***Unisa Innovation Challenge (IC)***

The Forge-Insimbi ilola insimbi

“Iron sharpens Iron”

**2023 Call for Applications**

**Closing date: Friday, 31 May 2023 (Extension)**

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Do **YOU** have what it takes to solve a ***SOCIETAL CHALLENGE***? If yes, then the Unisa Innovation Challenge is for you. You are invited to pitch their innovative ideas to a panel of judges at various regional office or virtually!

Who is eligible to participate?

* **ALL** Unisa students currently registered in 2023 (1st and 2nd Semester), irrespective of the qualification registered for or duration or level of study.

Important Information to Note

* The idea/concept/product must be *innovative* and targeted at addressing a *Societal Challenge.*
* An idea is considered *innovative* if it is new and has not been implemented before to solve the identified societal challenge or is an improvement over existing solutions wherein the improvement provides a significant benefit to the target audience or market.
* *Societal Challenges* in this context refers to the problems that our society is grappling to resolve. These may be national and include cross-cutting such as poverty, food security, access to health, achieving inclusive and equitable quality education, achieving gender parity, sluggish economic growth, unemployment, access to health care, access to cheap reliable source of energy or portable water, etc.

<http://www.statssa.gov.za/MDG/SDGs_Country_Report_2019_South_Africa.pdf>

<https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/Executive%20Summary-NDP%202030%20-%20Our%20future%20-%20make%20it%20work.pdf>

Some may be local affecting only a particular sector or group of people. For more examples of some of the challenges: <http://openix.co.za/openix/inter-university-innovation-challenge>

# Application and Assessment Process

Unisa Innovation Challenge

Call for Proposals

Regional Pitching Sessions

Pre-Select

Exit

Bootcamp Ignite Innovation

Training

Mentorship

Final Applications

shortlist

Final Pitch

Selection

Exit

Exit

International Exchange

Incubation

Mentorship

Funding

Launch

Pre-select

Ignite

Assess

Accelerate

Launch

* The call for proposals goes out at the beginning of each year.

Preselect

* All interested students or groups of students wishing to enter their innovative idea/business concept as part of the Unisa Innovation Challenge are required to pitch their innovative idea/business concept before a panel of experts.
* Pitching sessions will be organised in most of the Unisa centres. For a pitching session near you, check the notice boards. You are welcome to also pitch virtually. See details below
* Students wishing to pitch an idea/concept must RSVP to [innovation@unisa.ac.za](mailto:innovation@unisa.ac.za). Please kindly include the following information: Name, title of pitch, your cellphone number and Unisa office near you.
* Prepare a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation
* The Pitching Panel will score all pitches based on the following criteria:

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| --- | --- |
| **Problem definition (20%):** | **The extent to which the challenge being resolved has been clearly identified and defined.** |
| **Innovativeness of the proposed solution (50%):** | **The extent to which the solution is new or is a significant improvement over existing solution.** |
| **Feasibility of the proposed solution (20%):** | **The extent to which the proposed solution is feasible having regard to the technical aspects of the project, timelines, team, partnerships, financial resources, etc.** |
| **Potential Impact of the proposed solution (10%):** | **The extent to which the proposed solution will impact positively on the identified challenge.** |

Ignite Bootcamp

* The best ideas/concepts will proceed to the next phase.
* All students whose ideas/concepts have been selected will be required to attend up to 5 day Bootcamp.
* At the end of the Boot Camp, it is envisaged that students will leave with an advanced draft of their Unisa Innovation Challenge proposal.
* Students may be allocated a mentor.
* Students will be given a deadline to submit their final applications during the boot camp sessions. No late applications will be accepted.

Assessment

* All complete applications received will be reviewed by an Innovation Challenge Selection Committee.
* The mandate of the committee is to review all applications and shortlist those applications it thinks have merit.
* Complete applications will be assessed by the IC Selection Committee using the following criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Problem definition (5%):** | **The extent to which the applicant has a clear understanding of the challenge identified.** |
| **Customer/user definition (5%):** | **The extent to which the applicant has identified the appropriate customers and users. The extent to which the applicant has undertaken customer discovery.** |
| **Innovation (35%):** | **The extent to which the proposed solution is innovative and differs from existing solutions.** |
| **Feasibility (15%):** | **The extent to which the proposed solution is feasible having regard to the technical aspects of the project, timelines, partnerships, financial resources, etc** |
| **Capabilities (15%):** | **The extent to which the team has the requisite expertise to develop and/or implement the proposed solution. In the case of an individual applicant, this refers to the extent to which the individual has the requisite expertise to develop and/or implement the proposed solution.** |
| **Sustainability (10%):** | **The extent to which the team has developed a sustainability plan for their proposed solution.** |
| **Potential impact (10%):** | **The extent to which the proposed solution will make an impact to society.** |
| **Quality of the submission/presentation (5%)** | |

* A maximum of 20 ideas/concepts can be shortlisted.
* Students whose ideas/concepts have been shortlisted will be invited to present to an external panel of judges for a final assessment. The final presentation will take place during the Innovation Festival in December 2023
* The winners will be selected and announced during the Awards Ceremony at the end of the Innovation Festival.

Accelerate

* A maximum of 10 projects can be supported.
* Each project will receive the following financial and non-financial support:
  + R 100 000 per project which will be used towards the development of the concept or idea. Additional funding may be made available depending on progress and compliance with all conditions of grant. The funding will be dispensed in tranches based on progress.
  + Access to a dedicated mentor to assist with development and implementation of the idea/concept.
  + Access to incubation services where available
  + Access to a commercialisation specialist, IP specialist and product design professional.
  + Assistance with marketing the idea/concept
  + Opportunity to participate in an international student exchange.

**Regional pitching sessions and workshop**

The DITTC is organising pitching sessions in various regions. Kindly consult the schedule of regional visits at the service center closest to you. For those who cannot pitch at the centers they can pitch virtual on Ms Teams as per the schedule below. The call will close on **31 May 2023.** If you cannot attend a pitch virtually kindly let us know, send an email to innovation@unisa.ac.za

Enquiries may be directed to:

***Ms. Hlumela Kunene:*** kunendq@unisa.ac.za ***(012 429 8549)***

***Ms. Nṱangananedzeni Muanalo:*** muanan@unisa.ac.za ***(012 429 3767)***

| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday** | **Sunday** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2023 Innovation Challenge Pitching Sessions**  **March** | | | | | | |
|  |  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** |
| **13** | **14** | **15** | **16** | **17** | **18** | **19** |
| **20** | **21**  Human Rights Day | **22** | **23**  **Mafikeng Agency** | **24**  **Durban Hub x2** | **25** | **26** |
| **27** | **28**  **Polokwane** | **29**  **Makhado**  **Potchefstroom** | **30**  **Giyani**  **Kimberly Agency** | **31**  **Bloemfontein** |  |  |
| **APRIL** | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  | **1** | **2** |
| **3** | **4**  **Mthatha**  **New Castle Agency**  **Rustenburg Hub** | **5**  **East London Hub** | **6** | **7**  Good Friday | **8** | **9** |
| **10**  Family day | **11** | **12**  **Port Elizabeth Agency** | **13** | **14**  **Sunnyside Campus** | **15** | **16** |
| **17**  **Science Campus** | **18** | **19** | **20**  **Nelspruit Hub** | **21** | **22** | **23** |
| **24** | **25** | **26** | **27**  Freedom Day | **28** | **29** | **30** |
| **MAY** | | | | | | |
| **1**  **Workers day** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| **8** | **9**  **Virtual Pitches** | **10**  **Virtual pitches** | **11**  **Virtual pitches** | **12**  **Virtual pitches** | **13** | **14** |
| **15** | **16** | **17** | **18** | **19** | **20** | **21** |
| **22** | **23** | **24** | **25** | **26** | **27** | **28** |
| **29** | **30** | **31** |  |  |  |  |