



Pitch-up: Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Awarding Ceremony



Organised by MEERY Project

AGENDA

Recitation of Holy Quran

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Introduction

Master of Ceremony

Welcome Remarks

Mr. Ali Shareef, Project Manager, MEERY Project

**Video presentation on "Pitch-Up: Youth
Entrepreneurship Challenge"**

Address by the Minister

Dr. Ibrahim Hassan, Hon. Minister of Higher Education

Presentation of Awards to Winners

Remarks from Judges

Hilal Agil, Founder & President at The Eco Org

Address by the Chief Guest

Mr. Salah Shihab

Co-founder & Managing Director of Voyages Maldives
Pvt Ltd and Seagull Group

**Video presentation on "Pitch-Up: Youth
Entrepreneurship Challenge" Winners**

Lunch

1100hrs – 1330hrs

10th January 2022 (Monday)



ABOUT PITCH-UP?

The competition was launched
on 05 April 2021

The Pitch-up competition
welcomed proposals in
the fields of



**Information and
Communication
Technologies**



Tourism



**Tourism Related
Construction**



Agriculture

Fostering technical and vocational skills development and promoting youth entrepreneurship in priority sectors is a key objective of the Maldives: Enhancing Employability and Resilience of Youth (MEERY) project. Financed by the World Bank, MEERY project is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Economic Development.

MEERY project's "Pitch-up: Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge" is a nationwide business pitch competition that was opened to all Maldivian young men and women between 18-35 years, designed with a goal in mind: to promote entrepreneurship among Maldivian youth.

"Pitch-Up: Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge", invited Maldivian youth to submit innovative, feasible and sustainable entrepreneurship ideas as solutions to local and global problems.

The competition welcomed innovative entrepreneurship ideas that respond to government's COVID-19 response priorities.

Winners of the competition are eligible to receive financial grant assistance of up to MVR 600,000 to launch their start-ups.



LEGAL ARCHIVE

AHMED AFRAH ISMAIL



**Information and Communication
Technologies Sector**



"Legal Archive is an open data legal document repository that aims to make case research and case building easier, faster, and more effective. The aim of the project is to guarantee access to information as a means to access to justice. The project having been selected for funding has validated that this project is very much needed as a public service.

We aim to deliver on this and have the service available to the public by March 2022."

**GRANT
WINNER**



THE BANANA **STORY**

YUSREE ABDUL JALEEL
YASRA JALEEL



Agriculture Sector

"The Banana Story plans to take the waste from the banana plants and turn it into sustainable plant based textile. We think its absolutely " Bananas" we won the grant!"

**GRANT
WINNER**



AGRO VENTURES

**AHMED ZAYAN HABEEB
IBRAHIM LAMEER ABDUL BAREE**

Agriculture Sector



"Agro Ventures plans to develop large-scale indoor farms on islands far from Male'. The project's goal is to improve locals' and resorts' access to high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables. The venture will allow us to collaborate with locals to establish innovative farming methods in farming communities that will benefit our fragile ecosystem.

We are able to launch a project that we had been dreaming about and planning for the past three years thanks to the pitch-up competition."

**GRANT
WINNER**



THE NET ZERO INITIATIVE

**EIMA WASEEM
IFHAM ADAM IBRAHIM**

Tourism Sector



"We aim to protect the natural havens of our country that existed long before us, we work with the nature to tread lightly and pave a low carbon pathway for the Travel & Tourism Industry.

The Net Zero Initiative is an environmental initiative that offers tourists a chance to spend a carbon- neutral stay in the Maldives through the purchase of carbon offsets. We will serve as a climate financing organization and will help fund offset projects internationally and conservation efforts locally. Eco conscious travel, which is all about the choices you make, is the first step towards a responsible tourism and a low carbon pathway.

Winning this competition means that we get to start our work in shaping the Maldivian Travel and Tourism industry to be more sustainable. Sustainable tourism will only become a reality if we all do our part and getting to advocate this on a national platform such as the 'Pitch up' competition means a lot to us as Climate change is happening now and it is imperative to act now."

**GRANT
WINNER**



ALA

**MOHAMED MAHIL
UMAR BASIL**

Agriculture Sector



"This is our effort to go back to our roots and bring back Taro (Ala) back in to the local diets and share the exquisite taste and benefits with the tourists that come to the Maldives."

**GRANT
WINNER**



SYLLABI

JUMAIL MOHAMED

**Information and Communication
Technologies Sector**



"This is a new product that supplements and enhances the educational system and the processes of education in Maldives with potential to adapt and expand to other systems of education globally. The primary goal of Syllabi is to connect students with what they learn and form learning circles across the country helping the students fall in love with the content. The teaching materials are delivered to the students in various forms, inclusive of much more than just theoretical knowledge.

Getting required Capital & Executing this would have been really hard & taken years without MEERY project. I've no doubt of the economic and entrepreneurial boom that is to come from this initiative. Thank you MEERY project team, world bank, ministry of higher education and the ministry of economic development for the opportunity."

**GRANT
WINNER**



WOOD STUDIO MV

**AISHATH SHUAILA RASHEED
FIRUSHANA NASEEM**

Tourism Sector



"Our project, Wood Studio, is about reinventing and redesigning local souvenir and home décor products with a contemporary Maldivian touch. Our goal is to create an authentic and environmentally friendly product using natural materials, such as wood and coconut shells. Winning the Pitch Up competition is a great opportunity for us to make our ideas come to life. We've learnt a lot from this competition, and we hope that our business can, in time, reduce the dependency on imported products. We're excited to start creating!"

**GRANT
WINNER**



RAAJJE **FARMS**

MARIYAM SHAMHATH ALI
AMAN HALEEM
MOHAMED ISMAIL

Agriculture Sector



"A long arduous journey came to fruition when our project was selected a winner, among many enterprising and innovative ideas. This funding will go a long way in helping us achieve the lofty targets we have set to become a leader in the local agriculture industry.

Most importantly this will help us contribute positively to our society, and be a part of the revolution that is to come. We want to be among the youth, who take this country forward and leave a legacy of hope and aspirations, for those who dare to dream, and a blueprint for entrepreneurial success."

**GRANT
WINNER**



ADVENTURE UP

**SHAM NASEER
MOHAMED RIMAH RASHEED
MOHAMED AFZAL LIRAR**

Tourism Sector



"Adventure Up Maldives aims to provide recreational and entertainment solutions to Maldivian youth and visitors alike.

As a team of high school friends working together for over a decade, this has been a dream of ours for years with funding being the main obstacle in realising this dream. By winning Pitch-Up we have overcome this obstacle and has cleared our paths to realising this dream."

**GRANT
WINNER**



FEHI FARM (HYDROPONICS FARM)

HUDA FAHEEM

Agriculture Sector



"The purpose of the project FehiFarm is to develop a hydroponics farm to provide locally grown, high quality, fresh and affordable vegetables and other food items for the consumption of our local market. Hydroponic farming gives an increased crop yield, shorter harvest time as well as reduced distance from farm to plate. The business will provide locals with employment opportunities whilst giving priority to women with the aim of women empowerment. FehiFarm will cater to business customers, households in the community and online customers.

Through the journey of the Pitch-Up competition, I have gained entrepreneurial knowledge and was able to make my business plan clearer and more realistic. Being a winner of the competition, it finally paves the way for the business to be established and provide a better choice for consumers instead of imported vegetables and food items."

**GRANT
WINNER**



HARVST **HYDROFARM**

MOHAMED RAFHAN ISMAIL



Agriculture Sector

"It has always been my passion to grow food organically, in the healthiest way possible, without the use of harmful chemicals and fertilizers. Technology advancements in the 21st century has opened up its doors to endless possibilities of how you can grow your greens. It has shown us that with proper technology, farming can go literally anywhere.

HARVST Hydrofarm will use an advanced hydroponic system to create a sustainable method of farming in a fully controlled environment. Winning this competition means a lot to me. However this is merely a stepping stone. The hard work and effort will construct the bridge that connects this dream to reality. I am thankful to have gotten this opportunity, which would help my growth in the business, as well as helping the community, build a future, towards sustainability."

**GRANT
WINNER**



THE GAMMA COMPANY

**ABDULLA MUBAAH
ALI HABEEB
HUSSAIN IBRAHIM**

Tourism Sector



"The Gamma Company will be a start-up company on a mission to offer its customers sustainable surfboards at reasonable prices with high quality, various sizes and contemporary designs. Due to the lack of affordable options the demand for surfboards vastly outstrips supply since most young local surfers and companies with small scale operations cannot afford to purchase adequate numbers of surfboards.

To fill the gap The Gamma Company proposes to build surfboards using reclaimed cardboard and wood materials as its core. They will be sourced from local vendors and through agreements made with waste management corporations. Winning the Pitch-up competition has made huge impact as a driving force of motivation for our company to go forward with the idea, It has helped us gain more insight to innovative and manage our skills The Gamma company team is looking forward to utilise our resources to make more sustainable products for the future of the industry."

**GRANT
WINNER**



ISLANDBOUND

AHMED SAAIF
AZHEEN WAHEED
AHMED ZAYAAN

Information and
Communication Technologies
Sector



"Islandbound is the first OTA platform dedicated for and tailored to cater the needs of the Maldivian tourism industry , bridging the existing gaps in this industry and bringing a new standard of convenience for budget travel in the Maldives . The platform is able to curate custom tour packages instantly based on customer preferences. We believe that local tourism has the potential to create sustainable island economies and contribute largely to the development of the Greater Maldives.

Our aim is to help the industry achieve it's true potential and help create additional opportunities for more people to get directly involved and positively Impacted by tourism. Pitch-up has been a wonderful opportunity and we are very excited finally be able to bring our vision to life through this competition. It's only the beginning and we are very thrilled and motivated to continue our startup journey from here and hopefully achieve even greater milestones."

**GRANT
WINNER**



ARIFIYAALHO

**MOHAMED URWATH
HASSAN SHIRHAAN**

**Tourism Related Construction
Sector**



"It was a great milestone that we achieved this. Winning this made achieving our dream much easier than we expected.

Our team already started the ground work, our future plans will be going with the original business plan we submitted to Pitch-Up."

**GRANT
WINNER**



LA BELLE

**AMINATH SHIFRA
FATHIMATH LAMHA**

Tourism Sector



"As an island with a thriving local tourism industry, there is an increasing demand for grooming and wellness services. La Belle is a female owned spa & salon aiming to cater for this growing demand and fill a current service gap at Ukulhas island.

At La Belle, we wish to create a socially conscious business environment by sourcing materials locally as much as possible and providing other small businesses a retail avenue for their products."

**GRANT
WINNER**



AROMATO

**ZAAIN ALI WAHEED
MOHAMED ALI JINAD
AHMED JINAN ALI**

Agriculture Sector



"Aromato is an indoor vertical hydroponics farm concept based in the Maldives that will produce greens and herbs. The lack of land space and high import rate of greens means vertical farming is necessary for locals and tourists to eat fresh produce regularly. Winning Pitch-up competition means everything to a 19 year old me. I have been passionate about plants ever since I can remember.

It is my childhood dream, a way for me to be independent and most importantly, a way to give my family, friends and fellow Maldivians a healthier life. It is a great start for my future plans. I want to produce local greens, promote how we can have a balanced diet from local plants only and teach vertical farming as an option for anyone to grow in their home and more."

**GRANT
WINNER**



AURA RESORT WEAR

AISHATH YUSFA ATHIF



Tourism Sector

"Aura" is an eco-friendly boutique label offering simple, elegant, and luxury vacation clothes. We design our own clothing pieces by drawing inspiration from nature and the Maldivian lifestyle.

For many years, the fashion industry has been under pressure for creating ethical and environmental problems. With these issues in mind, we will craft our pieces using natural fibers and plant-dyes that have low environmental impact. The fabrics are light-weight and breathable, making them ideal for tropical climates. Some of the fabrics we plan to use are pure linen, recycled viscose, tencel, organic cotton, and cupro."

**GRANT
WINNER**



FUTURE **AGRO**

IBRAHIM ZAMEER MOHAMED

Agriculture Sector



"Future Agro aims to be the first in Maldives to grow fresh produce in enterprise level hydroponics farms, targeting to expand through innovations and become the benchmark for future businesses entering the market.

Winning pitch-up is the first stepping stone in building a futuristic farm business and the goal is to replicate and upgrade the setups to have automated hydroponic farms all around Maldives, supplying quality fresh to different sectors."

**GRANT
WINNER**



LOBSTER FARMING

**WISHAL MOHAMED
MOHAMED ZAMEEN
ABDULLAH RASHEED**

Agriculture Sector



"With a Mission of pioneering into farming Lobsters in Maldives, we propose this project to produce lobsters and supply them in a sustainable way. Lobsters of the minimum allowed size of catch will be bought from the local fisherman and recreational fishers, to grow them in controlled environment. The present government also has specific idea to developed such projects , (Kandu fahun Nafaa) which basically means earning from the lagoons and ocean as we have 99% ocean covers our country. as the idea still lays we would like to embrace this idea.

By winning pitch up competition, now we can implement our long dreamed Project, which is to implement a fully functional lobster farm where we can breed lobster and grow it in our own farms so than we can reduces imported frozen lobsters to the Maldives and we can give life to a newborn production line to the Maldives which will benefit economically to the government in long-term Plus Social benefits in short-term. We want our product (Island Lobster) to be recognized world wide and it to become a trademark of Maldives and these lobsters to be served in High End Hotels World Wide."

**GRANT
WINNER**



KOVELI

**IBRAHIM LUAYYU MOHAMED
AHMED KHUSAAM
MOHAMED RAISAAN MAMDHOOH**

**Information and
Communication Technologies
Sector**



"Our project is to help create a platform for the local talents where they can interact and market themselves to the global and local community.

Winning this competition has given us motivation to work harder at finding new innovative ideas to tackle problems faced by our community.

It has also served as an inspiration for colleagues and friends to attempt to make their innovative ideas into a reality."

**GRANT
WINNER**



MUDUVAH

**ABDUL ALEEM HASSAN
AHMED NAZEEH MOHAMED
AHMED ANIS ISMAIL**

Agriculture Sector



"We are more than excited to have won the MEERY Pitch-Up competition as this would give us a wonderful opportunity to support our local farmers. We intend to do this by providing a unique platform for liaising with their customers and facilitating support in different ways.

Our project aims to provide a full fledged solution to all farmers across the country and build a reliable and dependable network to provide information about customers and farmers of the Maldives. We believe the solution that we have proposed will help several new start-up farming businesses and have a rippling effect into the economy."

**GRANT
WINNER**



FEHI HIYAA

SAMAAH MUJUTHABA



Agriculture Sector

"Fehi Hiyaa aims to establish a modern farming complex free from limitations faced by conventional farms. We aim develop a completely indoor farming solution isolated from the outdoor elements that can hinder the production of crops. A completely controlled environment allows many varieties of plants to be grown predictably regardless of local environment and season.

With the aid of connected sensors, automatic irrigation, airflow control and motorized roofing along with a skilled personal will allow this project to produced crops at a steady rate to cater the demand of a highly fluctuating market. With the financial support of Pitch-up, we will manage to bring this project to production readiness, therefore bypassing many initial financial overheads that comes along with setting up the needed infrastructure for such a complex project. This will allow use to have more room on focusing self-generated finances to improve and scale up the facility services."

**GRANT
WINNER**



KIHINEH

MOHAMED AZLAN ZAHIR
AHMED AIHAM SHIYAM

**Information and
Communication Technologies
Sector**



"'Kihineh' aspires to be the go to place for all the general questions and answers that arise in the Maldives. It is a convenient, multi user platform where government bodies, businesses and individual users can find problems and solutions for their specific areas of interest.

Meery Project allows us to turn this idea into reality whilst being able to create something meaningful & beneficial for society as whole.

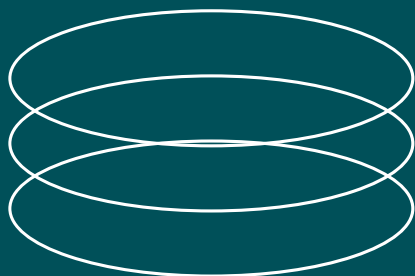
Winning this project, we believe "Kihineh" to be a great leap in digitalization of information & communication within the Maldives by bringing hope & simplicity, and be a necessary step for the future of technological innovation in the country."

**GRANT
WINNER**

An Independent Judging Panel

The Pitch-up judging panel was selected with great care. We looked for individuals that represent a unique combination of experiences, skills, and talents in our priority sectors—Tourism, Tourism related construction, Agriculture, and Information Communications Technology.

The selection panel was tasked with selecting the most creative and innovative new ideas.



JUDGING PANEL

1

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmed

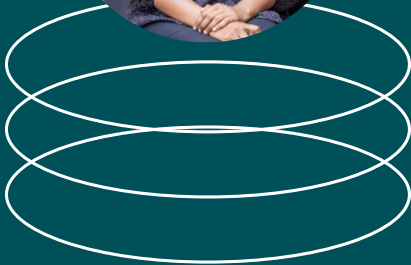
Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmed is a serial entrepreneur, private enterprise development professional, impact investment promoter and investor. Dr. Ahmed is the Founder Chairman & Principal Consultant of Terra Resources International, Founder Chairman of Venture Investment Partners Bangladesh Ltd. (VIPB), VIPB Asset Management Ltd (VIPB AMC) and Founder President & CEO of US-Bangladesh Investment Group Inc. Dr. Ahmed obtained Ph.D. in Economics from University of Virginia and B.A. in Economics from University of Oklahoma



2

Rifaath Hassan

Rifaath Hassan is a graduate in agriculture science and a researcher. She is passionate about the transformation of food systems and local food movement and has been working in both the public and private sector contributing her expertise in the field of, food security for island nations, organic farming and climate change adaptation on agriculture. Currently she is conducting a study on traditional crops (taro) in the southern most islands of the Maldives in relation to sustaining island level food security. Rifaath is also the co-founder of an urban farming initiative (Sq.Ft) as a start up in ClimateLaunchpad.



JUDGING PANEL

3

Fareeha Shareef

Fareeha Shareef is a co-founder and director at FJS, a Consultancy, Tax and Assurance firm based in the Maldives. She has 20 years of experience in strategic management, financial and business planning, auditing, training and socio-economic research. Fareeha has worked with prominent public, private & international organizations including UNDP, FAO, IFAD, WHO, World Bank & ADB. She has served as Chairperson of Bank of Maldives PLC and on the boards of MPAO & HDFC. She is currently a Board of Director at Ooredoo Maldives PLC and CBM. Fareeha is a Fellow Member of the ACCA, UK and a Council Member of CA Maldives.



4

Hilal Agil

Hilal Agil is the founder and president of The Eco Organization, an environmental non-profit organization founded in the Maldives focused on leveraging technology and innovation for climate action. Interested in technology and music from a young age, he has launched and led successful technology companies in London and California including Meanwise, Inc. and Squele, LTD as the CEO and Co-founder. Hilal co-founded the Maldivian heavy metal band Nothnegal and has been honored with a National Youth Award by the president of the Maldives for his contributions to Maldivian performing arts. Hilal studied Engineering and specialized in Data Science - Artificial Intelligence from the University of Oxford.



JUDGING PANEL

5

Naradha Rajakaruna

Naradha Rajakarunais an experienced financial management specialist in various business dynamics including business planning & analysis, organizational re-engineering, merger & acquisition integration, performance measurement, resource management, growth strategy development and project management. He possesses multi-industrial exposure in oil & trade, travel & tourism, resorts & airport, IT & software, and telecommunications in Sri Lanka and Maldives. Based in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Naradha is a Fellow Member of IPA Australia and IFA UK. He holds an EMBA from the ICFAI University, India., along with CIMA UK qualification.





YOUTH
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
CHALLENGE

PITCH-UP



THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP



MEERY Project
Ministry of Higher Education
Ministry of Economic Development