



منافع

Biodiversity Ideathon

Introduction

Situated in the southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula covering 309,500 km² and with a coastline of 3,165km, the Sultanate of Oman is blessed with a diverse terrain that features mountains, plateaus, plains, valleys, escarpments, coastal areas and more. This extraordinary landscape is home to a wealth of unique genetic resources that includes:

- 1,400+ wild plant species
- 320+ marine plant species
- 1,200+ fish species
- 90+ land mammal species
- 518 species of native and migratory birds
- 760+ invertebrate marine species
- 250+ species of coral reefs
- 117 amphibians and reptiles
- 5 turtle species
- 21 land snake species
- A world of microorganisms

Without doubt, Oman's rich indigenous genetic resources are of significant cultural, historical and commercial value not only to the sultanate but also to the region and indeed the world.

This biodiversity offers countless social and economic possibilities and opportunities and while some of these are already being capitalised on, many more are yet to be unlocked. These precious natural assets are the inheritance of generations to come and should, therefore, be properly preserved and safeguarded for their benefit.

One of the most valuable gifts that biodiversity offers is its ability to contribute towards achieving food security for local communities through the development of sustainable agriculture. For example, one gene extracted from Ethiopian barley helped protect the barley crop in the USA against the Yellow Dwarf Virus, thus generating more than

USD 160 million
in revenue for farmers

On top of this, a number of extracts from wild plants and are now used in manufacturing environmentally friendly non-toxic organic pesticides. In fact, some studies have shown that



of commercially available medicines use basic ingredients extracted from natural sources. The value of medicinal products extracted from wild plants for human use has now reached USD 40 billion a year.

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The natural and organic beauty market has also seen remarkable growth during the last few years, exceeding USD 2.5 billion in Middle East markets alone in 2017, according to TechSci Research, which predicts that it will achieve USD 5 billion by 2022. Another study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) showed an increasing demand for sustainable products and a major growth in eco markets for locally made goods, eco-friendly services, organic farming, medicinal plants and green cosmetics and other niche products. The PwC study expects a staggering expansion of the market of such goods and services from USD 65 billion currently,

2020
80 Billion USD



2050
2 Trillion USD





+1200
species of
Plant



+1,200
species of
Fish



+7,200
species of
Fungi



5
species of
Turtle



+130
species of
Coral



527
species of
Birds

In light of the above figures that highlight the huge potential of biodiversity products and the countless opportunities this opens up for us here in Oman, Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Centre (OAPGRC), part of The Research Council (TRC), is organizing the Manafa'a Ideathon Program to give researchers, stakeholders and entrepreneurs in Oman the chance to put forward their innovative biodiversity-based business ideas on how to leverage this natural asset, and to help them convert their creativity into tangible and profitable projects.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the Manafa'a Ideathon Program is to support efforts to diversify Oman's economy by:

- Providing a platform for Omani and Oman-based innovators and entrepreneurs to present, discuss and refine ideas for new products inspired by our biodiversity
- Encouraging start-ups that are based on applied research on national biological resources
- Building public awareness of potential biodiversity investment opportunities

3. Categories

The Manafa'a Ideathon Program is all about value-added products and services.

Added value can be broadly defined as obtaining greater economic value from a product of the same raw material, by changing its current place, time and form. In other words, to change the original characteristics of the material into other characteristics that are more sought after in the market.

In genetic resources, added value is usually achieved through an innovation that leads to the improvement of existing products and services, or creating new ones. Boasting a biodiversity unique in the region, Oman has a treasure trove of potential opportunities for the discovery and manufacture of value-added products.

Examples of biodiversity value-added products and services include natural personal care products,

such as moisturizers, oils, cosmetics and perfumes, as well as various herbal medicines, dietary supplements, organic agriculture, biopesticides, and natural fertilizers. In addition, there are products manufactured using nanotechnology, such as marine paints used on ships and also the manufacture of silica. Indeed, there are certainly many more applications still waiting to be discovered. They are also embedded in the electronic systems and applications aimed at improving, refining and maintaining the product or the biological resources.

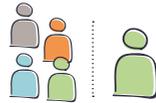
4. Conditions of Participation

Applicants must meet the requirements of the Manafa'a Ideathon Program as follows:

Participants



The applicant must be an Omani or a resident in Oman aged 18 years or over



Registration is allowed individually or as part of a team

Other Conditions

- The applicant must not have participated in the Manaf'a Ideathon Program on any previous occasion
- The applicant must demonstrate their ability to develop the product

Ideas



Genetic resources used must be authentic or registered in Oman

Other Conditions

- The proposed idea must not be subject to any intellectual property rights (IPR)
- The idea must be original and new in Oman
- The idea must be real and viable as a commercial product
- The idea must be technically workable
- The idea must be innovative and of quality

General Rules & Regulations

- Incomplete registration forms will be excluded
- Any infringement of IPR will be cause for disqualification
- Failure to comply with the Manafa'a Ideathon Program timeframe or schedule will be cause for disqualification
- The participant must provide full and accurate personal data
- The winners must sign an agreement to convert their idea into a commercial project
- The winners must provide all the documents and studies required to complete the program
- OAPGRC has the right to use project ideas for the purpose of advertising the Ideathon through all media channels
- OAPGRC will not accept responsibility for any dispute that may arise between the members of the participating teams during or after the Manafa'a Ideathon Program or during the preparatory stages
- The participant shall be responsible for obtaining the IPR for any idea or product

5. Manafa'a Ideathon Program Stages

Manafa'a Ideathon Program will be carried out in 7 stages with a chronological order as follows:

1 Awareness & Publicity

OAPGRC will hold a press conference to announce the Manafa'a Ideathon Program, which will also be advertised in the print and audio-visual media as well as social media. OAPGRC will organize public gatherings in a number of higher education institutions across the Sultanate for that purpose.

2 Registration

Registration for the Manafa'a Ideathon Program can be made electronically through OAPGRC website www.oapgrc.gov.om. The registration form link, will be made available on the OAPGRC website at the opening of registration.

3 Evaluation & Shortlisting

OAPGRC periodically forms the Evaluation Committee from among the members of its scientific committees and staff. The Evaluation Committee will be responsible for:

- First Screening: Incompatible, incomplete or unclear submissions will be excluded
- Second Screening: Participants who passed the first screening will be interviewed and evaluated
- Selection of Participants: Participants who passed the second screening will be approved on a priority basis, according to the logistics capacity of the program (determined periodically)

4 Preparatory Workshop

After the final selection of the qualified teams and individuals, OAPGRC will hold a one-day preparatory workshop, one week before the 48-hour Manafa'a Ideathon itself. The purpose of the workshop is for the participants (teams and individuals) to share their ideas and experiences and plans. In order to ensure the achievement of the objectives of the Manafa'a Ideathon Program, the teams and individuals will be prepared for the next stages through a number of events as part of the workshop agenda, including the following:

- Introducing the Manafa'a Ideathon Program and its different stages
- Delivering some developmental talks on entrepreneurship, feasibility studies, product design and development, product marketing, intellectual property, future technologies, etc
- Introducing Oman's government and private business incubators
- Organizing open meetings for participants to network as well as to select and form teams
- Final announcement of the formation of teams

5 The 48-Hour Manafa'a Ideathon

The Manafa'a Ideathon itself is a two-day event that will be held during the weekend, after which the teams will be able to present their ideas for commercial products. The overall program is as follows:

- Day 1: The participating teams will take their assigned places in the event venue (the venue is announced periodically) and will be given free time to start brainstorming their ideas and select one idea to collect data on. By the end of the day, each team will have identified the initial scope of the idea.
- Day 2: The teams will take the idea onto the next level i.e. designing a prototype of the product (if possible) and developing a preliminary financial study, along with a marketing plan, in addition to building product identity. At the end of the day the teams are to prepare a presentation on the product according to the prescribed form.
- During the two days (at specified times on each day) the teams will be joined by mentors from different scientific, financial and marketing backgrounds in order to provide technical support to the teams towards the development of the product, in accordance with the general guidelines given to the mentors.

6 Judging Panel

For each session, OAPGRC will form a panel of judges with no more than 6 members. The members of the panel will come from number of areas that may include: academia, entrepreneurship, marketing and identity, business incubators, and financial advisory services.

On the next day of the 48-hour Manafa'a Ideathon, the teams will present their ideas for commercial products to the panel. The panel will then assess the teams against the pre-defined criteria. At the end of the day, the panel will submit its final decision to OAPGRC.

7 Announcement of Manafa'a Winners

The four winning teams from the two-day Manafa'a Ideathon will be announced at an official ceremony the day after the panel's decision. The winning teams will receive a prize of

RO 2,500

(dispersed in phases) and a Manafa'a Ideathon plaque.

6. Manafa'a Awarding Process

Winners Orientation & Execution of Commitment Contract

Within one week of the announcement of winners, OAPGRC will hold a meeting with the prize winning teams to brief them about the remaining stages of the Manafa'a Ideathon Program and the respective time periods, as well as to agree on a mechanism to meet the requirements of each stage. The winning teams are then required to sign a commitment contract to complete all stages for the production of the product prototype.



Prize Money Payments

The prize shall be handed out according to the mechanism agreed upon by OAPGRC and the winning teams, but not later than six months from the date of signing the commitment contract, as follows:

- The prize money will be disbursed according to the agreed upon stages.
- The amount may be disbursed as follows:

1 The amount will be paid to a third party after verification of the data provided, such as the lease contract, cooperation contract, invoice, quotation, etc.

2 The amount will be credited to the account of one of the team members in the event of a purchase of any materials for the project, if the same was paid for personally by that member.

- The amounts paid shall cover the following items only:

Item	Description	Required Documents	Payments (%)
Operational plan	Including work tasks, timeframes and the budget required for each task	Provision of proofs of the budget (for example, quote, contract, bills)	10-30%
Contract with a business incubator	Can be a governmental or private incubator (including research or other specialized centers). The agreement must specify the terms provided by the incubator, the mechanism of progress reporting, duration of incubation and financial costs	Incubation Agreement	As agreed (up to 30%)
Consumables	Including any materials used in manufacturing the product prototype	Letter of approval from the incubator for each payment	30-70%
Product prototype	Creating a product prototype that can be marketed to the supporting institutions	Confirmation letter from the incubator, product description, feasibility study	The balance

Follow-Up and Final Report

- OAPGRC will assign staff to follow up on the progress of the teams and their achievements, and to help with any difficulties they may encounter
- The winning teams shall provide any details or data as may be requested by OAPGRC
- The winning team shall provide a brief progress report on the progress of the product every two months
- The winning team shall provide a detailed report of the product prototype (for documentation purposes)
- OAPGRC shall prepare an annual comprehensive report on the Manafa'a Ideathon Program, the winning ideas as well as the initial products based on these ideas after the incubation period

Science Incubation



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Innovation 6 Technology Transfer Center



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