

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

TREE REVOLUTION: DISCOVERING LIGNIN CHALLENGE

Version: Sept, 2025

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1. CONTEXT

CMPC, a leading company in the forestry and pulp industry with a presence in more than 11 countries, within the framework of its global strategy to drive the transition toward the bioeconomy, invites the scientific-technological research and entrepreneurship community to participate in the **Tree Revolution: Discovering Lignin Challenge**.

This challenge aims to identify, validate, and enhance new applications of Kraft lignin — a by-product from Kraft pulp mills that is useful as a bioproduct in multiple industrial applications — through initiatives at various levels of technological maturity.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CHALLENGE

General Objective:

Promote a circular and sustainable economy through the development of innovative solutions based on Kraft lignin, leveraging its multiple applications and scalability potential.

Specific Objectives:

- Identify solutions that address the use of Kraft lignin at different levels of technological maturity.
- Strengthen the relationship between CMPC and the innovation ecosystem by integrating universities, R&D centers, professional institutes, technical training centers, and science-based startups.
- Explore the possibility of continuity for those projects that prove to be especially interesting for CMPC.

3. ELIGIBILITY

Research teams and entrepreneurs belonging to the following may apply:

- Higher education institutions (universities, professional institutes, technical training centers, and other academic or training organizations);
- Technology and R&D centers;
- Science-based startups;
- Companies with innovative solutions connected to this challenge.

4. PARTICIPATION CATEGORIES

The call is divided into two categories, according to the technological maturity level of the proposed solutions:

Category 1 – TRL 3-6 (Early Stage):

Focused on proposals at the proof-of-concept stage.

Category 2 – TRL >6 (Advanced Stage):

Targeted at solutions that have technological validation at scale.

This distinction will allow proposals to be evaluated considering the feasibility, scalability, and potential impact of each solution at its respective level of maturity.

5. CHALLENGE STAGES

The process is specified below: from application and initial selection, through the bootcamp, to the final presentation of the solution.

a) **Application**

The application of the solution must be submitted in compliance with the criteria indicated in section 7. APPLICATION of this document. The application period will be open from **9:00 a.m. on 03/09 2025** until **6:00 p.m. on 19/10 2025**.

b) **Initial Evaluation**

Professionals from **HUBTEC** and **CMPC** will review and evaluate the proposals received through the application form. This process will be based on the evaluation guidelines described in items 8.1 (Eligibility Criteria) and 8.2 (Initial Evaluation Criteria), taking into consideration the answers provided in the application form.

Proposals will be graded on a scale from 1 to 5. Based on the results, a maximum of **20 projects** will be selected across both categories, having at least **7 selected per category**.

Following the application deadline, **HUBTEC** will communicate the results of the initial evaluation to all applicants within **15 business days**.

c) **Interviews**

The proposals pre-selected in the initial evaluation stage will advance to individual online interview sessions, where they will present their proposals to a panel composed of professionals from **CMPC** and **HUBTEC**.

The startup teams will have **five business days** to prepare for this stage.

CMPC will be responsible for selecting the initiatives that advance to the next stage, based on the evaluation guidelines described in item 8.3 (Interview Evaluation

Criteria). Therefore, it is recommended that the presentation addresses and responds to these criteria.

Proposals will be graded on a scale from 1 to 5, according to the aforementioned criteria, and a maximum of **15 proposals** will be selected across both categories, ensuring a minimum of **5 selected per category**.

Once the interviews are completed, **HUBTEC** and **CMPC** will have **5 business days** to communicate the results and selected participants of this stage.

d) Bootcamp

This stage consists of a working session for the teams selected after the interview stage. Its purpose is to delve deeper into the technical and commercial aspects of their solutions, seeking strategic alignment with the challenges and CMPC's business model.

The **Bootcamp** will be organized by **HUBTEC** and will include sessions led by experts on defined topics. These specialists will provide the necessary knowledge for each startup to refine their ideas and enhance their development.

The **Bootcamp** will last for **4 business days**. Startups will be able to freely register for one or more sessions, depending on their needs.

e) Pitch and Award Event

The final **Pitch** will be held before a panel composed of professionals from **CMPC** and **HUBTEC**, and will consist of a presentation of the proposal lasting up to **5 minutes**, with an additional **5 minutes** allocated for questions (if applicable).

The evaluation committee will be composed of experts from **CMPC** and **HUBTEC**. The panel will evaluate the Pitch according to the guidelines described in item 8.4 (Pitch Evaluation Criteria).

The winners of each category (TRL 3-6 and TRL >6) will be announced within **five business days** after the event. A total of **3 winning startups per category** will be selected.

The format of the event (in-person or online) will be determined based on the origin of the finalist teams to maximize participation

6. PRIZES

The following prize structure will apply for each category:

- **First Place:** USD 7,000
- **Second Place:** USD 3,000
- **Third Place:** USD 1,000

This amount will be paid by **HUBTEC** upon issuance of the corresponding tax document, within a maximum period of 20 business days from the receipt of said documentation. The

prize will be delivered directly and will be of free disposal for the winning team, without implying any mandatory reinvestment in the project.

7. APPLICATION

a) Application Channel

To apply for the challenge, you must go to the **HUBTEC** website, access the application process through the corresponding link, and complete the application form.

The application period will be open from **9:00 a.m. on 03/09 2025** until **6:00 p.m. on 19/10 2025**.

b) Application Requirements

Proposals must meet the following requirements:

1. Must have as their objective the use and applications of Kraft lignin.
2. Must correspond to the following levels of technological maturity:

TRL 3 - 6 (Early Stage): Refers to solutions in the experimental development or initial validation phase, with proof-of-concept carried out and, in some cases, validations in laboratories or controlled environments. These technologies have not yet been demonstrated under real operating conditions but have technical foundations that support their application potential.

TRL >6 (Advanced Stage): Refers to solutions that have been validated under conditions relevant to their final use, whether in simulated environments, pilot scale, or even industrial scale. These solutions have demonstrated functionality beyond the laboratory and show readiness to be integrated into real production processes.

3. The solution must have technical foundations that support its feasibility and present a preliminary approach on how it could be scaled for industrial or commercial implementation.
4. Presentation of an interdisciplinary team with relevant experience.
5. Proposals coming from universities must have the endorsement of the corresponding transfer office or unit.
6. Applications that include background on the state of the art of similar solutions, freedom-to-operate (FTO) studies, and/or background on intellectual property related to the proposed development will be positively valued.

8. EVALUATION

The evaluation will be carried out according to the following criteria:

8.1 Eligibility Evaluation:

HUBTEC will not consider for evaluation any applications that do not meet the application requirements described in section 7 of these Rules.

8.2 Application Form Evaluation:

Applications will be graded on a scale from 1 to 5, considering the following criteria and weightings:

Guidelines	Detail	Percentage
Opportunity Identification	<p>Identification of the opportunity to be addressed through the use of Kraft lignin for the development of the technological solution.</p> <p>Clearly identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The opportunity strengthens CMPC's position in the industry.• Competitive advantages it could generate for the company in terms of portfolio diversification and sustainability.	20%
Proposed Solution	<p>Detailed description of the proposed solution, considering its differentiating and innovative character, and potential impact.</p> <p>Clearly identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of the solution up to the proposal stage• Proposed solution with innovative and differentiating character• Proposal's potential impact (business case of the solution)• Competitive advantages of Kraft lignin compared to existing materials for the development of the proposed solution.	30%

Scalability	It is clearly identified that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for scalability • Pathways for commercial scalability 	20%
Intellectual Property and Freedom to Operate	State of protection (patent, application, trade secret, etc.), clarity regarding ownership and protection strategy. It will be positively valued if the proposal clearly describes the technological and competitive context of the solution, demonstrating knowledge and highlighting its level of novelty or differentiation compared to existing developments.	15%
Team	Possess the necessary capabilities and experience for the development of the proposal.	15%

8.3 Interviews with Pre-Selected Teams

The panel composed of professionals from **CMPC** and **HUBTEC** will evaluate the interviews with scores from 1 to 5, considering the following criteria and weightings:

Criterion	Detail	Percentage
Team Capabilities	Technical experience; Complementary capabilities	30%
Science-Industry Experience	Previous experience with the industry	20%
General Project Assessment	Impact that the proposed solution could have at the company level and its connection with its strategic objectives	50%

8.4 Pitch Evaluation

The startups will be evaluated by a committee composed of members from **CMPC** and **HUBTEC**, with scores from 1 to 5, considering the following criteria and weightings:

Criterion	Detail	Percentage
Innovation of the Solution	Does the project introduce a novel idea and clearly differentiate itself from other similar projects, providing a solution to the challenge?	30%
Feasibility and Viability	Is the project technically viable and financially feasible, with a clear potential for long-term sustainability?	30%
Clarity and Structure of the Presentation	Was the presentation clear and was the work plan well-structured and defined?	20%

9. COMMITMENTS AND GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Mandatory participation: The selected teams must commit to participating in the activities established in this call, as defined in each stage (validation bootcamp, pitch, and award event).

Intellectual Property: The intellectual property of all solutions submitted in this call will belong exclusively to the participants. **CMPC** will not acquire any rights over it at this stage. The selection of a winner only constitutes recognition of the proposal. Any future collaboration for the development or scaling of a solution will be formalized through a separate agreement, whose conditions — including those related to intellectual property — will be negotiated between the parties at that time.

Communications: The winners agree to be available, if required, to participate in interviews, photo sessions, or recordings coordinated by CMPC and HUBTEC. All audiovisual or documentary material will be produced and managed by CMPC and HUBTEC, who may use it for dissemination purposes. The winners grant CMPC and HUBTEC the rights to use such material.

Confidentiality: The selected teams must sign a confidentiality agreement (NDA) prior to the start of the bootcamp, ensuring the secure handling of the information exchanged during the challenge.

CMPC and **HUBTEC** reserve the right to remove any participant from the Challenge, without the need to provide cause or reason.

10. DATES

- **Open Call:** September 3, 2025 until 6:00 p.m. on October 19, 2025
- **Interviews:** November 19, 2025 to November 28, 2025
- **Bootcamp:** December 9, 2025 to December 12, 2025
- **Pitch Preparation:** December 15, 2025 to January 2, 2026
- **Final Pitch:** January 7, 2026
- **Winners Announcement:** January 14, 2026

For inquiries and further information, interested parties may contact:
convocatoria_CMPC@hubtec.cl

HUBTEC will send notifications and updates related to the application process to the email address registered by each applicant.

11. GENERAL REMARKS

Opportunity for continuity (Optional on the part of the company): While this call does not guarantee the continuation of joint work between **CMPC** and the winning projects, if any project proves to be especially interesting for CMPC, the possibility of moving forward with its validation will be independently evaluated. This decision will be made by the company taking into account aspects such as the strategic alignment of the technological solution, commercial feasibility, and the interest of the company's internal business units.

Access to innovation network: Integration into the **HUBTEC** community, facilitating networking and connections with other actors in the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

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