



Social Impact Prize – Q&A Follow-up

1. Eligibility and Fit with the Programme

Q. What kind of projects are a good fit for the Social Impact Prize?

The programme looks for **early-stage, impact-first ventures** addressing social or environmental challenges through an entrepreneurial approach. Projects from different sectors can apply, as long as they clearly explain **which system they aim to change** and demonstrate the potential to **generate systemic impact**, influencing how that system works (e.g. rules, practices, incentives, or power dynamics).

Q. Who can apply? Do applicants need to be already incorporated or apply as a team?

Applications are open to **startups, social enterprises, or entrepreneurial teams**, whether already incorporated or still informal. Individual founders can also apply, although **having a team is generally a stronger fit** for ventures already moving into validation and early growth.

Q. Are there requirements regarding age or team size?

There is **no specific age limit** and **no strict requirement on team size**. What matters is that applicants demonstrate the **skills and commitment necessary to develop and validate the solution**.

2. Geographic Scope

Q. Can startups from outside Italy apply?

Yes. The Social Impact Prize is open to ventures **operating in or addressing challenges relevant to the Mediterranean region**.

Q. Can projects expand beyond the Mediterranean region?

Yes. The programme focuses on strengthening the Mediterranean ecosystem, but ventures may also **scale beyond the region** if their model allows it.

3. Stage of Development and MVP

Q. Is having an MVP mandatory?

Not strictly. The programme mainly targets **seed and early-stage ventures**, ideally with a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) or early validation, but projects in **initial validation phases** may also be considered.

Q. What counts as validation if the solution has not yet been fully tested?

Validation can include **pilot activities, early users, partnerships, feedback from beneficiaries, or initial testing** of the solution.

Q. Can a public event count as an MVP for an advocacy or awareness project?

Yes, if it represents a **real pilot activity** and helps demonstrate the concept, participation, and early feedback.

4. Application Materials

Q. What materials should be submitted in the application?

Applicants should submit a **short pitch deck** describing the problem, solution, team, and stage of development. They may also include **evidence of validation, financial information, and a company registration document** if already incorporated.

Q. Are there specific guidelines for the pitch deck?

There is no rigid format. The pitch should clearly explain **the problem, the solution, the impact potential, the sustainability of the model, and the team**. A concise presentation is sufficient.

5. Evaluation Criteria

Q. How are applications evaluated?

Applications are assessed across all selection phases based on the following criteria:

1. **Sustainability of the Service or Solution**
2. **Scalability**
3. **Replicability**
4. **Systemic Change**
5. **Mindset and Frame Change**

A detailed description of these criteria is available in the **programme regulations**.

Q. How does the programme assess systemic impact?

Systemic impact is assessed by looking at the **venture's strategy to influence how a system works**, not only the direct outcomes of the solution. Applicants are encouraged to explain how their initiative can contribute to **changing rules, practices, incentives, power dynamics, or behaviours** within a system. In early-stage ventures, we focus not only on measurable results but also on the **ambition, strategy, and potential for long-term systemic change**.

6. Financial Sustainability and Use of the Grant

Q. Should the application include financial information such as revenues and costs?

Yes, when available. Teams should show an **overall path toward financial sustainability**, but highly detailed projections are not required at a very early stage.

Q. Are there restrictions on how the grant can be used?

No. The **€20,000 grant is unrestricted**, so the winning team can use it in the way that best supports the development and scaling of the solution. No detailed spending report is expected. The focus is more on the **impact enabled by the grant** than on tracking each individual expense.