



## Young SDG Innovators Programme FAQ's

### General

#### **1. What is the Young SDG Innovators Programme?**

The Young SDG Innovators Programme (YSIP) is an accelerator programme designed to engage young professionals working in companies that participate in the United Nations Global Compact. The programme aims to equip them with skills to advance sustainability efforts, drive innovation and deliver tangible sustainability solutions for your company.

#### **2. What does the programme involve?**

In the programme, young professional participants (“Innovators”) explore new innovations and learn from leading experts and sustainability leaders about how to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the development of breakthrough ideas, products and business models. Using the tools and training from the programme, the Innovators work in teams to identify an SDG-related challenge that is relevant to their company and, over the course of the programme, develop a solution to address that challenge.

#### **3. What are the benefits of participating for companies?**

The programme offers companies the opportunity to engage their top talent at the junior and middle manager level and develop a new generation of employees that think between the intersection of corporate sustainability and innovation. Companies also benefit from the development of real business solutions that have the potential to provide value for both the company and society.

#### **4. What is the cost for my company to participate?**

The fees to take part in the Young SDG Innovators Programme in the UK are:  
£1500 for first 2 innovators  
£750 for 3rd innovator  
£500 for 4th innovator

Please note that any additional programme activity costs, such as travel and incidentals, are not covered through the programme.

#### **5. Where does the programme take place?**

The 2021/2022 programme is currently being run by Global Compact Local Networks in the following countries: Brazil, China, Kenya, Malaysia & Brunei, the United States and the UK

#### **6. What is the commitment my company has to make to take part in the programme?**

As a participating YSIP company, you commit to:

- Select 2 – 4 Innovators to take part in the programme for the full duration of the programme (January – July)
- Allow Innovators the time needed for full participation in the programme



- Identify a Mentor and a Champion who will support the Innovator team internally within the company

## 7. What is the time commitment for Innovators?

Innovators are expected to attend 5 innovation camps in total. These will consist of 2 in-person 2-day workshops and 3 camps that will take place online, each one broken into multiple half day workshops. Previous participants have spent approximately 2-3 hours per week on online learning and activities, and group project development.

## 8. What is the difference between Innovators, Champions, and Mentors?

Innovators are the young professionals that form teams to take part in the programme to develop viable SDG business solutions for their companies. Over the course of the Accelerator, in their company teams, they will work on a challenge specific to their company with the goal of designing more sustainable business models, initiatives and products that will advance the company's sustainability efforts while driving innovation and delivering tangible solutions with potential market value.

Mentors help shape the ambitions and plans of the Innovator teams, serving as advisors and acting as sounding boards to the teams as they identify a sustainable development challenge relevant to their company and develop a solution that will address it. Mentors will support the teams in their efforts to frame their challenge applying sustainable business and innovation concepts to create prototype and tangible business solutions with real market potential. Throughout the programme Mentors will play a pivotal role in shepherding the team's journey from ideation to development to a presentation of their solution.

Champions are senior-level executives within the same company as Innovators that ensure the teams have high-level support in their company and the SDG business solutions are aligned with the company's strategic goals and objectives. The Champion will be responsible for supporting the company's Innovator team and acting as a link between the team and the company management to embed and implement the ideas and outcomes of the programme into the company's strategy and operations. Representing senior management, Champions will play an integral role in the programme by promoting the work of the Innovator team using their position within the company to ensure that the outcomes and solutions derived from the programme are taken seriously.

Each Innovator team must have a designated Mentor & Champion throughout the programme.



### 9. What is the programme outline and schedule?

Programme activities will run between January 2022 and July 2022, with an Innovators Summit in September 2022. Workshops dates are tbc and will be communicated as soon as they have been confirmed. The programme phases are below:

<p><b>Onboarding:</b> Exploring the core concepts around business and the Sustainable Development Goals and Breakthrough Innovation to understand and apply to relevant challenges facing business today.</p>	<p><b>Challenge Identification:</b> Understanding how to identify and prioritize specific SDGs and their relevance for business as well as the business impact on the SDGs.</p>	<p><b>Challenge Definition:</b> Using SDG impact and assessment tools to build a challenge that is ambitious enough for breakthrough impact and speaks to real needs within the company.</p>
<p><b>Solutions Development:</b> Learning how to generate new ideas and the tools to use to move an idea from a concept into a fully defined project.</p>	<p><b>Solutions Testing and Validation:</b> Moving project solutions to more refined versions through testing and validation within the company and with external stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>Offboarding:</b> Incorporating the trainings, skills and projects from the programme back into participants' respective companies to embed breakthrough thinking within their organizations.</p>

### 10. How can my company ensure the protection of our intellectual property if we take part in the programme?

While the programme is designed to facilitate cross-pollination of knowledge, new skills and ideas across project teams, we recognize the importance for companies to safeguard proprietary information and ideas. As part of the application process, we require participants to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to cover any intellectual property being used or discussed as part of the programme.

#### Eligibility:

### 11. Why is the programme only for young professionals?

The programme is designed to target employees that do not yet have senior management responsibilities and therefore have more time to dedicate to a 10-month development programme.

### 12. Why do you categorize young professionals as 35 and under?

There is no set definition for the age of a young professional. Young professionals can be categorized as working individuals anywhere between the ages of 21 to 40. The age of 35 was selected as the upper age limit for the programme given that many demographic and population statistical organizations recognize young adulthood at being between the ages of 18 and 34.



**13. Is any company participating in the UN Global Compact eligible to take part in the programme?**

Any **business** participating in the UN Global Compact is eligible to take part in the programme as long as they are based in a country whose Global Compact Local Network is participating.

**14. How many young professionals can my company select for the programme?**

Companies can select between 2 – 4 young professionals to participate in the programme per cycle.

**15. What are the eligibility criteria for the Young SDG Innovators?**

The programme is designed to target employees aged 35 and under who have a passion for sustainability, creativity; and demonstrate strong teamwork skills. Employees from business innovation, Research and Development, marketing, logistics, procurement, customer experience/service and sustainability units are encouraged to participate.

**16. Does the Global Compact have to approve the Young SDG Innovator candidates from my company before they are selected?**

No, we encourage companies to choose individuals who best fit the Innovator profile to ensure diversity among the candidate pool in terms of business unit and background. Guidance is provided to companies as to desired qualifications for Innovators – see Participants Overview.

**17. What kind of companies are encouraged to apply?**

Companies from the first two cohorts were from all sectors. Since this is an innovation-focused program, we will favour companies that are involving departments such as Innovation, Research & Development, and Engineering. To inspire knowledge sharing, we encourage companies to recruit participants that are not involved in sustainability-related aspects of the company. Companies should use the Young SDG Innovators Programme as an opportunity to teach departments traditionally separate from sustainability about the SDGs.

**Application:**

**18. How do I apply?**

Companies interested in joining the programme can fill out the sign up [form](#) or connect directly to their participating Global Compact Local Network. Due to demand and limited spots in the programme, Local Networks will need to confirm company participation before approved companies are able to put forward programme participants.



YOUNG  
SDG  
INNOVATORS



**19. When does the programme start?**

The on-boarding period for Innovators starts in January 2022, where they are given time to better understand concepts on SDGs and breakthrough innovation before the first in-person innovation camp in February.

**20. My company is not able to take part in the programme this year but would like to participate next year. Can we sign up now for the next round?**

Programme applications are managed by Global Compact Local Networks which have the right to determine how and when to waitlist companies for future rounds of the programme.