

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING AN INNOVATION PROJECT ABSTRACT

Total abstract wordcount: **400 words**.

First Submission deadline (window 1): **18 January 2026 @ 23:59 GMT**. This is the deadline for MSF Scientific Days.

The abstract system will reopen when dates known (window 2) for abstracts intended for the MSF Scientific Days Asia, Latin America & Southern Africa **ONLY**.

Please Note: If you wish your research or innovation to be considered for MSF Scientific Days, the abstract must be submitted in the first window (deadline: 18 January 2026). If you submit your work during window one there is no need to resubmit during window two as all work will be carried forward for consideration by the editorial committees of MSF Scientific Days Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa.

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](#)).

Innovation abstracts: what kind of innovation projects can be submitted as an abstract?

We welcome abstracts from the initiation, development, or implementation stages (see diagram below). 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*.

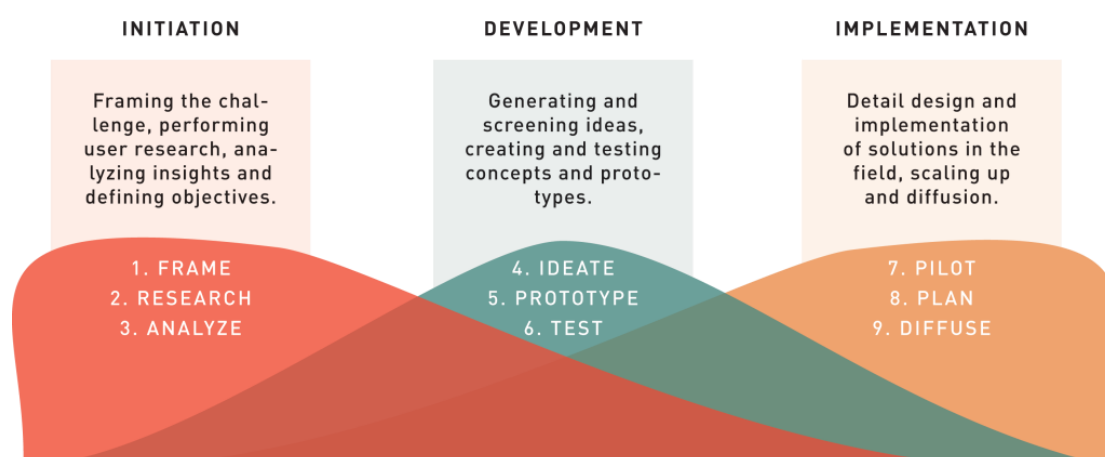
What does this mean? It means that, ideally, you have developed and tested your innovation (i.e. gathered data to analyse whether it worked and the impact it had or could have), and can submit an abstract based on the outcomes, how you achieved them and what they might mean for MSF's work. A good example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

We are equally interested in 'failed' projects and successful ones. We know that not all innovations achieve the hoped-for outcome or impact - we need to *'fail forward' and learn*.

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.

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 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.

Application Process

Support

Assistance is available to review/assist in abstract writing. If you require this, please contact scientificday@london.msf.org as early as possible.

Abstract review

All abstracts are considered for the , Europe, Asia, Southern Africa and Latin America events for either poster or oral presentation. The requirement to plan a high quality and geographically appropriate agenda for each event dictates where abstracts will be invited to present.

Abstract editing

Abstracts accepted for oral presentations will be edited. The aim is to ensure that presenters are fully prepared to meet questions that may be raised during the conference and to ensure that MSF research is presented clearly and appropriately.

Authors must be available to revise abstracts and presentation slides according to the conference timeframes. Please note that the offer of an oral presentation involves commitment by authors to meet deadlines and to respond to points raised by the Editorial Committee.

Abstracts accepted for the MSF Scientific Days event will be edited for English language readability, scientific clarity, consistency, and adherence to abstract guidelines.

Edited abstracts will include questions/points raised by the Editorial Committee – these must be addressed in the abstract revision.

Presentation editing

Presentation slides are not edited unless they are sent early and assistance is requested. However, they will be reviewed to ensure that guidelines are met – in particular around ethics statements, image use (author and copyright information included, including for maps; consent and ethics of using images of people or patients, particularly children), and clarity/accuracy of English language.

Presentation practice

All oral presenters must ensure they are fully prepared to present both to an in-person audience and an online audience of 1000s; so public speaking training is highly recommended.

Presentation practice for presenters will be available online prior to MSF Scientific Days. To take advantage presenters must register in advance by emailing scientificday@london.msf.org with a subject title of 'presentation coaching'.

Content sharing

All abstracts, slides, and videos of oral presentations or demos will be shared on the [MSF Science Portal](#). Highlights of the day will be written up for blogs and potentially further publication.

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: Does this project involve human participants or their data?

You will be required to select from the following options:

- **No**, I have applied the [innovation ethics framework](#) to identify and mitigate potential harms.
- **Yes**, this innovation project meets the exemption criteria for ERB review. It was conducted with permission from (provide name and position).
- **Yes**, other - please explain (e.g. who had ethical oversight).
- **Yes**, this innovation project was approved by an Ethics Review Board (provide details).

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