

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING AN INNOVATION PROJECT ABSTRACT

Total abstract wordcount: 400 words Submission deadline **26 January 2022**

What is an innovation project?

In MSF, an innovation can be the creation and implementation of new or novel products, services, or strategic approaches. Or, an innovation can mark an advance on an existing product, service, or strategy.

Any MSF innovation project is designed to benefit or improve an aspect of healthcare delivery either for patients, communities or for MSF staff.

This doesn't mean the project has to be medical in nature, but it must improve the way MSF provides medical care (for example, [developing new systems for regenerating boreholes](#)).

Abstracts and demos

We are looking for [abstract submissions] and [demo submissions] for the MSF Scientific Days – Innovation that show evidence of impact, either in the outcomes that new approaches bring or in the development of improved processes or understanding for MSF.

What kind of innovation projects can be submitted as an abstract?

When you submit your abstract, you need to indicate which stage your innovation project is at (see the diagram below):

- Initiation
- Development
- or Implementation stage.

We welcome abstracts from all the above stages. However, we don't accept projects which are at the idea or design stage. The MSF Scientific Days are special because they focus on improving our work in the field through *evidence* and *rigorous evaluation / analysis*.

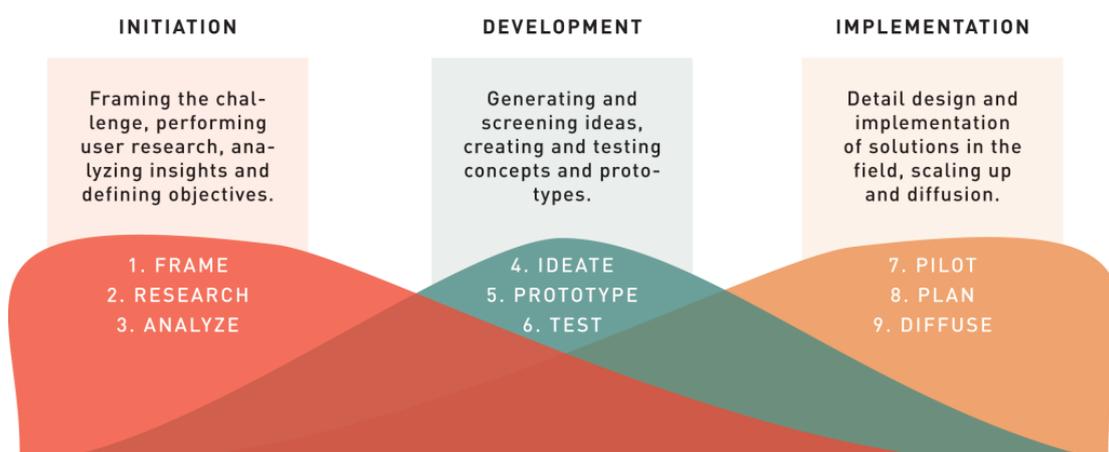
What does this mean? It means that, ideally, you have developed and tested your innovation (i.e. gathered data to analyse whether it worked and the impact it had or could have), and can submit an abstract based on the outcomes, how you achieved them and what they might mean for MSF's work. A good example can be found, [here](#).

We are equally interested in ‘failed’ projects as successful ones. We know that not all innovations achieve the hoped-for outcome or impact - we need to *‘fail forward’ and learn*. This year, one of the sessions is dedicated to those of you who are brave and willing to present your failures. See a good example, [here](#).

You can submit an abstract for a project at the Initiation or Development stage as long as you can conclude learnings from analysis of data. These learnings could be in the form of a new process for MSF or a new perspective on a field challenge. Here are two examples:

Luc has an idea of how to solve a field challenge, but through his analysis of that challenge, he finds that it is actually a symptom of a wider problem. He then explores this wider problem and generates a new idea of how to solve it. Because Luc’s project already has relevance for MSF’s work and is based on evidence and analysis, he can submit it as an abstract as long as he can describe how he obtained the evidence and what analysis he did.

Pascale is creating a new tool for nurses in the field. She tests a new approach to developing this tool and subsequently discovers a much more effective way to gather and communicate MSF nurses’ requirements to the design team, meaning time and money are saved. If she can demonstrate through data how that process has improved upon what already exists, she can submit it as an abstract. See an example of this, [here](#).



What are the next steps?

Submit your abstract

Please be aware that all abstracts must be relevant for a medical humanitarian audience. Submissions from other disciplines are welcome, but they must have the objective of improving medical impact.

Discuss your project with a mentor, first

We recognise that those of you not involved in research may be unfamiliar with the concept of submitting work in the form of an abstract. If this is the case, and you would like support with the process (or even if you would like to discuss whether your work is relevant to submit), please get in touch via scientificday@london.msf.org. If you do need support, please let us know by the end of December 2021, so we have time to help before the abstract deadline.

Content

Introduction

Your introduction should describe the background to your project:

- What challenge or opportunity did your project address and why does it matter to MSF?
- What change did you expect it to make?

Methods

Your methods section should describe how you collected and analysed your results:

- How did you plan to compare the resulting change against what exists already?
- What indicators of success did you measure (for example, data on quality of care, reach, price, efficiency, user experience etc) and how did you analyse them? *

Results

Your results section should describe the data with which you evaluated your project and what your analysis of this data showed:

- What change have you seen from the work you've done?
- Did your results show whether your innovation offers a better/cheaper/faster/easier solution compared to other/existing approaches? How did it do so and was it in the way you were expecting?
- Describe other factors you considered that might have had an impact on your results?
- If the project changed from its initial objective or process, what evidence did you use to make that decision? What was the result of the change?

Conclusion

Your conclusions should describe the implications of your work and any recommendations you may have for its future:

- Is your project ongoing? If yes, what are the next steps? If no, did it reach its objectives or was it stopped early?
- Whether failure or success, what did you learn from this and what are the implications (potential impact) of your work, for practice, policy, programmes or advocacy for MSF or others?
- What should happen next in this area of innovation / within your project?

What kind of innovation projects can be submitted as a demo?

The demo session is for innovative projects that are ‘work in progress’, where you might not yet have results from testing or implementation. It’s a great opportunity to present your project more informally and get feedback from the MSF Scientific Days audience. Demos may also be offered to presenters of oral presentations where the Editorial Committee sees additional benefit from a hands-on demonstration.

Ethics

All abstracts must contain an ethics statement. For innovation projects that do not involve research on human subjects, there is [a self-guided innovation ethics framework](#) that should be consulted by the Project Sponsor or whoever is responsible for oversight of the initiative (e.g. an Operational Director). If the Innovation Ethics Framework has been followed, please tick the appropriate box in the submission system.

If your MSF innovation project involved human subjects or their data, this must have ethics oversight by the relevant Medical Director from the Operational Centre responsible for the research. Please see here for [MSF ERB \(Ethics Review Board\) guidance](#).

In the submission system, you will be asked whether your project involves human participants or their data. If it did, you will be required to choose from the following options:

- This innovation project meets the exemption criteria for Ethics Review Board (ERB) review. It was conducted with permission from *[insert name of person responsible for ethical oversight]*
- This study was approved by the following Ethics Review Board (ERB) *[you will be asked to insert the name of ERB, e.g. MSF ERB]*
- Other - please describe if your study doesn’t fit into any of the above categories.

If your project does not involve human participants or their data, you will be asked to confirm that you have applied the [Innovation Ethics Framework](#) to help identify and mitigate potential harms.

Conflicts of interest

You will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest. Failure to disclose these might lead to withdrawal of abstracts or presentations from MSF Scientific Days. All conflicts of interest will be published in the conference booklet.

A conflict of interest exists when professional judgement concerning a primary interest (such as patients' welfare or validity of research) may be influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial gain).

All authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organisations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. Examples of financial conflicts include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patents or patent applications, and travel grants, all within 3 years of beginning the work submitted.

Financial relationships are easily identifiable, but conflicts can also occur because of personal relationships or rivalries, academic competition, or intellectual beliefs. A conflict can be actual or potential, and full disclosure is best practice.

Agreements between authors and study sponsors that interfere with authors' access to all of a study's data, or that interfere with their ability to analyse and interpret the data and to prepare and publish work independently, may represent conflicts of interest, and should be avoided.

All submissions must include disclosure of all relationships that could be viewed as presenting a potential or actual conflict of interest.

If there are no conflicts of interest, authors should tick the box to state that there are none.

Please note, all submitted MSF abstracts will be sent to the relevant Medical Director so that they are aware of what has been submitted.

Data reporting standards

- If you have quantitative data, give actual numbers, not only percentages. Do not use phrases like 'around half' unless supported by underlying numbers. Ensure that the denominator is clear throughout the analysis and include where needed.



- Means need standard deviations (SDs); medians need interquartile ranges (IQRs). Give 95% CIs and p-values where appropriate.

Get in touch

If you have any questions, please get in contact with us: scientificday@london.msf.org