



## Challenge Exploration

### What is an SDG Business Challenge?

The core focus of the Young SDG Innovators is to work together to identify solutions that will address and advance the SDGs through your company's core business operations and strategies. However, in order to identify a solution, you must first understand the problem.

Embracing the challenge is a key part of building the breakthrough mindset. After all, it is the challenge that will inform your team of what opportunities lie ahead for your company and help you understand how your company can leverage the SDGs to drive new innovations.

Your team challenge will carry you throughout the entire programme and so it is important that whichever challenge you identify and define for your company, speaks to the core of a need in your company. Your Challenge will allow you to create direct and tangible innovation as a result of the programme and should be framed in a way that the results of which can contribute to advancing the SDGs. The right challenge should be important to both your company and to the SDGs.

It is never too early to start thinking about your challenge and it is likely that you or other members of your team may already have some idea of what your company challenge could be or which SDGs you wish to address.

There is no exact science to identifying the right challenge but ensuring you are asking yourself the right questions can help to clarify whether you are on the right path towards a challenge that meets the needs of your companies and the SDGs. In thinking about your challenge, it should contain the following key elements

**Vision** | Your Challenge should exemplify your company's vision for innovation and its sustainability objectives.

**Achievability** | Your Challenge should be framed in a way that a solution can be developed and tested as part of the programme. A quick litmus test for your challenge is to gauge whether you can come up with 3-4 different solutions within 5 minutes.

**Ambition** | Your Challenge should be an exciting endeavor that has the potential to create real change with a focus on future business models at the intersection of sustainability and disruptive innovation.

### Challenge Framing

The Challenge Framing questionnaire is a great team activity to do in order to start the process of identifying your challenge if you are starting from scratch and an effective and simple method to ensure your challenge is driving at real SDG impact if you already have one identified.

It is recommended that you go through the Pre-Boarding Essentials Toolkit and reading before you take on the challenge framing activity. This is to ensure that you have a good understanding of the SDGs and how your business can contribute.

Once you have done the reading, get your Innovator team together to work on the challenge questionnaire. The only thing you will need is the questionnaire document and a pen or pencil (or better to save paper and work off a computer). The questionnaire starts by asking open questions at the beginning and then more specific questions to push you towards achieving the desired elements as stated above. You are not expected to have exact answers and there is no "right" answer to any of the questions.

After you've completed the questionnaire, do it again from the top, taking all the outcomes from the first questionnaire and applying it again through the same questions to further refine your results. No one expects that you will have your fully defined challenge by the end of your first pass at the questionnaire, or even the second or third. That is, after all, why you are in the programme. The activity is simply to start you off on the process and shift the way you look at problem solving as you head into the Onboarding phase of the programme.



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Again, in this exercise, there is no right or wrong answer. It is meant to stimulate your creativity and get you accustomed to the ideation process which involves more questions than answers and requires constant iteration. Be as creative and wild with your responses as you want. You will have plenty of time in the future to pare them down and ensure that you end up with a challenge that is both achievable and ambitious and speaks to your company's vision.

### **What Next?**

After running through the questionnaire a few times, take a look at where you started and where you are now. Do you see progress? If so, that's great. Hold on to your questionnaire sheet(s) and bring them with you to your Onboarding camp. If not, that's fine as well. Again, this is more of a thinking exercise and a great way to assess if, for example, your challenge focus is too narrow or does not bridge your company's needs with those of the SDGs. Reach out to your mentor or Champion, or other key stakeholders in your company for advice and guidance. It is always easier to seek guidance when you can be specific about where you need the support. Most importantly, don't get discouraged if your challenge does not come easily to you. Your SDG business challenge is a crucial part of the programme and so it is important that you take the time to get it right.



## Challenge Framing Questionnaire

1. Which SDGs are you prioritizing?



2. What is the business problem you are trying to solve? *Feel free to be as broad as you want with stating your problem.*

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3. How could you reframe this problem as a question? *For example, starting out your problem with the phrase "How might we..."*

4. How are you trying to impact your company's SDG priorities? *You can review the list of SDG targets for each Goal on the [SDG Knowledge Platform](#).*

5. Who is most impacted by this problem? *Think about this in terms of who is the "user" most affected by this problem. This could be the company itself, the environment or a specific demographic group.*

6. What are some potential solutions to your problem? *There are no right answers, this is meant to be open. Think broadly. It's fine to start a project with an expectation or two, but make sure you allow for surprising outcomes.*

7. What are some of additional contexts and constraints that you're facing? *These could be internal or external factors – geographic, demographic, technological or time-based – that could positively or negative affect your challenge.*

Based on the responses to the above questions, try the challenge questionnaire again with an updated problem statement (Question 2) reshaping it based on your responses.