

DT4A INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the DT4A Innovation Challenge?

The DigitalTransport4Africa (DT4A) Innovation Challenge is an initiative by WRI Africa, supported by AFD, that aims to support organizations and initiatives, from private companies to universities and NGOs, that are contributing to the movement for open data across the region and improved planning and implementation of sustainable mobility, particularly of the paratransit or informal transport sector. Activities might include:

- Promoting paratransit in African cities through open data and mapping
- Enabling the improvement of transit services, especially informal public transport
- Curtailing growing transport emissions, improving safety and increasing access to opportunities
- Providing hands-on experience with open data principles to the large and diverse network of city authorities, residents, universities, private technology companies, and international development groups engaged in urban mobility
- Sharing knowledge to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration at the local and regional level

Moreover, WRI and AFD seek initiatives that align with [SDG 11.2](#) and the [Sustainable Mobility for All](#) vision:

- **Universal Access** – Connecting all communities, with an emphasis on vulnerable groups including women and children, people living with disabilities and those living in extreme poverty, to the necessary opportunities and resources of urban life.
- **Efficiency** – Improving the reliability, affordability, and quality of public transport services inclusive of all formal, semi-formal and informal transit providers.
- **Safety** – Greatly reducing traffic-related fatalities, injuries and crashes
- **Green** – Minimizing the negative environmental impact of mobility, which includes greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

How many activities are eligible?

There will be three main activities that are eligible for support; applicants can apply for the one that best describes the primary initiative:

- **Tech, application and tool development:** for applicants developing and deploying open-source tools for transit data collection, management, transit operations, and passenger information services.

- **Capacity building:** for applicants focusing on building the capacity of local governments and local mapping communities on data collection, management and analysis; building capacity of decision makers on the application of open transit data for transportation planning, management and operations; and capacity building on the development and uptake of passenger user information tools and services.
- **Research and analysis:** for applicants focusing on leveraging existing transit datasets in the DT4A repository and conducting meaningful action research and analysis.

Who is eligible to apply for the DT4A Innovation Challenge?

The challenge is open to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research and academic institutions and private sector with the aim of helping achieve SDG11 are eligible to apply for the small grants. Applicants must have the support of local authorities (municipalities), and submitting letter of support from the city officials is highly recommended. Applicants must be from Africa (or working in Africa).

Please consult the [Terms and Conditions](#) before you apply.

How much money will be awarded?

The DT4A Innovation Challenge award consists of financial rewards that will be awarded to four competitive finalists. Each finalist will receive an award of US\$30,000. The four finalists will also have the opportunity to regularly meet with an advisory committee, consisting of key experts in the field, over the course of the grant period.

How the fund will be awarded?

The finalists will be awarded the money in two phases:

- The first disbursement will be made once the design; planning and preparation stage is complete. Finalists will work closely with DT4A's advisory group to clearly identify an implementation strategy, activities, budget and other key items. Once this is complete, submitted and approved, 50% of the funds will be dispersed.
- The second disbursement will be made once the implementation is complete and finalists have presented their achievements to DT4A's advisory group, a final report has been submitted and DT4A will have carried out a site assessment.

How are the four finalists selected?

Four finalists will be selected from the entire submissions based on an assessment by the WRI and AFD evaluation team according to defined criteria. These include:

- Demonstrate a strong understanding of DT4A's objectives and clearly articulate how the innovation/initiative aligns with DT4A,

- Describe clearly what the innovation is and how it is filling a need/gap in the city/community particularly for underserved groups/vulnerable communities,
- Explain how the innovation is utilizing open-source transit data, tools and applications,
- Demonstrate the impact of the proposed initiative/innovations on sustainable urban mobility in accordance with the four policy goals of DT4A (universal access, efficiency, safety and green),
- Demonstrate the scalability of the innovation/initiative to other geographies
- Explain how the grant will be used within the given timeline and justify its feasibility.

The jury will select four finalists through deliberation and voting based on their subjective judgement of the merit of each finalist. The jury's decision is final and not subject to review. Applicants are expected to collaborate with the evaluation team to provide additional information necessary for carrying out due diligence, including, but not limited to, documentary verification of the eligibility and accuracy of the information submitted.

Can an application integrate the three areas listed as eligible activities?

Applicants must select one primary activity area. Other activities may be listed as related and connected, but one activity area from the Selection Criteria is required.

Must the applicant NGO be a local NGO?

Applications from both local and international NGOs are eligible as long as they satisfy the conditions listed under the eligibility section. In addition to the NGOs, academic institutions and private companies that have projects or initiatives that fit the selection criteria are eligible to apply.

Can we apply for a project related to transportation technology improvements?

Yes, you can. These applications fall under the tech, application and tools development category.

Do the 4 awardees divide US\$30,000?

No, the total amount of the award money is US\$120,000. Each applicant will receive US\$30,000 each.

What is the required stage of the projects? Should they be already implemented/tested in the real world?

Projects/initiatives at all stages are acceptable. This includes projects at the initiation stage, projects that are ready for implementation and those who are in the middle of the implementation stages.

Does the local NGOs get support in anyway?

Yes, they will. Awardees will get continues support from WRI and the wide range of experts who work with WRI and the DT4A project during the different stages of their projects.

Should the awardees cover their project costs beforehand?

Yes, the awardees need to cover the project costs beforehand. WRI will disburse the award money in two phases – 50% of the award money will be paid in September 2022 after project kick off and submission of a report and the other 50% will be paid in May 2023.

Can organizations collaborate and apply?

Yes, they can. Organizations are allowed to form a partnership and apply.

Can one organization submit more than one application?

No, multiple entries by a single applicant are not acceptable.

What are the requirements for researchers who are still at the university? Can they apply?

Yes, researchers who are still at the university can apply as they are classified under the academic institutions/universities. But they should collaborate with the university and apply on behalf of the university.

Can we apply without providing a recommendation from the local government, as it is quite difficult to get it?

Yes, you can apply. In fact, it is highly recommended to provide a letter of recommendation from the local government, this is well explained in the eligibility section in the call for submissions and in the application form. However, having good pre-existing/current engagement with the local government can easily speed up the implementation of the activities as the implementation requires collaboration with the local authorities, moreover, the timeline for the Challenge is quite short and the fund is relatively small, the reason why we strongly recommend having the support of the local authorities.

If a local NGO is associated with an international NGO, which one could provide evidence for the financial statements once the competition is won?

Since you are in partnership, this is something that could be discussed internally or a decision that you could make amongst yourselves and decide which of you will be able to provide the financial statements once you have been selected as a finalist.

Can we apply for the development of tools and applications related to transport systems as a whole? Or for the tools& app that are not directly related to public transport?

The aim of this Challenge is to support initiatives that contribute to open source and improved public transport planning. However, we should not ignore other tools and applications that aim to improve transport systems at the same time, that would be a good innovation too. Applicants with such questions can reach out to us at info@digitaltransport4africa.org. We can discuss this in more detail and provide advice.

Can the policy development for Urban Transport Management officers in the municipality be allowed to apply?

In fact, eligible applicants can be organizations/NGOs, academic institutions and private companies. However, it would be possible for transport authorities to join hands with NGOs, for example, to apply for this Challenge. We would encourage you to reach out to us via info@digitaltransport4africa.org for further clarification and guidance before applying.

Can new organizations/NGOs apply for this Challenge?

Yes, they can. However, as this is supplementary funding, the award seems not to be enough as some costs should be covered beforehand. But Applicants should be able to demonstrate how this should be managed in the application.

When will the results be announced?

Please refer to the call for submission for a detailed timeline. For any changes to the timeline, applicants will be notified of their status on a rolling basis.

How do I apply?

During the submission period, the DT4A homepage will have a link to the application portal. After creating an account, you will receive a confirmation email containing your unique password. Login to start, retrieve and complete your application at your own pace. Gather the documents you plan to submit and upload them to the portal. You will be able to make changes to your application until the submission period closes. The link to the online application will disappear once the submission period is closed.

In which languages can I apply?

The DT4A Innovation Challenge accepts submissions in English and in French. Please use the submission form in the language of your choice.

What information should I submit?

The submission form contains several questions. You will be asked to answer all the questions and to describe basic information about your organization/applicant and the initiative. You will be asked to describe your innovation proposal that you intend to address in the pilot city, describe the impact your innovation will have in the community/city, its scalability/approach and feasibility, the challenges you foresee in implementing your innovation initiative and how you plan to overcome them.

You are encouraged to provide different types of evidence, including a letter of support from the local government in the country where you will be implementing the innovation, provide examples of similar previous work, including the duration of the contract, contact references, etc. We also encourage you to provide any other letters of support you may have from other partners. You will be able to upload files, videos and other pictures to support your submission.

How much does it cost to participate?

Participating in the DT4A Innovation Challenge is free of charge.

Who can I contact for more information?

You can reach the DT4A team at this email: info@digitaltransport4africa.org