1. Selection Criteria

The SDG Action Zone is seeking partners from all sectors whose proposals are fresh, dynamic and break through silos to accelerate and collaborate on SDG action. The content is encouraged to dig into specific, tangible issues and examples to drive transformation action and change.

To be eligible, proposals must meet the following criteria:

Alignment with the SDGs through the lens of one or more of the following cross-over themes
- **People:** Healthy Society; Inequality & Equity; Inclusive Growth; Activism; Education; Gender; Creativity & Culture; Decent Jobs; Human Rights; Social Protection; Leave No One Behind.
- **Planet:** Climate; Biodiversity; Nature; Oceans; and Food Systems; Sustainable production and Consumption; Sustainable Cities; Clean Energy.
- **Partnerships:** Financing for Development; Data; Philanthropy; Civil Society; Business; Multilateralism; Economies and Investment; Emerging Technologies; Accountability; Media; Humanitarian Action; Sustainable Peace.

Content:
- Promote action and accountability for the SDGs.
- Provide deep, tangible, expert insights on what needs to happen to achieve the state of the world we want and need.
- Share tangible solutions, ideas, innovations and approaches that could turn the tide in this critical turning point.
- Set the vision for what we can achieve with this combination of adaptation, action and ambition.
- Include a call to action to mobilise specific counterparts, constituencies and citizens to ensure this vision is realised.

Speakers and format:
- Involve multiple sectors (i.e. civil society, business, academia, other key United Nations partners and governments). The more sectors included the higher consideration your proposal will be given.
- Engage the audience in an innovative way that goes beyond just reporting on SDG progress to date.

Representation criteria
- Minimum 50% non-male speakers.
- Minimum 50% speakers from the Global South.
- Significant Youth* involvement (between the ages of 15-24).
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*Persons between the ages of 15 – 24, as defined by the UN Secretariat I'm

Please note: Strong preference will be given to applications that have a focus on Leave No One Behind and youth engagement in relation to the themes.

2. Engagement types

Interested parties are invited to host events, talks or feature performative or creative content through the programme. As such, application types include opportunities to:

- **Host a breakout session** around the state of one predetermined theme that connects and engages participants.
- **Deliver a stand alone talk** to share humane, creative, disruptive and inspiring stories of personal lessons learned or provocative ideas and solutions that have the power to accelerate SDG action.
- **Host creative content** and feature new media, new technologies, innovations, games and immersive experiences that attendees can interact with in the virtual exhibition zone to increase knowledge, empathy and action for positive social change.
- **Perform a musical, dance or poetry piece, or share a multi-media production** that provides expressions of humanity, unity, urgency, hope and ambition to complement the substantive discussions being programmed.

2.1 Breakout sessions

Once the big picture has been outlined each day at the SDG Action Zone, a series of breakout sessions will dig deeper into thematic issues, hone in on contextual nuances, and provide substantive discussions, masterclasses, dialogues and workshops to provide deep, tangible, quantifiable, insights on what needs to happen to achieve the state of the world we need and want. These sessions will set the vision for what can be achieved with this combination of adaptation, action and ambition and call for action to mobilise specific counterparts, constituencies and citizens to ensure this vision is realised. This is the opportunity for event hosts to set the specific groups tangible ‘homework’ to contribute to the much needed action required.

Breakout sessions can be delivered in a range of formats from panel discussions, workshops, dialogues or deep dives. Applicants are encouraged to think creatively and share their plan for how the session will run.

**Requirements**

- Dedicated moderator.
- Up to 6 speakers from different sectors/ regions.
- Dynamic discussion sharing different insights into a topic.
No PPT presentations

Speakers and format:
- Involve multiple sectors (i.e. civil society, business, academia, other key United Nations partners and governments). The more sectors included the higher consideration your proposal will be given.
- Engage the audience in an innovative way that goes beyond just reporting on SDG progress to date.

Representation criteria
- Minimum 50% non-male speakers.
- Minimum 50% speakers from the Global South.
- Significant Youth* involvement (to ensure generational balance).
- For Panels - Represent a minimum of 4 distinct constituent groups - e.g. government; local authorities; civil society; private sector; non-state actors, including indigenous and disability groups; youth groups; creative community; academia; media; and UN).

*Persons between the ages of 15 – 24, as defined by the UN Secretariat

Please note: Strong preference will be given to applications that have a focus on Leave No One Behind and youth engagement in relation to the themes.

2.2 Talks

Honest and bold stand alone talks that deliver a very human, story-telling style of sharing information and insights. There are two different types of Talks that applicants can apply for:

1) **Reimagine**: Inspirational leaders will reflect on personal or immediate failures that led up to adapting to a disrupted environment and to realizing the urgency of systemic change. Through their own experience, in these 15 minute spotlights, they will focus on the levers needed to be pulled to move the system towards the SDGs. These are their stories on why and how they couldn’t go back to business as usual.

2) **Lightning solutions**: Multi-disciplinary experts will share action-oriented insights into what needs to and can be done to unleash the transformative change required to truly drive progress at this critical inflection point. These 7-minute, quick fire insights will provide the tangible and ambitious solutions that have the power to supercharge impact in relation to one or more of the themes in focus. These expert insights will be sourced from a tapestry of sectors, disciplines and geographies, each honing in on a specific context for action, which together will frame the innovation required at global, regional, national and sub-national levels.
Requirements

- The talk should be prepared as a ‘story’.
- Visual aids should only be used to pique the interest of the audience in an often thought-provoking or thought-challenging way.
- Content needs to stand alone and offer something new, different, and exciting or insightful with a strong focus on action for the SDGs.

2.3 Immersive experiences and virtual exhibition booths

Virtual, augmented and mixed realities creators, game developers, photographers, illustrators and artists working across mediums are invited to share their work and take the SDG Action Zone crowd on a journey.

Virtual exhibit and immersive spaces will showcase new media, new technologies, innovations, artwork, games and immersive experiences that lets the viewer experience the Future of our world from different perspectives, learn different ways of doing things, and take action for transformative change.

*Hosts can also submit applications to host a session or deliver a lightning talk to provide insights into the impact of the project on accelerating action towards the SDGs.

Requirements

- Content to be fit for virtual hosting with dynamic screen content and user engagement.
- Expert host or facilitator to chat to participants through the event platform and ‘walk them through’ the exhibit or experience at key moments across the event.
- Focus on core issues related to the SDG Action Zone.

2.4 Performance and multi-media productions

Art has always explored and assimilated the experience of upheaval and has served societal change throughout history. Emerging and established performers, musicians, film-makers and artists from around the world will capture the urgency, hope and ambition of the current moment. Through their work, participants of the SDG Action Zone will be challenged to imagine the world in radically different ways.

Requirements

- Performances should be novel - whether a never before screened version of the piece or a new piece entirely.
- Focus on core issues related to the SDG Action Zone.

2.5 Register a speaker
In order to deliver an impactful event programme for the SDG Action Zone which features diverse viewpoints, perspectives, sectors and expertise, we are looking to build a speaker roster that may be drawn upon to curate big picture plenary sessions and build and strengthen partner-led sessions. Individuals from a range of backgrounds are invited to register their interest to be invited to speak. Speakers will be experts in their field, leading figures and effective activists representing a wide range of perspectives in society including through diversity across sectors, geography, gender, race, religion, cultures and more.

As the programme develops, speakers may be approached by event hosts and invited to join specific event programmes being hosted in the SDG Action Zone.

Requirements:
- Speakers should have a proven expertise in a related topic area tying in with the key themes of the programme.
- Speakers will be required to provide video evidence of their speaking credentials.

3. Important information for applicants

Hosting a virtual event
This year the SDG Action Zone will be hosted fully virtually. All events, talks, performances, exhibits and productions will be hosted through an online event platform. There will be no physical location or technical hardware provided for speakers, session hosts or performers to transmit their interventions into the digital platform. Applicants will receive information on how to host breakout sessions, deliver talks, link up for performances and host their exhibits through this platform when the programme is confirmed. Please note however applicants will be required to:

- Host their sessions autonomously through the platform. This will include sharing the technical information with their speakers and running the events through the platform in the same way they would in a physical location. Ensuring the chat is moderated and speakers are briefed and on-boarded. A production team will support with audio and visual testing and preparations but for all intents and purposes, breakout session hosts will require an in-team events manager to ensure a smooth link-up with the production team and delivery of the session.
- Session hosts are encouraged to factor participant engagement and stimulation in their proposals. Digital first solutions for online collaboration, information sharing and interactivity are encouraged to feature in applications alongside substantive content and expert speakers.
- Some of the smaller segments such as standalone talks and performances may be pre-recorded. The applicant will be responsible for sharing this recording with the organising team.
- All speakers, performers and session hosts will be required to ensure they have the appropriate set-up at their location to join the event virtually or record their intervention ahead of time if applicable.