



Railway Innovation Hackathon 2026 – invitation to **propose a challenge**



8 - 9 January 2026



Bern Wankdorf



English

Dear Partners,

We need you and your challenges!

We are looking for exciting challenges posed by railway companies and the railway industry to fuel this Innovation Hackathon!

- Do you face a complex or unsolved challenge?
- Are you open to innovative, cross-disciplinary approaches?
- Would you like fresh perspectives and hands-on solutions?

Submit your challenge now!

Selected challenges will be tackled by creative teams of **motivated students, young professionals, and industry experts** during the **Railway Innovation Hackathon 2026**. This is a unique opportunity to gain novel insights into your real-world problems and develop tangible approaches that are **funded with up to CHF 25,000**.

How to Submit Your Challenge

If you're interested in submitting your most pressing challenge, please complete the attached template and return it to deniz.pueseli@unisg.ch via email **by 15 October 2025**.

There is no specific thematic restriction – your challenge can address any aspect of the rail or train system. We welcome a wide range of topics – whether they relate to operational processes, technical infrastructure, customer experience, digital transformation, or sustainability.

To support your submission, we've attached an example challenge from a previous similar hackathon edition for your reference. **We look forward to receiving your challenge!**

What happens next- The Selection Process

Depending on the amounts of challenges received and due to limited slots, the organizing team might have to select the challenges. This selection will be based on the following rules:

- Relevance to **Railway Innovation**
- Potential for **impactful approaches**
- Diversity of topics and organizations represented
- **Level of complexity** (suitable for a Hackathon format)
- Commitment and clarity of the challenge description

You will be informed by **31 October 2025** whether your challenge has been selected or not. If chosen, you will work closely with us to refine your submission before the Hackathon. To ensure your full commitment and enable co-financing the event, we require a **mandatory financial contribution of CHF 5,000** from each selected challenge partner. By contributing, you ensure that the winning team working on your challenge receives guaranteed follow-up funding of **CHF 25,000**. This enables the selected team to further develop their approach **together with you** after the Hackathon.

If your challenge is not selected this time, we may consider it for **future editions** or integrate it into other New Mobility Lab/Railway Talent Hub initiatives.

Requirements and Process

This Hackathon follows a structured, supported process:

1. **One-Pager Submission:** Using the provided template
2. **Webinar for Challenge Owners:** Explaining expectations, process, funding of selected Hackathon winners
3. **Coaching and Support:** For refining your challenge pre-Hackathon
4. **Hackathon Participation:** Two-day event with guided collaboration
5. **Follow-Up:** Optional further development and funding opportunities as well as a national ecosystem to sharpen the approach of the Hackathon winners

The challenge owner is expected to attend the two-day workshop and invest approximately 8 hours in preparation and follow-up to further refine the submitted challenge

Your Benefits

By submitting a challenge, you gain more than an outside-In perspective — you become part of a high-impact innovation process with long-term value.

Here's what's in it for you:

- **Funding for Further Development:**
Each challenge-winning team will receive up to CHF 25,000 in follow-up funding from

the Innosuisse Innovation Booster to further develop the most promising solution together with you.

- **Access to a Powerful Innovation Ecosystem:**
Work with top-tier universities, industry experts, and innovation coaches across Switzerland and beyond — all focused on pushing boundaries in the railway sector.
- **Visibility and Publicity:**
Your challenge and collaboration will be featured in media communications, event coverage, and network publications, strengthening your position as a forward-thinking organization in the mobility sector.
- **Actionable Outcomes:**
Get hands-on, practical ideas and concepts from diverse teams that combine academic insight with real-world relevance.
- **Talent Pipeline:**
Connect with highly motivated students and young professionals — a valuable opportunity to meet potential future collaborators or recruits.
- **Expert Support:**
Benefit from ongoing coaching, feedback, and methodological guidance throughout the innovation process.

About the Hackathon

The Railway Innovation Hackathon is a joint initiative by the Railway Talent Hub and the Innovation Booster New Mobility. The goal is to shape the future of mobility - together. To achieve this, we're bringing together students, young professionals, and industry experts to co-develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges in rail and mobility.

Language: Please be aware that this event will be held in English.

We look forward to receiving your ideas!

If you have any questions, please reach out to deniz.pueseli@unisg.ch.

Feel free to forward this invitation.

Best regards

[Railway Talent Hub](#) & [Switzerland Innovation Park Central](#)