
CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF INNOVATIVE BUSINESS IDEAS 3rd COHORT 2023

A) Background

The University of Rwanda (UR) aspires to be an internationally recognized University that excels in research and innovation, teaching and learning, and community engagement. In collaboration with World Bank, Inter University Council of East Africa and Sida, UR has established Grid Innovation and Incubation Hub (GIIH). This Hub is hosted at the African Centre of Excellence in Energy for Sustainable Development (ACE-ESD) and has the following overall mission:

- ✓ To mentor and nurture students with business concept
- ✓ To provide business coaching and training through boot camps
- ✓ To incubate both idea-based and growth stage business concepts
- ✓ To support the validation, roll out and scale up of prototypes via seed funding
- ✓ To create a pipeline of societally relevant start-ups
- ✓ To support students and other university spinoffs networking with industry (private sector), international funding agencies, experts, researchers, and scientists.

This call for innovative business ideas invites students, interested UR alumni, and other innovators to submit their business ideas for collaborative effort to develop a minimum viable product that might fit the market needs and solve the global emerging issues.

B) Criteria for selection

The innovative business concept must meet the following criteria:

1. The business concept should be jointly developed by a team and implemented through the UR practice venture process, or individual students sharing their dreams and passion
2. The business concept should contribute to country priorities as elaborated in the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
3. The business concept should demonstrate a high probability of profitability and financial viability
4. The business concept should demonstrate a high degree of local appropriateness and degree of responsiveness to local community problems

5. The business concept should demonstrate sustainability in terms of its proposed business models for business implementation
6. The business concept should clearly indicate why there's a need for funding
7. The business concept should clearly demonstrate a unique value proposition and alternative solution
8. The business concept should indicate which market segment, (ex -B2B, B2C, or both)
9. The business idea should indicate its specific industry sector

C) Submission

The submitted business concept should include a brief description of the following: -

- a. Title of the business concept
- b. Industry or sector: for example, the agriculture industry, energy sector, etc
- c. Brief description of a business concept (500 words)
- d. Brief description of team members and their specific roles
- e. Summary of the problem statement and proposed alternative solutions fit (maximum 250 words)
- f. Market segment or niche
- g. Background of the founder and the promoter/ or co-founder (max 300 words)
- h. Brief explanation of why the concept is doable – 2 paragraphs
- i. Brief gender dimension (250 max words)

D) Pre-selection process

A pre-selection process based on formal requirements and adherence to the requirements will be conducted at the GIIH/ACE-ESD – Nyarugenge Campus.

What to expect: We would provide feedback to applicants on strong areas of their application and areas where there is a need for improvement

E) Startup boot camp at the ACE-ESD -Incubation Center

Selected best business concepts will be allowed to attend a boot camp for 7 days.

What to expect: The boot camp aims to provide a business coach, mentorship, and guidance. Incubatees will get free access to expertise in their field and industry practitioners will be available to share their success stories and business journey.

F) Incubatees at the Incubation Hub

At the end of boot camp, there will be a second selection of the best concepts. The incubatees will be hosted at the Grid Innovation and Incubation Hub for a period 12 months before graduation of ventures to our acceleration platform.

What to expect:

Pillar 1: Personal Growth and Leadership

The entrepreneur's vision plays a core role in how far the business will go. This training will enhance your ability to see further, and in doing so the business will have a chance to get there too. You would build skills needed to surmount social and psychological obstacles and create strategies to work creatively around external limitations and structural obstacles.

Pillar 2: Business Growth Component/Mentoring

We will train you how to direct your enterprise to pursue a diversified approach of "invest", "create" or "perform" to achieve organic business growth. You will gain the capacity to enhance and continuously evaluate your business models to determine the relevance of your existing model with the future in mind. With this knowledge, you will connect the different elements in the business to develop and sustain a flow that enhances the seamless delivery of a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) to the customer.

Pillar 3: Peer Networking Component

You will leverage on existing experiences of other entrepreneurs to strengthen learning. You will help each other by presenting your work and ideas about your enterprises and receive constructive feedback to make improvements.

Pillar 4: Technical Training Component

You will be empowered to adopt a diversified approach in developing sustainability-focused strategies that will encompass all the enterprise's components: Marketing, People and productivity, Costing, Stock control, Buying, Recordkeeping, Governance, and Financial Planning.

Pillar 5: Access to Unipod

Free co-working space, access to computers, access to the prototyping laboratory and maker space.

Pillar 6: Seed funding

The selected individuals will be given market validation seed funding and business coaching as an incubatee at the Center

G) The deadline for submission

The deadline for submission is set for **25th December 2022**

H) Application

All the proposals should be submitted through this link <https://acesd.ur.ac.rw/concept>

For any additional information, clarifications, or inquiry, you can contact the Head of the Grid Innovation and Incubation Hub through these emails

1. innovationgiih@gmail.com
2. p.nyiringango@ur.ac.rw

For more information, please visit the ACE-ESD website: <https://acesd.ur.ac.rw/> or <https://giih.ur.ac.rw/>

NB: Only preselected innovative concept owners will be notified for further processes.



Dr Charles Kabiri

Ag. Center Director

African Center of Excellence in Energy for Sustainable Development (ACE-ESD)