

Zayed Sustainability Prize Demonstrates Global Reach and Impact with over 5,900 Submissions

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- US \$5.9 million Prize attracts submissions from 156 countries
- High number of entries leverage advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain to address pressing sustainability challenges
- Since 2008, the Prize has transformed the lives of over 384 million people

The Zayed Sustainability Prize, the UAE's pioneering global award for sustainability and humanitarianism, has officially closed entries for its 2025 awards cycle. A total of 5,980 applications were received across the six Prize categories of Health, Food, Energy, Water, Climate Action and Global High Schools, from 156 countries.

The Zayed Sustainability Prize winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony, which will be held on 14 January 2025 as part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week.

This year's Prize has seen a notable 15% increase in submissions over the previous year from small and medium enterprises (SMEs), nonprofit organisations, and high schools. Close analysis of the submissions reveals a prevailing trend across all categories: a significant number of solutions are harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI), big data, blockchain, 3D printing, and biotechnology applications, revealing the importance of technological innovation in driving progress towards sustainability.

H.E. Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, Director General of the Zayed Sustainability Prize, and COP28 President, said "For the last 16 years, the Zayed Sustainability Prize has supported innovative solutions that address pressing global challenges and deliver tangible impact to communities around the world. Inspired by Sheikh Zayed's commitment to humanitarianism and people focused, inclusive sustainable development, the Prize has transformed the lives of over 384 million people."

"We are deeply encouraged by the record number of applications we have received from every continent. This overwhelming response, particularly from young people and organisations in the

Global South, reinforces our belief that innovations harnessing cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence, coupled with community-driven approaches, are key to effectively addressing climate change and driving social and environmental progress," he added.

This year's submissions were more varied than ever, highlighting the universal impact of climate change on nations across all continents. Most of the submissions came from emerging markets, revealing that rapidly developing countries are at the forefront of catalysing local, innovative solutions to address the sustainability gap.

The top submitting countries included Brazil, India, Kenya, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and the United States. This year, the Prize accepted submissions in multiple languages, including Arabic, English, French, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish, promoting inclusivity, ensuring broader participation, and allowing diverse perspectives from different regions and cultures to be represented.

The Food (1,255) and Climate Action (1,532) categories attracted the greatest number of submissions, followed by Health (997), Global High Schools (906), Energy (669) and Water (621).

In the Food category, which received twice as many submissions compared to last year, the entries respond to challenges related to sustainable food production through innovations like agricultural technology (Agtech) for food system resilience.

Submissions addressing deforestation and rising carbon emissions dominated the Climate Action category, with organisations leading efforts in soil restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and sustainable resource use, fostering environmental sustainability.

SMEs and NPOs in the Health category predominantly focus on enhancing access to healthcare and disease prevention through solutions that leverage innovative technologies, community-driven programmes, and partnerships to bridge gaps in medical services, especially in underserved regions.

In the Energy category, the Prize received numerous entries from organisations dedicated to expanding sustainable energy access in vulnerable communities. While submissions featuring emerging technologies like hydrogen fuel systems, energy storage solutions and electric mobility, all critical for the global energy transition, also increased significantly.

Finally, in the Water category, many entries concentrate on enhancing water accessibility through innovative solutions that emphasise water conservation, advanced recycling techniques, filtration processes, and comprehensive treatment systems to ensure clean water resources for all.

The number of submissions from high schools has more than doubled compared to the previous year, signalling a significant increase in youth involvement and dedication to sustainable

practices. In the Global High Schools category, the proposals included sustainable food production methods such as hydroponics and aquaponics, effective recycling and waste management strategies, the use of bioenergy, and the creation of bioproducts.

Following the close of submissions, the Prize now enters the evaluation stage. All entries will be shortlisted by an independent research and analysis consultancy. A Selection Committee comprised of globally renowned industry experts will then assess the qualified entries and shortlist the candidates. The third and final tier of the evaluation process is the Jury, which will convene in October to unanimously elect the winners in each category.

Since its launch in 2008, the US \$5.9 million Prize has transformed the lives of over 384 million people around the world. Its global impact continues to grow, as it accelerates sustainable development and humanitarian progress. Each winner in the Health, Food, Energy, Water and Climate Action categories receive US \$1 million to expand the scope and scale of their sustainability solution(s), while the Global High Schools category has six winners, representing six world regions, with each winner receiving up to US \$150,000.

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The Zayed Sustainability Prize is the UAE's pioneering award for innovative solutions to global challenges.

A tribute to the legacy and vision of the UAE's founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the Prize aims to drive sustainable development worldwide.

Each year, across the Health, Food, Energy, Water, Climate Action and Global High Schools categories, the Prize rewards organisations and high schools for their groundbreaking solutions to our planet's most pressing needs.

Through its 117 winners, in 16 years, the Prize has positively impacted over 384 million lives across the globe, inspiring innovators to amplify their impact, and chart a sustainable future for all.

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