Harit Manthan 2026 - National Hackathon
Submission Guidelines

1. Introduction

Harit Manthan 2026 - National Hackathon is a national-level innovation challenge jointly organized by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and Udhmodya Foundation (Startup Ecosystem of University of Delhi). The Hackathon aims to crowdsource innovative, scalable, and cost-effective solutions to address critical challenges in urban biodiversity and green space management. *The Hackathon will be held on 17th – 18th April 2026 in New Delhi.*

DDA manages over 16,000 acres of parks, biodiversity zones, and city forests across the National Capital, making it a critical custodian of Delhi's ecological infrastructure. However, DDA faces a significant challenge: existing technology solutions available in the market are expensive and unproven for government-scale deployment. This innovation gap limits DDA's ability to:

- Deploy cost-effective biodiversity monitoring and management systems
- Implement scalable conservation technologies
- Address operational challenges innovatively
- Achieve ecological outcomes efficiently

The Hackathon will be conducted across **two parallel tracks**:

- **Technology Challenge**: Focusing on digital, data-driven, and technological solutions
- **Policy Challenge**: Focusing on governance, planning, and institutional frameworks

The initiative seeks to:

- Identify **deployable solutions** that can be tested within DDA's ecosystem
- Enable **real-world application and pilot** of selected ideas
- Support winning teams through a **12-month incubation programme**

The Hackathon will culminate in a two-day national event, where shortlisted teams will present their solutions to an expert jury panel.

2. Eligibility and Participation

2.1. Eligibility Criteria

The Hackathon is **open exclusively to students** currently enrolled in a recognized university or higher education institution in India.

Eligible participants include students pursuing:

- Undergraduate (UG) programmes
- Postgraduate (PG) programmes
- Diploma programmes

Participants must be **actively enrolled at the time of registration and submission**. Individuals who have graduated or are not currently enrolled in an academic programme are **not eligible** to participate.

2.2. Team Composition

- Participation is permitted only in teams. Individual entries will not be accepted.
- Each team must consist of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5 members.
- All members of a team must meet the eligibility criteria specified above.
- Teams are encouraged to be interdisciplinary, combining skills across technology, policy, design, and related domains.
- Each team must designate one member as the Team Lead, who will act as the primary point of contact for all communication.

2.3. Participation Rules

- A participant may be part of only one team in the Hackathon.
- Teams are permitted to apply to only one track (either the Technology Challenge or the Policy Challenge). Applications to both tracks will not be considered.

2.4. Institutional Affiliation

- The team members may belong to the same or different educational institutions.

- Cross-institutional teams are permitted and encouraged to participate in the Hackathon.

2.5. *Proof of Eligibility*

All shortlisted teams will be required to provide valid proof of eligibility, including:

- Student identity cards issued by their institution
- Failure to provide valid documentation may result in disqualification.

3. Problem Statements

The Hackathon will be conducted across two parallel tracks: **Technology Challenge** and **Policy Challenge**. Participants are required to select their track/s and develop solutions aligned with the corresponding problem statements.

All problem statements are framed in the context of public green spaces in metropolitan cities. Participants are expected to develop solutions that are adaptable across urban contexts, while also demonstrating clear applicability to Delhi and its green spaces.

3.1. *Tech Challenge Problem Statements:*

Problem Statement 1: Measuring the Health and Performance of Public Green Spaces

Public green spaces play a critical role in improving urban liveability — supporting biodiversity, regulating temperature, and enhancing air quality. However, cities often lack reliable, standardized ways to measure, compare, and monitor the health and ecological performance of these spaces over time.

How can technology enable cities to measure, monitor, and evaluate the ecological and functional performance of public green spaces — including, but not limited to, aspects such as tree health and survival, biodiversity and species presence, habitat quality, carbon and microclimate impacts (including thermal comfort), water resilience, sufficiency and flood mitigation potential, climate resilience and adaptation to adverse development impacts, natural resource conservation and rejuvenation, and the condition of both natural (softscape) and built (hardscape) infrastructure — in a way that supports standardized assessment, data-driven planning and resource allocation?

Problem Statement 2: Making Public Green Spaces More Engaging and Accessible

Public green spaces often remain underutilized due to limited awareness, lack of interactive experiences, and weak engagement between citizens and these spaces. While they provide significant environmental and social benefits, these are not always visible, equitably accessible, or inclusive across different user groups.

How can technology be used to enhance citizen engagement with public green spaces by making them more interactive, informative, and inclusive, while enabling citizen participation and awareness, and generating actionable insights for park management — both spatially and qualitatively — to improve access, usage, safety (particularly for women), microclimate comfort, ecological resilience, efficient use of sustainable materials, and overall user experience and perception?

Problem Statement 3: Making Every Drop Count

Urban parks are among the largest consumers of freshwater in a city — at a time when groundwater tables are falling and municipal supply is under stress. Treated wastewater is increasingly available as an alternative source, but its safe use requires monitoring that most park authorities do not have. Meanwhile, ponds and water bodies within parks — critical for biodiversity and microclimate regulation — are often restored through methods that clean surfaces without healing underlying ecological systems.

How might technology help cities use water more intelligently within their green spaces — reducing extraction from stressed sources, enabling the safe reuse of treated water, and restoring the ecological health of urban water bodies rather than simply maintaining their appearance?

3.2.   *Policy Challenge Problem Statements*

Problem Statement 1: From Public Goods to Sustainable Assets
Urban green infrastructure generates enormous public value — in heat mitigation, air quality, mental health, biodiversity, and climate resilience — but this value is rarely captured in ways that attract sustained investment. Public funding alone is insufficient to protect and grow large urban green estates. Yet the frameworks for bringing in private capital, CSR resources, or carbon finance are often underdeveloped, poorly structured, or absent.

How can cities design financial models that make investment in urban green infrastructure genuinely attractive to the private sector — without compromising

public access, ecological integrity, or long-term conservation goals? What would it take to turn a city's green estate into a financially sustainable asset?

Problem Statement 2: Unlocking the Potential of Cities' Green Spaces

Parks in metropolitan cities have the potential to be vibrant community anchors — spaces where people gather, connect with nature, and build civic life. How can policy and community-driven approaches help more city residents discover, use, and take ownership of their green spaces?

Problem Statement 3: The Air We Share

Air pollution and water pollution remain among the most pressing environmental challenges in urban areas. Rivers, lakes, and other water bodies within cities are often heavily polluted due to untreated sewage, industrial discharge, and urban runoff. These are not simply failures of regulation or enforcement; they are also failures of ecological planning. At the same time, ecological systems such as floodplains, wetlands, and green corridors — which can naturally filter water, disperse particulate matter, and absorb and clean stormwater — have been encroached upon and fragmented. Cities have lost the very ecological systems that could have buffered them against the pollution they now generate.

How should cities use their green infrastructure — floodplains, wetlands, urban forests, and ecological corridors — as a deliberate, policy-driven tool to mitigate air and water pollution? What would it take to embed ecological systems into pollution governance frameworks, so that a city's green estate becomes a frontline defence rather than an afterthought in the fight for cleaner air and water?

4. Submission Requirements

The Hackathon will be conducted in **two stages**:

- **Stage 1: Pitch Deck Submission (for all registered teams)**
- **Stage 2: Mentorship & Pitch Refinement (for shortlisted teams)**
- **Stage 3: Final Presentation (for shortlisted teams only)**

Teams must adhere strictly to the submission requirements outlined below. Non-compliant submissions may be rejected.

4.1. *Stage 1: Pitch Deck Submission*

All registered teams are required to submit a **Pitch Deck in PDF or PPT format in this template**, as part of the initial screening process.

In addition, teams must submit a **video recording of a slide-based presentation explaining their Pitch Deck, with a clear voiceover explaining each slide.** The presenter may choose to appear on camera; however, this is not mandatory.

4.2. *Submission Components:*

The Pitch Deck must include the following components:

S.No.	Criteria	Description
1	Executive Summary & Demo	• Brief introduction of the start-up • Overview and demo of the product/ service solution • Description of user journey • What makes the solution unique
2	Problem Statement	• Clear articulation of the problem being addressed • Validation using real-life examples, data, or user pain points
3	Solution	• Description of how the solution addresses the problem • Long-term vision or what it looks like to solve the problem at scale
4	Business Model	• Pricing strategy • Revenue sources • Financial Sustainability • Cost structure • Target users
5	Market Plan / Growth Strategy	• Understanding of market • Understanding of competitive landscape • Strategy for initial adoption and pathway to scale
6	Management Team and Core Skills	• Team members and roles • Relevant skills, experience, and expertise
7	Current Progress, Achievements & Timeline	• Current status of the solution • Key milestones/achievements (if any)

		• Future roadmap and timelines • Awards, strategic partnerships, funding rounds (if any)
8	Call to Action	• Current goal • Strategy to achieve the goal • Support required
9	Grant / Funding Required	• Amount of funding / support requested • Proposed utilization of funds

4.2.1. _Submission Format_

- The Pitch Deck must be submitted in PDF or PPT format in the provided template.
- The video presentation **should not exceed 10 minutes in duration** and must be submitted as an MP4 file or a shareable Google Drive link.
- File naming convention: TeamName_TrackName.pdf

4.2.2. _Submission Mode:_

- Submissions must be made through the official Hackathon registration link.
- Email submissions will not be accepted.

4.3. _Stage 2: Shortlisting & Mentorship_

Based on the evaluation of the Pitch Decks, the **top 10 teams per track** will be shortlisted through an online screening process.

- Submissions will be evaluated by a designated jury panel
- A total of **20 teams (10 per track)** will be selected for the final round

4.3.1. _Mentorship & Pitch Refinement (Day 1 of Event)_

- Shortlisted teams will be invited to participate in the in-person Hackathon event on 17th April 2026 at **Maya Art Gallery, Indraprastha Park**.
- Each team will be paired with a mentor/expert.
- Mentors will provide:
  - Feedback on the solution approach

- o Guidance on strengthening feasibility and implementation
- o Inputs to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the pitch

4.4. Stage 3: Final Presentation

Shortlisted teams will present their refined solutions to the jury on 18th April 2026, the final day of the Hackathon event, at **Atal Akshaya Urja Bhawan**.

- Presentation duration: **10 minutes per team**
  - o The final Pitch Deck must be submitted in PDF or PPT format.
  - o Any supporting material (demo links, videos, etc.) may be included where applicable

4.5. General Instructions

- Submissions must be original and unpublished work.
- Plagiarized submissions will lead to disqualification.
- Teams must ensure clarity, conciseness, and completeness in their submissions.

5. Evaluation Criteria

5.1. Stage 1: Evaluation Criteria (Pitch Deck Submission)

Criteria	Description	Weightage
Problem Understanding	Clarity and depth of understanding of the selected problem	20%
Innovation & Originality	Novelty and uniqueness of the proposed idea	20%
Feasibility	Practicality and implementability within urban public systems and green spaces	20%
Impact Potential	Environmental, social, and/or operational impact	20%
Clarity of Submission	Structure, articulation, and overall quality of the pitch deck	20%
Total		**100%**

5.2. Stage 3: Evaluation Criteria (Final Presentation)

5.2.1. Technology Challenge

Criteria	Description	Weightage
Innovation & Technical Strength	Originality and robustness of the technological solution	20%
Feasibility & Implementation	Practical deployability within urban public systems and green spaces	20%
Prototype / Technical Demonstration	Quality and functionality of prototype or system design	20%
Scalability	Ability to scale across multiple parks/contexts	15%
Impact	Environmental and operational benefits	15%
Presentation & Communication	Clarity, structure, and effectiveness of pitch	10%

5.2.2. Policy Challenge

Criteria	Description	Weightage
Problem Analysis	Depth of understanding and contextual grounding	20%
Policy Innovation	Originality and strength of proposed intervention	20%
Feasibility & Governance	Practical implementability within institutional frameworks	20%
Impact Potential	Social, environmental, and behavioural outcomes	20%
Clarity & Structure	Coherence and articulation of the framework	10%
Presentation & Communication	Effectiveness of delivery and argumentation	10%

Note: The decision of the Jury shall be final and binding.

6. Awards and Incubation Support

Selected teams will be awarded prize money and provided with incubation support to further develop and implement their solutions. All awards, seed funding, incubation support, and related benefits under this Hackathon shall be subject to these Submission Guidelines, as well as the applicable policies, rules, and guidelines of Udhmodya Foundation, as amended from time to time ('Udhmodya Guidelines'). For further details, please refer to 'University of Delhi - The Innovation and Startup Policy, 2023'.

6.1. *Awards*

- **Up to 10 teams** from the final stage of the Hackathon may be selected for awards and further support.
- The number of awarded teams will be determined based on:
    o Quality of submissions
    o Feasibility and implementation potential
    o Jury evaluation
    o Udhmodya Guidelines

6.2. *Seed Funding*

- Selected teams will be **eligible for seed funding support up to Rs. 10 Lakh each**, subject to evaluation, the discretion of the jury, and applicable Udhmodya Guidelines.
- The amount of funding awarded to each team will vary and will be determined based on:
    o Strength and viability of the solution
    o Scope of implementation
    o Recommendations of the Evaluation Committee

6.3. *Incubation Support*

Selected teams may be offered **incubation support under Udhmodya Foundation** for a period of 12 months as per Udhmodya Guidelines.

The incubation programme may include:

- Access to **workspace and infrastructure**
- **Mentorship and expert guidance**
- Support in **solution development and scaling**

- Assistance with **funding, partnerships, and market linkages**
- Access to **technical, legal, and compliance support**

7. Intellectual Property

7.1. *Ownership of Prototypes/ Solutions*

Ownership, licensing, and usage of intellectual property arising from the ideas, concepts, and solutions submitted under the Hackathon shall be governed by the applicable policies, rules, and guidelines of Udhmodya Foundation, as amended from time to time.

7.2. *Pilot and Scaling of Solutions*

- Selected teams may be provided with opportunities to pilot and test their solutions within DDA's parks and green infrastructure.
- DDA reserves the right to adopt, deploy, and scale selected solutions without the payment of any licensing or usage fees.
- Any large-scale implementation will be undertaken in consultation with the respective teams, on mutually agreed terms, and in accordance with Udhmodya Guidelines.

8. Timelines for the Hackathon

Stage	Timeline	Details
Launch & Opening of Registrations	20th March 2026	Hackathon announcement and opening of registrations
Registration & Pitch Deck Submission	Till 30th March 2026	Teams register and submit pitch decks
Evaluation & Shortlisting	31st March – 6th April 2026	Top 10 teams per track shortlisted through online screening
Shortlist Announcement	7th April 2026	Selected teams informed
Hackathon Event – Day 1 **Maya Art Gallery, Indraprastha Park**	17th April 2026	Mentorship sessions and pitch refinement
Hackathon Event – Day 2	18th April 2026	Final presentations and jury evaluation

Atal Akshaya Urja Bhawan		
Results Announcement	18th April 2026	Winners announced
Incubation Programme	April 2026 – March 2027	12-month incubation support for selected teams