



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for the Somalia Women's Market Access Open Innovation Challenge 2025

Eligibility Criteria

1. What are the eligibility requirements for applicants?

The challenge is open to all Somali-registered businesses from any industry. However, priority will be given to women-led businesses and those with at least 30% women in their leadership team. This means that male-led businesses are also eligible to apply, but having women in leadership will be considered advantageous during evaluation.

Applicants must also:

- Have a basic operational structure and understanding of key business functions. (No startup or idea-stage financing will be provided.)

2. Can individual applications be submitted?

No. Only businesses or organizations that meet the eligibility requirements may apply. Individual applications are not accepted.

3. What business registration or license is accepted?

Any business registration or license from Federal or State Ministry of Commerce and Industry is accepted.

4. What is the geographic focus for applications?

Applicants may be based anywhere in Somalia but having operational experience in Southwest State and Jubaland State is additional bonus. Proposed solutions will be tested or scalable in the following districts: Kismayo, Bardhere, Afgoye, Baidoa, and Ceelbarde.

5. What is the required technology readiness level?

Applicants must have a validated prototype or functional model at Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4 or higher. TRL 4 means that your proof of concept has been demonstrated in a lab setting, and multiple key components have been integrated and tested together. Solutions at higher TRL levels (e.g., TRL 5 and above) are strongly encouraged and will receive additional evaluation points.

6. What is the commitment to scaling?

Applicants must demonstrate a feasible plan and capacity to scale their solution within 12–24 months to ensure long-term impact.

7. What should be included in the proposal?

Applicants should submit the following:

1. Project Overview

- Problem Statement (Max. 300 words)
- Solution & Unique Value Proposition (Max. 450 words)
- Target Beneficiaries (Max. 50 words)

2. Business Model & Implementation

- A structured, one-page plan outlining:
 - Existing Alternatives. List how this problem is addressed today.
 - Key metrics. List the key numbers that tell you how your initiative is doing.
 - Stakeholder segment. List your target beneficiaries and users.
 - Channels: List your path to users/beneficiaries (inbound or outbound)
- Scalability & Impact (Max. 250 words)
- Challenges & Risks (Max. 150 words)
- DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) Commitment (Max. 50 words)

3. Team Composition

- Number of women in leadership
- Team structure, expertise, gender & role distribution

4. Financials & Resources

- Cost Estimate (USD)
- Revenue Model & Investment Readiness. List sources of funding

5. Supporting Materials

- 3-5 slide Pitch Deck
- Video Pitch (Max. 3 minutes)

6. Business documents

- Business registration or license from the Federal or State Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Business Profile

Evaluation Criteria

8. How will proposals be evaluated?

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- **Problem Statement (25%)**: Clarity and relevance of the challenge addressed.
- **Feasibility & Sustainability (18%)**: Practical implementation and long-term viability.
- **Inclusivity & Women's Empowerment (18%)**: Promotion of gender inclusivity and women's economic empowerment.
- **Innovation (12%)**: Novelty and effectiveness of the solution.
- **Scalability (12%)**: Potential for broader implementation and adoption.
- **Organizational Capacity (7%)**: Team expertise and readiness.
- **Alignment with RLRP Goals (8%)**: Relevance to project objectives.

Benefits for Selected Entrepreneurs

9. What benefits will selected entrepreneurs receive?

The 10 winning innovators will receive:

- Tailored business coaching, including Lean Startup and Agile Risk Management methodologies.
- One-on-one mentorship from industry experts throughout the program
- Seed funding to accelerate their solution.
 - Phase 1: *10 selected companies will receive: \$5,000 each*
 - Phase 2: *5 companies that proceed to phase 2 will receive: \$10,000 each*
 - Phase 3: *Final winning companies will receive: \$25,000*
- Support in market access and partnership facilitation.
- Visibility through platforms of MoAI, CIAD, IFAD, RLRP, FSRP, local radios, national and international media outlets.

Application Process

10. How can I apply and get more information?

- Applications should be submitted via a centralized application CIAD portal managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation:
<https://ciad.moa.gov.so/e/apply>
- Applicants will receive a confirmation email with an application ID.
- For more details, refer to the Challenge announcement or reach out via official contact channels:

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✉ agrobusinessdept@moa.gov.so
✉ aabyan@rlrp.gov.so

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12. What is the application deadline?

- The original deadline is **September 15, 2025 at 11:59 PM Mogadishu time**.
- Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

13. What are the language requirements?

- Application forms and communication materials are available in both English and Somali to ensure accessibility. But all submissions must be in **English**

14. What about Intellectual Property (IP) rights?

- Intellectual property rights will be governed by Somali national laws and provisions within the RLRP and FSRP agreement. Finalists will be briefed on IP clauses in their grant agreements.

