

AGRITECH CHALLENGE 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS AGRITECH CHALLENGE 2021?

Agritech Challenge ('programme') is a cohort-driven programme to identify and support agri + fin tech solutions to improve lives and financial health of smallholder farmers in 7 countries across Asia and Africa.

The programme will facilitate international expansion of the selected solutions to the following 7 countries ('participating countries'): Kenya, Malawi, Uganda & Zambia in Africa and India, Indonesia and Malaysia in Asia.

HOW IS THE PROGRAMME STRUCTURED?

The programme will call for applications during 22 July – 30 Aug 2021, followed by an evaluation to select a cohort of 20 innovators ('participants') in Sep 2021.

The engagement with the cohort will commence in Oct 2021 and continue till Jan 2022, to help facilitate a pilot of the solution by each participant in its chosen market, and a showcase / pitch of the solution in Feb 2022.

The participants will be provided the following support as part of the programme –

Curated engagement with industry partners –

The programme will enable introductions and subsequent discussions with industry partner(s) in the chosen market to jointly build the solution framework, supported by mentoring and guidance by the partner. The programme has a wide network of industry partners across the participating countries with shared objectives to co-create solutions relevant for their respective market(s).

Support from local and regional innovation hubs –

The participants will be provided country-level insights, local linkages, mentoring as well as support on understanding regulatory & compliance landscape to help localise the solution. This will be further enabled through the opportunity to collaborate with startups in chosen market(s), by engaging with innovation hubs and bodies across the participating countries.

Access to sector and market insights –

Through a network of ecosystem and sector partners across the participating countries, the programme will facilitate access to sectoral and technology resources to help co-create the solutions.

Other support –

The programme will facilitate the opportunity for fund-raising by enabling linkages to a network of investors / funders. Further, there will be continued post-programme support on solution pilot and scope for subsequent scale up.

UNCDF will enable exchange of insights and resources by working with a network of experts across the participating countries, including engaging with the partners – Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog (Govt. of India), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rabo Foundation, IFAD and Bayer.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

The Programme invites applications from innovators based on the following criteria:

- A start-up registered in any of the participating countries, with at least 2 years of operations
- Start-up with at least –
 - USD 150,000 average annual revenue in the last 2 years; OR
 - USD 100,000 average annual revenue in the last 3 years
- The start-up must address at least one of the following three challenge areas in at least one of the participating countries
 - Low Productivity
 - Climate Risk
 - Inefficient Supply Chains
- Start-up should have a live solution / business with an active customer and/or user base, and not in development or testing phase
Active customer/ user defined as having transacted with the solution at least once in the last 90 days.

THE STARTUP HAS NOT BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR 2 YEARS BUT MEETS THE REVENUE CRITERIA. CAN THEY STILL APPLY?

The programme is inviting applications from registered startups that have had operations for at least two years and also fulfill the other eligibility criteria.

THE STARTUP MAY NOT ADDRESS THE 3 CHALLENGE AREAS THROUGH EXISTING SOLUTION. CAN THEY STILL APPLY?

The programme supports creation of solutions that address at least one of the challenge areas. If the current solution does not address these challenges, but there is a relevant use-case that the startup can / is willing to build by utilizing its current stack or solution, they are eligible to apply with their current and proposed solution details.

THE STARTUP CURRENTLY DOES NOT HAVE ANY INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS OR PRESENCE. CAN THEY STILL APPLY?

Having existing international operations or presence is not a prerequisite to apply to the programme, so long as the eligibility criteria is being fulfilled.

HOW WILL THE APPLICANTS BE EVALUATED TO FORM THE COHORT?

Applicants will be evaluated through an independent jury process to form the cohort of 20 startups, against the following key parameters:

- Degree of Innovation
- Sustainability and Commercial Viability
- Social Impact and Sustainable Development Goals
- Organisational Capacity and Implementation

WILL THE SELECTED STARTUPS RECEIVE A FINANCIAL GRANT OR FUNDING SUPPORT THROUGH THE PROGRAMME?

The programme will enable access and linkages to a network of investor to facilitate fund-raising opportunity for the participants.

At the end of the programme, the participants might be considered eligible to receive a financial grant by the UNCDF.