

Women's-led Startups Contest in BRICS Countries Attracts Over a Thousand Applications

The 18 finalists will head to Rio de Janeiro in July, with travel expenses covered by the competition.

Female entrepreneurship will be highlighted in this edition of the BRICS Business Forum, ahead of the government summit taking place this year in July in Rio de Janeiro. In total, 1,032 women-led startups from the BRICS countries have applied for the "BRICS Women's Startup Contest." The competition, which honors women at the forefront of business, will be part of the event's program.

Applications from Brazil, South Africa, and India represent more than 70% of the total. The initiative is a co-realization of the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (SEBRAE) and the Women's Business Alliance (WBA), coordinated in 2025 by the Brazilian National Confederation of Industry (CNI). The competition will award professionals in six categories: Health and Wellness, Agriculture and Food Security, Education and Skills Development, Energy, Infrastructure and Mobility, Trade, Services and Digital Transformation, and Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions.

The next steps include the stage of analysis, compliance, and maturity of each startup registered, followed by technical evaluations, occurring initially by regions as follows: Region 1: Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba; Region 2: Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Iran; Region 3: India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand; Region 4: China, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt; Region 5: South Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda, Nigeria. The evaluation period goes until May 27, and the 18 selected will be announced to the public during the BRICS Business Forum in July in Rio de Janeiro, where they will participate in technical missions and gain international recognition. Travel expenses will be covered by the competition. The Business Forum is sponsored by WEG, Embraer and XCMG and has an institutional partnership with the National Council of Sesi, the Social Service of Brazilian Industry and the OCB (Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives). The BRICS Business Forum and the private sector engagement groups (BRICS Business Council and BRICS Women's Business Alliance) are coordinated by the Brazilian National Confederation of Industry (CNI).