

Press release

Casablanca, 17 February 2022

The OCP Group launches “Usine du Futur by OCP”, an Open Innovation challenge dedicated to Industry 4.0.

- **The objective of this challenge is to identify Moroccan, African, and international start-ups able to co-develop innovative digital solutions in connection with the Group's industrial businesses.**
- **4 major topics are concerned: Safe Operations, Smart Operations, Supply Chain, and Sustainability.**
- **The 4 finalist start-ups will benefit from access to experimental and acceleration infrastructures of the OCP Group's Innovation ecosystem to launch their Proof of Concept (POC) and thus demonstrate the feasibility of their concept or idea.**

The OCP Group, the world's leading producer of phosphates and leader in the phosphate fertilizers market, is extending its Open Innovation program to industrial businesses with the launch of its “Usine du Futur by OCP” challenge through which the Group is putting the innovation players in competition with each other on the challenges of the factory of tomorrow. This challenge is part of the launch by the OCP Group of its Open Innovation platform: “The Next Seed”.

Through this initiative, the Group continues to support the development and promotion of the African and international entrepreneurial ecosystem. The Group aims at identifying Moroccan, African, and international start-ups able to co-develop innovative digital solutions in response to strategic and operational issues of the Group's industrial businesses.

The OCP Group is addressing 4 challenges to start-ups around Industry 4.0 to anticipate the challenges facing the factory of the future and imagine solutions that will accommodate futuristic technologies: maximizing safety employees to achieve “Zero incidents” (**Safe Operations**), optimizing the performance of industrial production lines by reducing losses (**Smart Operations**), making the traceability of shipments more efficient and optimizing customer satisfaction (**Supply Chain**), and controlling the air quality at the industrial site level (**Sustainability**).

A call for applications will be open from 17 February to 27 March 2022 to identify the start-ups that will best respond to the issues identified by the Group. **Start-ups can apply on the site dedicated to the challenge: <https://www.the-nextseed.com./fr/challenges/usine-du-futur?lang=fr>**

At the end of this application phase, a start-up selection procedure will be initiated. This phase will take place in two rounds and be followed by a final during which a jury made up of experts and members of the management of the OCP Group will nominate the 4 finalist start-ups.

The finalist start-ups will be supported for 3 months by experts from the OCP Group to prototype and deploy their solutions as part of a pilot project. The ecosystem of the OCP Group, made up of its partners such as the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P) with its "Startgate" campus for start-ups and its "Innovation Lab Operations" (ILO), will also make available to those start-ups extended support with a range of services (co-working space, fablabs, acceleration program, etc.) and dedicated experimentation fields such as the Safi experimental factory to validate the value proposition of their solutions. The Safi site will be the testing ground for the Challenge in which start-ups will be able, in collaboration with the site's entities, to meet the technological, industrial, and environmental challenges of the Factory of the Future.

Following the prototyping phase, the start-ups having succeeded in setting up an innovative and functional solution will be able to deploy their solutions in real conditions and close collaboration with the businesses of the Safi site, as well as the entities of the Innovation ecosystem of the OCP Group.

As a reminder, the previous competitions (Mining Challenge and Data Challenge) have enabled innovative solutions to emerge in connection with the topics of Mine 4.0 and the use of data analytics in the transformation of the OCP Group's businesses.

About OCP Group:

The OCP Group helps feed a growing world population by providing it with essential elements for soil fertility and plant growth. With a century of expertise and a turnover of 5.9 billion dollars in 2020, the OCP Group is the world leader in the plant nutrition and phosphate fertilizers market. The Group offers a wide range of specialty phosphate fertilizers, adapted to enrich the soil, increase agricultural yields and nourish the soil to feed the planet economically and sustainably. Based in Morocco, and present on 5 continents, the OCP Group works closely with more than 350 clients around the world. Committed to best serving the environmental and social development of Africa, the OCP Group places innovation at the heart of its strategy, in particular for the establishment of sustainable and prosperous agriculture on the continent. The Group is firmly convinced that leadership and profitability go hand in hand with social responsibility and sustainable development. Its strategic vision is at the intersection of those two dimensions.

Learn more: www.ocpgroup.ma