

WHAT IS THE GROW ASIA INNOVATION CHALLENGE?

The **Grow Asia Innovation Challenge** seeks to revolutionize Southeast Asia's agricultural sector through the adoption of climate-smart digital technologies. Supported by the Korean Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the initiative aims to harness innovative, farm-ready technologies to foster a smallholder-inclusive, climate-resilient agricultural transformation. By empowering smallholder farmers, the challenge focuses on enhancing productivity, improving market access, and bolstering climate resilience.

Our goal is to develop a robust pipeline of tailored digital solutions for climate-smart agriculture that are ready for deployment in Southeast Asia. We will facilitate strategic partnerships and business matchmaking between innovators and commercial entities, culminating in a live pitch event during the Philippines Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture's (PPSA) Key Partners Meeting in April 2025. This initiative is dedicated to delivering transformative innovations directly to those who need them most: smallholder farmers and their value chain partners, enabling them to combat climate change at its roots.

This Innovation Challenge is part of the Smallholder Economic Empowerment through Digital Solutions (SEEDs) project, which aims to benefit 12,000 smallholders (approximately 48,000 including family members) engaged in relevant farming systems across Cambodia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The SEEDs project is committed to closing the digital divide faced by many smallholder farmers in Southeast Asia, facilitating their access to essential services for modernizing their farms and agri-enterprises. This integration into the rapidly evolving digital technology landscape will help smallholder farmers achieve increased productivity and higher incomes.

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WHAT SOLUTIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

This Innovation Challenge is directly shaped by the problems and challenges faced by coconut, cacao, and coffee farmers in the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia—we are digital technology agnostic.

We are actively seeking innovative solutions and technologies to support the growth and development of these vital industries, specifically addressing the following challenges:

- **Challenge 1: Farmer Traceability and Logistics Tools.** We aim to enhance product traceability systems, empowering farmers and farmer organizations with improved logistical support and oversight. Our goal is to develop robust traceability mechanisms for products that are free from deforestation, enabling farmers to meet sustainability standards and access valuable certifications and incentives.
- **Challenge 2: Digital Advisory Solutions.** We seek to expand access to digital decision-making tools for smallholders and agri-SMEs. These tools will facilitate the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, helping farmers make informed decisions that enhance both productivity and sustainability.
- **Challenge 3: Strengthening Technology Adoption.** Our objective is to promote technology adoption among farmers by enhancing digital literacy and providing user-friendly innovations tailored to their specific needs. We believe that by making technology more accessible and adaptable, we can empower farmers to thrive in a rapidly evolving agricultural landscape.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

We are looking for startups that integrate climate-smart digital agriculture solutions to address the problems and challenges faced by coconut, cacao, and coffee farmers in the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia.

- Solutions focused on Climate-Smart Digital Agriculture. Startups should leverage digital technologies to enhance sustainability, efficiency, and resilience in agriculture. Solutions may include farmer traceability and logistics tools, digital advisory solutions, and other innovations that support smallholder farmers and promote sustainable and digitized agricultural practices.
- Startups with a demonstrated interest and commitment to serving smallholder coconut, cacao, and coffee value chains in Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on the Philippines.

Preference will be given to startups that have:

- Proven applicability or demonstrated adoption of their solution in agricultural settings.
- Actively operating or having a presence in Viet Nam, Cambodia, the Philippines, and/or the Republic of Korea.
- Registered with local authorities at the time of application submission.

WHERE DO I APPLY FOR THE INNOVATION CHALLENGE?

Prepare your **Pitch Deck** and apply by clicking [here](#). The application process takes less than 5 minutes!

If you have any questions regarding the application, you can contact:

- Erica Sale, Regional Manager, Programs: erica@growasia.org
- Monica Milano, Program Manager: monica@ppsa-ph.org

WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT OUR TEAM WOULD BE MAKING AS A PARTICIPANT?

The challenge is set to begin in April and will continue through the end of 2025. The Philippines has strategically chosen coconut, cacao, and coffee as its primary focus commodities, recognizing their potential to drive economic growth, foster rural development, and support sustainable livelihoods across the nation. These crops were selected not only for their economic significance but also due to the existing local expertise in their cultivation and the strong market demand they command both domestically and internationally.

Participating teams will have the opportunity to engage in Human-Centered Design (HCD) Training and the PPSA's Key Partners Meeting in April 2025, and be invited to the Grow Asia Investment Forum. Furthermore, teams will take part in a Digital Learning Series, aimed at facilitating knowledge exchange on innovative solutions, and will engage in post-innovation challenge activities.

Each team is expected to commit 2-4 hours per week for dedicated personnel time and meetings throughout the program. We are here to support you in harnessing the power of focus and accountability, encouraging you to step beyond your comfort zone, and connecting you with a vibrant network of local leaders. Together, we will leverage this expertise to scale your solutions not only in the Philippines but also throughout Southeast Asia.

HOW WILL MY TEAM BENEFIT FROM THE PROGRAM?

Grow Asia and the PPSA are committed to advancing a pipeline of market-ready, digital, climate-smart agriculture technologies, facilitating their integration into agri-SME value chains throughout the region. Participating teams will gain invaluable support through this challenge, including:

- **Personalized Mentorship:** Connect with influential leaders from the Grow Asia and PPSA networks for tailored guidance and support.
- **Strategic Advisory Sessions:** Receive tailored one-on-one sessions focused on forging partnerships and exploring go-to-market strategies in the Philippines and beyond.
- **Pitch Opportunities:** Present your solutions to high-potential customers, investors, and partners in the Philippines, opening doors to new collaborations.
- **Human-Centered Design Training:** Participate in an interactive training (in-person if circumstances permit, otherwise virtual) designed to enhance existing or prototype solutions by addressing farmers' specific challenges more effectively.
- **Visibility Boost:** Gain exposure through features in Grow Asia newsletters (with 11,000 subscribers) and PPSA communications (over 4,000 subscribers), as well as on social media and the Grow Asia website, including inclusion in the Digital Directory.

IS THERE ANY COST TO PARTICIPATE?

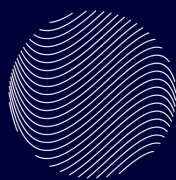
There is no cost to participate.

ABOUT



Grow Asia was established by the World Economic Forum, in collaboration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2015, to bring together governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other key stakeholders in the region to convene, facilitate, and scale efforts that promote more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable food systems.

It does this by brokering commercial and non-profit partnerships at the field, level, regional, and global levels between more than 690 public, private, civil society, academic and farmer organizations that make up the Grow Asia Network. This catalytic network creates an ecosystem that supports knowledge sharing, collaboration, innovation, and policy change. To date, we have reached over 3.4 million smallholders and small rural enterprises. Through 5 Country Chapters and 44 value chains, our collective effort has increased farm incomes by \$81 million a year for selected value chains, and enabled more than 185,000 farms to adopt new technologies.



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2025 • PHILIPPINES

FOR ADDITIONAL ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:
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