CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF INNOVATIVE BUSINESS CONCEPTS OR PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR INCUBATION AT AI AND IoT APLIED RESEARCH INCUBATION HUB
2nd 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.

Through a high competition, the University of Rwanda (UR), the African Center of Excellence in Internet of Things (ACEIoT) has won a grant to implement the project entitled "**IoT and AI Applied Research Results Commercialization Through Incubation Hub**". The project is funded by Research and Innovation Systems for Africa (RISA), a program of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office that aims to strengthen research and innovation ecosystems in Africa.

The project aims at establishing an IoT and AI based applied research incubator/accelerator, which will facilitate the transfer of applied research prototypes and knowledge from IoT lab to market and commercialization through academia-industry collaboration.
The project will be implemented in collaboration with FabLab, Narada LTD, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana and other stakeholders for strengthening the academia-industry collaboration.

The hub will provide required technical and entrepreneurship capacity for students to transform their research into viable ventures for commercialization and creating new startups.
The hub has the following overall objectives:

- Facilitate the Technology/knowledge Transfer from university to Industries

- Provision of required resources, infrastructure and knowledge through professional training to incubates.

- Support in developing new solutions which address societal challenges and reduce poverty.

- Linking incubates with the industry for job opportunities and creating start-ups.

- Strengthening Academia-Industry collaboration

This call for innovative business concepts or project proposals application invites UR students in the STEM programmes, interested UR alumni entrepreneurs with their associates/partners from other Universities if any and UR students living with disabilities who have innovative projects in the area of IoT and AI to submit their business concepts or project proposals for a collaborative effort to develop a Minimum viable product that might fit the market needs and solve society's challenges. The projects should have been developed and reached a certain level at least having prototype.

B) Criteria for selection

The innovative business concept must meet the following criteria:

1. The business concept or project proposal should be jointly developed by a team from UR students or UR alumni with their partners from any other Universities implemented through the practice venture process, or individuals sharing their dreams and passion. Any team should have at least one UR student or alumni. Individual concept note of a UR student can also be submitted.
2. The business concept should demonstrate team composition which takes considerable factor Gender and Equity Social Inclusion(GESI) such as females, youth, and people with disability.
3. The business concept should contribute to country priorities as elaborated in the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4. The business concept should demonstrate a high probability of profitability and financial viability concept.
5. The business concept should demonstrate a high degree of local appropriateness and degree of responsiveness to local community problems.
6. The business concept should demonstrate sustainability in terms of its proposed business models for business implementation
7. The business concept should also clearly indicate why there's a need for funding
8. The business concept should also clearly demonstrate a unique value proposition and alternative solution.
9. The business idea should indicate its specific industry sector of application and adjacent sector.

C) Submission

The submitted business concept or project proposal should therefore include a brief description of the following:

a. Title of the business concept or project proposal
b. Industry or sector: for example, the agriculture industry.
c. Brief description of a business concept or project proposal (max 500 words)

d. Brief description of team members and their specific roles where applicable
e. Summary of the problem statement and proposed alternative solutions fit (maximum 250 words)
f. Background of the founder or project owner and the promoter/ or co-founder (max 300 words)
g. Brief explanation of why the concept is doable – 2 paragraphs.
h. Brief gender dimension, and inclusion of people with disabilities (300 max words)

i. **Supporting documents:** Complete concept note or project proposal in PDF with above sections discussed**,** ID, student card or proof that you were a student at the University of Rwanda, recommendation letter from National Union of Disabilities' Organization of Rwanda(NUDOR) for people with disabilities if applicable,

D) Pre-selection process

A pre-selection process based on formal requirements and adherence to the requirements will be conducted at the ACEIoT – 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. Only applicants with innovative idea will be contacted for interviews and only successfully applicants will be hosted as incubates

F) Incubates at the Incubation Hub

The incubates will be hosted at the IoT and AI Incubation Hub and get different trainings for a period of <u>at least 6 months</u> before the graduation.

What to expect: The training aims to provide a business coach, mentorship, and guidance on transforming the ideas into commercial product. Incubates will get free access to expertise in their field and industry practitioners will be available to share their success stories and business journey.

Training 1: Prototyping

The prototyping aims at providing hands-on skills required to put different components that constitute the idea together. This is the action of experimenting and implementing design ideas into preliminary versions of a finished product**.**

Training 2 : Entrepreneurship

This training aims to provide a business coach, mentorship, and guidance. The incubates will be provided with different entrepreneurship knowledge and skills which they can use to create their own business and start a company. We will teach incubates how to direct their enterprise to pursue a diversified approach of "invest", "create" or "perform" to achieve organic business growth. They will gain the capacity to enhance and continuously evaluate their business models to determine the relevance of your existing model with the future in mind. The incubates will help each other by

presenting their work & ideas about their enterprises and receive constructive feedback to make improvements.

Training 3: Commercialization

This training aims at providing the product commercialization skills which can help in putting the final product on the market.

Seed funding

There will be a selection of best projects which will be given market validation seed funding and business coaching as incubate at the hub. The funding amount is limited to $5,000

G) The deadline for submission

The deadline for submission is set for **4ᵗʰ May 2023 at 5PM, Kigali time**

H) Application

All business concepts or project proposals should be submitted through this application link

For any additional information, clarifications, or inquiry, you can contact us at

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For more information, please visit the website: https://aceiot.ur.ac.rw/

Female applicants are highly encouraged to apply.

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

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