

## **GDN Next Horizons Essay Contest**

**(in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)**

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## **About the GDN Next Horizons Contest**

### **Q. What is the GDN Next Horizons Essay Contest?**

The GDN Next Horizons Essay Contest is an international essay contest launched by the Global Development Network in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Essays are currently being invited in three languages; English, French and Spanish; on the theme of the future of development assistance. The primary objective of the contest is to invite fresh thinking related to the future of aid that can inform the ongoing discourse on development assistance and to make this thinking available to policymakers and key stakeholders.

### **Q. What is the research theme for the essays invited under the GDN Next Horizons Contest?**

**The contest invites essays on the theme of the future of development assistance.** The broad sub-themes for essay submissions are listed below:

- **Instruments:** Which financial instruments should be used to provide aid, and what is the right balance among these different instruments? Should financial instruments as diverse as loans, guarantees, insurance, equity be used and be mixed with varying degrees of with varying degrees of subsidization? If so, how and when? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different financing instruments? How can the contribution of debt, equity, and risk management instruments—as distinct from grants—be assessed towards meeting internationally agreed targets for human development—such as relating to health, education, and gender equality?
- **Bilateral and multilateral institutions:** How should the donor “aid system” be organized? Some donor countries administer bilateral aid from their foreign ministries, some from independent cooperation ministries and some through aid agencies. Are there other options? Is there a preferred way? What are the respective comparative advantages of bilateral and multilateral channels to deliver aid?
- **Middle-income countries:** If the main objective of ODA is poverty reduction, is there a case to restrict ODA to the poorest countries? What should an aid agency do for a country that has millions of poor people and a space program? If one answer is to work with subnational entities such as provinces and cities, how should donors adapt to do so? How would details of risk assessments, national qualification criteria, national borrowing limits, financial tools, and so on, need to be adjusted?
- **Aid and governance:** Aid is often criticized for reducing the accountability of government and funding corruption. Yet good governance seems central to economic development. What are the ways for aid to *improve* governance?

- **Recipient role:** Most discussions of foreign aid center on what donors should do, and are generally shaped by donors' perspectives. Recipient governments may have very different views. How should recipient countries allocate aid in the context of other sources of financing (i.e. where is aid most effective)? How can recipient governments manage foreign aid to minimize distortions and build their institutional capacity?
- **Data and information technology:** There is growing excitement about the power of open data as a tool both to inform policy and spending decisions and to hold governments to account for commitments they make. What will this data and technology driven transformation in the development project "marketplace" actually look like? How might citizens use data to provide feedback on government services and development projects? What will it take to get there?

**Q. When will GDN start accepting submissions under the Essay Contest?**

Essays in English, French and Spanish can be submitted from 12 June, 2014 onwards. Dedicated platforms for submissions in French and Spanish will also be available from 17 July, 2014 onwards.

**Q. In which all languages are you accepting the submissions under the Essay Contest?**

The essay contest invited submissions in three languages: English, French and Spanish.

**Q. How many prizes will be given out under the Essay Contest?**

Up to 20 winning entries will be chosen under the GDN Next Horizons Contest.

**Q. What will be the grant amount for the prizes?**

The monetary prize will be US\$ 20,000 per essay selected as a winner under the Essay Contest.

**Eligibility**

**Q. Is there any restriction in terms of my nationality to be eligible to apply?**

You are not eligible to participate under the Essay Contest if you are a resident of Cuba, Iran, Syria, North Korea, Myanmar and Sudan. GDN will verify the citizenship and residency of shortlisted and qualifying authors.

**Q. Do I have to be of a certain age to be eligible to apply?**

To be eligible, you must be over 21 years of age. There is no upper age limit in terms of age to apply to the Essay Contest.

**Q. Are current staff members, contractors or agents of GDN eligible to apply?**

Current staff, contractors and agents of GDN, together with members of their immediate families (parent, child, sibling and spouse of each) and those living in their same household are ineligible to participate in the Essay Contest

**Q. Are current staff members, contractors or agents of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation eligible to apply?**

Current staff, contractors and agents of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, as primary funder for this round, together with members of their immediate families (parent, child, sibling and spouse of each) and those living in their same household are ineligible to participate in the Essay Contest.

**Q. Can the essays be authored by more than one person?**

The essays submitted under the Contest can be authored either individually or by a group of individuals.

**Q. Our essay is authored by two or more individuals. However, not all authors meet the eligibility criteria. Are we eligible to apply?**

In case of essays written by more than one author, all authors must meet the eligibility criteria. GDN will disqualify any application where any author does not meet the eligibility criteria.

## **Submission**

**Q. Is there a specific format I should follow for submitting my essay?**

The format of the essay should follow the guidelines given below:

- **Essay Cover Page:** The cover page should display the title of the essay and contain an abstract of at most 250 words. Information on the author(s) and corresponding author's should not be presented on the cover page and neither on the abstract. Information on the authors can only be present in the list of referenced documents
- **Essay Word Limit:** The main text should contain at most 5,000 words, not counting notes and reference lists. Sources should be cited consistently. The abstract should not be more than 250 words and must be included in the essay document.
- **Essay Margins and Spacing Requirement:** The format should be in Times New Roman, minimum 12-point font, 1 inch/2.5 centimeter margins.
- **Essay Document and Page Formatting:** The submission should be Microsoft Word .doc or .docx format. Essays in PDF will not be accepted.

**Q. Can the name of the author(s) and corresponding author's appear within the text of the essay?**

GDN follows a blind review process wherein identities of the author(s) are concealed from the reviewers to eliminate any selection bias. Due to this, information on the author(s) and corresponding author's should not be presented on the cover page of the essay and neither in the abstract. The applicants will only be required to provide their name within the online application form.

**Q. Where can I submit my application?**

To submit, please visit GDN's **Online Submissions Platform** using the following internet link: [www.gdn.int/nexthorizons/apply](http://www.gdn.int/nexthorizons/apply). Please refer to the Guidelines for detailed instructions on how to apply.

**Q. What is the application process?**

The application should be submitted as **electronic files** only through the online submissions platform ([www.gdn.int/nexthorizons/apply](http://www.gdn.int/nexthorizons/apply)). Please note that GDN does not accept hard copy of applications or those sent through post.

**Q. The online submissions platform is not opening on my web browser. What do I do?**

If the online submissions platform is not opening on your web browser, please ensure that either of the following web browsers is installed on your computer.

- Chrome version 22.x (November 2012) or higher (Download)
- Firefox version 16.x (November 2012) or higher (Download)
- Internet Explorer Version 9.x (March 2011) or higher (Download)

If you still unable to open the online submissions platform, please contact us at [nexthorizons@gdn.int](mailto:nexthorizons@gdn.int), with the subject line: 'Essay Contest –Technical Issues' detailing the exact nature of the issue being faced.

**Q: I have forgotten the password to my online submission platform profile. What do I do?**

In case you have forgotten the password to your online platform, log on to [www.gdn.int/nexthorizons/apply](http://www.gdn.int/nexthorizons/apply) and click on **"Login Help"**. You will see a pop-up box where you will be asked to type and submit your registered email address. After sending the details, you will receive a reset password email link to your registered email address.

**Q. I am unable to submit my application on GDN's online platforms. What do I do?**

If you unable to submit your application through the online submissions platform, please contact us at [nexthorizons@gdn.int](mailto:nexthorizons@gdn.int), with the subject line: 'Essay Contest –Technical Issues' detailing the exact nature of the issue being faced.

**Q: What is the last date for submitting an application?**

The deadline for submitting a completed application for the contest is 15 September, 2014 (Indian Standard Time 6:00 PM). Entries received after the deadline will not be accepted.

**Q. I have some questions and would like to talk to someone from GDN. What should I do?**

GDN must keep a written record of communication of all queries received to demonstrate that no applicant has received any unfair advantage or special treatment over other applicants during the entire process. GDN will not entertain any phone calls from applicants.

If you have any query, please write to us at [nexthorizons@gdn.int](mailto:nexthorizons@gdn.int) and we will respond to your email within 3 working days.

**Application Review Process**

**Q. Will I be notified once my application has been received?**

You will receive an email from GDN at the email address provided by you once you have successfully submitted your application.

**Q. Will I be notified if my submission has not been selected for a prize?**

Given the volume of submissions received, only successful applicants will be contacted by GDN.

**Q. What criteria will GDN use for selecting the winners?**

Submitted articles will be assessed on three broad criteria:

- **Originality** (presenting new information and innovative ideas or analysis)
- **Usefulness** (wide-applicability and feasibility of ideas, significance, realism, policy relevance, proposals or conclusions that are scalable innovations that can result in tangible policy change or other wide-scale or systemic change)
- **Analytical Quality** (rigor of scholarship, logic in the flow of ideas, clear and concise writing)

For more information on the competition, the complete eligibility criteria and selection process please read the guidelines (available online: [www.gdn.int/nexthorizons](http://www.gdn.int/nexthorizons)). **Please note that applications that do not follow the guidelines will NOT be considered.**