

## Call for Applications

### **‘Living Indus - Green Startup Youth Champions Award’ Recruiting Youth Champions of Change for the Living Indus Initiative**

#### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

##### **Background**

‘Living Indus - Green Start-up Youth Champions Award’ is an initiative by the Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC), Government of Pakistan and the United Nations, in collaboration with National Incubation Centers, to encourage and enable Pakistani youth working towards developing environmental protection and climate mitigation solutions.

The Living Indus Initiative<sup>1</sup>, spearheaded by the MoCC, in collaboration with the UN, was approved by the Parliament in September 2022 and officially launched at COP 27 last year. The Living Indus Initiative aspires to transform the Indus Basin into a thriving system by repairing and restoring the natural resources and ecosystems that are resilient in the face of climate change. The initiative proposes a diverse set of 25 interventions to initiate coordinated executive efforts to restore the health of the basin with particular focus on water, ecology, biodiversity, and agriculture sectors.

The Living Indus Initiative aims to build awareness and create targeted investment in actionable solutions to Pakistan’s sustainable development problems—particularly with respect to the triple planetary crisis: climate action, environmental degradation/pollution, and loss of biodiversity. This includes a reduction of emissions, and efforts towards the realization of both the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The initiative aims at upgrading the existing projects as well as introducing new projects for ecological restoration of the basin.

Under the Living Indus Initiative, the Indus Trust Fund is an intervention that aims to facilitate social entrepreneurs to address these challenges through various grant opportunities including the **‘Living Indus - Green Start-up Youth Champions Award’** that has been designed by UNFAO and UNICEF Pakistan in collaboration with National Incubation Center Lahore (NICL). NICL’s commitment to facilitate young Pakistani startups places it as a unique player in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Working at the nexus of industry, academia, entrepreneurs and public policy actors, the Center plays a pivotal role in creating an enabling environment for all stakeholders. In addition to providing training and networking opportunities, NICL also plays a significant role in building strategic partnerships, whereby mutually beneficial channels of exchange and collaborative learning are built. Likewise, NICL’s mandate also includes supporting projects that are in public interest and promote innovation to secure the livelihoods of future generations.

The grant opportunity being offered to young startup founders in the country, aims to build a reservoir of creative solutions to safeguarding the environment, building resilience and adaptability—all crucial components of our response to climate change. The competition could yield startups ranging from innovations in renewable energy, a sustainable transition in the food chain, circularity solutions for plastic waste, a mind shift in urban mobility or education methodologies that build mindfulness around environmental protection. Similarly improved waste management mechanisms, sustainable agriculture or even radical concepts such as the development of “alternative protein” could all fall under the domain of ‘green’ solutions.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.livingindus.com](http://www.livingindus.com)

Pakistan's emerging green startup space has the potential to solve social, economic, and environmental problems, while also creating livelihood opportunities, particularly for the youth and women. There are already promising results in the green startup space including the eco bricks that solve the problem of plastic waste, solar powered carts for roadside street vendors, sustainable housing solutions and recycling of electrical waste. The 'Living Indus - Green Start-up Youth Champions Award' aims to encourage social entrepreneurs to become an integral part of the efforts towards reversal of the deteriorating health of the Indus Basin,

## GRANT INFORMATION

**Funding Opportunity Title:** 'Living Indus - Green Start-up Youth Champions Award'

**Announcement Type:** Grant

**Applications Open:** 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**Application Close:** 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023

**Total Grant Amount:** USD 2000

This initiative aims to engage young people (16-32 years of age) of Pakistan, which is one of the country's biggest assets, to apply their creativity for solving some of the most pressing problems for the future of Pakistan's economy. The grant opportunity is open to all startups across Pakistan including AJK and GB. To win the grant, startup applicants need to apply through the National Incubation Center Lahore's website <https://niclahore.lums.edu.pk/Living-Indus-Green-Startup-Award> where they will be required to submit an online application form for the 'foundry program'. Winners can incubate at a participating National Incubation Center of their choice (NICL, NICQ, NICK). For more information about the Living Indus Initiative, applicants can visit the website: <http://www.livingindus.com/>.

### Eligibility Information:

In order to be categorized as a 'youth' startup, at least one of the founders in your startup must be in the 16-32 age bracket. You must also respond to all questions pertaining to being a green startup in the online application form.

### Application Process:

Eligible startups will go through two rounds of interviews after which a screening committee consisting of representatives from the UNFAO and UNICEF, as well as representatives from the Foundation Council and Advisory Boards of NICL, NICQ, NICK and NICP will shortlist three winning grantees:

1. 'Living Indus - Green Startup Youth Champion' (Recipient of Prize Money of USD \$2000 and a guaranteed seat in the incubation program of their nearest NIC)
2. Living Indus Graduate (Runner up, no prize money but a guaranteed seat in the incubation program of their nearest participating NIC)

*The modest prize of USD \$2000 to the winning startup is contingent upon successful completion of incubation at the relevant NIC.*

**Support for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility:** As design and management partners of the 'Living Indus - Green Startup Youth Champions Award', UNFAO, UNICEF and collaborating National Incubations Centers are committed to an open, transparent and equitable application process. We encourage all startups to apply that fall in the 'youth' category irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religious background, geography, educational background or disability. Women, minorities and underrepresented groups are particularly encouraged to apply.



## Contact Information

For queries relating to the 'Living Indus - Green Startup Youth Champions Award', please email us at [niclahore@lums.edu.pk](mailto:niclahore@lums.edu.pk) using the award title in the email subject line or call us at +924235608517

\*Each partner NIC has a different duration for the incubation cycle and starting dates. Winning grantees may incubate at any NIC between August 2023 and December 2024.

