

# Innovation Challenge Call

*Inventing a sustainable future for Africa today*

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

### Background

The fifth African Science, Technology and Innovation Forum will be held from 27 to 28 February 2023, in a hybrid format, in Niamey, Niger under the theme: “**Accelerating development and diffusion of emerging technologies for a green, inclusive and resilient Africa**” with a special focus on Sustainable Development Goals 6 (clean water and sanitation); 7 (affordable and clean energy); 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure); 11 (sustainable cities and communities); and 17 (partnerships for the Goals) and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063. For this call, the focus is on SDG 6 and 7 given their importance to Africa in the face of climate change and their relevance in meeting all the other key SDGs in Africa.

### About the Innovation Challenge Call

The Innovation Challenge Call brings together a large pool of global scientists, experts, innovators and entrepreneurs to propose feasible solutions to scientific, technological and industrial challenges faced by public and private entities. Public and private entities may range from firms, government and civil societies agencies, research institutions, universities, independent teams and individuals etc. The Call presents entities that offer renewable energy and water solutions (or seeking to do so) the opportunity to find solutions to their real-life problems. Inspiring and interesting challenges are also likely to attract potential partners and knowledge providers which could reduce the risks associated with research and development, deployment of new technologies and business practices, and entry into new markets among other risks.

Your challenge may be in product, process, manufacturing, deployment, decommissioning and/or recycling design, research and development (R&D), safety, sustainability, costs, scaling up, etc.

Submit the challenge that you wish to solve and implement in your entity and/ or your community. The challenges may be related to efforts for:

- a) bringing down the costs of production (e.g. manufacturing of solar cells, batteries etc), deployment, maintenance, stability, use and recycling (e.g. products, services, infrastructure, parts and accessories),
- b) increasing capacity and lifespan of energy and water solutions and systems,

- c) improving sustainability, utility, lifespan and long-term effects of water and energy products, processes or systems on the environment and society,
- d) overcoming regulatory requirements such as safety standards, land use and environmental issues, among others.

**This is a Challenge Call.** Please do not submit solutions: this is not a call for innovations and/or solutions that you have developed. Instead, submit the challenges that you and partners face for which you are actively seeking a solution. For this year's call, the focus will be on Challenges across the entire energy and the water value chains. This is not an **entrepreneurship or a research challenge** and thus do not submit challenge related to business plans, research funding, setting up, management, viability etc.

### **The Process**

All challenges received will be reviewed to ensure they are clear, related to the subjects of focus (i.e. SDG 6 and 7), and could be understood by third parties. This is an important step to enable others to provide useful and relevant ideas and solutions to the challenge. The Forum and its partners will work with challenge owners to improve the clarity of the challenge. The challenges will then be shared with the solvers registered in the ECA data base and that of partner organizations.

Challenges that receive at least one suggested useful solution will move to the next stage for considerations of possible support, partnerships and collaborations. Good challenges to which challenge owners do not find useful solution may go to the bootcamp and hackathon of the STI Forum 2023. Here, different teams will work towards finding solutions that challenge owners may find useful.

### **Advantages:**

You are in charge: you define the challenge, and you choose the solutions that works for you and others in your circumstance. The Forum and its partners will support you as firms, institutions, communities or individuals to source new ideas and solutions from some of the smartest and brightest minds in Africa and beyond to address your challenge. More importantly, the Forum and its partners will support you in refining the challenge sufficiently clear to enable experts from all walks of life to provide useful ideas or solutions.

### **Eligibility criteria**

All legal entities – individual entrepreneurs and innovators, firms, institutions and public entities in Africa – except UN entities and those linked to STI Forum - may submit one challenge.

Beyond these generalities, the following criteria need to be met:

1. The entity submitting the challenge must be the challenge owner and the one seeking solutions (e.g. a firm) or directly facing the challenge (e.g. NGO in its current work with a community).
2. For this call, only technological challenges will be accepted. Non-technological challenges (e.g. organizational, institutional and managerial arrangements) are outside the current scope of work of Origin.

3. You should be actively looking for a solution now to overcome the challenge, and are able and willing to put aside some resources (e.g. human, financial, institutional resources) to implement the solution, if one is found
4. Your entity is at least three (3) years old – be it formal or informal.

All are encouraged to apply, especially women and youths.

## Your Application Template

### A) Required information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Your Name:</li> <li>➤ Name of Your Entity:</li> <li>➤ Address:</li> <li>➤ Email:</li> <li>➤ Mobile number:</li> <li>➤ Website link:</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Describe the business of your entity (250 words)</li> </ul>
<p>Annual Revenue, Sales: \$          Annual budget          (choose the one that applies)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of workers team members:</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of customers/users/clients:</li> </ul>

### B) Support documents

1. Cover letter & letter of support from your entity is required
2. A support letter from at least one partner is required

### C) Closing date: 14 January 2023

## Send your applications to

Complete the application here and/or send it to:

1. Asfaw Yitna – [yitna@un.org](mailto:yitna@un.org)
2. Gedion Workneh – [workneh@un.org](mailto:workneh@un.org)