



spark

2024 edition

LAB

Your experimentation lab
for innovative solutions in sport

Competition rules

Call for innovative solutions &
Lab for real-life experimentation



This document contains the official rules of the SpArk Lab Contest. By registering for the Contest through the submission of the application form, the Applicant acknowledges and accepts these Rules without any reserve.

Any amendments to these rules may be made during the Contest. Applicants will be notified via publication on the website www.spark-valais.ch/sparklab.

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1. Objective

The SpArk Lab Contest, powered by CimArk through its innovation hub in the science of movement and sport, SpArk (hereafter referred as the "Organiser"), in partnership with the iconic Race of the Five 4000s - Sierre-Zinal (hereafter referred as the "Partner"), is a call for innovative solutions and a testing ground for experimentation.

The Contest aims to create a dynamic ecosystem in the Valais region, where innovative ideas can be tested and implemented in a real-world environment.

SpArk Lab has diverse and ambitious objectives as:

- Transforming a sporting event into an unprecedented experimental laboratory for solution providers,
- Testing these innovations under real conditions to determine their effectiveness and relevance,
- Providing prompt and constructive feedback to facilitate solution development and optimization,
- Offering customized support to innovators to accelerate their market launch.

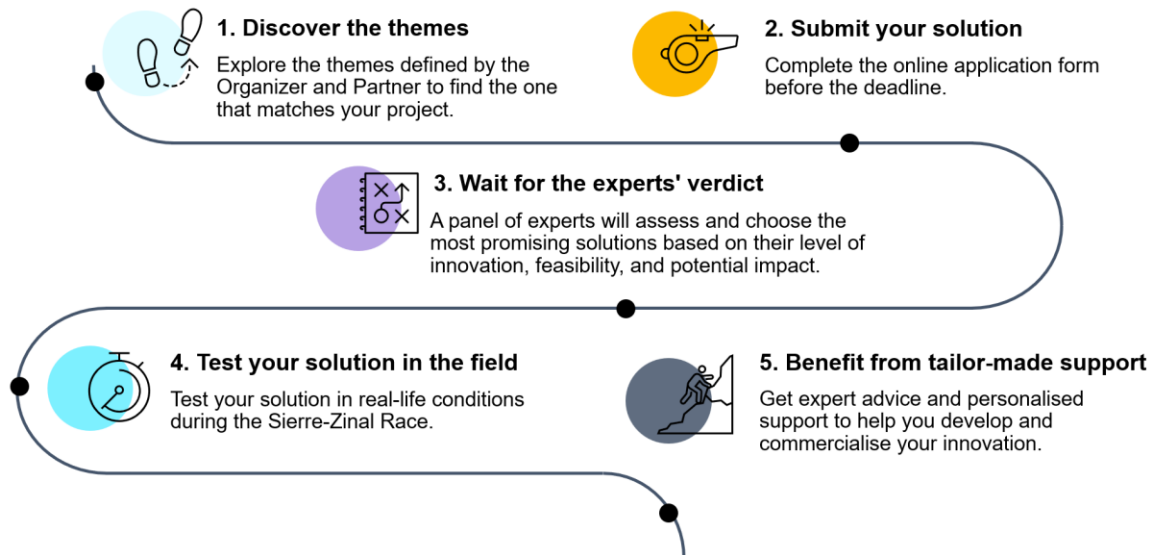
2. Contest partners

SpArk is an innovation hub for the sciences and technologies of movement, striving to catalyse innovation, digitalisation, sustainability, and economic development within the realm of sport and performance. SpArk relies on a dynamic ecosystem that encourages collaboration and networking among the best regional, national, and international competencies.

Sierre-Zinal, also known as the Race of the Five 4000s, was established in the Valais Alps in 1974. Since then, the event has annually offered participants the opportunity to traverse a 31km course with 2200 meters of ascent and 1100 meters of descent, amidst an extraordinary landscape. With the help of meticulous organisation and dedicated volunteers, the event brings together participants from various categories, such as professional trail runners, families, experienced racers, and individuals who see this race as a personal challenge. A portion of the course is also designated for younger participants.

3. SpArk Lab process

The SpArk Lab consists of five stages:



4. Fields of experimentation

Nominees will have the unique opportunity to test their innovation at one of two major events:

- The **Sierre-Zinal Race**, on Saturday 10 August 2024, a large-scale event that will allow for large-scale experimentation.
- The **Sierre-Zinal Volunteers Race**, on Saturday 21 September 2024, in a more intimate setting.

The choice of the field of experimentation will be determined by the Organiser and Partner after the evaluation and selection phase, considering the specific characteristics of each innovation and the associated testing needs.

5. Benefits for participants

- **Exclusive field of experimentation** with privileged access to the event to organise user tests,
- **Access to a broad community of testers** represented by the race participants, enabling accelerated feedback,
- **Tailored support** with personalised coaching and targeted networking,
- **Access to a qualified network** with opportunities for collaboration,
- **Increased visibility** by highlighting the solution and the team on social media during the experimentation phase and at the event.

Applicants considering the creation of a startup will have the opportunity to join a local incubator with the potential to receive in-kind support and services valued at over CHF 100,000 from The Ark Foundation, a sponsor of the Contest.

6. Themes

Applications must present innovative solutions focused on the following themes:

For participants

- Personalised and intelligent **nutrition and hydration**
- **Innovative equipment and accessories** to enhance the race experience
- **Health and safety** for efficient preparation and recovery
- **Personalised training** tailored to the unique challenges of the race, **and performance**

For the sport event

- **Innovative event format and concept** to enhance the race experience
- **Intelligent logistics, mobility and race security** for smooth and safe management
- **Event sustainability** to minimize environmental impact
- **Optimized, autonomous feeding station management** for efficient distribution
- **Event promotion** to increase visibility and attractiveness
- **Participant experience** to reward, retain and engage runners
- **Volunteer experience** to recruit, coordinate, and retain volunteers
- **Spectator experience** to improve access, engagement, and for an enriched experience
- **Sponsor activation and management** to foster attraction and engagement

Applicants are also encouraged to propose innovation themes beyond those listed.

7. Submission of applications

To participate, the Applicant must complete the online application form in French or English, available at www.spark-valais.ch/sparklab.

The opening date for applications is set for **18 March 2024 at 12:00 AM (Swiss time)**, and the closing date for applications is set for **14 June 2024 at 12:00 PM (Swiss time)**.

The Applicant undertakes to provide all the necessary information for the evaluation of its application, under penalty of rejection.

The Organiser will acknowledge receipt of each application by e-mail.

Any requests for information or questions about SpArk Lab should be sent by e-mail only to hello@spark-valais.ch.

8. Conditions of participation and eligibility

To be eligible, the Applicant must:

- Complete the application form in full form,
- Submit a solution at the prototype / MVP stage that can be tested in real-world conditions (commercialised solutions are not eligible),

- Demonstrate the relevance of the solution with the chosen theme,
- Demonstrate the potential for commercial development.

The SpArk Lab is open to all individuals, teams, start-ups, companies, research institutes, associations, or industrial groups - from Switzerland or abroad - wishing to submit, challenge, test, validate, and develop an innovative solution or concept.

Participation in the SpArk Lab implies full acceptance of these rules.

9. Calendar

- **18 March 2024:** Launch of the call for solutions
- **14 June 2024:** Deadline for submission of application forms
- **18 June 2024:** Discussion & selection of nominees by a Jury
- **End of June 2024:** Announcement of nominees
- **10 August / 21 September 2024:** Real-world experimentation
- **From September 2024:** Tailored support

10. Selection procedure for applications

The Jury is composed of the following members:

- **Members of the SpArk Operational Committee (Organiser)** who bring their expertise in innovation, technology, and development strategy.
- **Members of the Sierre-Zinal Race Steering Committee (Partner)** who, thanks to their in-depth knowledge of the event and the trail running, provide expertise on how to integrate innovation and how it can benefit the race.

The Jury will evaluate, score and select the applications according to the following main criteria:

1. Relevance of the solution and its fit with the stated themes,
2. Innovative or creative nature,
3. Technical feasibility and testability under real conditions at the event,
4. Potential for dissemination and impact in terms of social, economic, and/or environmental outcomes,
5. Consistency with the ethical values of the race and the support offered by the Organiser.

Applicants who are selected will be personally informed by email and invited to present their solution during a « validation » interview to allow for in-depth evaluation and direct dialogue between the Applicant and the Jury.

The Jury reserves the right to decide on the number of Nominees depending on the quality and relevance of the proposals received. The Jury's decisions are final, confidential, and without appeal.

11. Conditions of experimentation

During the validation interview, Nominees will discuss with the Jury the specific details of the solution testing:

- **Field testing conditions**, including logistical and technical aspects.
- **Interactions with the participants (hereafter the “Testers”)**, including coordination with the Testers to ensure seamless integration of the tests into the context of the race.
- **Planning of the tests**, by establishing a detailed schedule for the preparation and execution of the tests to ensure optimal organisation and clear communication between all parties involved.

The active participation of the Nominees is required throughout the experimentation phase to ensure proper execution and rigorous monitoring of the tests.

The Nominees are responsible for organising, setting up, running and monitoring the tests during the event. This includes recruiting and coordinating Testers, adhering to established test protocols and collecting relevant data.

Nominees must obtain all necessary permissions and strictly follow the guidelines set out in the Sierre-Zinal Race regulations, available at: <https://www.sierre-zinal.com/fr/reglement-340.html>.

Nominees are also responsible for the logistical management, the safety of the Testers and the ethical compliance of their experiments.

12. Terms and conditions

Participation in the Contest and access to field experimentation are entirely free of charge.

All costs associated with the application, selection and experimentation phases, as well as any other activity requiring the physical presence of the Nominee at the Contest events, are the responsibility of the Applicant/Nominee (e.g., application preparation costs, travel, accommodation, subsistence...).

Nominees are fully responsible for providing and managing all materials, equipment, and personnel required to conduct their experiments. This includes but is not limited to, technological equipment, measuring instruments, consumables and any other specific material needed to carry out the tests under real conditions.

The costs associated with purchasing, renting, transporting, and maintaining the equipment are the sole responsibility of the Nominees.

No reimbursement will be made by the Organiser or the Partners for expenses incurred by the Applicants or Nominees in connection with their participation in the Contest.

13. Organiser Commitment

The Organiser undertakes to:

1. Create the necessary conditions for the smooth running of the Contest, including a dedicated website, Contest rules and an appropriate application form, as well as the use of promotional tools and messages;
2. Coordinate the different stages of the call for solutions, from mobilising Applicants to evaluating applications and validating Nominees in collaboration with the Partner;
3. Coach the Nominees for the preparation and execution of the field tests, ensuring support tailored to their needs;
4. Provide privileged access to the field of experimentation and to the participants of the events, subject to their consent and in compliance with the conditions and agreements established with the event Partners;
5. Communicate through social media and other communication channels to promote the Contest, the Partners, the Nominees and their innovative solutions;
6. Explore the possibility of tailor-made support and provide access to a qualified network to facilitate collaboration and development opportunities for the Nominees.

14. Applicant Commitment

The Applicant agrees to:

1. Provide all information required by the Organiser for the evaluation and management of its application;
2. Provide the information necessary to promote their solution as part of the communication campaign;
3. Be aware of and fully accept these rules;
4. Waive any right of appeal against the conditions of the organisation of the Contest, the results and the decisions of the Jury;
5. Waive any right to compensation in the event of modification, postponement, or cancellation of the Contest;
6. Own the intellectual property rights of the proposed solution or be authorised by the co-owners to apply for the Contest;
7. Allow the Organiser and the various Partners to mention the solution in their internal and external communications, to publish, reproduce and display their name and photograph on any support that may be used in connection with the Contest, while respecting the confidentiality of industrial and commercial property;
8. Ensure an active presence at the various events organised in connection with the Contest;
9. Keep the Organiser informed of the progress and the possible commercialisation of the solution;
10. Be open to participate in the tailored support programme offered by the Organiser;

15. Data protection

Personal data is only collected if provided voluntarily by the Applicant when filling in the application form.

The Organiser collects only the data strictly necessary for the organisation of the contest.

These data will be used exclusively for the processing and execution of the Contest and for sending invitations to future events or newsletters (which can be cancelled at any time with a single click). If necessary, they may be communicated to the Partners of the Contest and the service providers involved in the execution and communication of the event.

The data transmitted may only be used to provide the service. No other use by third parties other than the Organiser is authorised.

16. Litigation

Any claim or dispute that may arise in connection with the Contest will be dealt with directly by the Jury, whose decision is final and not subject to appeal.