- *Refer to the Terms and Conditions when reading this document.*

- *An "existing business" is an already operational for-profit or non-profit organisation. It encompasses existing businesses, whether formally registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) or operating informally. Additionally, it includes businesses that are well-established or relatively new.*

CATEGORY 1: EXISTING BUSINESS – TECH

EDHE designed this category specifically for established businesses within the technology sector. **Technology** encompasses the practical application of scientific knowledge, particularly in industry. It involves the development of machinery and equipment based on scientific principles, as well as the field of engineering and applied sciences.

- **Tech businesses**: These actively create and utilise new technologies.

- **Tech-enabled businesses**: While relying on technology for their operations, they primarily function within a different industry. Their core focus lies in integration rather than innovation.

Please note that this category does not include businesses using technology as an add-on or integration - such as delivery apps, e-commerce platforms, website development, graphic design, or digital media services. Here are some of the technology industries;

- **FinTech (Financial Technology):** Refers to technology-driven innovations in financial services, including digital payments, cryptocurrency, online lending, and robo-advisory.

- **MedTech (Medical Technology):** Encompasses products and solutions used in healthcare, such as surgical robots, health data systems, COVID-19 testing kits, and digital health trackers.

- **EdTech (Education Technology):** Involves hardware and software tools that enhance teaching and learning, from smart boards and online courses to interactive videos and remote teaching technology.

- **AgriTech (Agriculture Technology):** Involves utilising technology to improve agriculture efficiency, productivity, and sustainability. Examples include automated irrigation, drones for surveillance, and weather forecasting.

- **CleanTech (Cleaning Technology):** Focuses on environmentally friendly solutions for waste management, pollution reduction, and sustainable energy sources.

- **DeepTech (Deep Technology):** Encompasses advanced technologies like artificial intelligence, robotics, blockchain, biotech, and quantum computing.

- **RetailTech (Retail Technology):** Involves innovations in retail, such as online shopping systems, inventory management systems, and personalised customer experiences.

- **RegTech (Regulatory Technology):** Aids financial institutions comply with regulations by streamlining processes related to due diligence, fraud detection, and data management.

- **LegalTech (Legal Technology):** Applies technology to legal processes, including contract management, e-discovery, and case analysis.

- **GovTech (Government Technology):** Refers to technology solutions used by government agencies to improve public services, enhance transparency, and streamline administrative tasks.

- **PropTech (Property Tech):** Involves utilising technology in real estate, covering areas like property management, smart buildings, and real estate transactions.

- **FoodTech (Food Technology):** Innovations in food production, distribution, and safety, including precision agriculture, food delivery apps, and sustainable packaging.

Other (please specify and explain the industry)

Judging Criteria:

1. **Business description and industry integration**: The contestant must explain how they integrated technology into the business and specify its industry (e.g., FinTech, AgriTech, BioTech).

2. **Product analysis**: Clarify technology functionality and usage.

3. **Innovation**: Highlight the business's advancements over current methods or its introduction of new technology to the South African market.

4. **Business model and value proposition**:

   - **Market research and analysis:** Provide evidence of conducted market research and present its key findings. Define the target market, market size, and prototype testing.

   - **Value proposition**: Describe the unique value offered to these customer segments.

   - **Distribution channels**: Specify how value is delivered to customers effectively.

   - **Revenue streams**: Explain how your business generates income or collects customer payments. (e.g., sales, subscriptions).

   - **Competitive advantage**: Describe unique advantages over direct and indirect competitors.

5. **Financials**:

   - **Opex**: Explain the operational expenses involved in running the business.

   - **Capex**: Define the capital expenditures, such as assets, required to operate the business.

   - **Sales**: Provide information on the number of products sold and the cost per product.

   - **Profitability**: Explain the current profit margins of the business and well-supported projections for future profitability.

6. **Essential resources and activities:** List the vital assets and resources necessary for the effective operation of the business. Emphasise the fundamental tasks the business must execute to generate and deliver value. Recognise external entities, such as suppliers, partners, and collaborators, essential to your business.

7. **Scalability**: Outline plans and strategies to scale impact to reach a larger audience effectively.

8. **Marketing strategy**: Explain the go-to-market plan and tools for effectively capturing the target market.

9. **Operations**: Detail procedures for business operations' inputs, processes, and outputs.

10. **Team composition and presentation skills:** Outline the team's skills and expertise. Clarify the knowledge and strategies employed to manage complex challenges effectively. Evaluate presentation skills, including readiness, engagement, confidence, utilisation of visual aids, effectiveness of the pitch, and time management during delivery.

CATEGORY 2: EXISTING BUSINESS - SOCIAL IMPACT

A Social Impact business deliberately creates positive and sustainable changes in a country's social, economic, and environmental fabric. Let's delve into the key aspects:

- **Purpose beyond profit**: Traditionally, businesses primarily aimed at generating profits and serving shareholders. However, there's a growing recognition that businesses should transcend their financial bottom line. Social impact businesses prioritise making a tangible difference in society alongside their business objectives.

- **Addressing unique challenges**: These businesses identify and tackle specific social challenges and needs within South Africa. These challenges include unemployment, poverty, inequality, healthcare disparities, and environmental concerns.

- **Contributing to well-being**: By aligning their investments with societal needs, social impact businesses contribute to the country's overall well-being and sustainable development. They allocate resources to critical areas like job creation, socio-economic inclusion, community development, and environmental sustainability.

- **Embracing innovation and technology**: Social impact businesses recognise that innovation and technology can drive positive change. Through the development and implementation of innovative solutions, they enhance access to essential services, improve efficiency, and champion sustainable practices.

Social impact industries;

- **Education**: Companies that support education initiatives, including scholarships, teacher training, and school infrastructure development, make a valuable contribution to social impact.

- **Healthcare**: Businesses engaged in healthcare services, medical research, and community health programmes are crucial in enhancing well-being.

- **Renewable energy**: Companies that promote clean energy solutions, solar power, and sustainable energy access to positively impact the environment and society.

- **Agriculture and food security**: Initiatives related to sustainable farming practices, food distribution, and nutrition education address critical social needs.

- **Financial inclusion**: Businesses focusing on financial literacy, microfinance, and affordable banking services empower underserved communities.

- **Environmental conservation**: Organisations working towards conservation, waste reduction, and ecosystem protection contribute to social well-being.

- **Technology and innovation**: Companies leveraging technology for social good, such as digital literacy programs and tech-based solutions, drive positive change.

Judging Criteria:

1. **Societal impact description**: Clearly articulate the social problem the business addresses and emphasise its impact on the targeted community.

2. **Innovation**: Explain the novelty of the business approach in solving social problems, whether through new business models, technology, products, services, or production methods.

3. **Feasibility:** Does the solution's implementation successfully address the targeted social issue and create a significant impact?

4. **Business model and value proposition**: How directly is the business model linked to social impact?

   - **Market research and analysis:** Provide evidence of conducted market research and present its key findings. Define the target market and market size.

   - **Value proposition**: Describe the unique value offered to these customer segments.

   - **Distribution channels**: Specify how value is delivered to customers effectively.

   - **Revenue streams**: Explain how your business generates income or collects customer payments. (e.g., sales, subscriptions).

   - **Competitive advantage**: Describe unique advantages over direct and indirect competitors.

6. **Finances**:

   - **Opex and capex**: Explain operational and capital expenses, such as assets, required to operate the business comprehensively.

   - **Sales:** Detail the quantity of products sold and their respective prices.

   - **Profitability**: Explain the current profit margins of the business and well-supported projections for future profitability.

5. **Essential resources and activities**: List the vital assets and resources necessary for the effective operation of the business. Emphasise the fundamental tasks the business must execute to generate and deliver value. Recognise external entities, such as suppliers, partners, and collaborators, essential to your business.

7. **Scalability and sustainability**: Is the solution commercially viable and financially sustainable to guarantee enduring social success? Outline plans and strategies for scaling impact to reach a larger audience effectively.

8. **Marketing strategy:** Explain the go-to-market plan and tools for effectively capturing the target market.

9. **Operations and efficiency**: Describe how the business operates efficiently to achieve its social impact goals.

10. **Team composition and presentation skills:** Outline the team's skills and expertise. Clarify the knowledge and strategies employed to manage complex challenges effectively. Evaluate presentation skills, including readiness, engagement, confidence, utilisation of visual aids, effectiveness of the pitch, and time management during delivery.

CATEGORY 3: EXISTING BUSINESS – GENERAL

This category is open to all types of existing businesses that meet the competition's Terms and Conditions. It focuses on businesses with a track record of success, proven products or services, and a clear understanding of their market. Judges will evaluate businesses based on their alignment with the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their potential positive impact on society and the environment. Contestants in this category should showcase how their existing ventures contribute to achieving specific SDGs. Here is the list of the 17 SGDs to choose from;

- **No Poverty**: The goal is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.

- **Zero Hunger**: End hunger, achieve food security, and promote sustainable agriculture.

- **Good Health and Well-Being**: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages.

- **Quality Education**: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

- **Gender Equality**: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- **Clean Water and Sanitation**: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

- **Affordable and Clean Energy:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

- **Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Promote sustained, inclusive, sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work.

- **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure**: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.

- **Reduced Inequalities:** Reduce inequality within and among countries.

- **Sustainable Cities and Communities**: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

- **Responsible Consumption and Production:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

- **Climate Action:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

- **Life Below Water:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.

- **Life on Land:** Protect, restore, and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

- **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

- **Partnerships for the Goals:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Judging Criteria:

1. **Business description and SDG alignment**: Clearly describe the business and specify which of the 17 global SDGs it aligns with.

2. **Solution analysis**: Clearly define the product or service, highlighting key features and benefits.

3. **Feasibility**: Does the solution's implementation successfully create a significant impact?

4. **Business model and value proposition**:

   - **Market research and analysis:** Provide evidence of conducted market research and present its key findings. Define the target market and market size.

   - **Value proposition**: Describe the unique value offered to these customer segments.

   - **Distribution channels**: Specify how value is delivered to customers effectively.

   - **Revenue streams**: Explain how your business generates income or collects customer payments. (e.g., sales, subscriptions).

   - **Competitive advantage**: Describe unique advantages over direct and indirect competitors.

9. **Financial overview**:

   - **Opex and capex**: Explain operational and capital expenses, such as assets, required to operate the business comprehensively.

   - **Sales**: Detail the quantity of products sold and their respective prices.

   - **Profitability**: Explain the current profit margins of the business and well-supported projections for future profitability.

5. **Essential resources and activities**: List the vital assets and resources necessary for the effective operation of the business. Emphasise the fundamental tasks the business must execute to generate and deliver value. Recognise external entities, such as suppliers, partners, and collaborators, essential to your business.

6. **Scalability and sustainability**: Is the solution commercially viable and financially sustainable to guarantee enduring success? Outline plans and strategies for scaling impact to reach a larger audience effectively.

7. **Marketing strategy**: Explain the go-to-market plan and tools for effectively capturing the target market.

8. **Operations**: Detail procedures for business operations' inputs, processes, and outputs.

10. **Team composition and presentation skills:** Outline the team's skills and expertise. Clarify the knowledge and strategies employed to manage complex challenges effectively. Evaluate presentation skills, including readiness, engagement, confidence, utilisation of visual aids, effectiveness of the pitch, and time management during delivery.

CATEGORY 4: RESEARCH-BASED BUSINESS

The Research-Based Business category aims to nurture innovation and bolster the growth of early-stage, research-based startups that have established a proof of concept. The technology should be in the pre-commercialisation or commercialisation phase, backed by ample validation data to support the commercialisation hypothesis.

The judges will seek individuals or teams who have significantly contributed to scientific and technological research through data collection, analysis, and interpretation. They will also be interested in businesses that have developed innovative products or services, whether they are yet to be commercialised or already in the market. This category welcomes businesses that have devised innovative solutions to social or environmental challenges.

Now, let's explore the concept of a "proof of concept" (PoC).

1. **Definition:**

   - A PoC demonstrates that a specific idea, product, or technology is feasible and can function as intended.

   - Businesses validate it initially, indicating they can successfully implement the proposed concept because it has practical viability.

   - Essentially, a PoC answers the question: "Can this idea or innovation be transformed into a functional solution?"

2. **Key Aspects:**

   - **Feasibility:** A PoC seeks to validate the technical feasibility of an idea by testing whether the core components or mechanisms operate as expected.

   - **Risk Reduction:** By developing a PoC, entrepreneurs can identify potential challenges, risks, and limitations early in the development process.

   - **Decision-Making:** A successful PoC offers data-driven insights that guide decisions about whether to proceed with full-scale development or to pivot.

3. **Process:**

   - **Design and Build:** Entrepreneurs construct a small-scale prototype or model that encapsulates the core features of their concept.

   - **Testing:** The prototype undergoes testing under controlled conditions to verify its functionality and performance.

   - **Results:** If the PoC demonstrates feasibility and aligns with business goals, it lays the groundwork for further development.

Technology readiness level (TRL)

Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) are a method used to estimate the maturity of technologies during the acquisition phase of a programme. TRLs are scaled from 1 to 9, with 9 being the most mature technology. Here are the definitions of each level:

- **TRL 1**: Basic principles are observed and reported.

- **TRL 2**: Business formulates the technology concept and application.

- **TRL 3**: Business prove the critical functions and characteristics of the technology through analytical and experimental methods.

- **TRL 4**: Business validate the component and breadboard in a laboratory

environment.

- **TRL 5**: The business validated the component and breadboard in a relevant environment.
- **TRL 6**: The business demonstrated the system/subsystem model or prototype in a relevant environment.
- **TRL 7**: The business demonstrated the system prototype in an operational environment.
- **TRL 8**: The business completes the system and is "flight qualified" through tests and demonstrations.
- **TRL 9**: The system is "flight proven" through successful mission operations.

Judging Criteria:

1. **Identified problem/need:** What is the identified problem/need, how was it validated through your research findings, and what is its significance?

2. **Proposed solution:** What are the uniqueness and benefits of the proposed solution (product/process/service) to customers?

3. **Technology readiness level (TRL):** What is the current technology readiness and development level of the proposed solution?

4. **Business model and value proposition:**

   - **Market research and analysis:** Provide evidence of conducted market research and present its key findings. Define the target market and market size.

   - **Value proposition:** Describe the unique value offered to these customer segments.

   - **Distribution channels:** Specify how value is delivered to customers effectively.

   - **Revenue streams:** Explain how your business generates income or collects customer payments. (e.g., sales, subscriptions).

   - **Competitive advantage:** Describe unique advantages over direct and indirect competitors.

5. **Intellectual Property (IP):** What steps has the business taken to protect any innovation-related intellectual property? Is there a strategy for managing and leveraging intellectual property rights to support the commercialisation process? Mention the critical primary collaborators and a breakdown of the IP ownership.

6. **Regulatory considerations**: Are there any regulatory or legal requirements for the business to address when developing and implementing the proposed solution? How will compliance with these regulations be ensured?

8. **Financial overview**:

   - **Opex and capex**: Explain operational and capital expenses, such as assets, required to operate the business comprehensively.

   - **Sales**: Detail the quantity of products sold and their respective prices.

   - **Profitability**: Explain the current profit margins of the business and well-supported projections for future profitability.

9. **Scalability and sustainability**: Is the solution commercially viable and financially sustainable to guarantee enduring success? Outline plans and strategies for scaling

impact to reach a larger audience effectively.

10. **Marketing strategy**: Explain the go-to-market plan and tools for effectively capturing the target market.

11. **Product development process**: Explain the product development process for your research-based business. Additionally, specify the current stage of your business within this process.

12. **Team composition and presentation skills:** Outline the team's skills and expertise. Clarify the knowledge and strategies employed to manage complex challenges effectively. Evaluate presentation skills, including readiness, engagement, confidence, utilisation of visual aids, effectiveness of the pitch, and time management during delivery.

STUDENTPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Judging criteria:

1. **Judges' overall score**: EDHE will present the Studentpreneur of the Year award to the student entrepreneur who earns the highest score from the judges among the winners of the Existing Business categories. This category carries the most weight in the evaluation process.

2. **Financial performance**: The student entrepreneur must have presented a business demonstrating exceptional financial performance in the past year. This category evaluates the student's ability to manage finances effectively and generate revenue.

3. **Growth potential**: The business presented by the student entrepreneur should demonstrate long-term profitability and sustainability. This category assesses the student's ability to scale their business and adapt to changing market conditions.

4. **Impact**: Finally, the Studentpreneur of the Year should positively impact the economy by uniquely solving economic or socio-economic issues.

5. **Personal attributes**: the student entrepreneur must show passion, resilience, perseverance, and commitment to their business. The student must have shown dedication, hard work, the ability to overcome challenges, demonstrate exceptional business acumen, creativity, leadership, commitment to creating a positive impact, and