



NEOM



NEOM SPORTS OPEN INNOVATION PROGRAM

by NEOM & GSIC powered by Microsoft

FAQs

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Questions

1. What is NEOM?

The land of the future, where the greatest minds and best talents are empowered to embody pioneering ideas and exceed boundaries in a world inspired by imagination.

NEOM is a region in the northwest of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. NEOM means 'new future' and with more than 2,800 staff – from 86 countries – already living and working here onsite, it has already become a home for people who dream big and want to be part of building a new economic model for the country and the world.

The name NEOM is derived from two words. Envisioned by His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince and Chairman of the NEOM Company Board of Directors, the first three letters come from the Ancient Greek prefix neo – meaning 'new'. The 'M' is the first from 'Mustaqbal', an Arabic word meaning 'future'. The M is also the first letter of the Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman.

More information: <https://www.neom.com/en-us>

2. What is GSIC?

The Global Sport Innovation Center powered by Microsoft is a non-profit organization powered by Microsoft that connects different players in key areas to create value in the sports industry. GSIC is a global reference center working with the best sport tech companies and sport entities.

GSIC facilitates synergies and provides its members with value-added services that enable sports entities and companies to grow and develop with the help of experienced professionals in sports tech ecosystem.

More information: [GSIC - Global Sports Innovation Center \(sport-gsic.com\)](https://sport-gsic.com)

3. What is the NEOM Sports Open Innovation Program?

NEOM is a place where innovation happens faster than anywhere else. Giving people the perfect environment to conceive and develop technology that's simple, intuitive and enriches the human experience. Working in harmony with nature to enhance, liberate and empower people and serve humankind as a whole.

NEOM in partnership with Global Sport Innovation Center (GSIC) are launching the first edition of the NEOM Sports Open Innovation Program, to select four of the best sport-tech companies across the world, in two specific areas: Adventure Sports and AI.

Through this Open Innovation Program, NEOM and GSIC have the objective of developing NEOM, the land of the future, where the greatest minds and best talents are empowered to embody pioneering ideas and exceed boundaries in a world inspired by imagination. The challenge is on for NEOM, the next global hub for sport, that holds physical activity and innovation at its very core. NEOM is set to become a top destination for major sporting events, partnering with global sports brands, championing outstanding livability for residents and contributing to NEOM's innovative economy.

Objectives and Goals of NEOM's Sport Sector:

- Foster an active living environment for communities through sport, physical activity and adventure sports across all of NEOM.
- Develop high-performance facilities for domestic and international athletes and host major sporting events.
- Spearhead the latest adventure sports.
- Become a regional sport tech hub.

As an accelerator of Human Progress, NEOM is looking to implement solutions in Adventure Sports and AI that support their five fundamentals and interconnecting principles: technology, nature, sustainability, community and livability.

4. What is the objective of the call?

The call aims to identify the most promising technological solutions that can revolutionize the NEOM sports industry, with a particular focus on NEOM Adventure Sport and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in the sports industry. The program will be centered around the sport ecosystem in NEOM, which is known for its exceptional opportunities in adventure sports, while also embracing other sporting domains. The NEOM Sports Open Innovation Program aims to onboard startups and companies from all over the world.

The final selection will consist of five innovative companies, each granted the exclusive opportunity to participate in an immersion program with the NEOM Sport team among other prizes mentioned below. The program will encompass a range of valuable resources, including tailored mentorship sessions, specialized content, and engaging activities, all aimed at maximizing the startups and companies' potential in the region.

By participating in the NEOM Sport Open Innovation Program, these companies will gain access to a unique ecosystem that combines cutting-edge adventure sports with advanced AI technologies. They will be encouraged to explore groundbreaking solutions that can enhance sporting experience, optimize performance, and unlock new possibilities within the industry.

The NEOM Sport Open Innovation Program invites startups and companies from around the world to join forces and contribute to the development of groundbreaking advancements in adventure sports and AI. This initiative will play a crucial role in fostering innovation, driving scalability, and facilitating the internationalization efforts of the selected startups/companies.

If you believe your company has the potential to reshape the future of the sport through groundbreaking adventure sport and AI solutions, we encourage you to apply to the NEOM Sport Open Innovation Program. Embrace this unique

opportunity to be part of an extraordinary journey and contribute to the transformation of the sports industry on a global scale.

5. What are the challenges we are trying to solve with this challenge?

The call aims to identify the most promising technological solutions that can help **solve the following Challenges:**

NEOM Adventure Sports Challenges:

Introduction to the challenges

NEOM Adventure Sports

The NEOM Adventure Sports is a launchpad for the latest in adventure sports. THE HUB is a launch pad for the latest in adventure sports. It will be a living lab that provides the ability to test innovations in customer experience, sports technology, licensing, and operations, which will underpin the way NEOM designs adventure sports in the future across land, sea, and air.

NEOM aims to become a global adventure sports hub using sports tech and innovation, maximizing the region's breathtaking adventure sports landscape with a strong emphasis on sustainability.

NEOM Adventure Sport will be woven into the architecture throughout NEOM: from the Gulf of Aqaba with its world-class scuba diving, to TROJENA and its outstanding rock-climbing, via ferrata, skiing, and mountain biking.

NEOM will capitalize on its unique natural assets to offer a lifestyle that is embedded in physical activity.

The NEOM Adventure Sports is working closely with NEOM tourism, the opportunity across land, sea, and air to become an iconic destination for adventure sports using an equitable and sustainable approach will become a reality.

Challenges

Challenge 1 - Pre-Experience and Post-Experience: This challenge aims to strike a balance between leveraging technology for enhancing the experience while respecting the fundamental aspect of adventure sports, which is to immerse oneself in nature and the physical environment. This is why NEOM's is looking for innovative solutions to enhance the overall adventure sports experience by focusing on pre-experience and post-experience. This could include creating immersive pre-experience activities or virtual reality simulations, designing interactive post-experience platforms for sharing and reliving adventures, and developing innovative ways to engage and connect with adventure sports fans when the activity ends.

Challenge 2 - Capacity Building: Foster capacity building in the adventure sports industry by developing innovative programs, tools, or initiatives that promote skill development, knowledge sharing, and professional growth. This challenge could include creating online learning platforms, organizing training workshops and mentorship programs, or designing tools and resources to help adventure sports enthusiasts and professionals enhance their skills and expertise, while developing the local talent in the region.

Challenge 3 - Security Component: Create solutions that promote harmony with nature, in line with NEOM's livability strategy, and ensure the safety and security of participants in adventure sports. This challenge could involve developing advanced safety equipment and technology, designing sustainable and eco-friendly adventure sports infrastructure, or implementing effective risk management strategies to minimize accidents and environmental impact.

Artificial Intelligence in the Sport Industry Challenges:

Introduction to the challenges

NEOM will deliver **anchor sports facilities** such as NEOM stadium, Football Club & Sports Club to develop **high-performance, Olympic sports**, and **R&D labs. Multi-sport & grass-root** asset categories within **community/pathway sport**;

adventure/extreme sport; urban and standalone sport are being **designed** into the urban fabric in **collaboration** with each NEOM region.

Within these categories, NEOM Sport Sector has a wide range of sports facilities of differing typologies across the various maturing NEOM Masterplans being developed by the NEOM regions in conjunction with Urban Design, NEOM Departments, and stakeholders.

One of the key aspirations of NEOM is to develop a community that will be the healthiest and most active population in the world, with 75% of inhabitants active 30 minutes a day, and 60% of inhabitants involved in adventure sport on a weekly basis. NEOM will look to embrace the positive power of sport in shaping the region's communities and creating a sense of well-being by seamlessly integrating sport into the urban fabric and natural environments and making it a core part of daily life. In addition, NEOM will take its place on the global sporting map by hosting major sports events, attracting high-performance athletes and global sporting audiences.

Sector Goals

NEOM Sport assets and facilities intend to achieve the following:

- Foster an active living environment for NEOM communities, residents, and visitors through sports, physical activity, and adventure sports.
- Develop high-performance facilities for domestic and international athletes and host major sporting events.
- Spearhead the latest adventure sports.
- Become a regional sports tech hub.

Sector Objectives

In achieving the overarching sector vision and goals, sports assets/facilities across NEOM will be expected to contribute to the following more specific objectives:

- Recreational sports and healthy living will be a central part of daily life in NEOM.
- Integrate activities & facilities into daily routines.

- Provide varied and comprehensive offerings.
- Foster links to education, tourism, entertainment activities

NEOM Sports Club

As well, NEOM will establish a **flagship private multi-sports club** in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the vision 'To be the most innovative sports club, focused on excellence in development'.

An existing multi-sports club in the region will be **acquired, and improved** (e.g., asset development, workforce expansion) and **re-branded** to NEOM Sports Club (NSC), with the goal of re-**locating to NEOM** in future years.

NSC's ambitions are driven by the men's football first team aiming to reach [Saudi Professional League](#) by Year 5 and become a pioneer in women's football through establishment of an academy. Initially, NSC will provide playing opportunities across 11 pathways to performance sports for elite athletes, and 23 participation sports for the general population.

Challenges

Challenge 4 - AI-Driven Sports Facilities Building: Develop AI-powered solutions to optimize the development and building of sports facilities across the NEOM region, with a focus on connectivity, construction efficiency, inclusivity, security, and livability, leveraging the potential of AI to enhance the overall sport infrastructure and create fan engagement and media solutions for athletes and visitors. Develop AI-powered solutions to optimize the development and building of sport facilities/infrastructure focusing on cognitive connectivity and security, inclusivity, livability and efficiency.

Leverage the potential of AI to enhance the overall future infrastructure of sport facilities and create long term engagement with residents, athletes and visitors by providing exceptional living experiences that meets NEOM's objectives of providing sport facilities/venues within five to ten minutes of every citizen and encouraging them to be more physically activity by meeting their needs and goals/desires and dreams.

Challenge 5 - AI-Enhanced Pure High Performance: Utilize AI technologies and video tracking solutions to create an AI-driven living lab within NEOM Sport Club, focusing on high-performance sports, particularly football and team sports. The challenge is to leverage AI to analyze player data, enhance training methodologies, and provide personalized insights to optimize performance, foster innovation, and create a world-class sports environment within NEOM.

The finalist selected companies, up to a maximum of 10, will have the opportunity to pitch their solution in front of a jury made of representatives of the sports and innovation industry, who will choose five winners.

6. How can I participate in the call?

Candidates to participate must complete their application for admission by registering and submitting information through the following [Form](#).

Applications for admission received or attempted to formalize after the deadline for admission of applications will not be assessed for admission to the program.

Applications Opens: September 12, 2023

Applications Close: October 12, 2023

Finalists' announcement: November 2, 2023

Winners' announcement: November 23, 2023

The organizers reserve the right to modify the dates published in the present document.

7. How much does it cost?

Applying for this call is completely free.

8. Can I only participate if I have a sports solution?

Companies with focus in other markets are more than welcome if they can implement solutions related to the challenges addressed as the objective of the call.

9. What are the requirements to participate?

The call is aimed at companies and entrepreneurs who are in a position contribute with their technological innovation to the evolution and digital transformation of the NEOM sports industry. Participants may submit projects/companies that meet the following requirements:

- Be a legally created company.
- Have a dedicated full-time team.
- Have **market-tested product** and potential to implement internationally.
- Have traction, **preferably with paying customers**, in the sports industry.
- The individual promoter / representative of the startup/company must be of legal age and must have the legal capacity to be bound. You may not be an employee, manager, partner, or maintain a business relationship with NEOM at the time of application.
- The promoters of each startup/company may only participate in this call by submitting a single project per company.

Participants who do not fulfill any of these requirements will not be included in this call, losing the right to receive any service and no claim to NEOM and/or GSIC.

10. Is the call international?

Yes. This program is open for companies all over the world regardless of country or cultures.

11. What are the selection criteria?

The following criteria, rated from 1 to 5 (being 1 the lowest and 5 the highest) will be evaluated for the selection of participating projects in each of the stages of the process (verification of eligibility, evaluation and selection):

1. **Innovation** – the extent to which the submission is unique to, or adds value to, existing solutions.
2. **Impact** – the extent to which the submission demonstrates the potential to effect change.
3. **Scalability** – the extent to which the submission can scale and the potential to implement it internationally.
4. **Maturity** of the team, the organization and the stakeholders.
5. **Sustainability** – Social and Environmental sustainability of the project aligned with the sustainability agenda of the NEOM.
6. **Business Model** – Feasibility and economic sustainability of the project.

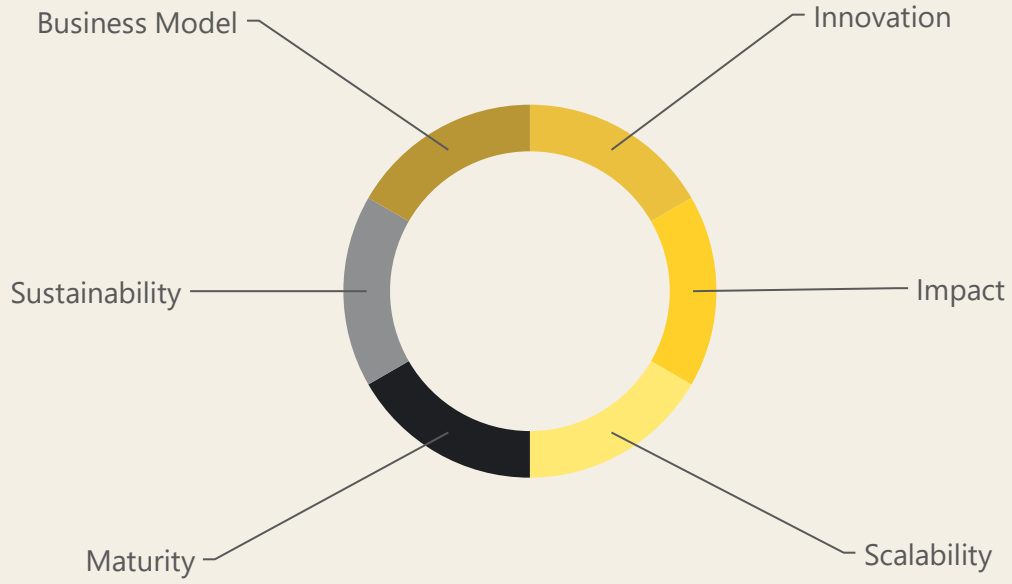
In the evaluation process, each judging criterion will carry an equal weight of 16.66%. This ensures a fair and balanced assessment of the projects based on their innovation, impact, scalability, maturity, sustainability, and business model.

Innovation	16.66 %
Impact	16.66 %
Scalability	16.66 %
Maturity	16.66 %
Sustainability	16.66 %



Business Model

16.66 %



12. What are the phases of the contest and how will the winners be selected?

The selection of projects will be carried out based on the criteria described in the previous section.

The judging committee will be made up of industry experts and directors from:

- NEOM
- GSIC
- Other relevant stakeholders from the industry

The judging committee will be responsible, among others, for ensuring the correct development of the selection process and the quality of the same; resolving any doubts as to the eligibility of applications and the application of the rules; short-listing the most promising startups and companies.

- **Verification of eligibility:** Once the application period has closed, the projects will be reviewed to ensure that the rules of participation have been complied with. Applications that do not comply with the rules will be eliminated from the process. The judging committee also has the right to ask, if needed, for more information about the start-up/company in order to complete the selection criteria.
- **Evaluation and selection:** Applications that pass the verification of eligibility will be evaluated by the judging committee in a decision session, which will select the winners accordingly.

13. In which language should I submit my application?

All the applications must be in English.



14. I have read the basis, but I have a specific doubt.

For any questions regarding the bases, please contact:

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