



# IDEAS

## Social Innovation Challenge

Now in our 25th year of  
incubating impact



PKG

PRISCILLA KING GRAY  
PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER

IDEAS

# MIT's premier social impact incubator



IDEAS incubates social impact ventures—nonprofit, for-profit, and hybrid models.

All teams cultivate entrepreneurship skills rooted in systems change, social impact, and ethics provided uniquely by IDEAS.



*"We came to PKG IDEAS looking for help understanding our social impact. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is critical, but we knew there was a broader social dimension we didn't fully understand. Who benefits from our solution- and who might be left out?"*

***IDEAS helped us expand our lens and think more deeply about the people behind the problem we're trying to solve."***

*- David Brown MBA '25  
Helix Carbon*



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# Success Stories



## ***Biobot Analytics* | 2017 cohort**

Biobot Analytics analyzes wastewater to monitor the spread of respiratory illnesses and high-risk drug use, to predict disease clusters & outbreaks, optimize health resources, and fuel breakthroughs in disease treatment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Biobot was first to build a test to gauge virus levels in wastewater, eventually collaborating with CDC and government entities. Time Magazine lauded Biobot as one of the Best Inventions of 2022. Biobot went through Y Combinator and attracted funding from The Engine, Pioneer Fund and others.

## ***Forma Systems* | 2025 cohort**

Forma developed technology that uses up to 72% less cement and up to 67% less steel than conventional flat concrete floor slabs with proprietary optimization software & 3D-printed mold fabrication. Forma expands access to high-quality, low-carbon affordable housing & building systems

After winning a grant through the IDEAS Challenge, Forma won the top prize of \$100,000 at the MIT Climate & Energy Prize competition.



## ***Takachar* | 2012 cohort**

Takachar develops affordable, small-scale, portable technology that attaches to tractors in remote farms. The machine converts crop residue into sellable bio-products like fuel and fertilizer. Their Takavator Mini Unit is deployed in Southern India, on the west coast of the US, and in British Columbia, Canada. In 2023, Takachar processed 400 tons of biomass and avoided 800 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.

In 2021, Takachar won the Earthshot Prize, funded by Prince William and Princess Catherine.

# How IDEAS works

## MIT's home for early-stage social innovation.

*From idea to impact through a  
comprehensive curriculum,  
mentorship, funding, and robust  
network of critical support.*

### Discover & Define

Students identify a real-world challenge, build relationships with the most affected communities, form teams, and work through learning experiences to prepare to submit strong applications.

### Prototype & Test

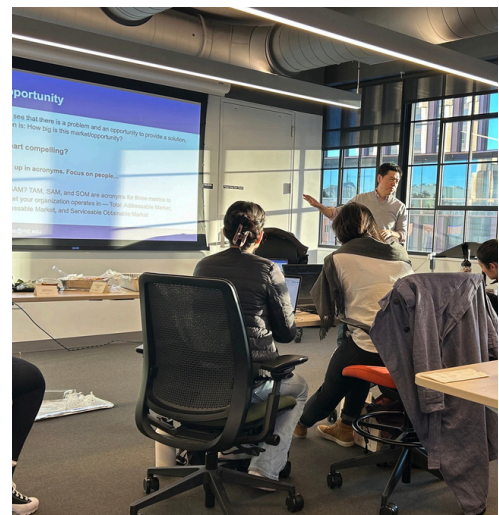
Teams apply, interview, and are selected for the incubator. Teams develop early interventions using community-centered frameworks, theories of change, and systems-level analyses.

### Apply & Pitch

Students submit refined proposals and pitch to expert judges for a chance to win up to \$20,000 in additional grant funding.

### Launch & Learn

Winning teams pilot their ideas with continued support from mentors, advisors, and the IDEAS network for the next 18 months.







# Program History

Since 2001, IDEAS has empowered MIT student-led teams to address social and environmental challenges through social entrepreneurship. Students recruit global teammates and co-create solutions with community partners and stakeholders.

Through incubator programs, peer to peer exchange, and practical mentorship, teams build skills in collaboration, systems thinking, and impact measurement, supported by partners, reviewers, and seed funding of \$1,000, with up to \$20,000 in follow-on grants available.

Grantees are selected based on:

- **Innovation** in context
- **Impact** potential
- **Feasibility** of implementation

63  
countries

1200+ teams

276  
grantees

# Sponsor IDEAS

Sponsor the IDEAS Showcase & Awards Ceremony to connect with the brightest impact-driven founders at MIT.

## IDEAS Showcase & Launch

<b>DISCOVER &amp; DEFINE SPONSOR</b>	<i>The kickoff phase. Sponsor recognized where our guests gather and connect.</i>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>PROTOTYPE &amp; TEST SPONSOR</b>	<i>The breakthrough innovation phase. Sponsor highlighted on welcome page of 25th anniversary booklet.</i>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>LAUNCH &amp; LEARN SPONSOR</b>	<i>The hands-on rollout phase. Sponsor logo on all nametags.</i>	<b>\$7,500</b>
<b>IGNITE AWARD</b>	<i>Sponsor the \$5,000 grant award</i>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>MOMENTUM AWARD</b>	<i>Sponsor the \$7,500 grant award</i>	<b>\$7,500</b>
<b><del>IMPACT AWARD</del></b>	<i>Sponsorship level claimed.</i>	<b><del>\$10,000</del></b>
<b>CATALYST AWARD</b>	<i>Sponsor the \$15,000 grant award</i>	<b>\$15,000</b>
<b>FRONTIER AWARD</b>	<i>Sponsor the \$20,000 grant award</i>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>SUSTAINING SPONSOR</b>	<i>Annual recognition as a lead sponsor of IDEAS in perpetuity</i>	<b>\$250,000+</b>