

REGULATION

NOVA impACT! Challenges 2026

May 13th, 2026

Preamble

NOVA impACT! Challenges (the “Program”) is an initiative of NOVA University Lisbon, which aims to provide the University community with an experience of developing an entrepreneurial project with social and/or environmental impact. This initiative is open to members from all Universities, who can apply in mixed teams.

NOVA University Lisbon is herein represented by its NOVA Impact office, hereinafter referred to as “Organization”.

Title I – Scope

Article 1

Object

The present Regulation is intended to define the terms and rules of participation in the NOVA impACT! Challenges organized by the Organization.

Article 2

Goals

The main objectives of this Program are:

- Stimulate entrepreneurial culture among students;
- Promote awareness and social responsibility through ideas and initiatives that leverage social entrepreneurship projects with impact on the community;
- Reinforce NOVA's role as a promoter of entrepreneurship, placing innovation and knowledge at the service of the community.
- Support the development of impactful solutions placing knowledge and innovation at the service of society.

Article 3

Promoters / Sponsors

The entity promoting the Program is NOVA University Lisbon.

Article 4

Conditions for entering the Program

- 4.1. Participation in this Program is free.
- 4.2. All the participants must read this Regulation, and fully accept their terms in their entirety without reservation, before its registration and participation in the Program.
- 4.3. Participants must apply in teams of 2 to 5 members. The teams can be composed by students from all fields and levels (Undergraduate, Master, Ph.D., etc.) and Researchers enrolled in any Portuguese University. Those who have completed their cycle of studies no more than 5 years prior to the beginning of the Program are also eligible to participate. Teams with multidisciplinary backgrounds will be positively valued in the selection process.
- 4.4. Participation in the Program is under the conditions of being any person on legal age and able to justify it with an identification card.
- 4.5. All the registered participants guarantee that will abide to the rules mentioned above. The delivery of the prizes will be conditional upon the capacity of the participants to meet the conditions stated.
- 4.6. Any Team who does not abide by the terms of the Regulations during its registration and at any time during the Program will be automatically and without previous notification, disqualified from the Program and shall not be awarded any prize. In the case where a prize would have been given to a Team who does not or did not comply with the Regulation at the time of its registration or during the Program, the Organization has the discretionary right to demand the return of the prize received.
- 4.7. To participate, candidates must:
 - Be available to collaborate, share knowledge, and innovate.
 - Ensure availability and commitment to regular participation during the course of the Program.
 - Be present in all group sessions defined by the Organization.
 - Have a positive attitude towards the challenges and difficulties that may arise during the event.

Title II - Phases of the Program

Article 5

Phases and calendar

The NOVA impACT! Challenges involves three sequential phases, in terms and with respect to the proposed:

- a) The first phase of the Program is the application submission through form published by the promoter. This phase will begin on May 25th, 2026, and will end at 11:59pm of June 15th, 2026. Selected participants will be notified via email.

b) The second phase of the Program begins with the kick-off of the program on June 23th, 2026. The goal is the development of the proof-of-concept phase, where the selected teams are expected to develop a prototype of the project during the initiative duration of three (3) weeks, as well as the participation in the workshop sessions, mentoring and progress checkpoints that are to be scheduled.

c) The third phase of NOVA impACT! Challenges will consist of a DEMO DAY, on July 13th, 2026, where the teams will make a final pitch to the Jury, presenting the progress and prototypes developed throughout the program, at a location (physical) and time to be defined.

Article 6

Registration and Selection of Applications

6.1. Application for the competition is free of charge and must be done through the form published by the Organisation on its website and social media pages.

6.2. Up to 10 Teams will be selected to the second phase of the Program mentioned in the previous Article. The Organization reserves the right to increase the number of selected Teams, based on the excellence of the applicants.

6.3. The selection process will take into account the following set of criteria:

a) background of the team members and proven ability to develop a solution addressing specific challenge(s). Multidisciplinary teams will be valued;

b) willingness and commitment to carry on the proof-of-concept phase and to achieve the objectives of this Program;

c) the ideas are expected to be innovative and respond to a challenge/problem identified, and its execution should be viable in a timeline of 1 (one) year, with the presentation of a prototype or proof-of-concept during this initiative;

d) the ideas shall correspond to a new product, a new application to an existing product, a new service or a new business model, with relevance and impact on the social/environmental sector and should be aligned with at least one of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG);

e) The ideas in the contest must be original, and the proposers are responsible for ensuring their originality, without any legal or contractual impediment, to divulge them to the NOVA ImpACT! Challenges Jury and the Organization.

6.4. Within the scope of the selection process, selection interviews may be held whenever the Organization deems it necessary.

Article 7

Proof-of-concept stage

7.1. The proof-of-concept will consist of a phase of implementation and validation of the selected projects. The proof-of-concept or prototype can be developed using video, photos, diagrams, apps, 3D printing, and others. Whenever justified, the solution presented may be a business plan with 1 (one) year implementation.

7.2. Each selected team will receive, initially, up to EUR 500,00 (five hundred Euros) to be able to develop the prototype over the three weeks of the Program.

7.3. At the beginning of each week, a workshop will be offered, defined according to the week's objectives and, during the remaining days, the teams will have to work to develop their projects.

7.4. The workshops will focus on the following themes:

- a) Workshop 1: Social Entrepreneurship
- b) Workshop 2: IP Protection and Valorization
- c) Workshop 3: How to Pitch

7.5. Each team will have a mentor/facilitator who will provide guidance during the competition in developing the project and facilitating access to the NOVA Mentor Network or to NOVA's infrastructure.

7.6. During the 3 (three) weeks of the proof-of-concept, there will be made checkpoint meetings with the Organization committee to assess the evolution and development of projects.

7.7. The end of the proof-of-concept will be on the DEMO DAY, with presentations of the final pitch by each of the teams able to complete the Program.

Article 8

DEMO DAY

8.1. The projects will be presented on the final Pitch DEMO DAY to the jury, which will evaluate the quality of each one of the projects developed and the prototype.

8.2. For the DEMO DAY, participants may use any multimedia device such as PowerPoint, audio and video projection and presentation of prototypes. The maximum duration of the pitch will be 3 (three) minutes, followed by 5 (five) minutes for Q&A.

Title III – Jury Evaluation and Awards

Article 9

Winner Selection

- 9.1. The projects presented by the applicants and the final Pitch are evaluated by a Jury composed of at least three elements designated by the Organization.
- 9.2. The Jury decision and the announcement of the winners will be held at the end of the DEMO DAY. In case of a tie, the final decision will be up to the President of the jury.
- 9.3. The Jury will evaluate the Projects and the Final Presentation according to the following criteria:
 - a) Dimension of the social and / or environmental impact of the project;
 - b) Quality of the presented project, translated through the arguments presented by the team in relation to the market needs or in the impact in the society that the solution, product, service or technology is able to tackle;
 - c) Quality of the proof-of-concept developed in the Program;
 - d) Innovative characteristic of the presented project;
 - e) Quality of the presented business strategy;
 - f) Quality of team and their competences to develop the project;
 - g) Adequacy of the presented financing structure;
 - h) Alignment with the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

Article 10

Monitoring Committee and Awards

- 10.1. The Organization will set up a “Monitoring Committee” and designate its members, assigning them the task of monitoring the projects throughout the entire Program. The winning team can be invited to participate in other entrepreneurial programs with their expenses covered if the NOVA impact office finds it relevant. A *per diem* value can be assigned to the team if justified for representation purposes.
- 10.2. The selected projects will automatically be eligible for a maximum of EUR 500,00 (five hundred euros) for the development of the proof-of-concept. To this end, they must present, in the first 3 (three) days of the proof-of-concept phase the final expenditure plan provided to the “Monitoring Commission”, which will be responsible for the allocation of funds during that phase, whenever justified by the team and within the scope of the Program.
- 10.3. The "Monitoring Committee" will also be responsible for evaluation of the execution of the objectives proposed in the project.
- 10.4. If a team does not justify the need to obtain funds for the proof-of-concept, the Organization reserves the right not to allocate any funds for this phase of the initiative.
- 10.5. Failure to comply with conditions set by the “Monitoring Committee” may imply the repayment of the amount allocated for the implementation of the proof-of-concept.
- 10.6. Additional prizes of up to EUR 4.000,00 (four thousand euros) will be awarded to the best team(s) in the final DEMO DAY. The Organization reserves the right not to award the prizes if the Jury

considered that the final results do not meet the above criteria. Additionally, the Jury reserves the right to divide the prize by more than one team or to award two prizes up to 2.000€ each team if the quality of the projects justifies to.

10.7. The winning team(s) must sign a declaration of honour that funds will be used for the development of the project and define 3 (three) outputs of the project to be developed in the following 3-6 months. Teams must equally send/present a short report (max. 10 pages) stating the development of the project at the end of the plan implementation. The report should be sent to: novaimpact@unl.pt within 6 (six) months after the final prize money has been transferred to the winners' bank account, for follow up purposes of the program and impact analysis. The date may be extended under justification of the team and the project needs. The organization reserves the right to accept it or not depending on the justification presented.

10.8. Should any project that arises or is developed within the scope of this Program evolve to the creation of a juridical entity (e.g. a start-up, an association, etc.), the promoters are committed to apply to the NOVA Spin-off® seal, according to the rules provided in Regulation n.º 157/2018, published in *Diário da República*, 2nd series, on March 14th.

Article 11

Communication and announcement of winners

11.1. All communication with participants will be carried out by e-mail: novaimpact@unl.pt

11.2. The winners will be announced on the day of the DEMO DAY.

Article 12

Image Rights

12.1. By signing up to participate in the Program and in accordance with this Regulation, the participants automatically authorize the free and open use, without any payment involved of their name and image in photos, files and / or digital media and content as well as in posters, films and / or spots, in any type of media and / or promotional pieces, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines, posters, banners, billboards and the Internet, for the wide dissemination of the Program results.

12.2. The authorization provided for in the preceding number does not imply or result in any obligation of disclosure or payment.

Article 13

Confidentiality and intellectual property

13.1. The Jury of the Program and the Organization undertake to not disclose any confidential information whenever requested by the applicants.

13.2. For the purposes of the preceding number, the applicants must clearly distinguish, in all the information they provide to the Organization and Jury of the Program, information that is CONFIDENTIAL.

13.3. The Organization is prohibited from taking any measures, except as provided for in number 1 of this article, with a view to protecting or ensuring the confidentiality, intellectual property, and other rights of competitors, so the protection of such rights is the exclusive responsibility of the participants themselves.

13.4. Whenever applicable, the intellectual property regulation of NOVA University Lisbon (Regulation n.º 1104/2020, published in *Diário da República*, 2nd series, on December 22nd) is in force.

Title IV - Final and Transitional Provisions

Article 14

Data identity and disclosure

14.1. The Organisation guarantees the confidentiality of the process, as well as the anonymity of the applicants not selected for the proof-of-concept or the DEMO DAY.

14.2. By signing up to participate in the Program in accordance with this Regulation, participants will automatically recognize and to explicitly accept that the NOVA University Lisbon is not responsible or to be liable for any damage or loss arising from participation in the Program or eventual acceptance of the prizes.

Article 15

Withdrawal

If there is any withdrawal from competing teams, the Jury may reinstate other competitors in replacement of the withdrawals.

Article 16

Competition Rules

16.1. The participation in the Program and the awarding of the prizes requires the acceptance purely and simply and the full respect for the Regulation in all its terms. The Organization reserve the right to disqualify, immediately and without compensation, every Team not satisfying in full with the present Regulation.

16.2. The Organization reserve the right to modify at any time the terms of the Regulation, and during the Program without the requirement of notification to the applicants, concerning the application and the validity of these modifications. The applicants are invited to consult regularly the Regulation. The participants give up expressly any complaint or contesting linked to any modification brought to the Regulation by the Organization

Article 17

Liability for damages

17.1. Participants in the Program, exempt the Organization and the NOVA University Lisbon from any liability for property and / or moral damage, or any incidents caused to them resulting from participation in the Program.

17.2. The Organization cannot, in any case, be held responsible for any damage caused by the defect or the delay of delivery of the projects, in particular for the refusal to consider late submissions, or for any damage caused by the impossibility to connect to the relevant websites or to upload/download correctly any delivery, the defect or the delivery time of any email sent during the Program, or for any damage caused by any hurdle preventing the participants attending or participating in the whole or part of the Program

17.3. The Organization cannot be held responsible in case of total or partial modification, suspension, interruption, adjournment or cancellation of the whole or part of the Program for reasons beyond their control. In such case, the Organization will inform as soon as possible the participants via e-mail or by any means it sees fit.

17.4. The Organization cannot be held responsible for the consequences of a disqualification of an Innovator, and/or a Team, due to a violation of the Rules, and/or in case of rejection of a Team due to noncompliance with the Rules.

17.5. In any case, the Organization will not be held responsible for the delivery of the prizes nor in case of impossibility for a winner to benefit from the respective Prize for circumstances beyond the Organization control. The responsibility of the Organization cannot be engaged in case of loss and/or deterioration of the Prize by post or any third similar service provider and more generally, if the Winning teams(s) do not receive its Prize. The responsibility of the Organization cannot be engaged in case of incidents or of damages of all kinds, which could arise because of the enjoyment of the awarded Prize and/or because of its use.

Article 18

Interpretation and Application

18.1. Any doubts regarding the interpretation and application of these Regulations will be exclusively clarified by the Organization through the e-mail novaimpact@unl.pt.

18.2. The Organization and the jury guarantee confidentiality throughout the application and evaluation process of the projects submitted to the competition.

18.3. The Organizers reserve the right to modify at any time the terms of this Regulation.