

FIKRA ISLAMIC FINTECH ACCELERATOR

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS FIKRA?

The FIKRA Islamic Fintech Accelerator Programme (FIKRA) is a joint initiative by the Securities Commission Malaysia (SC) and the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). The objective of FIKRA is to further enhance the Islamic capital market (ICM) ecosystem in Malaysia by identifying and scaling innovative fintech solutions.

FIKRA will connect innovators through a collaborative environment for mentors, investors and industry partners, along with relevant regulatory guidance, primarily through a 3-month-accelerator programme.

Another focus area of FIKRA is to help position ICM as a lucrative segment for building a career by creating a pipeline of talent through increased awareness of opportunities in Islamic fintech.

HOW IS THE PROGRAMME STRUCTURED?

FIKRA is focused on driving two key engagements:

1. Facilitating solution testing & pilots through the accelerator programme; and
2. Growing ideas & solutions for subsequent engagement.

The FIKRA accelerator programme will run for 3-months, which will include structured support to selected 10 applicants (participants). The accelerator participants will go through curated sessions, masterclasses, mentoring, and linkages with industry partners for solution co-creation & testing, as well as solution showcase opportunities. Further, there will be continued post-accelerator tracking and networking opportunities for the participants.

First Month

Orientation with UNCDF will take place in the beginning of the programme. Broadly, it will focus on defining outcomes and milestones along with the support framework to achieve the outcomes. Participants will be introduced to and be acquainted with select industry partners that will work with the participants towards scoping the solution framework and engagement model.

Second Month

Participants will work towards co-creating the solution along with their industry partners, supported by inputs from the programme's diverse pool of mentors and investors. Participants will also receive regulatory guidance from the SC. Depending on the progress of participants; pilot testing of solution may start in second month.

Third Month

The focus during the third month will be on solution testing and re-testing, as well as refining the solution through feedback. Participants will also be coached for the jury pitch session.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR FIKRA?

Any innovator (at least 18 years old) with tech-based ideas and/or solutions is eligible to apply. These could be individual participants, start-ups at different stages of development or other organisations including fund managers and financial services providers.

The idea/solution must address at least one of the following three key challenge areas.

- New ICM Offering
- Access to ICM
- Integration of Islamic social finance into ICM

FIKRA is open to Malaysian as well as international applicants from other countries, who can apply independently or as a consortium.

The applicant and the proposed idea / solution must not involve any Shariah non-compliant activities including services based on 'riba' (interest), gambling & gaming, liquor and liquor-related activities, pork and pork-related activities, non-halal food and beverages, Shariah non-compliant entertainment, tobacco and tobacco-related activities, conventional share trading and stockbroking in Shariah non-compliant securities, and other activities deemed non-compliant according to Shariah.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE PROGRAMME?

Applications Open (25 May – 30 Jun) > Evaluation & Cohort Selection (July) > Structured Support (Jul-Sep) > Winners' Selection (Oct) > Demo Day at the SCxSC Fintech Conference 2021 (Oct).

HOW WILL THE APPLICANTS FOR THE PROGRAMME BE EVALUATED?

Applicants will be evaluated against the following parameters:

- Degree of Innovation (40%)
- Sustainability & Commercial Viability (30%)
- Social Impact and Sustainable Development Goals (30%)

WHAT TYPE OF REGULATORY GUIDANCE WILL BE PROVIDED IN FIKRA?

Regulatory guidance in FIKRA will include SC providing relevant informative session on securities laws and regulatory frameworks to participants as an introduction to Malaysia's capital market. Participants may also receive regulatory clarification from relevant line departments in SC.

Engagements with SC via FIKRA does not begin or fast-track any licensing, registration or any other gatekeeping process; nor does it give any entitlement, guarantee or additional benefit in seeking any license, registration or any other approval process with any sectoral regulator.

Any solutions that need to be regulated will still be required to comply with the necessary obligations and regulations imposed by the sectoral regulators, as may be relevant.

WHO WILL BE CONDUCTING THE MENTORING IN FIKRA?

Industry partners are the mentors that will work closely with the participants throughout the programme to co-create and refine solutions.

Participants will also engage with various global mentors (academicians, investors, and domain & sector experts) across technology adoption, human-centered design and building solution proposition.

HOW WILL THE FINALISTS / WINNERS BE SELECTED?

Participants will be pitching their solution proposition to a panel of judges at the end of the programme. Winners will be selected based on evaluation from these judges that will comprise select partners from industry, investors and sector experts, among others.

HOW WILL ONE BENEFIT FROM THE PROGRAMME?

All who enter the programme will gain in varying degrees depending on which stage they are currently at with their growth journey. All participants will gain access to FIKRA's curated masterclasses and webinars. Those selected for accelerator programme will gain from structured support towards solution development through mentoring, regulatory guidance and access to programme's partner & investor network. The selected participants will also receive post-programme monitoring support.

HOW IS THIS PROGRAMME DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS IN THE MARKET?

FIKRA is designed with a development perspective to further enhance the Islamic fintech ecosystem. The accelerator programme is meant to develop a vibrant innovation ecosystem for the ICM by building a collaborative environment for applicants to be connected to industry partners and investors. It is also to create a continuous pipeline of solutions, talents and skills for the fintech-segment within ICM.