implement their proposed plan within 6 months of award (must conclude by May 2027).</b>
<b>Disbursement</b>	<b>70% upon signing of the prize agreement and 30% upon approval of the final report.</b>

Note: The total prize pool and per-winner amounts are within the delegated authority of the UNDP Uganda Country Office. If the evaluation panel determines fewer than four solutions meet the quality threshold, part of the pool may remain unawarded.

This is a **prize competition**, not a grant. Winners are free to use the prize money to advance their solution as described in their submission, with no requirement for co-financing or detailed budget breakdowns.

### WHAT WINNERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO DO

- Sign the UNDP Innovation Challenge Prize Agreement (based on the standard model template cleared by the UNDP Legal Office).
- Submit a one-to-two-page Prize Utilization Plan after being notified, outlining how the funds will be used to pilot or develop the solution.

- Provide a simple end-of-prize report (max. 5 pages) describing progress, challenges, key results (with gender-disaggregated data), and lessons learned.
- Grant UNDP rights to document, publish, and promote the solution as a public good (see Intellectual Property section below).

**THEMATIC FOCUS – WHAT KINDS OF SOLUTIONS ARE WE LOOKING FOR?**

The problem is open-ended, but to stimulate thinking, solutions could touch on areas such as:

- Waste collection efficiency – e.g., novel routing, community collection models, digital tracking.
- Recycling and resource recovery – low-cost, decentralised processing of plastics, organics, e-waste. Rudimentary recycling or melting of plastics and other products is discouraged
- Upcycling and value addition – turning waste into marketable products. Solutions like plastic bricks will not be acceptable due to related health and safety issues.
- Plastic waste reduction – alternatives to single-use plastics, buy-back systems.
- Informal sector integration – tools, training, and platforms that formalise and support waste pickers.
- Digital innovation for waste management – apps, pay-as-you-throw, waste exchange platforms.
- Behavioural change and awareness – creative campaigns that achieve measurable shifts in disposal practices.

All proposals must show:

- How the solution directly involves and benefits women, youth, and marginalised groups.
- That it avoids or minimises negative environmental and social impacts. All shortlisted proposals will be screened against UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards.
- Potential to create local livelihood opportunities, especially for women and youth.

**SELECTION CRITERIA AND EVALUATION PROCESS**

**Evaluation Process**

- **Eligibility check** – verification of mandatory requirements.
- **Technical evaluation** – an Evaluation Panel will score all eligible entries against the criteria below.
- **Panel composition** – The panel will consist predominantly of UNDP staff members. External subject-matter experts may be invited on a pro-bono or competitively-selected basis; all such experts will be cleared for conflicts of interest and will sign a Declaration of Impartiality. The final award decision rests solely with UNDP staff members.
- **Prize awarding** – Winners will be notified and publicly announced.

**Selection Criteria**

**Criterion Weight Description**

Criteria	Weight	Description
Innovation	30%	How novel is the solution? Does it address the transformative challenge in a way not yet common in Uganda? potential
Gender and Inclusion	20%	Extent to which the solution empowers women, inclusion youth, and marginalised groups, both in design and expected impact.

Feasibility	15%	Is the solution at MVP/prototype stage, implementation? Is there a credible plan to use the prize to capacity pilot or advance it within 6 months?
Scalability	15%	Potential for replication in other municipalities; viability beyond the prize-funded period.
Environment	10%	Expected reduction in open dumping/burning, social impact increased recycling, improved livelihoods; no significant adverse risks
Value for price	10%	Likely impact relative to the prize amount money requested; efficiency and reach of the proposed solution
Total	100%	

**Passing threshold: Minimum 80 points out of 100.**

#### **TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

- All submitted entries will be acknowledged.
- Shortlisted entrants will be invited for a virtual interview or to give a brief demonstration.
- The names of awarded entrants, prize amounts, and a non-confidential summary of winning solutions will be published on UNDP Uganda's website.
- Unsuccessful entrants will receive feedback upon request.

#### **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ)**

This Challenge is designed to generate public good solutions. By entering, you agree to the following IP terms, which are consistent with UNDP Innovation Challenge policy:

- **Ownership of IP:** All intellectual property rights in the ideas, concepts, and solutions submitted shall vest in UNDP upon submission. This ensures UNDP can make the innovation widely available and prevent monopoly control.
- **License to the winning innovator:** UNDP will grant the prize winner a perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive license to use, further develop, and commercialise the solution.
- **Open access:** UNDP may publish and freely share the solution (including through open-source platforms) and may grant licenses to third parties to adopt, adapt, and scale the innovation in other development contexts. The prize winner must not be, and cannot expect to be, the sole source of goods or services derived from the innovation.
- **Attribution:** UNDP will take reasonable steps to acknowledge the source of the innovation when publicly sharing it.

If you are not comfortable with these IP terms, please do not enter the Challenge.

#### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Your entry must be in English** and consist of:

1. **Innovation proposal** – a single PDF or Word document (maximum **25 pages**, excluding annexes) containing:
  - Entry title and pilot municipality.
  - Name and contact details of the lead entrant (organisation).
  - **Problem statement** – the specific waste/circular economy challenge you aim to solve.
  - **Description of your innovation** – what it is, how it works, current development stage (prototype/MVP/pilot), and what makes it novel.

- **Impact pathway** – how the solution will directly benefit women, youth, and marginalised groups; estimated people reached and environmental outcomes.
  - **Preliminary prize-use outline** – how you would spend the prize money (main activities and milestones over 6 months).
  - **Scaling and sustainability** – how the solution could be sustained or expanded beyond the prize period.
2. **Evidence of current solution stage** – photos, demo videos, user feedback, test results, or any other material that demonstrates the solution exists beyond the concept stage (max. 5 files, or a link to an online folder).
  3. **Registration/ID document** – for organisations, certificate of registration; for individuals, clear copy of a government-issued ID.
  4. **Declaration of no conflicts of interest** – a signed statement confirming that the entrant has no outstanding obligations to UNDP and that the entry does not involve procurement-related conflicts. (A template can be downloaded with the challenge documents.)

**Do not** submit a detailed budget breakdown or financial statements. This is a prize competition, not a grant.

### SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

**Deadline: 30 June 2026, 5:00 PM (East Africa Time)** – late entries will not be considered.

All materials must be submitted **electronically** as a single compressed folder (.zip or .rar) to:

**Email:** tenders.kampala@undp.org

**Subject line:** “Innovation Challenge – Circular Economy – [Entrant Name] – [Pilot Municipality]”

*Example:* “Innovation Challenge – Circular Economy – Green Women’s Initiative – Jinja”

UNDP will send an automated acknowledgement within 48 hours. If you do not receive one, please resend or contact the email above to confirm.

### KEY DATES AND TIMELINE

Activities	Date
Challenge launch	<b>13th May 2026</b>
Information webinar (virtual) – Q&A	29 May 2026 (10:00 AM EAT)
<b>Submission deadline</b>	<b>31 July 2026</b>
Eligibility screening	1–5 August 2026
Technical evaluation	5–15 August 2026
Panel deliberation and recommendation	16–25 August 2026
Final UNDP approval	01–05 September 2026
Award announcement and signing of prize agreement	10–15 September 2026
Prize utilisation period	15 September 2026 – 15 March 2027
Final Report	due 31 March 2027

### ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS AND DISCLAIMERS

1. **No obligation to award** – UNDP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all entries without incurring liability. A prize may not be awarded if submissions do not meet the quality threshold.

2. **Accuracy of information** – Entrants warrant that all information provided is true and complete. False statements may result in disqualification and recovery of any prize money disbursed.
3. **Conflicts of interest** – Members of the Programme Board, evaluation panel, and their immediate family members or affiliated institutions are not eligible to participate.
4. **Anti-corruption and fraud** – UNDP has zero tolerance for fraud, corruption, and misconduct. Any suspicion will be investigated, and prize winners may be required to return funds and face sanctions.
5. **Social and environmental safeguards** – Proposals that pose significant risks to people or the environment will be rejected. Winners must comply with UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards during prize implementation.
6. **Monitoring and audit** – UNDP may request progress information and may audit the use of the prize money to ensure it was used for the stated purposes.
7. **Amendments** – UNDP may amend this Challenge document. Any changes will be published on the UNDP Uganda website.
8. **This is a prize competition, not a procurement or grant.** It is governed by UNDP’s Innovation Challenge policy and the Prize Agreement that winners will sign.

#### **CONTACT AND CLARIFICATIONS**

Questions: Must be submitted in writing by 15 May 2026 to [tenders.kampala@undp.org](mailto:tenders.kampala@undp.org) with subject line: “*Question – Innovation Challenge – [Your Name/Organisation]*”.

Responses: Anonymised questions and answers will be published on the UNDP Uganda website by 22 May 2026. No individual replies will be sent.

Information Webinar: 15 May 2026 at 10:00 AM East Africa Time – link to be provided on the UNDP Uganda website. Attendance is strongly encouraged.

#### **ANNEXES (Available for Download)**

- **Annex A:** Grant Proposal Form (Word template)
- **Annex B:** Workplan Template (Excel)
- **Annex C:** Gender Inclusion Form (Word template).
- **Annex D:** Declaration of No Conflict of Interest.
- **Annex E:** Application checklist (Word template).

**Download link:** <https://www.undp.org/uganda/procurement>

#### **Issued by:**

UNDP Uganda Country Office

Plot 11 Yusuf Lule Road, P.O. Box 7184, Kampala, Uganda

Tel: +256 417 112 100

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