

inno up

CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION



The deployment and application of Artificial Intelligence is the central challenge facing all industries — including tourism. For this reason, the Federal Division of Tourism and Leisure Industry has decided, together with a number of member companies, to examine the possibilities of AI applications in the day-to-day operations of businesses, to identify suitable solutions, and to test them where the opportunity arises.

Tourism and the leisure industry in Austria play a significant role in the Austrian national economy. The Federal Division of Tourism and Leisure Industry, with its six specialist associations, represents more than 90,000 licensed businesses.

Category: Hospitality Innovation

Via inno up, innovative startups are being sought that support hotels with intelligent booking agents in the areas of reservations, guest interaction, and optimal room utilization.

The focus is on solutions that guide guests through the booking process, handle inquiries in an automated manner, and enable dynamic allocation of unoccupied rooms in real time. The goal is to reduce manual effort, increase occupancy rates, and simultaneously improve the guest experience.

Specifically, the following types of solutions are being sought:

- AI-powered booking agents via website, chat, messenger, or email
- Automated room assignment taking into account availability, guest preferences, and operational rules
- Digital guest interaction before, during, and after the stay
- Seamless integration with existing systems (PMS, Channel Manager, CRM, RMS)

Both specialized standalone solutions and integrated approaches are sought — ones that intelligently connect booking, communication, and operational management, and that provide hotels with meaningful relief in their day-to-day operations.

Participation criteria:

To qualify for the challenge, your startup should meet the following basic requirements:

- Proof of concept: the fundamental feasibility of your solution has been at least demonstrated
- Ideally a proof of market: market opportunities have been analyzed and assessed
- Company no older than 5 years
- Willingness to potentially collaborate with other finalists to develop a complete solution
- Working language: German or English

Offer to the winning team:

From the finalists of the challenge, a winning team will ultimately be selected. The following benefits and opportunities are on offer:

- The winning team receives €1,000 in prize money
 - The opportunity to carry out a pilot project with your solution
 - In the event of a successful pilot, a potential rollout within the company
 - Joint marketing within the industry and access to the network
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Legal Disclaimer:

All adult natural and legal persons are eligible to participate, provided they meet the participation criteria outlined above. Employees of the Federal Division of Tourism & Leisure Industry and their relatives, as well as public officials, are excluded from participation.

The Federal Division of Tourism & Leisure Industry defines a challenge, on the basis of which innovative startups can register via the project website <https://www.wko.at/startups/inno-up> on an online platform.

A pre-selection of eligible participants is carried out through this platform and subsequently presented to the buddy company. The Federal Division of Tourism & Leisure Industry, in consultation with the coaches, then selects the three most suitable startups (up to a maximum of five) for the final (pitch day); finalists will be notified by email. In a final step, the ideas are refined and presented. One or more winners may be selected from among the finalists.

There is no legal entitlement to the conclusion of contracts or any other business relationship between participants/winners and the Federal Division of Tourism & Leisure Industry. Likewise, there is no legal entitlement to a final taking place and/or a winner being determined. Participants will not receive any compensation for their participation. The terms of participation, parts of the process, or the entire process may be amended at any time. Any changes will be communicated in a timely manner and published on the platform at <https://www.wko.at/startups/inno-up>. There is a possibility — and participants explicitly acknowledge — that the research, development, and other activities of the participants and the Federal Division of Tourism & Leisure Industry may overlap thematically. No claims of any kind shall arise for participants as a result of such overlap. Registration as a participant constitutes express consent to this disclaimer.

