



Funded by  
the European Union



Kathmandu



## — Roots of Circularity (RoC) Incubator Program 2026: Bagmati Cohort 3



### Call for Applications : Bagmati Province

We are now accepting applications from all business sectors that have potential to integrate circularity interventions, strategies and initiatives within their business - current products and services, as a micro, small and medium enterprises, and startups based in Bagmati Province for the RoC Incubator Program - Bagmati Cohort 3.

#### TO APPLY



Scan the QR  
Fill up the Google Form

#### DEADLINE:

**31 March, 2026 (17 Chaitra, 2082 BS)  
| 11:59 pm Nepal Time**

If you have any queries, please contact [roc.nepal@impacthub.net](mailto:roc.nepal@impacthub.net)  
or visit our website <https://rootsofcircularity.com/>

## About the organization

[Impact Hub Kathmandu](#) (IH KTM) is a female-led Nepali not-for-profit organization started after the 2015 Nepal earthquakes under the premise that a disaster can be a catalyst for innovation. It has evolved into an accessible, safe and inclusive innovation-led community Hub. The Hub is designed to give innovators, entrepreneurs, activists, artists and change-makers a creative space to meet, work, network and learn, while harnessing new ideas to help address social and environmental challenges. An amiable open space that welcomes people from across Kathmandu, and beyond! We are part of a global network of 100+ Impact Hubs in over 60 countries, working across disciplines, acting across sectors, with amazing people putting ideas into action.

## About Roots of Circularity (RoC) Project

Roots of Circularity (RoC) is a four year long project funded by the European Union. It is spearheaded by Impact Hub Association (IHA) in collaboration with Impact Hub Kathmandu (IH KTM) and Wildlife Conservation Nepal (WCN) that aims to cultivate a Circular Economy ecosystem in Nepal. Over the course of four years, RoC will focus its efforts in the Bagmati and Lumbini Provinces, with the primary goal of driving a shift in the entrepreneurial landscape, policy and citizens engagement to embrace circular economy principles. The project will engage with civil society organizations, empower startups and micro, small, and medium enterprises, and collaborate with private sector, provincial and local government, policymakers, and academic institutions to promote multi-stakeholder collaboration for circular economy development.

### Project Background

IH KTM conducted scoping studies with relevant stakeholders such as local government officials and agencies, businesses and associations, academia, and international organizations in the target Provinces - Lumbini and Bagmati. The studies demonstrated emerging markets in sectors such as tourism and heritage, agro-business, construction, and manufacturing amongst others, despite the pandemic. In addition, there is increased interest from local authorities to establish business incubators to strengthen their local entrepreneurial ecosystems. The action provides an opportunity to bring stakeholders from the entrepreneurial ecosystem and civil society to share knowledge, expertise and learn from each other to advocate and implement circularity. It intends to build on existing efforts and help connect the dots from youth and students to entrepreneurs and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)<sup>1</sup>, to civil society organizations and public institutions. By raising awareness, education, capacity building and seed funding the Action is anticipated to elevate the circular economy discussion and generate initiatives to contribute to the circular economy of Nepal.

---

<sup>1</sup> MSMEs will be defined on the basis of number of employees/employment with reference to the Industrial Enterprises Act 2020 and related research papers. For example, micro is upto 9 employees, small is 5-19 employees and medium is 20-99 employees, whereas startups based on this distinction will be less than 5 employees.

## Specific Objective

60 startups and MSMEs will be capacitated on circular economy, across the two Provinces, and financially supported towards innovative circular business models. Every year 10 enterprises from each province will be selected for the incubator program to develop circular business models and build their capacity through incubation, and pre-acceleration programs, more so while adopting circular economy principles as part of solutions.

## About the RoC Incubator Program in Bagmati Province

The RoC Incubator Program offers enterprises and entrepreneurs support to adopt circular economy principles, approaches and strategies into their business. It will provide the incubatees (selected enterprises) with guidance to design and develop circular solutions and a circularity-led business plan.

The RoC Incubator Program comprises two phases. The first phase of the RoC Incubator Program - ideation and incubation, will be for eight months; Ideation is Human Centered Design Sprints where incubatees work towards identifying their circular solutions and in Incubation, there will be 11 masterclasses and one-on-one coaching sessions every month. The second phase of the RoC Incubator Program - pre-acceleration, will be for three months, post phase one. In this phase, between one-two incubatees from the cohort will be selected for the pre-acceleration phase. Selection will depend upon their need, interest and those who will benefit most from additional access to finance to grow/scale their business models. At the end of this period, the entire cohort is expected to “graduate” from the program.

The main objective of the RoC Incubator Program is to capacitate 10 enterprises (cohort) in the Bagmati Province to develop circular business models. Each enterprise will receive financial support in the form of a pre-seed fund during the program. The Program will prioritize startups and MSMEs led by women, youth and marginalized groups such as underrepresented communities and ethnicities (dalit, LGBTQIA+ amongst others) fostering their active participation in the change process.

## Why apply for the RoC Incubator Program?

The selected incubates will have the following benefits:

- 1. Financial support:** The selected 10 enterprises will receive a pre-seed fund that will allow them to boost their circular solutions and business model (about EUR 2,777 per enterprise<sup>2</sup>).
- 2. Human Centered Design (HCD) Sprint:** The selected 10 enterprises will go through 3-4 days HCD Sprint using the design thinking approach to ideate circular solutions for their own business.

---

<sup>2</sup> The exchange rate at that time will be applied.

- 3. Masterclasses:** The selected 10 enterprises will be capacitated through monthly masterclasses that focus on contextualizing circular economy, its strategies, circular finance and business plan development. The masterclasses are curated based on the curriculum of the RoC Incubator Program. They are mentioned below:
- Month 1: Introduction to Circular Economy
    - 1.1: Developing A Circular Mindset
  - Month 2: Circular Finance
  - Month 3: Circular Strategy
    - 3.1: Stakeholder/Ecosystem Mapping
    - 3.2: Visibility and Branding
  - Month 4: Environmental Practices
    - 4.1: GEDSI Workshop
  - Month 5: Circular Business Models
  - Month 6: Business Plan Development
  - Month 7: Reflection & Planning
- 4. Coaching Sessions:** Monthly one-on-one business, financial and technical<sup>3</sup> coaching sessions to guide the selected 10 enterprises to meet company milestones.
- 5. Networking and collaboration:** The selected 10 enterprises will get the opportunity to meet, build connections with IH KTM's network of industry experts, institutions and technical consultants through which they can enhance their business with exposure to potential markets.

## Selection Process

The RoC project will be selecting 10 incubatees per cohort. There will be two rounds of selection, the first round selection will be conducted internally by the RoC project team based on the information submitted in the application form. The first round of scoring will be done on the basis of the selection criteria (i.e. eligibility criteria and evaluation criteria) provided below. During the scoring process the applicants may also receive a call from the team for clarification and/or reference check. The top **15 applicants** will be selected from the first round of scoring and will be invited for in-person interviews. *Please note that if you did not receive an email from the project team, you are not selected for the second round.*

The second round of selection will be conducted by an interview panel of experts who have experience in business incubation, circular business models, engineering and product development, diversity, equity and inclusivity (DEI), environment and climate change. The interviews will be based on the information requested in the application form. After the in-person interviews 10 applicants will be selected for the incubation program. *Please note that the selected candidates from the second round are informed regarding the onboarding process through an email and follow up call. Those who are not selected will receive an email from the project team.*

---

<sup>3</sup> Technical sessions will be provided on the need/s of the enterprise.

## *Eligibility Criteria*

Registered startups and MSMEs in Bagmati province beyond the ideation phase and in operation are eligible to apply. Priorities will be given to

### **1. Enterprises**

Startups and MSMEs from all business sectors that have potential to integrate circularity interventions, strategies and initiatives within their business - current products and services are eligible to apply (except for trading businesses).

### **2. Registration status**

Startups and MSMEs that are registered according to the laws of the Government of Nepal.

### **3. In operation**

Applications from the startups and MSMEs that are in operation for minimum six months to one year across the Bagmati Province.

### **4. Location**

The business must be located in Bagmati Province.

### **5. Application Form Completion**

The applicant needs to comply with the application process to be considered for selection. This includes the completed application form (address all questions) and provide all the required information.

### **6. Products & Services**

Applicants whose products and services are introduced in the market with basic features (minimal viable product i.e. the product must have undergone successfully the necessary quality testing confirming it can be commercialized<sup>4</sup>) are encouraged to apply.

**NOTE: We are pleased to announce the selection process for the 3rd Bagmati Cohort, where we aim to foster inclusivity and gender balance. Women, youth and marginalized groups - underrepresented communities and ethnicities such as Dalit, LGBTIQ+ are encouraged to apply and will be prioritized.**

**Out of the 10 available participant slots, at least 5 will be allocated to women owned enterprises. This decision reflects our commitment to ensuring equitable representation, recognizing that women constitute more than 50% of the population. The purpose of this intervention is to create more opportunities for women, and we believe this balanced approach will contribute to the overall success and impact of the cohort.**

**Out of the 10 available participant slots, at least 2 slots will be allocated to startups and MSMEs owned by persons from marginalized groups such as underrepresented communities and ethnicities (Dalit, LGBTIQ+ amongst others).**

<sup>4</sup> A minimum viable product is a version of a product with just enough/basic features to be usable by early customers who can then provide feedback for future product development.

## Evaluation criteria

All the applicants will be scored based on the criteria below for the first (application screening) and second round (1-1 Interview) of selection.

S.N	Criterion	Criterion Description	Scoring Scale Interpretation
1.	Team Performance	Clarity, Confidence, Commitment towards generating social and environmental impact and solutions, and diversity, equity and social inclusion (team).	<p><i>Scoring Scale (maximum score 5)</i></p> <p>a. Score 5: Exceptional performance across all dimensions, setting a standard for commitment, diversity, social inclusion, integrity.</p> <p>b. Score 4: Excellent performance across multiple dimensions, excelling in commitment, diversity, social inclusion, and integrity.</p> <p>c. Score 3: Exhibits above-average performance across multiple dimensions, demonstrating strong commitment, diversity, social inclusion, and integrity.</p> <p>d. Score 2: Average performance across multiple dimensions, with solid but limited performance in commitment, diversity, social inclusion, and integrity.</p> <p>e. Score 1: Below-average performance across multiple dimensions, with room for improvement in commitment presentation quality diversity, social inclusion, and integrity.</p>
2.	Social Impact	Demonstrates efforts in fostering a sense of community and solidarity among members. Initiatives are innovative, inclusive, and have a substantial positive impact on the community's cohesion and development. Efforts in job creation are well-structured, sustainable, and have a transformative effect on the local economy. In addition, the company should be able to address the solution for a specific social problem that they seek to solve through their business.	<p><i>Scoring Scale (maximum score 5)</i></p> <p>a. Score 5: High community building initiatives. Actively creates jobs. Exceptional educational initiatives leading to transformative effects.</p> <p>b. Score 4: Has created jobs. Strong community engagement. Significant educational impact achieved.</p> <p>c. Score 3: Minimal job creation. Potential to create jobs. Has created a few jobs. Moderate community building efforts. Moderate educational initiatives by the enterprise.</p> <p>d. Score 2: Potential to create jobs. Some community engagement activities. Some educational programs were initiated.</p> <p>e. Score 1: No job creation. Limited community engagement. Limited educational efforts with minimal reach.</p>

3.	Environmental Impact	Sustainable use of natural resources, biodiversity conservation, integration of concepts such as reuse, reduce and recycle (amongst others), waste management and renewable energy adoption and energy efficiency. It contributes to the environmental consciousness of the consumers. Creates positive impact through the design and delivery of the products and services. The company addresses environmental problem/s that they seek to solve through their business.	<p><i>Scoring Scale (maximum score 5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Score 5: High level of commitment to creating positive environmental impact. Active contribution to the environment.</li> <li>b. Score 4: Actively implements environmental strategies and practices, and be innovative in its solution/s.</li> <li>c. Score 3: Clarity in direction and starting to incorporate measures into operations, but needs to improve.</li> <li>d. Score 2: Started to implement strategies or practices but not comprehensive or fully integrated into the business model and operations.</li> <li>e. Score 1: No initiatives or practices in place to address environmental concerns. It's not a core part of the solution.</li> </ul>
4.	Financial Viability	The company's ability to achieve business operating objectives and fulfill its mission from generating revenue, diversified revenue stream, and strategic plan for business sustainability. This can be adapted through supply chain strategy and market understanding, customer positioning, awareness of regulatory dynamics and emerging sector trends.	<p><i>Scoring Scale (maximum score 5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Score 5: Financial viability is high.</li> <li>b. Score 4: The business has clear strategies. Efforts towards circular strategy are visible.</li> <li>c. Score 3: The business has clear direction and has developed strategy.</li> <li>d. Score 2: Initial steps towards financial management and innovation. The business is making an effort.</li> <li>e. Score 1: Financial viability is low.</li> </ul>
5.	Scalability/Growth	Potential to grow the business in the future - vision, mission, need for the solution to support growth. The company demonstrates the potential to scale/grow (expand the business) without incurring equal or greater costs in the existing business operation model. This can be achieved through modular operational frameworks, strategic partnerships, technology-driven efficiencies, investment strategies (funding) and adaptability to market demand.	<p><i>Scoring Scale (maximum score 5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Score 5: Exceptional potential for scalability or growth, positioning it as a market leader.</li> <li>b. Score 4: Exhibits high potential for scalability or growth, with clear pathways for expanding its operations.</li> <li>c. Score 3: Demonstrates moderate potential for scalability or growth, with opportunities to expand its operations and reach new markets.</li> <li>d. Score 2: Has some potential for scalability or growth, but faces significant barriers or constraints that limit its expansion.</li> <li>e. Score 1: Exhibits minimal potential for scalability or growth, with limited prospects for expansion beyond its current scope.</li> </ul>
6.	Innovation	The company demonstrates the willingness and potential to	<p><i>Scoring Scale (maximum score 5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Score 5: The company has a high level</li> </ul>

		<p>innovate and integrate circularity interventions, strategies and initiatives within their business - current products and services, knowledge and understanding of circular economy. The company has innovative and creative ways to rethink, recycle, reuse, repurpose, or use innovative technologies, etc.</p>	<p>of innovation, integrated circular business ideas and from the project they will be able to capacitate their members to strengthen the circular business model of their company.</p> <p>b. Score 4: The company has a circular solution using the rethink, recycle, reuse and repurpose innovative thinking. Through the project the company wants to prototype/test their solution.</p> <p>c. Score 3: The company is willing to incorporate circularity within their business model but they are looking to learn and innovate towards a circular business model.</p> <p>d. Score 2: The company does not yet see a potential to innovate but is keen to learn about the circular economy.</p> <p>e. Score 1: The company does not demonstrate any initiative to integrate circularity within their business model.</p>
<p><b>*Priority will be given to those companies who score high in the criterion 6; extra 5 points to applicants who demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and potential for integrating circular economy approach and initiatives into their business.</b></p>			

**DISCLAIMER:**

IH KTM reserves the right to cancel the call for applications in any case of receiving less applications and relaunch the call.

**TO APPLY:**

Please click the link provided below and fill up the application.

Google form Link: <https://forms.gle/XbXh7m9QFp4pBPFA6>

Deadline: 31 March, 2026 (17 Chaitra, 2082 BS) | 11:59 pm Nepal Time