

Description of the 2025 New Venture Contest (NVC)

Industrial Partnership Projects (IPP), in collaboration with Akhuwat, the Engineers for Community Welfare (ECW) of Pakistan, and Al-Khawarizmi Institute of Computer Sciences (KICS) Pakistan plans to host a competition for young entrepreneurs starting in August 2025. This will be a business ideas competition, inspiring young entrepreneurs to transform their business dreams to reality. All aspiring entrepreneurs, including graduates and undergraduate students, can participate by submitting their proposals and compete for the award of up to \$20,000 in the form of an interest free loan for starting their business.

In this competition, participants shall embark on a journey unlike any other. It will be a chance for them to pitch their venture plans, compete for the award money, receive unparalleled feedback and mentorship from world class business professionals, and obtain attention from different investors. The competition is also a platform for learning and gaining expert knowledge directly from the seasoned professionals.

1. Competition

The NVC is a three round competition where participant teams will present their new ventures proposals to a panel of expert judges. Prizes will be awarded to the top three teams as follows:

1st Place – \$20,000

2nd Place – \$10,000

3rd Place – \$5,000

All monies shall be awarded in segments in the form of interest free loans, which will be returnable in installments as described in Section 5 below.

2. Schedule

- Aug. 14, 2024 – Program launch

- Oct. 25, 2024 – Executive summary submission deadline for the qualifying round
- Nov. 1 to Dec. 1, 2024 – Executive summaries assessment
- Dec. 13, 2024 – Announcement of (10) semi-finalists
- Jan. 21, 2025 – Submission of detailed business plan for the final round
- Interviews begin Feb 8, 2025 (all Pakistan time)
 - Feb. 8 and Feb. 9 (8pm and 9pm)
 - Feb. 15 and Feb. 16 (8pm and 9pm)
 - Feb. 22 (8pm and 9pm)
 - Feb. 23 – Interview backup day
- Feb. 28 to Mar. 30, 2025 – Ramadhan and Eid
- April 9, 2025
 - All 10 semi-finalists will be invited to the award ceremony.
 - Each semi-finalist will be required to make a 5 to 10 min pitch of their proposal.
 - Each semi-finalist may also set up a table with their project prototype or poster(s) (optional).

3. Competition format

The competition shall consist of two rounds and the final ceremony, as follows:

3.1 Qualifying round

- All registered teams that meet the submission criteria shall participate in the qualifying round.
- Participants shall submit their proposals using the portal available on the www.ippus.org website. All submissions may include an approximate 2-minute video of the idea. An option will also be available on the portal to include an attachment providing brief details of the proposal. Please note that including such an attachment is optional.
- Based on multiple stages of reviewing and grading by judges, the top 10 teams will be selected for advancement to the semi-final round.

- All participants of the qualifying round may request written feedback from the judges.

3.2 Semi-final Round

- Teams selected for this round will be required to submit their detailed business plan, as per the requirements specified in Section 8.3, along with a 10-to-15-minute video presentation by the team (the submission of video is optional, but highly encouraged.)
- Participants will be given a schedule to virtually present their project to the judges.

The team will have 30 minutes to present their proposal, followed by 15 minutes for questions and answers. During the finals, judges will focus on the team's claims for venture's viability, sustainability, and its impact on the society especially in terms of jobs creation.

- All 10 semi-finalists will be invited to participate in the in-person final round as per the schedule of Section 2.

3.3 Semi-Final Meeting Norms

- All virtual meetings will be done either via Zoom or MS Teams.
- During the meetings, all team members should be present for the video meeting/recording. If any of the member is sick (or not present), his medical certificate should be submitted at the NVC portal or via e-mail to info@ippus.org.
- Teams can pitch their ideas using supporting materials such as slides, diagrams, and other audio/visual demonstrations.
- During the meetings, a moderator shall be available to keep time and to make sure that time distribution is fair among participants and judges.
- The virtual meetings will be recorded and available for later viewing.

3.4 Final Round

- All 10 semi-finalists are required to attend the final round event in person at a venue, the location of which will be decided at a later time.
- Each team will be required to give a 5-minute pitch of their proposal.

- The top three positions will be announced and awarded at the event.

3.5 Team Makeup

- A competing team may comprise of up to 5 partners, with at least one member above 18 years in age.
- Students and non-students can make a team.
- A team lead should be designated to avoid any communication misunderstandings. This team member will be the only point of contact with the organizers of NVC.

3.6 Competition Judges

Our panel of judges is comprised of seasoned professionals from leading industries. In addition to scoring the venture ideas, the judges shall provide invaluable feedback, guidance and mentoring to the participants, using their vast industry experience.

4. Registration and Application Details

The competition is focused on generating new ideas, with team members having direct stake in the venture. Accordingly, the qualification criteria are as follows:

- Ideas/ventures that have raised *all* of their funding from sources other than the members of the team will not be eligible for the contest. These rules thus exclude ventures formed and managed by partners who have little to no stake in the venture from competing for awards in the contest.
- Concepts with their overlying venture plans may compete for more than one NVC competition. Ventures that have generated revenue or raised equity capital from sources other than the members of the team before the current season are excluded.
- All ideas that are based on already established businesses for more than a year will be excluded. In the spirit of fair competition, only ideas conceived, but not yet fully implemented will be considered.

Since it is not possible to anticipate all possible situations, the IPP-US directors have the right to accept or reject a team that does not fully comply with the regulations, rules, and/or the spirit of fair competition. Any questions related to participation in NVC can be sent to info@ippus.org.

Participants can apply for NVC via our registration portal <http://www.ippus.org>, before the application deadline or by e-mailing to info@ippus.org. All submission dates will be final, and no submission extension will be granted due to any reason whatsoever. It is encouraged to submit the applications early so that any technical difficulties can be resolved before the deadline. ***All dates and times specified for competition deadlines are according to Pakistan Standard Time.***

Before applying, competing teams should review the eligibility rules to make sure their team meets the criteria for competing in NVC. Any rule violation will result in expulsion from NVC, for the current year and the following year's competition.

5. Competition Rules

1. Competition Board
 - a. The NVC is supervised by IPP-US in collaboration with Akhuwat, ECW, and KICS.
2. Mentors and outside advisors may become available for the best learning opportunity, however they:
 - a. Cannot be made part of the competition team;
 - b. Should not directly participate in writing, direct editing, or specific development of any part of the submission;
 - c. Can provide advice and insights into the development of the business plan, presentation coaching, and other general education interactions.
3. Rules Committee and Rules Violations
 - a. The Rules Committee is comprised of IPP-US directors and advisors.

- b. Rule violation concerns must be submitted in writing to the competition Rules Committee detailing the purported violation, competition team(s) involved, and competition team(s) reporting the purported violation.
 - c. False violation reports are a violation. Sanctioning will be authorized by the Rules Committee if deemed appropriate.
 - d. The Rules Committee has final authority in deciding if a violation occurred and will assess a penalty for the violation, if deemed appropriate. The Rules Committee can disqualify a team or a team member, increase cumulative ranking scores (decreasing overall ranking), change rankings, advise judges of a violation and allow them to consider the fact in their rankings, remove prize eligibility, disqualify a team from future competitions, or simply dismiss a purported violation.
 - e. The Competition Board has final jurisdiction on all recommendations of the Rules Committee.
 - f. Questions about the rules or guidelines should be addressed to info@ippus.org for clarification.
4. Special Situations
- a. If a competition team needs to request approval for a special situation or exception to these rules and guidelines, the team point of contact person should submit in writing a formal proposal explaining the situation or request to info@ippus.org. The proposal should be emailed as a pdf or a MS Word attachment. For any proposal, competition teams should allow at least one week for consideration and response. The Rules Committee will review all proposals and deliver a response. Teams are not making or soliciting offers as part of their participation in the competition. Any financial relationships that result from networking at the competition may only commence after the competition events.
5. Award Payment Methodology

- a. \$1000 of the award money will be a grant. The remaining amount of the award money will be paid as an interest-free loan. The disbursement will be made in multiple portions, depending upon the plan presented by the teams and the evaluation of requirements by the NVC, typically in 5 equal installments. That is, a winning team will provide a plan, with milestones setup in it. 20% of the loaned amount shall be provided after each milestone has been achieved.
- b. A return of the principal amount of the awarded loan will be expected from the winning team after two years of the last loan payment made. The winning team will be contacted about 3 months before the start of the repayment. Repayment installment plan will be discussed and decided between IPP-US/Akhuwat and the winning team at that time.
- c. One of the goals of the NVC program is employment creation. If the winning teams are able to demonstrate their ability to hire permanent staff, then as an incentive some portion of the loan will be forgiven. For example, if the winners are able to employ a staff of five, before repayments begin, 10% of the loan will be forgiven. This number will become 20% if the personnel size is 10, etc. Thus, theoretically, the whole loan can be forgiven if the business is able to employ 50 people or more.

6. Contest Submissions

Entries for the contest shall be limited to potential for-profit ventures. Tax-exempt and not-for-profit entities are not allowed to compete. All proposals submitted to the NVC shall be judged based on the following:

1. Novelty and originality;
2. Ability to be transformed to an industrial endeavor that demonstrates market need and that has the potential to create jobs and livelihood;
3. Availability of skillset to execute the project;

4. Sustainability to remain active and promising in market downturns and during change in political landscape;
5. Training others who would take the project to the next level; and
6. Overall potential of success.

7. Rules Regarding Intellectual Property (IP)

- No non-disclosure agreements (NDA) will be signed with the participating team by IPP-US and/or the competition judges.
- The proposals submitted to NVC will be considered as public information.
- The presentations that are made during the semi-final and final rounds may be recorded in case they are to be reviewed by the judges to arrive at their recommendations.

8. Competition Submissions and scoring

8.1 Executive Summary

An Executive Summary shall not exceed 3 pages of 1.5-line spaced 12pt formatted text. The summary should consist of, but not limited to, the following data points.

- One Sentence Summary
 - Business Overview and Competition
 - Problem that can be Solved
 - Services or Products Offered
 - Business Model
 - Job Creation using the Proposed Business Model
 - Prospective Customers
 - Strategies for Sales & Marketing
 - Capital Requirements
 - Management Team
 - Qualification of team members
 - Team leader's contact information (phone and email address)

8.2 Scoring of Executive Summary

Each judge shall score every submitted executive summary according to the following criterion. Judges may also provide brief comments for each of the criteria sections. The purpose of this feedback is to provide an educational opportunity for the competing teams.

- Quality of the proposal: 20%
- Viability and scalability of the model/strategy: 20%
- Usability in the local market: 20%
- Ability to create jobs: 30%
- Quality of Written Work: 10%

8.3 Business Plans

Business Plans must adhere to the following format.

- The plan shall not be longer than 10 pages of 1.5-line spaced 12pt formatted text.
- The plan may include up to an additional 10 pages of appendices.
- The plan shall consist of the following:
 - Executive Summary (Revised after the first-round submission)
 - Business Mission and Vision, including project scope
 - Business Description
 - Market Analysis
 - Economic benefits of the venture
 - Social benefits of the venture, including job creation
 - Description of Products and Services
 - Organization and Management
 - Marketing & Sales Strategy
 - Financials (Must include funding requirements and at least 3 years of projected income statement)
 - Appendices (optional and up to a maximum of 10 pages)

8.4 Scoring of Business Plan and the Final Round Pitch

Each assigned judge shall score the business plan and the follow-up semi-final presentation according to the following criterion.

- Quality of the plan: 15%
- Viability and scalability of the model/strategy: 15%
- Usability in the local market: 15%
- Ability to create jobs: 20%
- Quality of written work: 10%
- Financial projections: 10%
- Investor interest level: 10%

The final round 5-min pitch shall constitute 5% of the total score.

Based on the above, the top three positions will be announced at the final event, the date and time of which will be announced at a later date.

8.5 Presentations and their Judging

Presentations made in the semi-final round shall consist of the following components. They will be judged based on the effectiveness of the content and its delivery.

- Situation Analysis
 - Demonstrated knowledge of business space
 - Performed and presented research and analysis of industry landscape
 - Team shows promise to accept the challenge
- Market Opportunity
 - Market and target customer identified
 - Offering addresses a clearly identified plan/need in a compelling way
 - Market would welcome this company
- Business Model and Job Creation
 - Company showed clear and effective means of creating jobs
 - Model is sustainable and scalable
 - Critical risks have been identified and addressed
- Go-to-Market Strategy

- Sales and marketing strategy is developed, believed to be effective
- Distribution channels identified
- Plans for getting product/service into customers' hands made clear
- Management Team
 - Team seemed capable of executing their presented plans/strategies
 - Team showed confidence, passion, enthusiasm, and professionalism
- Financials
 - Financial plan presented, including projected income statement
 - Team demonstrated clear understanding of finances and key metrics
 - Assumptions were presented, and were reasonable and substantiated
- Answering questions
 - Content of answers was satisfactory
 - Answers directly addressed the question asked
 - Team was able to think on their feet
- Overall Presentation Effectiveness
 - Presentation included all necessary topics
 - All topics were clearly explained; presentation was sharp, persuasive
 - Story was compelling