

**FACE-TO-FACE**

06 JUL 2026

# UN Innovation Leads Retreat

Change and transformation



 <b>LANGUAGE</b> English	 <b>DURATION</b> 1 day	 <b>ENROLL BY</b> 01 Jul 2026	 <b>PRICE</b> 1,000 USD	 <b>LOCATION</b> Geneva (CH)	 <b>TARGET</b> UN Only
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 **CONTACT** [un-transformation@unssc.org](mailto:un-transformation@unssc.org)

As part of its work to foster more collaboration and innovation across the United Nations (UN) system, the [UN Innovation Network](#) is hosting the [2nd UN Innovation Retreat](#) for heads of UN innovation functions on 6 July 2026 in Geneva.

Following a couple of tumultuous years, the retreat will provide a space to take stock of the current realities facing innovation teams across UN entities - reflecting on how they have adapted to external shocks and how they must continue to evolve to remain a valuable service in increasingly technology-driven and disruption-prone contexts.

## Introduction

The UN Secretary-General has identified innovation as [one of five critical skills](#) needed for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and responding to the complex challenges of our times.

Over the past decade, most UN entities have set up innovation teams, units or labs to introduce organizations to new ways of thinking and working, test new ideas and accelerate the adoption of new approaches into organisations. Some organizations are far along this journey, while others are still in the earlier stages. But all are experimenting with creating a culture of innovation and collaboration, succeeding, failing and learning along the way. It is an opportune moment to reflect on "Innovation 1.0" - on a decade of experiences of what has worked, what hasn't, what was helpful and what is critical for instilling innovation mindsets in the UN.

At the same time, as organizations are embracing more innovative approaches, innovation functions need to rethink their focus and role going forward. What is the role of innovation functions when programme design is human-centred, when many parts of the organisation are experimenting with AI, when digital solutions are becoming the go-to approach? As innovation 1.0 becomes the norm, what does innovation 2.0 look like in the UN?

# Objectives

The retreat will be an opportunity for UN innovation leads to:

- Identify shared priorities and collaboration opportunities to enable joint action, including resource and capability sharing across entities
- Explore the future of UN innovation functions, including the roles, capabilities and funding models needed for future-ready innovation
- Co-create a forward-looking narrative for UN innovation that reflects the global dynamics, lessons learnt and aspirations beyond technology-only lenses
- Refresh and reinforce relationships among UN innovation leads

# Course methodology

Facilitated group discussion and activities.

# Course contents

The retreat will co-create a shared vision for innovation in the UN by 2030 and a (non-binding) commitment to creating the conditions for success based on lessons learnt to date. Such a shared vision would build on good practices, set achievable goals irrespective of the stage of the innovation journey, and link back / feed into the UN 2.0 agenda. This vision could be complemented by a compendium of emerging good practices from across the UN.

# Target audience

Heads of UN innovation teams, labs, units and departments.

Participation is limited to one person per UN entity. Remote participation is not possible.

# Cost of participation

USD 1000