

IC Taiwan Grand Challenge Pilot Program

Organizer: National Science and Technology Council

**Co-organizer: SEMI, Taiwan Semiconductor Industry Association,
Taipei Computer Association**

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IC Taiwan Grand Challenge

Guidelines

I. Introduction

The Taiwan Chip-based Industrial Innovation Program (Taiwan CbI) is a collaborative effort by various Taiwanese government ministries. It aims to make the most of Taiwan's expertise in semiconductor technology by combining chips with important innovations like generative AI. It focuses on attracting global startups and investment, using generative AI and chips for industry-wide innovation, attracting global talent, and advancing heterogeneous integration for overall industry growth.

To boost Taiwan's position as a leading IC startup cluster, the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) organizes the IC Taiwan Grand Challenge. It offers local incentives such as chip tape-out, masks, and IP services, collaborates with leading semiconductor companies for investment, and establishes public-private venture capital funds. These efforts aim to attract global talent and investment, with the goal of making Taiwan a hub for innovative chip technologies.

In 2024, the IC Taiwan Grand Challenge debuted, aiming to discover promising teams early and connect them with Taiwan. It spotlights global startups and academic groups focusing on **IC design innovations** and **Chip-based innovative applications**. Top selections are invited to establish bases in Taiwan, linking them with funding to advance chip innovations, leveraging the world's most comprehensive semiconductor industry ecosystem to support creative endeavors.

The Taiwan government hopes to integrate local IC design, manufacturing, packaging, testing, and product processes through this award. It seeks to attract global talent to Taiwan, driving business opportunities and fostering industry development.

II. Categories

Participating teams need to actively leverage innovative IC design to develop advanced application solutions or enhanced technologies across the following categories:

- Smart Data & AI (such as: cybersecurity, quantum computing, digital economy)
- Smart Mobility (such as: electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, smart cities, comms/satellite)
- Smart Manufacturing (such as: intelligent manufacturing, IC process, robotics)
- Smart Medtech (such as: biometrics, smart monitoring, eHealth)
- Sustainability (such as: sustainable manufacturing, energy-saving innovation)

III. Eligibility

1. Startups, legal entities, academic research teams, and persons that plan to collaborate with Taiwan's semiconductor chip design and manufacturing industry.

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- (1) Participants entering as companies must be startups that were established within 8 years from the date of registration. However, this does not apply to non-corporate entities, academic research teams, or individual persons.
- (2) Startups/ legal entities/ academic research institutions/ individuals from China (including Hong Kong, Macau) or startups established by people, legal entities or other institutions of China (including Hong Kong, Macau) from a third place are not eligible for the IC Taiwan Grand Challenge.

- (3) The source of funding must not include funds from any individual, legal entity organization, or other institution of China or any enterprise it invests in any third area, which refers to any individual, legal entity organization, or other institution of China (including Hong Kong, Macau) that directly or indirectly holds more than 30% of the shares or total capital contribution of the third-area enterprise; or having the ability to control the third-area enterprise.
2. The participant must own the intellectual property rights of the product, technology or solution or have obtained legal licensing access.
3. The participant must provide concept paper (for initial review) and deliver a presentation (for secondary review) within the designated time. The content of the concept paper includes the core technology, situations that have been solved or verified so far, the business model to be developed, market expansion plans, etc. The participant must submit a pitch video of no longer than 3 minutes, along with other supporting materials.
4. Participants who have previously won awards in the IC Taiwan Grand Challenge are not eligible for rewards in this competition. However, this restriction does not apply if the project leader is different from the one in the previous competition, especially for legal entities or academic research teams.

IV. Competition process

The award selection process is through online competitions. Teams can participate with no entry limits.

1. Registration will be accepted in two rounds: the first round will close on June 30, 2024, and the second round will start from September 4, 2024, close on January 31, 2025. Following these deadlines, there will be a two-week grace period for participants to complete their application materials. The official deadlines will be

published on the event website: ictaiwanchallenge.org. The organizer reserves the right to modify these deadlines without prior notice.

2. Online registration: Interested participants can fill in the registration form online at any time and upload required documents.

Please download the file through IC Taiwan Grand Challenge official website: <https://ictaiwanchallenge.org>

3. Qualification review: The organizer will conduct a qualification review and confirm the competition category in accordance with the regulations.
4. Initial review: The contents of the concept paper will be reviewed. Based on the review results, candidates will be notified whether they will proceed to the secondary review. Candidates that pass the initial review must submit the “IC Innovation Acceleration Platform Resource Requirement Application Form” (please refer to Attachment 1).
5. Secondary review: The presentation and Q&A will be conducted online. The entire process (including presentation and Q&A) will be conducted in English. The total time is 20 minutes.
6. Result Announcement: The organizer will schedule the review periods according to the volume of applications to be evaluated. Results will be published on the competition website and the NSTC official website two weeks after the completion of the review process.

V. Judging Criteria

1. Jury composition: Experts from Taiwan’s industry, venture capital, government departments in relevant fields are invited to form a committee to select the winning team via initial and secondary review.
2. Scoring criteria (100%):
 - (1) Local connections (**40%**)

- i. Specific resource requirements and development plans in Taiwan
 - ii. Ability to provide broader development plans for Taiwan's industries
- (2) Value Creation (40%)
- i. Ability to drive technological innovation potential and create social welfare
 - ii. Contribution to promoting new industrial links or promoting industrial upgrading
 - iii. Effectiveness of introducing derivative investments or creating high economic value
- (3) Technological Innovations (20%)
- i. Innovations in emerging application fields
 - ii. Innovations and developments in the manufacturing process, design, and application of new materials
 - iii. Ability to integrate the advantages of diversified innovation and integrated cross-domain thinking

VI. Awards

1. A landing prize of USD 30,000 will be awarded to ever winning team. Award recipients are required to have at least one team member participate in industry matchmaking events for a minimum of one month in Taiwan prior to signing the investment agreement. However, an alternative arrangement may be negotiated to allow flexibility. The matchmaking process will be tailored to the specific needs of the award recipients and the prize will be disbursed upon the completion of their obligations in Taiwan.
2. Industry chain linkage and chip development guidance through the IC Innovation Acceleration Platform: Based on the award recipients' resource needs for development in Taiwan, funding will be provided upon approval by the NSTC.

This support may include access to EDA tools, silicon intellectual property licensing services, IC design services, and wafer shuttle services, as required for chip development. Each award recipient may receive up to USD 3 million in total. Equity exchange will generally be conducted using the SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) model. If SAFE is not applicable under the relevant national regulations, alternative equity exchange methods will be negotiated.

3. **Industry Expert Review and Mentorship:** A review committee composed of senior technical experts from Taiwan's semiconductor industry and venture capital professionals will evaluate the resource requirements proposed by the award recipients. Based on these needs, industry experts will be arranged to provide professional mentorship and consultation to the award recipients.
4. **Additional Landing Resources:** Awardees will qualify for access to TTA facilities, including locations in Taipei and Kaohsiung (<https://www.taiwanarena.tech/>), as well as related business development support. A dedicated mentorship manager will serve as a liaison between the winning teams and advisors/mentors, assisting in connecting the awardees with the necessary resources.

VII. Obligations

1. After passing the initial review, participants must submit the Application Form for IC Innovation Acceleration Platform Resource Requirement (see Attachment 1). Upon confirmation of the award, the provided resources will be converted into equity, with shares held by the National Science and Technology Development Fund of the Executive Yuan.
2. Award recipients must sign the SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) investment agreement within three months of the announcement. The organizer reserve the right to allow extensions for signing or to negotiate alternative equity exchange methods if SAFE is not applicable. The agreement must be signed by a

company; if the award recipient is not a company, they must establish one before signing the agreement to qualify for investment.

3. Award recipients must cooperate with on-site business development in Taiwan, which includes, but is not limited to; participating in designated exhibitions, technical presentations, and award ceremonies. Examples include COMPUTEX/InnoVEX from May 20-23, 2025, and the Taiwan Innotech Expo (TIE) from October 14-18, 2025.
4. Award recipients are required to assist with publicity activities by submitting relevant materials or participating in promotional efforts. They must also cooperate with the organizer's arrangements for on-site meetings, scheduling activities, and monitoring & evaluation activities.

VIII. Rules and Regulations

1. Plagiarism, translation, rewriting, or general infringement of intellectual property rights are strictly prohibited in competition. Violation of this stipulation may result in disqualification of the offending teams or revocation of their awards. If the violation causes material losses, liabilities, trouble, or other inconveniences to the organizer or any other third party, the violator shall bear full legal responsibility.
2. Participating teams must ensure that all submitted information is factual, accurate, and correct. Participating teams may not fraudulently use any third party's information. If there is any false or incorrect information, the organizer reserves the right to disqualify the team.
3. Participating teams shall respect the decision of the review committee and shall not have any objections to the review results unless they can specifically prove that other participating teams have violated the relevant provisions of these regulations.

4. The organizer may collect and process personal information of contestants or other members for the purpose of contestant management, registration management, identity confirmation during the event, event contact, competition-related information contact, and related administrative operations. For those who do not agree to the collection and processing of their personal information, the organizer may disqualify the contestant from being shortlisted or winning the prize.
5. In accordance with Taiwan's tax laws, tax shall be withheld by the prize granting agencies for the monetary prizes/incentives granted to the winning companies. The applicable withholding rate for foreign companies is 20%. Prize winners should provide their identity document for the organizer to file taxes.
6. For non-profit publicity purposes, the organizer reserves the right to use the product technical information provided by the contestants to publish, author, publicly display, and distribute various types of media for publicity.
7. Anyone who registers to participate in this competition is deemed to have fully understood and agreed the terms of these regulations and is willing to fully abide by the provisions stated in these regulations.
8. The organizer reserves the right to modify these initial rules and regulations, which will be revised periodically and announced immediately. If there are any outstanding matters, they will be handled in accordance with the relevant regulations or explanations of NSTC.

IX. Contact

About Competition: Taipei Computer Association

- Contact person: Ms. Annett Wu
- Contact number: +886 2 25774249 Ext. 312
- Email: annett@mail.tca.org.tw

X. Attachment 1

Application Form for IC Innovation Acceleration Platform Resource Requirement

Explanation of the Guidelines:

1. IC Innovation Acceleration Platform leverages Taiwan's leading semiconductor capabilities and abundant resources to consolidate key resources needed for chip development, assisting global IC startups in accelerating the realization of potential products.
2. The maximum value of the investment provided is up to USD 3 million.
3. The investment provided will primarily be converted into equity using the SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) model. If the SAFE agreement is not applicable under the regulations of the respective country, alternative equity exchange methods will be negotiated. The equity will be held by the National Science and Technology Development Fund of the Executive Yuan.

Detailed required support: (Please describe the product and required support in detail, including product specifications, process nodes, collaboration needs with Taiwanese manufacturers, etc.)

- Product name and functions diagram:
- Product specifications: (please list details)
- IC Process: ____ nm
- Special requirements for packaging and testing:
- System integration or EVB requirements:
- Product schedule:
- Have you contacted any suppliers from Taiwan? If so, please list them.
- Other requirements: (example: additional requirements or precautions to product development, daily necessities, business development requirements, etc.)

Signature of consent (signature of the company representative or CEO.

For teams, all team members need to sign): _____