

FAQs

PROGRAM DESIGN

1. WHAT IS THE DURATION OF THE PROGRAM?

The program is 12 to 18 months long varying from case to case based on the needs of the start-up.

2. WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM?

TRANSFORM will extend bespoke business support and access to Unilever's value chain and resource network to the selected start-ups for scaling up their operations during the acceleration period. The duration of the support will depend on the need of each start-up. A project lead from Unilever will be mapped to each of the start-ups throughout the acceleration period.

Also, interspersed through the program shall be opportunities to interact with external stakeholders, funders and mentors from within TRANSFORM.

Program structure details will be shared in advance with the winners.

ELIGIBILITY

1. WHO CAN APPLY FOR THE PROGRAM?

TRANSFORM, aims to identify and support sustainable technologies and solutions that work on at least one of the following,

- **Improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers** - Enterprises that are keen to be, or are already working to, improve the **livelihoods and climate resilience/adaptation of tea, coffee, tomatoes, spices and dairy smallholder farmers** in India, with special focus on women through at least one of the following areas :
 - Capacity Building and Behaviour change
 - Financial Inclusion
 - Market Access & Fair Pricing
 - Post Harvest Management & Value Creation
 - Climate Change Mitigation
- **Driving plastics circularity and recycling**, thereby reducing plastic waste and consumption across the plastic packaging value chain. Organizations with the potential to create impact, scale across locations and demonstrate business model sustainability.
 - a. Scale a circular economy through an **ecosystem of collection & processing** with focus on small sachets in low-income countries.
 - b. Ensuring plastic waste-collectors are part of the solution, receive a **fair pay and decent livelihoods** whilst promoting gender equality
 - c. Expand new business models (e.g. **refill**) and innovations (e.g. **recycled flexibles**).
 - d.

2. IS THE CHALLENGE OPEN FOR INTERNATIONAL START-UPS?

No, only start-ups registered in India with more than 50% shareholding by Indian promoters are eligible to apply for the program.

3. IS THERE ANY PREFERENCE FOR A PARTICULAR TYPE OF INNOVATION?

Applicants with innovative solutions that improve livelihoods for smallholder farmers or innovations reducing plastic waste, and consumption across the packaging value chain are encouraged to apply. **There is a preference for innovations that have a high social impact potential for waste pickers or women farmers, low-income households, operations in tier 2/3 cities/rural areas, women led enterprise/women co-founder.** Innovations can be a product or a service but must be aligned to the focus areas outlined in the program.

PROGRAM OFFERINGS

1. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS I CAN AVAIL FROM THE PROGRAM?

Up to 4 selected start-ups will receive,

- **Innovation grants** of up to 1.30Cr, for the duration of the 12–18 month project.
- **Hands-on support from Unilever Professionals**, including an opportunity to test products or services in Unilever's Value Chain
- **Hands-on support from EY Professionals**, including opportunity to access EY Professional Consulting (EY Teams work with enterprises for up to 12 weeks, offering support to improve their businesses' productivity, resilience, and capacity to scale), dedicated 1:1 business Coaching, skills development workshops and training.
- **Market Access and Scale up support**
 - Opportunities to work with various functions across the value chain of Unilever
 - Workshops with experts, specialists, and sector leaders for developing the product market fit and go-to-market strategy
 - Access to TRANSFORM and its partners' wide network of public/private organizations and facilitation of introduction, where required
- **Fundraising support**
 - Access to TRANSFORM's large and diverse investor and donor network
- **Networking Opportunity**
 - Exposure to the wider network of stakeholders (corporates, government agencies, international development agencies etc) as well as high visibility opportunities offered by TRANSFORM through its partners like Unilever, FCDO and EY
- **Knowledge Services**
 - Curated set of capacity building and knowledge sessions with qualified industry experts to augment understanding of product – market fit
 - Monitoring and evaluation technical assistance to evidence socio-economic impact

2. DO I HAVE TO BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT FOR ANY COHORT-BASED SESSIONS?

While certain events will need selected enterprises to be physically present, the participants will have the option of attending the webinars/ sessions online. Details of the events will be shared in advance.

3. IS MENTORING PAID OR FREE?

Mentoring, as part of the continuous engagement with the selected applicants, will be provided free of charge.

Some mentor support, particularly from the internal ecosystem, comes pro-bono, however, some mentors and their advisory support may have a notional or actual cost. Participation in specialized/additional events could be subject to a nominal fee.

4. HOW FREQUENTLY WILL TRANSFORM INTERFACE WITH THE SELECTED START-UPS DURING THE SCALE UP SUPPORT?

There will be regular interface between the selected start-ups and the Project Lead from Unilever at least on a fortnightly basis. Each start-up will be allocated a Project Lead to help with customized requests who will continually and regularly engage with the start-ups.

TIMELINES

1. WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER DURING THE SELECTION PROCESS?

- 11th Nov '24 – Applications open
- 15th Dec '24 - Applications deadline

- 31st Jan '25 - First Round of Evaluations

- 31st March '25 - Grand Jury Round Pitch Day First-Level Selection:

- April '25 - Announcement of selected start-ups

[graphic to be inserted]