Frequently Asked Questions about UNOPS’ Global Innovation Challenge

Please find below the answers to frequently asked questions regarding the Global Innovation Challenge. For any inquiries, please contact UNOPS S3i Innovation Centre.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What is the Global Innovation Challenge?

   The Global Innovation Challenge of UNOPS’ Sustainable Investments in Infrastructure and Innovation initiative (S3i) calls for entrepreneurs, corporations, academia, investors and other innovators to provide creative ideas and solutions geared at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Solutions with the most potential will be invited to be incubated at one of the S3i Innovation Centres. Participants of the Incubation Programme will benefit from a wide range of services and events that help them scale up their business, speed up growth and advance their solution to the marketplace. More information about the Global Innovation Challenge can be found here.

2. How do I apply to the Global Innovation Challenge?

   The Challenge is open to both individuals and groups, such as business entities and other types of organisations. Female applicants are encouraged to apply. Please find further information about the ongoing Global Innovation Challenge here along with the Application link.

3. What does the Incubator offer for successful participants?

   Startups that are selected to be incubated will have access to tailor-made coaching and various other services offered by the Innovation Centre. As all teams will be different in terms of focus area, maturity etc, each participant will have the programme custom-made for their needs, including hand-picked mentors from the specific field of expertise. Participants will have access to UNOPS’ leading expertise in sustainable development, impact management, ESG metrics etc. as well as in project management, procurement and financial management. Through UNOPS’ extensive partnerships and networks, participants will also have access to the top global and local expertise and contacts, including opportunities to pitch to potential investors and venture capitalists at pitching sessions organised by the Innovation Centre. Participants will also be offered physical facilities at the Innovation Centre for the duration of the incubation (approximately one year). Some participants may also be given the opportunity to take part in an international exchange between other Innovation Centres, and participants with solutions that demonstrate the most potential may also be invited to develop a pilot in collaboration with UNOPS or its partners, at a suitable location.

4. What is a Boost Camp?

   Once the deadline for the Global Innovation Challenge application is closed, the selection committee consisting of subject matter experts from UNOPS and the private sector, reviews the applications and invites approximately 15 top teams to develop their solutions at a 1-day Boost Camp at the Innovation Centre, where they will learn and practice a variety of new skills related to entrepreneurship and innovation. Participants are expected to be active learning partners with other participants and mentors. At the end of the Boost Camp, participants will pitch their solutions to the selection committee and potential investor, and best performers will be qualified to take part in the Incubator Programme. Incubation starts soon after the Boost Camp.
The Boost Camps will take place at the particular Innovation Centre that has called out the Global Innovation Challenge. Currently, there are S3i Innovation Centres located in Malmö, Sweden and Kobe, Japan. Please find further details about the S3i Innovation Centre locations [here](#). Please note that arrangements for the Boost Camp will be determined based on restrictions due to COVID19.

**SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BOOST CAMP / INCUBATION PROGRAM**

5. **Are there options for part-time participation for the Boost Camp or the Incubator?**

Part-time participation in the Boost Camp is not possible: failure to participate in full will result in losing the opportunity to be selected for the Incubator. Part-time participation in the Incubator Programme is decided on a case-by-case basis. For further inquiries, please contact the S3i Innovation Centres directly - contact details provided [here](#).

6. **Which language(s) will the programme be delivered in?**

The language of the programme is English, although some Innovation Centres may conduct some parts of the programme in the local language if appropriate.

7. **What is expected from me in the Incubator and what happens if I do not live up to it?**

Together with the teams, we will establish a clear and feasible plan for each participant, with key milestones and expected deliverables. There will be monthly follow-ups, and with the full support of our experts, we anticipate the teams to deliver on it. Should you not deliver without good reasons, we reserve the right to terminate your participation in the programme.

8. **We are a big team - how many team members can we bring to the incubator? Can we change members that will participate in the Innovation Centre programme?**

Multiple team members are preferable. Given that the average size of startups are 2–5 people, extraordinary cases will be consulted individually in advance. Different members of startups can attend the programme as long as the milestones are met.

9. **I am already engaged with another accelerator/incubator, can I continue this while taking part in the Incubation Programme at the Innovation Centre?**

Participation in outside programmes and activities will be decided case by case, in consultation with UNOPS S3i Innovation Centre.

10. **What fees or expenses are associated with the Boost Camp or the Incubation Programme?**

There are no fees for participating in the Boost Camp or the incubation programme. As a rule, participants are expected to cover their own travel expenses, accommodation and other living expenses, but some arrangements may be possible for participants arriving from certain countries (see: [DAC List of ODA Recipients](#)).

   Participants are responsible for organising their own visas, when applicable. Participants may use their admissions letter as a supporting document if required.

If you have additional questions, please contact UNOPS S3i Innovation Centre.