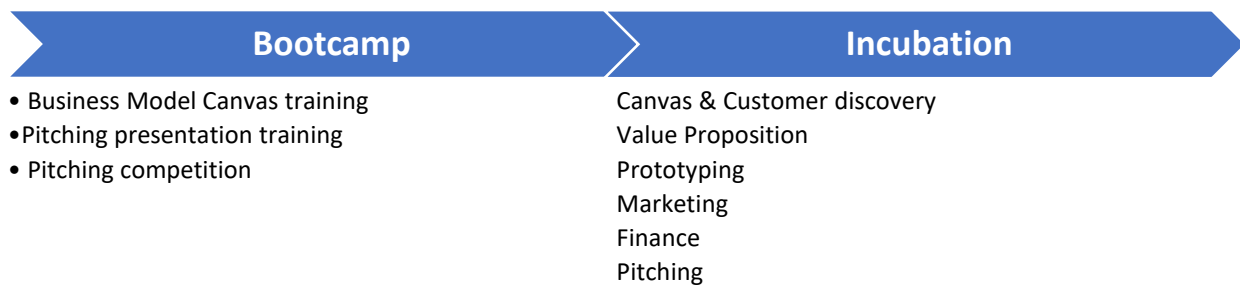# Young Innovators Program (YIP)- 2024
Guidelines

Dear students,

The Young Innovators Program (YIP)- 2024 is a cross-university, three-month training and mentorship program, supported from GIZ ITP Digital Transformation Centre (DTC), offered to support the brightest and creative students from eight universities and colleges in Kosovo. This year edition of YIP is focused on environmental and sustainable issues contributing to faster green transition of our society. Hence, we invite university students with innovative ideas and solutions to apply and take advantage of this unique opportunity. We seek applications with solutions that show promise in:

1. Recycling and upcycling of waste,
2. Digitalization of businesses to reduce waste, carbon emissions, and become environment friendly,
3. Fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

To this end, the Program is organized in two phases: Bootcamp and Incubation.

Bootcamp	Incubation
• Business Model Canvas training •Pitching presentation training • Pitching competition	Canvas & Customer discovery Value Proposition Prototyping Marketing Finance Pitching

Incubation Program Phases & Steps

1. *Application*

Aspiring entrepreneurs are invited to apply to the Program online through a Google Form, which has questions related to the personal and team member information and information about their business ides: problem to tackle, solution provided, market, etc. Application form also provides the opportunity for applicants to upload any document they have prepared: business plan, concept, presentation, etc. The application phase will remain open until **18ᵗʰ March**, the end of the day.

Aiming at informing students at universities, there will be info sessions organized at participatory universities. Info sessions will be organized jointly with universities, where universities will select the day, select the venue, inform and organize the students, etc, while VentureUP will share promotion material with universities, lead the session, provide answers to questions, motivate students to apply, etc.

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Additionally, there will be online info sessions for all interested applicants, organized by VentureUP, where universities will be responsible for sharing information with their students. Additionally, VentureUP will remain available to support every applicant during the entire application process.

2. Selection

After the application deadline, there will be a selection process taking place at every participating university for applications from that specific university. In total, there will be 10 startups that will be admitted into the Incubation Program, selected from all applications in all participating universities. Minimum fourteen (14) teams/startups will be selected for the Bootcamp, which meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Applicants have to be from the participating universities,
- Preferably there are more than one team members,
- Readiness to regularly attend the program at ITP Prizren (staying overnight whenever is required),

Teams with ready and functional prototypes will have the advantage.

3. Bootcamp

Minimum 14 teams will participate in the 2-day Bootcamp at ITP. The objective of the Bootcamp is to provide additional training, mentoring, and coaching to the qualified teams to prepare and advance their business models and prepare for pitching in front of the jury/commission made of representatives from every university. Further, as result of the pitching competition, at least 12 teams will be admitted to the Incubation Program.

During the first day of the Bootcamp there will be a training session on Business Model Canvas followed by the work of the teams on their own business models. During the second day, teams will receive training on preparing and delivering the pitching presentation. During both days, all teams will be mentored, coached by numerous mentors to receive necessary support to complete their business models and pitching presentations.

As result, at the end of the second day, there will be a pitching competition in front of the jury/commission made of university representatives, which will decide for up to 12 teams/startups that will qualify for the Incubation program. Criteria to select startups for the Incubation Program are as follows:

- Prepare a Lean Startup Business Model Canvas,
- Prepare the pitching presentation and deliver the presentation in front of the jury,
- Strong Idea or product with the potential to become a viable business,
- Idea/product has the market and potential to scale,
- There is a strong development team,

- Commitment to regularly participate in all training delivered during the Incubation Program at ITP.

4. _Incubation Program_

The aim of the Incubation Program is to help qualified teams/startups become investment ready. Qualified teams/startups which will be admitted to the Incubation program will go through 8-weeks training program, receiving 6 training modules. The training sessions will be in-residence training, delivered for two days during the week, staying overnight at ITP. The training modules are as follows:

Training 1: Customer Discovery & Canvas
Training 2: Value Proposition
Training 3: Prototyping
Training 4: Marketing & Startup tools
Training 5: Financial Management
Training 6: Pitching.

The training will be delivered by international and national trainers. During the incubation programs, teams will upgrade and finalize their business models, prepare their prototypes, become investment ready, and pitch in front of investors with the 3-minute pitching presentation. Additionally, teams will be supported by numerous mentors in specific fields, and finally coached by VentureUP staff.

5. _Pitching Competition_

At the end of the Incubation program, those teams/startups who have successfully completed the Incubation program will be invited to participate in a Pitch Competition, **to be held on 25 May as part of the Digital Skills Festival**. The Program aims to disburse equity-free grants; however, the number and amount is not guaranteed since the exact amount of financial support is dependent on the evaluation by the judges regarding the needed amount of financing and the availability of funding to fulfill finalist clients' needs.

The winners will be selected by an independent jury composed of various actors representing financial institutions, academia, private sector, donors, etc. The winners will be selected based on the following criteria:

1. **Product/service and Problem**
   - Clear product/service description
   - Problem(s) addressed by product/service clearly described
   - Target market and customer segments clearly identified
   - Benefits of product/service clearly described
   - Ready/functional prototype.

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2. **Market and Competition**
   - Each target market realistically defined and sized
   - The market(s) is significant and growing?
   - Competition analysis identified
   - Difference of product/service from currently existing solutions in the market.

3. **Strategy and Business Model**
   - The product/service appear to be based on sound technical principles (i.e., does it make sense)
   - The business model makes sense
   - The market has shown real interest in the product/service/solution (there is Traction)
   - Revenue generating activities are clearly described
   - Realistic financial projections.

4. **Team**
   - Team strength to move business concept forward
   - Team's commitment to executing the plan
   - Professionalism and completion of Team's presentation.

6. **Supporting Resources**

Supporting resources for both Bootcamp and Incubation Program include:

- Access to co-working space at ITP
- Overnight stay at ITP
- All expenses for participation in the Bootcamp and Incubation (transport, food, sleep, etc)
- Access to conference facilities & shared office equipment
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Networking with Investors
- Follow up support during scaling.

For every additional information on the Program, please contact us in:

Email: mentorrexhepi@venture-up.org
Phone: +383 44 193730.

Timeline of activities:

Activity/Timeline	Feb		March				April				May				June				July				
Setting the criteria, preparing material, etc	x																						
Open call for application	x	x	x	x																			
Info sessions at universities	x	x	x	x																			
Selection of startups					x																		
Bootcamp					x																		
Training 1: Canvas & Customer Discovery						x																	
Training 2: Value Proposition						x																	
Training 3: Prototyping							x																
Training 4: Marketing & Startup tools							x																
Training 5: Financial Management									x														
Training 6: Pitching									x														
Working on pitching presentations											x	x	x	x									
Final presenattion day (Demoday)													X										
Consultation meetings with the private sector															x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Networking with investors															x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

"Innovate & Digitalize for a Sustainable Future!"

Apply for the biggest cross-university

incubation program in Kosovo!