



The WAITRO SDG-Impact Poster Competition

What Are We Looking For? The Judging Criteria

The simple answer is that we are looking for posters describing projects that impact one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with, at a minimum, a clearly described roadmap to investor readiness. In the final, judges will assign scores in these six categories:

- **Impact:** short-and long-term economic, environmental, and social impacts
- **Feasibility:** technical, economic, operational scheduling and legal feasibility
- **Innovation and technical quality:** innovative solution, creativity of project idea, (unique) value proposition
- **Team Strength:** experience, commitment, leadership vision, and the ability to invest the time required to achieve success.
- **Commercial viability potential**
- **Roadmap to investor-readiness:** showing that the team knows how to take it to the next level, connect to the market and work with key stakeholders.

What is investor readiness? If you want to understand what we mean by investor readiness, you are strongly advised to invest a couple of hours watching the [kickoff webinar](#). Ultimately, investor readiness is more of a quality than a quantity.

What do you mean “roadmap to investor readiness?” Our goal is to help WAITRO Members access private and/or blended finance to take their projects from innovation to impact.

Wesley Okeke, CEO at WAITRO Associate Member and Summit Partner [Headway Idea Labs](#), gives this advice: To prepare an SDG-impact research project for commercialization, you should focus on **five** key steps and consider four types of criteria. Here’s a breakdown:

Five Steps Toward Commercialization:

1. **Market Research and Feasibility Study:** Conduct thorough market research to identify the demand for your solution. Analyze competitors, market trends, potential customers, and barriers to entry. Assess the feasibility of your project in terms of technology, finance, and market acceptance.



2. **Prototype Development and Testing:** Develop a prototype or a proof of concept that demonstrates the practical application of your research. Test the prototype in real-world conditions to validate its functionality, durability, and effectiveness in addressing the targeted SDG.
3. **Intellectual Property (IP) Protection:** Secure intellectual property rights to protect your innovation. This might include patents, trademarks, or copyrights, depending on the nature of your project. This step is crucial to ensure you retain ownership and control over the commercialization process.
4. **Business Model and Strategy Development:** Create a robust business model that outlines how your product or service will generate revenue. Develop a comprehensive commercialization strategy that includes pricing, distribution, partnerships, and marketing. Ensure that the model aligns with the SDG objectives and the mission of your project.
5. **Funding and Partnership Acquisition:** Secure funding through grants, investors, or partnerships to support the transition from research to market. Establish strategic partnerships with stakeholders, including NGOs, government bodies, and private companies, to facilitate market entry and scale-up.

Four Types of Criteria to Consider:

1. **Technical Viability:** Ensure that the technology or solution is technically sound and can be reliably produced at scale. Assess whether it can be implemented effectively in different environments and contexts related to the SDG.
2. **Social and Environmental Impact:** Evaluate the potential social and environmental benefits of the project. Consider how well the solution aligns with specific SDG targets and its potential to create positive, long-term impacts on communities and ecosystems.
3. **Economic Sustainability:** Analyze the economic viability of the project, including cost structures, pricing strategies, and financial sustainability over time. Consider whether the solution can be profitable while remaining affordable and accessible to target populations.
4. **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure that the project complies with relevant laws, regulations, and standards, particularly those related to the specific SDG. This may involve meeting environmental regulations, safety standards, or ethical guidelines, depending on the nature of the project.

These steps and criteria provide a comprehensive roadmap for taking an SDG research project from concept to commercialization, ensuring that it remains impactful, viable, and sustainable in the long term.