

CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF CONCEPT NOTE FOR InSPIRE CHALLENGE FUND

SWISS
FOUNDATION
FOR TECHNICAL
COOPERATION

We create opportunities

We are a leading organisation for the implementation of international development projects. We promote inclusive economic, social and ecological development to make an effective contribution towards sustainable and widespread prosperity in developing and emerging economies.

Swisscontact - Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation, is headquartered in Zurich and was founded in 1959 by leading figures from the Swiss private sector and Swiss universities. It is exclusively involved in international cooperation and since 1961 has carried out its own and mandated projects in 41 countries worldwide.

Swisscontact is registered as an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) in Bangladesh under NGO Affairs Bureau, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

BACKGROUND OF INSPIRE

Initiative to Stimulate Private Investment for Resource Efficiency (InSPIRE) is a challenge fund project that aims to support sustainable energy adoption in Bangladesh's RMG sector by enhancing technical and financial capacity. InSPIRE is a four-year project (January 2025–December 2028) in Bangladesh, funded by the Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka and implemented by Swisscontact.

Despite Bangladesh's RMG sector driving over 10% of the GDP and employing nearly four million workers, its future growth and competitiveness is at risk due to high energy consumption from unsustainable sources such

as fossil fuel. On that background, InSPIRE mobilizes a blended finance instrument, where private investment is matched with a **Challenge fund**, to support RMG sector for investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives. The challenge fund will provide **pre-grant investment readiness support** and **post-grant technical assistance**. The (a) pre-grant support includes information sessions, accessible online resources (e.g., FAQs and guidelines) on proposals development procedure, and (b) post-grant support entails technical assistance for energy audits and energy transition roadmap, social compliance assessment, gender-responsive and equitable planning, strategic and operational support to best utilize the fund.

InSPIRE Grant Size

- Small Grants: BDT 1,200,000 to 6,000,000 (approximately).
- Medium Grants: BDT 6,000,001 to 15,600,000 (approximately).
- Contribution by the applicant: a minimum of 60% of the project cost should be contributed by the applicant.

SCOPE OF WORK

InSPIRE invites eligible RMG factories and Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) to apply individually and/or, in consortium with subcontracting factories, financial institutions, international brands etc to submit **concept notes** proposing innovative, impactful, and scalable ideas for implementation of **energy efficiency or renewable energy projects** at their facilities. Concept note is the first of the two-staged selection process for InSPIRE challenge fund grant, which is followed by a full proposal (comprising of technical and financial).

LOCATION OF THE PROJECT

Project implementation is permissible throughout Bangladesh, with strategic emphasis on the RMG sector.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A. Eligible Applicants:

- Exporting RMG factories, in and outside EPZ.
- Subcontractor and suppliers to exporting factories (textile, knitting, spinning).
- National or international ESCOs working with RMG factories.
- Consortiums involving RMG factories, their sub-contractors, ESCOs, international brands, financial institutions, and any energy solution providers.

Applicants must:

- Be legally registered and compliant with labor laws and minimum wage standards in Bangladesh.
- Not be listed in any exclusion categories (refer to the [link](#)).
- Commit to co-finance at least 60% of the total project cost.
- Not receive any other donor funding for the same project.

B. Eligible projects must:

- Offer new or innovative **sustainable energy solutions** in Bangladesh's RMG sector.
- Address **systemic barriers** (technical, financial, or operational).
- Be **technically sound, financially viable, and replicable**.
- Integrate **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)** considerations.
- The project structure, funding mechanism, and contribution modality will vary based on the timeline. The minimum timeline for implementation being 6 months and the maximum timeline being 24 months.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND SUBMISSION DETAILS

Interested bidders should submit concept notes for the InSPIRE grant following the prescribed format in the ToR, *along with a forwarding letter signed by the authorized signatory of the applicant company to bgd.inspire@swisscontact.org* no later than **July 15, 2025**, on or before **5:00 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)**. The subject line should be- **"Concept note for the InSPIRE grant"**.

Please find the detail ToR [here](#). All relevant application packages will also be provided as **attachments** in the Terms of Reference (ToR)

** Only shortlisted applicants shall be contacted for the next procedure.*

** No late submission will be accepted.*

** Swisscontact reserves the right to reject any proposal that does not meet the required criteria or lacks sufficient documentation.*