

SEVA FIRST INNOVATION CHALLENGE
Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Department
Government of Maharashtra

Be a Problem Solver

Seven steps from "I noticed something wrong" to a solution that can win a work order from a government department.



THE PRIZE

A ₹10 lakh work order

From Government of
Maharashtra department and
allied offices — to build and
deliver your solution.

01 Not prize money

A work order is a contract. The government becomes your client.

02 You must deliver

What you promise in your submission, you build in the field.

03 First-timers can win

A real problem, real evidence and a working demo beat a fancy idea. This deck is that path.

Start from a problem you have seen

Real projects begin with something broken in front of you, not with a technology you find exciting.

The wrong start X

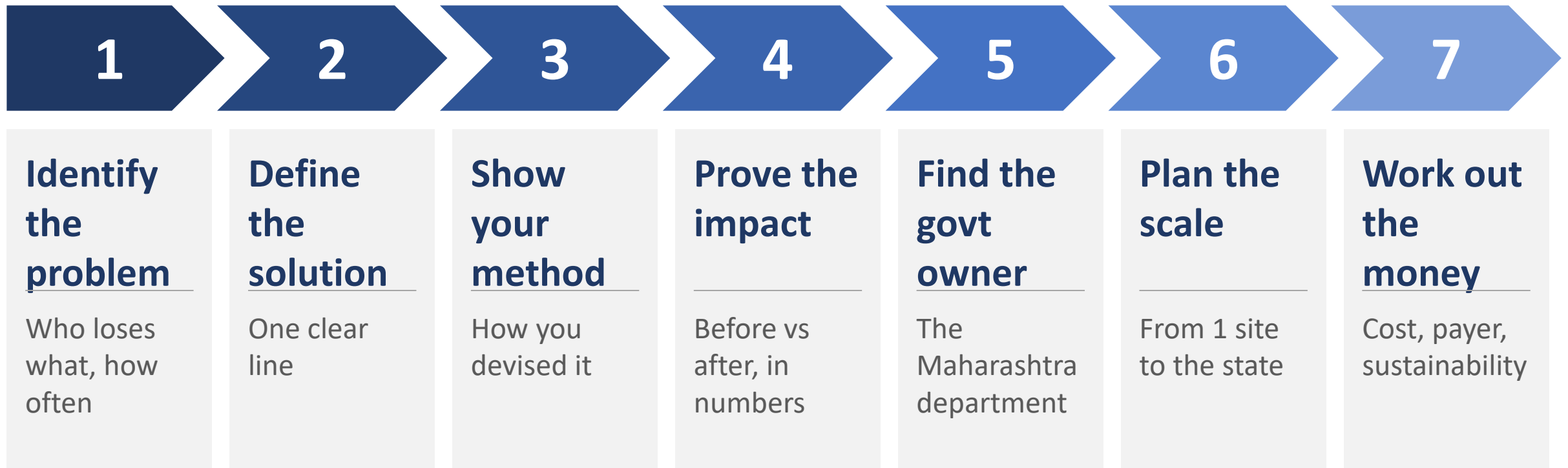
"I love drones. What problem can I attach to them?"



The right start ✓

"Vendors in my lane throw away 10–15 kg of vegetables every evening. Why?"

The seven steps



= Your complete project Ready for any challenge or office

"[Who] loses [what] because [what goes wrong], [how often]."

A topic ✗

"Pollution is bad."



A problem ✓

"Vendors in my lane throw away 10–15 kg of unsold vegetables every evening because they have no cold storage."

Back it with proof: two or three facts from stakeholders who actually face it.

1 Observe for a week

Carry a notebook.
Note what is broken, slow, wasteful or unfair around you.

2 Talk to 3 people

How often? What does it cost you?
What do you do about it today?

3 Pick one you can reach

The vendor you can visit daily beats the glacier you cannot.

4 Check it matters

Frequent and costly — or nobody will adopt your fix.

"A **[what it is]** that **[what it does]** so that **[the loss]** stops."

- **Solve the cause, not the symptom**

A poster about food waste fixes nothing. A shared low-cost cooler does.

- **Usable by the people affected**

Their language, their skill level, their budget — or it is not a solution.

- **Simplest thing that works**

Two buckets or a chart can be a complete solution. Add tech only when simple fails.

- **Say what it is NOT**

One honest line about what it does not do keeps it focused.

**Observe**

What you saw
and counted

Root cause

Ask "why?"
five times

Options

List 3, reject 2
with reasons

Prototype

Rough first
version, photos
of all

Test

What failed,
what you
changed

Include one failure honestly — it is your strongest credibility line.

Used a tool — a sensor, an app, an AI? Name it and say exactly what it did for you.

BEFORE

12 kg

wasted per vendor, per day

AFTER A 2-WEEK TRIAL

4 kg

= ₹6,000–9,000 more income a month

*"Before: **[number]**. After our trial with **[n people]**: **[number]**. Per person that means **[rupees / hours / health]**. Roughly **[count]** people in **[area]** face the same problem."*

No trial yet? Give the baseline, your expected result, and your trial date. An honest "not yet tested" beats an invented number — invented numbers are always caught.

Your problem area	Related Department in Maharashtra
Agriculture	Agriculture Department
Women & child care	Women & Child Development Department
Sustainability / waste	Environment & Climate Change Dept; your Municipal Corporation
Health & medical	Public Health Department
Infrastructure	Public Works Dept; Rural Development Dept
Emerging technologies	EIT&AI Department; Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS), SEEID
Education & employability	School Education Dept; Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Department (SEEID)
Energy	Energy Department; MSEDCL; MEDA
Climate	Environment & Climate Change Dept; Water Conservation Dept
Defence & security	Home Department; Industries Dept.
Urban development	Urban Development Department; your ward office

1 Walk into a real office

District Collector's office, Zilla Parishad, or your Municipal ward office.

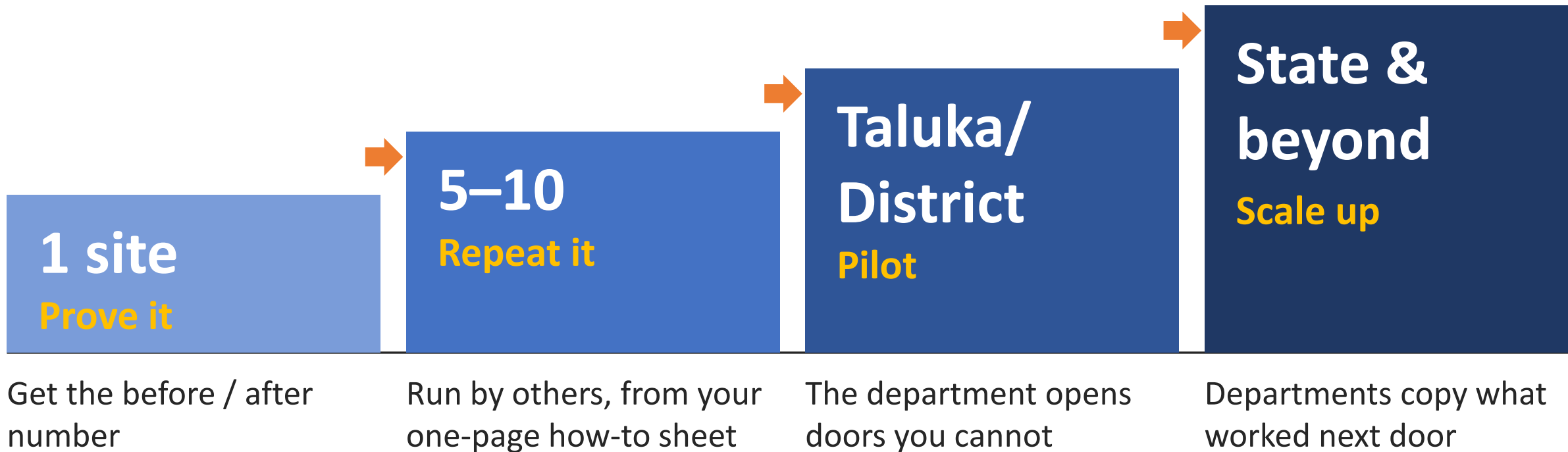
2 Carry a two-page note

Your Steps 1–4: the problem, the solution, the method, the numbers.

3 Tech idea? Go to MSInS

The state's front door for young innovators — it runs challenges where student solutions meet government problems.

Address a **designation**, not a person: e.g. Block Development Officer, Ward Officer, Taluka Agriculture Officer, etc.



✓ Someone who already exists runs each site — a teacher, a vendor, a ward volunteer

✓ Cost per site falls, or stays flat, as sites grow

Three money questions

1. What does it cost?

One-time cost per site, monthly running cost, and your time — yes, that is a real cost. Price things by asking shops; mark estimates as estimates.

2. Who pays?

Early: you, your school, well-wishers. Later: the department, CSR, prize money. Strongest: users who save money pay a little — that needs nobody's permission.

3. Does it sustain?

One line: monthly benefit per site vs monthly cost per site. If cost wins, name who covers the gap and why they would keep covering it.

If benefit beats cost, your solution funds itself — scaling becomes a decision, not a fundraiser.

Zero to idea & solution in 7 days

Walk and list

Note 10 broken, slow or wasteful things around you



Choose and dig

Pick one problem; ask "why?" five times to the root cause



Build rough

Cardboard, a chart, two buckets, a WhatsApp group — anything real



Trial it with real users, then Steps 4–7



Interview

3 people who face your top problem — cost, frequency, workaround



Sketch 3 fixes

Reject two with reasons; keep the simplest that works



Write it down

Problem line + solution line + your evidence

1

A real problem with evidence

Names, numbers and photos from the field — your Steps 1 and 4.

2

A working demo

However rough. Judges trust what they can see over what they are told.

3

Fits money the govt already spends

Show which department's existing cost your solution replaces or reduces.

4

A deliverable pilot plan

What you will deliver, where, by when, and who runs it — your Steps 5 to 7.

The safest way to win: pick a problem a department already struggles with, and show it working small before you ask for it big.

Your one-page project

- 01 Project name, team
- 02 Problem Statement in one sentence
- 03 Evidence from stakeholder consultation, secondary research
- 04 One-line solution
- 05 Your methodology
- 06 One failure and the fix
- 07 Impact: before and after, with numbers
- 08 Related Govt. and local office
- 09 Stagewise scale-up plan
- 10 Financial details

Before you submit, check three things

- ☐ Every claim has a number or a name behind it
- ☐ a stranger understands the page without you explaining
- ☐ you can answer "what failed?" honestly.

**Problems are everywhere.
So are solvers.
Be one.**

This week: pick one problem you have seen, take Step 1 —
and submit it to the Seva First Challenge.