

Social Change Challenge Award
Application Guidelines (tentative translation)

April 2024

Innovation Design Platform,
Office of Research and Innovation
Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo Tech)

****Email:**** venture@sangaku.titech.ac.jp

1. Overview and Purpose of the Program

Tokyo Tech produces numerous unique and advanced research outcomes daily. However, bridging the gap between these research results and their social implementation is not straightforward.

In response, Tokyo Tech has positioned 2021 as the "First Year of Startups", focusing on creating startups that utilize university's research findings to benefit society and generate new value.

As part of this support, the "Social Change Challenge Award" has been established to foster startups by early-career researchers with high ambition and excellent research seeds.

This program, "Social Change Challenge Award", recognizes early-career researchers who are motivated to make a difference in society through their research results, spotlighting their work and providing comprehensive support towards commercialization, including a total prize money of 25 million yen. We hope that this award will trigger a new movement among early-career researchers at Tokyo Tech.

2. Program Details

① Eligibility:

Research projects that wish to be commercialized in the future, aiming to solve societal issues with research findings and improve the quality of beneficial research and development. The program will support the examination and construction of research development and business models in collaboration with expert mentors.

*Merely conducting research or company business or preparation (registration, etc.) without the purpose of commercialization is not eligible.

② Program Period: Acceptance date (scheduled for early July) to March 31, 2025

③ Prizes: 3 million yen (Excellence Award), 1 million yen (Encouragement Award), per researcher

④ Number of Awards: 5 for Excellence, 10 for Encouragement

* The number of applications may increase or decrease depending on the status of applications and selection.

⑤ Eligible Expenses: Generally includes expenses that fall under the university's accounting items for research and development.

e.g.,

- Materials Cost: Expenses for purchasing new equipment, supplies, consumables, etc.
- Business Trip Expenses: Travel costs for the research leader and research participants mentioned in the proposal.
- Personnel Costs & Honorariums: Personnel expenses and honorariums for research participants and supporters, excluding the research leader.
- Other: Other expenses necessary for conducting research and development (e.g., patent acquisition, investigations, etc.).

3. Application Eligibility

Applicants must meet all the following conditions:

- ① Have a desire to change the world with their research.
- ② Be a faculty member or researcher at Tokyo Tech during the application and the acceleration program.
- ③ Be the inventor or involved in the core technological seed [1] of the research development issue. Patent acquisition is desirable but not mandatory. * It is desirable for applicants to have obtained a patent related to the relevant research results, but applications may also be submitted even if a patent application is pending or is to be filed, or if a patent application is planned to be filed. Or, applications based on research results (software, etc.) for which no patent application has been filed are also acceptable.
- ④ Have an interest in social contribution of research findings. (Applicants must be interested in applying to the Tokyo Tech Gap Fund Program [2], establishing or commercializing a startup company. Applicants do not necessarily need to be founders or business owners.)
- ⑤ No age restrictions, but early-career talents under 40 are preferred.

[1] "Technological seeds" refer to patents (including those pending or planned to be filed) and programs, etc. Additionally, "technological seeds" target developments and inventions made in the course of Tokyo Tech duties, which the university owns the rights to.

[2] Tokyo Tech Gap Fund Program (in Japanese only)

<https://www.idp.ori.titech.ac.jp/be-a-successful-entrepreneur/funding-support/tokyo-tech-gap-fund/>

4. Application Procedure

① Application Documents

- Entry Sheet (Please consolidate into a maximum of 2 pages and convert the file into PDF format)
 - Description of the research seeds you are applying with
 - Explanation of the issue you aim to solve and the expected customers
 - Current challenges in your research
 - Your aspirations for commercializing the research findings
- Supplementary Technical Description (optional)

[Entry Sheet Template URL:

<https://tokyotech.box.com/shared/static/fz9zynkrnf02es7tuw8ryujb92enlz3o.docx>]

② Application Method

Upload and submit the entry sheet created and downloaded as per point ①, along with any optional supplementary technical description.

[Application Form URL:

<https://tokyotech.app.box.com/f/a650247488f249278ad2b723f50537c7>]

Naming convention for application files: **[Name] File Name**

- ③ Application Deadline: Noon, June 10, 2024 (Monday)
- ④ Application Briefing Sessions:
 - April 23, 2024 (Tuesday) from 12:15 to 13:15
 - May 7, 2024 (Tuesday) from 18:00 to 19:00
 - The sessions will cover the objectives, detailed explanation of the program, and Q&A.
[Registration URL for the briefing session: <https://forms.gle/FTZU4xgVPkMvm7GR6>]
- ⑤ Contact Information: If you have any questions, please contact us at "10. Contact Information."

5. Evaluation

The evaluation will be conducted in two phases: a document review and an online presentation.

The aim is to select early-career researchers with outstanding technology, potential for attractive business, and high motivation.

The evaluation of the entry sheets will be based on the following criteria:

[Technological Seeds] Originality and novelty

[Business Potential] The societal issues solved by the technological seeds

[Motivation] The enthusiasm to "change the world with research"

6. Notification of Selection Results

The results of the document review will be notified by email from June 14 to 17, 2024, including details about the schedule for the online presentation (planned for June 18 to 20). The final selection results will be communicated by email from June 21 to 24, 2024.

*Emails will be sent from the Innovation Design Platform's office (venture@sangaku.titech.ac.jp).

7. Awards Ceremony

Award recipients will be recognized by the President of Tokyo Tech. The ceremony is scheduled for June 27, 2024, from 16:00 to 18:00 at Toranomon Hills Venture Café Tokyo.

8. During the Program Implementation

- ① After the award, all participants are required to attend the kickoff meeting (scheduled for late June).
[Kickoff Agenda]
 - The significance of identifying societal issues that can be addressed through research outcomes.
 - The relationship between business development and enhancing the quality of research and development.
 - Introduction of accompanying experts (mentors), etc.
- ② As part of the Innovation Design Platform's initiative, several events for networking both within and

outside Tokyo Tech are planned. Participants may also be expected to provide progress reports on their research and development, so their participation and cooperation are requested.

- ③ All awarded researchers are required to present their business models and research development results aimed at commercialization at a conference (planned for March 2025). Details will be communicated once finalized.

9. Other Considerations

- ① Please be aware that the content of submitted research proposals may be shared with or disclosed to the members of the "Social Change Challenge Award" evaluation committee, including venture capital evaluators. Confidentiality will be enforced with those with whom the information is shared or disclosed.
- ② The details of selected research development projects (names of representatives, project titles, summaries, etc.) may be published on the website of Innovation Design Platform, Office of Research and Innovation. The content to be published will be confirmed with the representatives beforehand.
- ③ This application guidelines are subject to change without notice. In case of revisions, the version number at the top right of the guidelines will be updated, and a summary of the changes will be announced on the website of Innovation Design Platform, Office of Research and Innovation.

10. Contact Information

For inquiries, contact Innovation Design Platform, Office of Research and Innovation
(Responsible persons: Shinji, Inoue, Kusunose, Ohno).

Email: venture@sangaku.titech.ac.jp