

2026 Ray of Hope Accelerator | Application Form & Questions

Apply to join the 2026 Ray of Hope Accelerator.

The application period for the 2026 cohort opens on March 3d, 2026, and closes on April 24th, 2025 (8:00pm EST).

We're looking for the world's most promising and impactful nature-inspired startups to join our next accelerator cohort. Learn more about the accelerator and the biomimicry companies we support:

<https://biomimicry.org/innovation/accelerator/>. Visit our How to Apply page to learn about the Eligibility and Selection criteria: <https://biomimicry.org/innovation/accelerator/apply/>.

This application takes approximately 45 to 90 minutes to complete. It includes questions about your company's nature-inspired solution, technology/product/service/business model, leadership team and finances, as well as your pitch deck as a PDF document, and the recording of a 1 min pitch video. For the video, upload it to YouTube (mark the video as unlisted if you don't want other people finding it) and test that the link works. See additional instructions below.

Since application must be completed **in a SINGLE SITTING**, please use this PDF version to review and prepare in advance.

We recommend reading through all the questions before you begin answering. Please respect the indicated word count for each section of the form. Applications that adhere to the word limits will be given priority in the review process.

Thank you for your time and effort, and we look forward to learning more about you and your biomimicry startup!

Contact Information

First name	
Last Name	
Title/Role	
Email Address	
LinkedIn Profile URL	

Startup Details

Startup Name	
Startup Website URL	
What year was your company founded?	
Startup One-sentence Description	10 words

<p>10 words max. Examples: Ecosia: “Search engine that funds global tree restoration.” / Patagonia: “Outdoor apparel company focused on environmental stewardship.”</p>	
<p>Startup Description</p>	<p>150 words</p>
<p>In what country is your company incorporated?</p>	<p>Dropdown menu selection with list of all countries.</p>
<p>What corporation type is your company?</p>	<p>Dropdown menu selection with the following choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LLC ● B-Corp ● Public Benefit Corporation ● C-Corp ● Not Incorporated ● Other
<p>Which industries are relevant to your company?</p> <p>Select up to three.</p>	<p>Dropdown menu selection with tags.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chemistry and Materials 2. Built Environment 3. Manufacturing and Advanced Robotics 4. Renewable Energy 5. Transportation and Mobility 6. Food and Agriculture 7. Conservation and Remediation 8. Life Sciences and Medtech 9. Biotechnology 10. Consumer Products, Cosmetics, Textiles 11. Water 12. BlueTech 13. ClimateTech
<p>Video URL: 60-second elevator-pitch</p> <p><i>Explain in a 60-second elevator pitch what you do, why you are the best fit to scale your startup and why you are a fit for the Ray of Hope Accelerator. This video should be recorded specifically for the purpose of this application and not be professionally produced (you can use your phone or computer camera).</i></p> <p><i>Upload your video to Youtube (mark the video as unlisted if you don't want other people finding it) and test that the link works.</i></p>	
<p>Pitch Deck PDF</p>	<p>Upload button</p>

Startup Team

Please list up to 3 founding team members by providing their name, title and email address. Information for at least 1 founding team member is required, this can be the same as the initial contact information. (Section will be repeated up to 3 times).

First name	
Last Name	
Title <i>Hint: Select all that apply.</i>	Dropdown menu with tag selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO • CTO • CFO • COO • CSO • Sole Founder • Co-Founder
Email Address	
LinkedIn Profile URL	

Tell us why your team is the right team to grow your startup. <i>Tell us about your expertise, your knowledge of your customer base, your experience in this sector and in the startup space, the diversity of skills on your team. Why is your team the winning team?</i>	200 words
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Your Solution

What problem or need are you solving?	200 words
Please describe your product or service.	200 words
How have you secured your intellectual property?	200 words
How does your solution draw inspiration from nature? Explain the biological principles behind your technology, process, or business model. <i>Examples from the Ray of Hope Accelerator portfolio: Cellulotech: Inspired by the hydrophobic properties of the lotus leaf. Fiberly: Mimics the molecular structure of cotton fibers to upcycle textile waste.</i>	200 words
Have you conducted any original research to support your nature-inspired innovation? <i>Please briefly describe it (including who on your team has conducted the research, names of researchers, lab etc.) and provide links to any relevant publications, data. Additionally, we invite you to provide links to relevant AskNature pages (if applicable - www.asknature.org).</i>	No character limit.
Which of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals does your organization address? <i>Select up to three goals. UN's SDGs: https://sdgs.un.org/goals</i>	Dropdown menu selection with the 17 SDGs goals

What social and environmental impacts does your solution create?	200 words
<i>Explain how your startup contributes to sustainability and regeneration, through materials, manufacturing, supply chains, emissions reductions, or other strategies.</i>	

Startup Progress & Strategy

Share any significant traction you have made to date.	200 words
<i>Tell us how you gained interest and validation from your target audience, customers, and the market. It could include but it is not limited to: LOIs, endorsements, customers, partnerships and collaborations etc.</i>	
<i>If you've applied to this accelerator in the past, make sure to state how you have progressed compared to your previous application.</i>	
Do you have revenue?	30 words
Have you raised any funding for your startup? If so, please select the amount of your largest investment to date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● \$5,000,000+ USD ● \$2,000,000 - \$5,000,000 ● \$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000 ● \$500,000 - \$1,000,000 ● \$250,000 - \$500,000 ● \$100,000 - \$250,000 ● \$50,000 - \$100,000 ● \$0 - \$50,000 ● No Funding Received
<i>Funding sources include but are not limited to; Friends and Family Funds, Grants, Angel Investment, Venture Capital Investment, etc.</i>	
Have you participated in any accelerators, competitions etc.?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No
If yes; which one(s) and when?	No character limits.
Who are your competitors and what makes your solution unique?	200 words
What are your next major company milestones?	200 words
<i>Briefly outline your timeline. What are your next key milestones and what challenges are you facing in accomplishing them?</i>	

Ray of Hope Accelerator

How did you learn about the Ray of Hope Accelerator?	Dropdown menu selection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TBI Staff ● Alumni ● Word of mouth ● Search Engine ● Social media (Instagram, LinkedIn) ● The Biomimicry Institute newsletter
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Event or conference ● News or media coverage (article, blog, podcast etc.) ● University outreach ● Partner organization ● An investor ● Previously applied ● Other
<p>Participation in the Ray of Hope Accelerator requires a commitment of 3-4 hours per week during the 6 months of the program, including a 1-hour live session and additional program-related work.</p> <p>Additionally, a mandatory in-person one-week gathering will take place during the first week of September 2026, requiring attendance from two founders/executive team members. Do you confirm that you and your team can meet these participation requirements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No
<p>Have you checked that your pitch video is accessible? A quick way to test is to copy and paste the link into an incognito browser window, if it plays there, it should work for us too.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No
<p>In applying for the 2026 Ray of Hope Accelerator, I agree with the Biomimicry Institute's Privacy Policy and Terms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No
<p>I'd like to receive newsletters, insights, resources and event invitations from the Biomimicry Institute.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No

Optional Questions: Diversity; Equity; and Inclusion

<p><i>The Biomimicry Institute is dedicated to increasing diversity and inclusion across its programs. We ask the following questions to better understand the diversity of our applicant pool. Sharing this information is voluntary, and responses will not impact your application evaluation. We will request more detailed DEI information from selected teams.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I agree to participate. ● Prefer not to answer
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<p>How does your founding team self-identify in terms of gender? Please check all that apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Woman/Women ● Man/Men ● Non-binary ● Genderqueer/Genderfluid ● Trans ● Two Spirit (for Indigenous respondents) ● Other ● Prefer not to answer
<p>How would your founding team describe their racial/ethnic identities? Please check all that apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● African ● African American ● Asian ● Hispanic / Latin(o/a/x) ● Indigenous / Native American / Aboriginal ● Middle Eastern / SWANA ● Multiracial ● Pacific Islander / Native Hawaiian

- White / Caucasian / European
- Other race / Ethnicity
- Prefer not to answer