

Ocean Communities Climate Challenge Information Package

About the Competition

The 2022 AXA Future Risk Report¹ found that climate change is the number one risk to global businesses in all geographic areas. Similarly, climate change is presenting ocean municipalities and coastal communities with some of the most challenging problems, here in Canada and around the world. Coastal cities cover roughly 356,000km of global coastline, and around 40% of earth's population live within 40 kilometres of a coast². As an ocean nation, Canada is at risk of experiencing increasingly severe impacts of climate events causing disruption to people and communities, and massive economic loss. But Canada is also a country with great potential to foster new ideas and innovations to mitigate climate change and support coastal communities with climate adaptation, thereby creating massive economic opportunities through the commercialization of innovation.

Are you an innovator or entrepreneur with a passion for the ocean and want to mitigate the impact of climate change? Do you want to make a difference in Canada's ocean communities? Then, the Ocean Communities Climate Challenge is for you!

The Ocean Communities Climate Challenge is a new competition focused on supporting the development of innovative solutions to ocean sustainability and climate challenges faced by municipalities from coast to coast to coast. Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Rimouski, Quebec, and Port Alberni, British Columbia have partnered with the Ocean Startup Project to raise awareness about coastal challenges that represent entrepreneurial opportunities for Canadian innovators.

To solve these challenges, the Ocean Communities Climate Challenge has identified areas of ocean opportunity and climate urgency, and invites entrepreneurs and innovators to pitch their solutions in these pressing areas as a new startup for a shot at **up to \$7,500 to seed the idea**, plus resources and training to develop it. A total of up to \$22,500 in prizes will be available.

During the competition, participants will receive access to programming and focus on conducting at least 25 customer discovery interviews to gain a thorough understanding of their potential customers' situations, needs and pain points.

Eligibility

The Ocean Communities Climate Challenge is designed for anyone curious about sustainability, oceans, climate solutions, business and/or innovation. If you have an idea on the "back of a napkin" or are interested in solving coastal sustainability and climate issues but don't know where to start, this competition is for you.

¹ <https://www.axa.com/en/news/2022-future-risks-report>

² <https://impact.economist.com/ocean/ocean-sustainable-development-goals/>

We are looking for diverse teams that bring together a variety of different experiences and perspectives. You should participate if you are interested in solving big ocean sustainability problems and are:

- A student
- A mid-career professional
- A researcher
- A developer/technical talent
- An individual who is interested in learning how to validate a business idea

Both teams and individuals are welcome to participate, but we highly recommend solo innovators look to form or join a team for this competition. Individuals from outside of Canada are eligible to participate, but they must be part of a team with Canadian members.

Participants must be at least 18 years of age.

Organizers' and sponsors' employees and their immediate families (i.e., their spouses, siblings, children, parents, spouses' parents and the spouses of any of those individuals) and their household members (related or not) are eligible to participate in the competition but cannot win the prize awards.

You are ineligible to participate if you are:

- A company with a product in market or generating revenue
- A winner of a previous Ocean Startup Project competition, such as the Ocean Startup Challenge

Evaluation

In selecting the competition winners, the strength of the team, effort to demonstrate proven market interest, the ocean sustainability or climate problem identified, and the idea for a solution all influence the judges' decisions.

Team (35%)	Market Interest (30%)	Problem Identification (25%)	Idea (10%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team is well-balanced with diverse skill sets ● Team members are passionate about solving a real-world problem ● Team members are dedicated and interested in turning an idea into a business ● Team has relevant experience and skills to execute or identifies areas where there may be gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thorough customer discovery was undertaken ● Teams spoke to at least 25 suggested customers & stakeholders and recorded insights that were shared ● Customer discovery indicates the identified problem is important to stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The team demonstrates they have conducted in-depth research into an ocean sector sustainability or climate problem they identified ● The size of the problem has been quantified (e.g., how much a customer spends to currently solve the problem or how much time the problem costs customers, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Idea for solution is focused on sustainability ● The proposed idea for a solution is feasible, scalable and would provide a unique value to customers ● The idea has potential to generate revenue ● Team demonstrates how they have refined idea or pivoted as a result of customer discovery

Awards

Awards up to \$7,500 CAD will be available to successful teams to develop their idea. Multiple prizes will be available. The amount awarded is determined by the judging committee. In addition to the cash award, teams will be introduced to regional and national incubators, accelerators and startup support organizations that can help them further develop their idea.

Funding is provided to winners as a reimbursement on expense claims. Claims must include receipts or invoices to support each item. Reimbursement is to be provided within 30 business days of submission of a complete claim. Missing items, ineligible expenses or other corrections may delay claim processing or result in claim rejection.

All expenses must be incurred by September 15, 2023.

The Ocean Startup Project reserves the right not to disperse any prizes.

Timeline

The following are the key dates for the Ocean Communities Climate Challenge:

- Registration opens: **March 28**
- Registration closes: **May 11 at 11:59 pm PDT**
- Kickoff event: **May 16**
- Customer discovery sprint: **May 16 - June 5**
- Team confirmation deadline: **May 23**
- Video submission deadline: **June 5**
- Shortlist announced: **June 8**
- Finalist presentations and winners announced: **June 22**

Process

Step one: Sign up to participate by filling out our online form with some information about you and/or your team before the May 11 deadline. Don't forget to let us know if you have a challenge in mind you plan to explore (see Challenge Statements below if you're looking for ideas) or if you have experience you would like to add to a team.

Step two: Attend the Kickoff Session on May 16 and join our online community space where you will find helpful information, potential team members and further information about the competition process.

Step three: Conduct 25 customer discovery interviews with industry and key stakeholders, and refine your idea based on the knowledge you gained from the resources provided and deeper exploration of the problem you want to solve.

Step four: Record and submit a short video describing your team, what ocean sustainability or coastal climate problem you've identified, the summarized results of customer discovery interviews, a brief overview of your idea, and who you think will pay for your solution (i.e. your customer).

Step five: The judging committee made up of industry representatives and partners evaluate submissions and select a shortlist. Please note that your team may be invited to an interview if there are any follow up questions before a final decision is made.

Step six: Find out who is selected as a winner when it's announced on June 22, 2023.

Support for Participants

Online Community

Participants will be invited to an online community space where they can ask questions, share resources with each other and receive feedback from peers and Challenge organizers. A link to the online community will be sent out after the Kickoff session on May 16, 2023.

Community Events

Members of the Ocean Startup Project team will be visiting several communities, including [Yarmouth and New Glasgow, Nova Scotia on April 18](#); Montreal, Quebec on April 26; and St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador on May 9. We'll also host an event virtually with Port Alberni featuring Canadian municipalities making waves in the Blue Economy on May 4. If you're at one of these events, come say hi to the team and we would be happy to connect with potential participants to discuss the competition.

Additional Information

By registering to participate in the Ocean Communities Climate Challenge, you agree to receive communications from the Ocean Startup Project and its partners.

If you have questions about the competition or registration form, please contact admin@oceanstartupproject.ca.

Challenge Statements

If you're an individual or team looking for a problem to solve, check out these Challenge Statements to find pre-identified ocean sustainability and climate problems to explore:

Monitoring and predicting ocean conditions

- Develop a low-cost and easy-to-deploy sea level and sea state monitoring system that provides real-time data and decision-making analytics for remote, northern or coastal communities
- Develop an innovative AI/machine learning-driven solution to accurately monitor and forecast risks and impacts (loss and damage) of climate change, such as sea level rise, flooding, and natural disasters like hurricanes or tsunamis.

Transitioning to net-zero port communities

- Develop innovative solutions to decarbonize the coastal supply chains and logistics, marine transportation, etc.
- Develop novel technologies to build sustainable coastal infrastructure with longer service lives and ability to withstand floods, wave loads etc.
- Develop innovative and sustainable methods to capture carbon in the ocean ecosystem

- Develop enabling technologies (sensors, analytics, marketplaces, etc) to support ocean-based carbon capture technologies

Creating resilient and circular economy coastal communities

- Develop a new, value-added product using waste streams from ocean-based industries
- Develop a method to repurpose shellfish waste into, for example, biomass production or fish processing waste into value added products
- Develop a system to recycle or repurpose polystyrene, fibreglass, and other materials from ghost fishing gear and other marine debris
- Develop closed loop systems to prevent marine effluent discharge from various industries
- Develop a new product and/or service that leverages or enhances the co-benefit values of macroalgae

Preserving and leveraging natural assets

- Develop innovative and applied technology that recycles ocean waste, such as biomass residues, plastics, and etc., to build, protect or repair coastal infrastructure
- Develop innovative and applied technology that recycles excess “salty” sediment/soil that cannot be disposed of on land to build, protect or repair coastal infrastructure
- Develop a scalable solution to minimize the threat of coastal erosion by using or preserving natural assets such as salt marsh, etc.
- Develop a system to measure the effectiveness of bioremediation impacts of shellfish and other aquaculture on the health of aquatic ecosystems
- Develop depuration facilities to permit harvesting of shellfish for Indigenous cultural practices and commercial use from areas currently closed to shellfish harvesting due to potential for contamination (or lack of monitoring ability)

Other

If you are aware of another climate challenge affecting ocean cities that was not included in the challenges above, we encourage you to share your idea.

Successful applicants must:

- Clearly identify and describe the problem
- Propose a solution