GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2026

CO-CREATING THE FUTURE

Science, Technology, and Innovation for Development

15-16 DECEMBER 2026 TOKYO, JAPAN

HOSTED BY GDN Global Development Network

Dear Colleague,

For more than 25 years, the Global Development Network (GDN) has championed a simple yet powerful belief: locally generated knowledge, research, and innovation are essential to addressing the world's most pressing development challenges.

Through our investments in researchers, institutions, and partnerships across the Global South, GDN has supported ideas that have informed public policy, strengthened research ecosystems, and contributed to meaningful improvements in people's lives. Today, as development challenges become harder to solve alone, from digital transformation and artificial intelligence to climate resilience, health, and inclusive economic growth, the need for trusted platforms that bring together diverse perspectives, expertise, and solutions has never been greater.

It is in this context that **I am delighted to invite you to partner with us for the Global Development Conference (GDC) 2026**, **to be held in Tokyo, Japan, on 15 and 16 December**. GDC 2026 is more than a conference; it is a platform for co-creation, partnership building, and innovation. It will bring together policymakers, researchers, development banks, foundations, governments, private sector leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators to move beyond dialogue and collectively develop practical solutions with the potential to deliver lasting impact. GDC 2026 is convened in partnership with the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Japan, the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), the World Bank Group Tokyo Development Learning Center and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF).

As we celebrate the **25th anniversary of the Global Development Awards Competition**, we return to where it began. GDN's 2000 conference was held in Tokyo, the year the Government of Japan first supported the Competition, which has since invested more than USD 4.2 million in over 420 researchers and civil society organisations across the Global South. GDC 2026 marks a shift in what we do with the ideas we have funded, from identifying and supporting promising work to building the partnerships that carry it to scale.

Your partnership will help us create an inclusive global platform where researchers and innovators from the Global South can connect with decision-makers, investors, and collaborators; where evidence can inform action; and where innovative solutions can move closer to implementation and scale.

By partnering with GDC 2026, your organisation will help shape a future where research, innovation, policy, and partnerships come together to accelerate inclusive and sustainable development across the Global South. It will provide an opportunity to engage with emerging ideas, connect with influential networks, identify future talent, and contribute to shaping the next generation of development approaches. All partners and sponsors will have the opportunity to showcase their organisation through a dedicated virtual booth on the conference platform.

We would be delighted to explore a partnership model that aligns with your organisation's priorities, expertise, and strategic objectives, creating meaningful opportunities for engagement and impact.

Thank you for considering this opportunity and I hope you will join us in Tokyo.

The pages that follow set out the ways your organisation might take part, and my team can be reached at conference@gdn.int.

JEAN-LOUIS ARCAND

President
Global Development Network

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TWO-YEAR INNOVATION PIPELINE

PHASE 1: INCUBATE

GDC 2026 - TOKYO

Through interactive "Co-Creation Labs", global tech experts and local innovators co-design scalable project concepts - Tokyo Portfolio. This will be a curated pipeline of high-potential initiatives supported by multidisciplinary partnerships, implementation roadmaps, and early engagement with prospective funding partners.

PHASE 2: PILOT

2027 INTERIM

Seed-funded concepts from Tokyo are deployed in the field. GDN's Research Facility on Inclusive Digital Transformation already supports implementation research through its pillar on digital public infrastructure, and the strongest AI and digital projects from Tokyo become the first cohort for its new AI pillar. That pillar takes on what the existing work does not, namely securing computing infrastructure, building local-language datasets, and measuring the socio-economic impact of AI in the Global South.

PHASE 3: SCALE

GDC 2027

The pilots are formally showcased to international donors and multilateral banks as vetted, scalable blueprints for national implementation.

The partners who seeded them in Tokyo are named alongside them.

SPONSORSHIP CATEGORIES

Click on each category to learn more

SHAPING THE FUTURE: PROGRAMMATIC AND INNOVATION FUNDING

- Global Visionary Partner: USD 100,000+
- "Tokyo Portfolio" Seed Funder: USD 25,000 – 50,000

ACCELERATING ACCESS: HIGH-VISIBILITY EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

- Localisation and Access Partner (Travel Grants): USD 15,000 per cohort of 5 LMIC Delegates
- Innovator Seat: USD 5,000
- Cultural Reception Host: USD 15,000 – 20,000
- Co-Creation Lab "Pod" Sponsor: USD 10,000

TARGETED ENGAGEMENT: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Knowledge and Impact Partner: USD 10,000
- Digital Connectivity Partner: USD 7,500

SHAPING THE FUTURE:
PROGRAMMATIC AND INNOVATION FUNDING

GLOBAL VISIONARY PARTNER: USD 100,000+

You are not sponsoring an event; you are the founding partner of a two-year global innovation pipeline.

Become a founding partner in building the next generation of development solutions. This is not an event sponsorship, it is an investment in a multi-year platform that identifies promising innovations, builds international partnerships around them, tests them in real-world settings, and supports their journey towards national and regional scale. As a Global Visionary Partner, you will help shape the future of international development by enabling locally led innovation to become globally supported action.

YOUR INVESTMENT OF USD 100,000+ WILL:

- Provide seed funding to launch **2–3 high-potential projects** emerging from the Tokyo Co-Creation Labs.
- Sponsor the participation of a cohort of **10 outstanding researchers and innovators** from the Global South, ensuring that the best ideas are represented regardless of financial constraints.
- Catalyse new partnerships between governments, multilateral institutions, academia, the private sector, and civil society around practical development challenges.
- Help build the new AI pillar of GDN's Research Facility on Inclusive Digital Transformation, extending an established research platform into implementation research on artificial intelligence for development.

Commitments may be structured across the 2026 and 2027 financial years.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Founding Partner Recognition as a principal architect of the AI pillar.
- Strategic Leadership Role, including a keynote address or participation in a flagship high-level policy dialogue during the Global Policy Symposium (day 2).
- Year-Round Visibility through co-branding across pilot projects, implementation reports, knowledge products, and international dissemination activities throughout 2027.
- Early Access to emerging innovations, implementation evidence, and investment-ready project portfolios.
- Convening Power, connecting your organisation with governments, multilateral development banks, foundations, researchers, and innovators committed to scaling evidence-based solutions.
- Virtual Booth on the conference platform to showcase your organisation and work.

SHAPING THE FUTURE:
PROGRAMMATIC AND INNOVATION FUNDING

"TOKYO PORTFOLIO" SEED FUNDER: USD 25,000 – 50,000

Directly fund the actionable pilots emerging from the Tokyo Co-Creation Labs.

The Tokyo Portfolio represents the strongest concepts emerging from GDC's Co-Creation Labs, solutions jointly developed by innovators, researchers, policymakers, and technical experts. Your investment directly supports these initiatives as they move from concept to field implementation.

Rather than funding conference logistics, every dollar is directed towards developing, piloting, and refining innovations capable of addressing pressing development challenges across the Global South. Venues and catering across all four locations are covered by our host institutions, so partner contributions fund delegates and pilots.

YOUR INVESTMENT OF USD 25,000 – 50,000 WILL:

- Provide direct seed funding for high-potential initiatives in areas such as artificial intelligence, digital public infrastructure, climate resilience, health systems, education, financial inclusion, and green technologies.
- Enable multidisciplinary teams to develop implementation roadmaps, validate concepts, and generate evidence for future scaling.
- Support partnerships that connect local innovators with global technical expertise, financing institutions, and implementation partners.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Recognition as a Core Innovation Partner for the projects you support.
- Opportunity to embed your own technical experts and specialists within the Co-Creation Labs to help shape project design and implementation strategies.
- Early engagement with emerging innovations before they reach wider funding markets.
- Access to implementation findings, policy insights, and opportunities to co-design future scaling pathways with governments and development partners.
- Visibility across project documentation, international dissemination, and future investment showcases at GDC 2027 and related GDN initiatives.
- Virtual Booth on the conference platform to showcase your organisation and work.

ACCELERATING ACCESS:
HIGH-VISIBILITY EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

LOCALISATION & ACCESS PARTNER (TRAVEL GRANTS): USD 15,000

Ensure that the innovators closest to development challenges are represented where global decisions are made.

Many of the most promising development solutions originate in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, yet financial barriers often prevent innovators from participating in international policy dialogues. As a Localisation and Access Partner, you will help remove these barriers by enabling researchers, entrepreneurs, and practitioners from the Global South to contribute directly to global discussions and co-create solutions with international partners.

YOUR INVESTMENT OF USD 15,000 WILL:

- Cover international travel, accommodation, visa costs, and conference participation for a cohort of five carefully selected Global South innovators.
- Increase the diversity and quality of the Co-Creation Labs by ensuring that local experience and evidence inform global policy discussions.
- Strengthen South-North scientific collaboration and promote locally led innovation as a cornerstone of sustainable development.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Recognition as the Official Localisation and Access Partner across conference communications and event materials.
- A say in how your cohort is composed. You receive the shortlisted candidate profiles and may indicate a regional or thematic priority, which we accommodate where the shortlist allows.
- Invitations to the 25th Anniversary reception on 15 December for your representatives in Tokyo.
- A written account of what your cohort produced in the Labs, the partners they were matched with, and what carries into the 2027 pilot year, for use in your own reporting.
- Dedicated storytelling and visibility highlighting the innovators and projects made possible through your support.
- Scalable opportunity to support multiple cohorts (USD 30,000 for 10 delegates, with corresponding recognition).
- Virtual Booth on the conference platform to showcase your organisation and work.

ACCELERATING ACCESS:
HIGH-VISIBILITY EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

INNOVATOR SEAT: USD 5,000

Put one person in the room who would otherwise not be there.

The Co-Creation Labs work because the person who built the project is the one designing its next stage. Financial distance is the most common reason that person is absent from rooms like this one.

YOUR INVESTMENT OF USD 5,000 WILL:

- Cover international travel, accommodation, visa costs and full participation for one researcher or practitioner from the Global South
- Keep that innovator connected through the 2027 pilot year, including the design work that follows Tokyo.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Named as the sponsor of a specific, identified innovator rather than a general fund.
- The innovator's profile, project and Tokyo outcome documented and shared with you for your own reporting.
- Attribution in the Tokyo Portfolio alongside the concept your innovator helped produce.
- Invitation to the 25th Anniversary reception on 15 December.
- Virtual Booth on the conference platform to showcase your organisation and work.

ACCELERATING ACCESS:
HIGH-VISIBILITY EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

CULTURAL RECEPTION HOST: USD 15,000 – 20,000

(Limit: 2 Partners)

Support the conversations where partnerships begin and ideas become action.

Some of the most significant collaborations are forged outside formal conference sessions. The networking receptions provide an environment where ministers, ambassadors, development leaders, researchers, philanthropies, multilateral organisations, and innovators can build trusted relationships that lead to long-term collaboration.

PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS:

- The **25th Anniversary Cultural Reception (Day 1)** featuring a traditional Japanese Kagami-biraki ceremony celebrating international cooperation.
- The **Global Policy Reception (Day 2)** hosted at Europa House following the Global Policy Symposium and GDAC Awards Ceremony.

YOUR INVESTMENT OF USD 15,000 - 20,000 WILL:

- Facilitate high-level networking among approximately 150 participants, including senior Japanese officials and experts, representing governments, multilateral development banks, foundations, academia, and the private sector.
- Create an environment that encourages new partnerships, investment opportunities, and collaborative initiatives extending well beyond the conference.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Recognised as host of the reception alongside GDN, with your organisation named on the invitation, the programme and the printed menu.
- Your senior representative welcomes guests alongside the GDN President.
- For the 25th Anniversary reception, your principal takes part in the Kagami-biraki ceremony together with the GDN President and senior representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Asian Development Bank Institute, the World Bank, the European Union and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.
- An allocation of ten invitations for guests of your choosing.
- Recognition as a partner strengthening international dialogue and development cooperation.
- Virtual Booth on the conference platform to showcase your organisation and work.

One host per reception. Two host roles available across the two evenings.

ACCELERATING ACCESS:
HIGH-VISIBILITY EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

CO-CREATION LAB "POD" SPONSOR: USD 10,000 (or equivalent In-Kind Expertise)

Shape the next generation of scalable development solutions.

The Co-Creation Labs are the engine of GDC 2026. Each Lab brings together innovators, researchers, policymakers, investors, development agencies, and technical specialists to jointly design practical solutions to real-world challenges. Rather than simply observing discussions, Co-Creation Lab Partners become active contributors to solution development.

Within the two thematic hubs, partners may support work in areas including:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Digital Public Infrastructure
- Digital Health
- Climate Resilience and Green Technologies
- Agriculture and Food Systems
- Financial Inclusion
- Urban Innovation and Smart Cities
- Education and Skills

YOUR INVESTMENT OF USD 10,000 (OR EQUIVALENT IN-KIND EXPERTISE):

- Support professional facilitation, technical expertise, and collaborative design processes within a dedicated thematic Lab.
- Enable multidisciplinary teams to develop implementation-ready concepts that become part of the Tokyo Portfolio for future piloting and scale-up.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Recognition as the lead partner for a thematic Co-Creation Lab.
- Opportunity to embed two technical experts within the Lab as Solution Partners, contributing directly to project design and mentoring participating innovators.
- Opportunity to introduce the thematic challenge through opening remarks and help shape discussions throughout the session.
- Recognition across the resulting concept papers, implementation roadmaps, and future project dissemination.
- Early engagement with high-potential innovations before they progress to pilot implementation and larger-scale investment opportunities.
- Virtual Booth on the conference platform to showcase your organisation and work.

TARGETED ENGAGEMENT:
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

KNOWLEDGE AND IMPACT PARTNER: USD 10,000

Help shape the knowledge agenda that extends far beyond the conference.

The ideas generated during the Co-Creation Labs will not end in Tokyo. They will form the foundation of the Tokyo Portfolio - a collection of implementation-ready concepts, partnership models, and policy recommendations designed to guide future investment and collaboration.

YOUR INVESTMENT OF USD 10,000 WILL:

- Support the documentation, synthesis, and dissemination of the conference outcomes.
- Enable the production of the Tokyo Portfolio Report, capturing the most promising innovations, partnership models, and implementation pathways emerging from GDC 2026.
- Ensure that lessons from the conference reach governments, development agencies, multilateral institutions, foundations, and research organisations worldwide.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Recognition as the Knowledge and Impact Partner of the Tokyo Portfolio.
- Opportunity to contribute technical insights during preparation of the final publication.
- Prominent visibility across the report, dissemination events, webinars, and digital knowledge products throughout 2027.
- Association with a flagship publication expected to inform future policy dialogue, investment decisions, and international development partnerships.
- Virtual Booth on the conference platform to showcase your organisation and work.

TARGETED ENGAGEMENT:
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY PARTNER: USD 7,500 (or equivalent In-Kind support)

Enable seamless global collaboration.

Meaningful collaboration depends on reliable digital connectivity. As the Digital Connectivity Partner, you will help ensure that every participant - from Global South innovators to senior policymakers - can engage fully throughout the conference and remain connected with colleagues around the world.

YOUR INVESTMENT OF USD 7,500 (OR EQUIVALENT IN-KIND SUPPORT) WILL:

- Provide high-speed wireless connectivity and digital communication services for delegates.
- Support digital collaboration during the Co-Creation Labs and networking sessions.
- Enhance participants' ability to share knowledge, access conference resources, and build partnerships in real time.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS

- Recognition as the Official Digital Connectivity Partner.
- Branded digital access portal or Wi-Fi landing page reaching every conference participant.
- Visibility across conference communications and digital platforms.
- Position your organisation as an enabler of international knowledge exchange and digital collaboration.
- Virtual Booth on the conference platform to showcase your organisation and work.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

The Global Development Conference is GDN's flagship event, held in a different region and on a different theme each year, with most participants from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Twenty-five editions have been held in 20 host countries on five continents.

The conference gives early-career and established researchers a platform to present their own work and exchange ideas directly with policymakers, building a global network that outlasts each edition. It offers Southern perspectives on sustainable development and feeds back into how development cooperation is designed and evaluated.

Who is in the room

Across 25 editions, delegates have consistently come predominantly from LMICs, with some editions drawing more than 90% participation from developing and transition economies. Every in-person edition of the conference has drawn between 350 and 700 participants.

Who is on the stage

Sitting heads of state and government have addressed six of the 25 editions. Keynote and plenary speakers have included leading voices in development economics, and LMIC representation on stage has remained consistently high across editions.

SUPPORTERS OF GDN AND GDC

Since 1999, GDN and its flagship conference have been supported by government agencies from 26 countries, eight multilateral development banks, and institutions across the United Nations system. Japanese institutions have been part of that record throughout, a connection that comes full circle with this year's edition hosted in Japan.

Multilateral development banks and financial institutions
African Development Bank · Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development · Asian Development Bank · Corporación Andina de Fomento · European Investment Bank · Inter-American Development Bank · International Monetary Fund · The World Bank

Governments and development agencies
Agence Française de Développement · Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia · Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany · Government of Egypt · Government of Fiji · International Development Research Centre, Canada · Japan Bank for International Cooperation · Japan International Cooperation Agency · Korea International Cooperation Agency · Ministry of Education, Peru · Ministry of Finance, India · Ministry of Finance, Japan · Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic · Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands · Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation · Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation

United Nations system and intergovernmental bodies
European Commission · International Labour Organization · OECD Development Centre · UN Economic Commission for Africa · UN Industrial Development Organization · UNICEF · United Nations Development Programme · UNU-WIDER · World Health Organization

Foundations
Ford Foundation · Gates Foundation · Michelin Foundation · OCP Foundation · Open Society Foundations · Robert Bosch Foundation · Sasakawa Peace Foundation · William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Universities and research institutions
African Economic Research Consortium · Campbell Collaboration · CERDI · Central European University · Economic Research Forum · FERDI · German Institute of Development and Sustainability · Institute for Studies in Industrial Development · Mohammed VI Polytechnic University · Peking University · Universidad de los Andes · Universidad del Pacífico · Universidad San Francisco de Quito · University of Ghana · University of the South Pacific

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