Cantillon Ventures

Round 1 Brief

You must submit a 2-page proposal outlining an idea for a social enterprise that addresses a problem in your local community by following these steps:

- **Choose** a focus area (possibly from the list provided).
- **Identify** a problem in your local community within your focus area.
- **Propose** a potential solution in the form of a social enterprise or initiative that you would like to develop throughout the course of the competition.

Submission Deadline: All proposals must be submitted by 27th February. To submit your proposal, upload it as a PDF to a form provided by email after registration.

Choose your focus area

Below is a list of examples to get you thinking.

- **Communities & Green Spaces:** How can you enhance new and existing urban spaces to promote community, inclusivity and sustainability?

  The Lowline New York City, USA – A proposed underground park in New York City's Lower East Side, transforming a disused trolley terminal into a public space using innovative solar technology. By channelling natural light underground through a system of reflectors and optics, the Lowline aims to create a green space that promotes urban revitalisation and enhances community well-being.

- **Educational Access & Outreach:** How can you support access to education for underrepresented communities in your local area?

  The Access Project, UK – A business helping motivated students from disadvantaged backgrounds win places at top universities.

__Or__

__Butterfly Books__, UK – A business which creates playful and thought-provoking stories that aim to transform the lives and minds of children and families by challenging stereotypes and perceptions encouraging an open-minded world for future generations.

- **Waste Reduction & Prevention:** How can you help your local community reduce waste generation and promote sustainable consumption, production and procurement practices?

  __Composting for Community__, USA – Seattle's program helps residents put the correct items in the city's food and yard waste bins by emphasising "food in, plastic out" It explains what can and can't be composted, provides tips for collecting food scraps at home, and works to reduce contamination from plastics and other non-compostables.

- **Health & Wellbeing:** How can you raise awareness in your community about the importance of good health, healthy lifestyles as well as people's right to quality health care services, especially for the most vulnerable?

  __The Nurture Project__ – A garden project that supports adults living with mild to moderate mental health issues. They have a case study __here__ that details Pippa's positive experience of the project.

  __Or__

  __Talk Club__ – A talking and listening club for men that helps keep them mentally fit by offering sports groups, talking groups and therapy. Further information on how this initiative is helping men in North Somerset is __here__.

Define the problem you want to solve

Begin by **considering** what and who is around you – where do you see an opportunity to make a positive impact within your chosen theme?

Once you think you have a target problem, test it out with a **problem statement**: A 2-3 sentence definition of the core problem you want to address. As much as we need ambitious, and bold problem-solving, the best problem statements are realistic, concise and specific. Here are some guiding questions that will help you narrow in:

- **What problem are you looking to address?**
- **What are the consequences of not dealing with this particular problem?**
- **Can you quantify the problem or the risk of not addressing the problem, if so, how?**
- **Who or what is affected by the problem? Who or what is particularly vulnerable?**
- **Has this problem been solved yet, or attempted to be solved? If so, what barriers or facilitators to change might you be aware of as a result?**
- **Who are the relevant local stakeholders?**

Helpful resources and further reading

- Strategic implications of defining a problem or issue
- Problem Framing A Perspective on Environmental Problem Solving
- Harvard Business Review Problem Definition & Solving Framework
- Problem Statement Canvas for Startups by D-Eship

Brainstorm Solutions

During this stage teams should **brainstorm** potential solutions to the problem. During this stage, generate a wide range of ideas without immediately filtering them. There is no such thing as a bad idea! Afterwards, teams can narrow their focus by refining ideas and synthesising information (the convergence stage).

Helpful exercise

Creating a **Customer Journey Map** is a great tool to generate ideas that are focused on the people who are directly experiencing the problem.

- **Choose** a process or journey that you want to map e.g. food shopping or going to school.

- **Write** down each step. Make sure to include even small steps that may seem trivial. The goal is to get you to consider the nuances of the experience that you may normally overlook.
- **Organise** the steps into a map. Often, you can display the steps sequentially in a timeline (as pictured in the website). However, your map may include branches to show alternative paths in the customer journey. You could also use a series of pictures or whatever method fits your data.
- **Look** for insights. What patterns emerge? Anything surprising or strange? Question why certain steps occur, the order they occur in, and so forth. Ask yourselves how you might innovate (aka improve) each step.
- **Show** the map to people familiar with the journey and ask them what you've overlooked or gotten out of sequence.

Settle on your solution

You should now be at the "Convergence" stage of the creative problem-solving process, where your team needs to **narrow down** your focus by **refining** your ideas until you have **one standout solution**, as well as **synthesising** everything you have learnt in the process. Remember, your idea should have **desirability** (within your chosen customer base), **feasibility** (in theory), and **viability** (of integrating into your community).

- **Desirability** – What makes sense to people and for people?
- **Feasibility** – What is functionally possible within the foreseeable future?
- **Viability** – What is likely to become part of a sustainable business model?

By the end of this stage, you should be able to answer these questions confidently and precisely:

- **What is your goal?**
- **What actions lead to this goal?**
- **What should the solution be?**

Your solution *should* be one that allows you to complete the actions that lead to your goal in a feasible and sustainable way.