

Zayed Sustainability Prize Honours Global Pioneers Advancing Progress

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- US\$5.9M awarded to 11 organisations and high schools from the UAE, Brazil, Canada, Nepal, Switzerland, Uganda and across six sustainability categories
- From AI-enabled diagnostics to Cooling-as-a-Service, this year's winners deliver locally adapted innovations that empower millions
- In 18 years, the Prize has scaled solutions reaching more than 411 million people globally

The Zayed Sustainability Prize, the UAE's pioneering award for innovative solutions to global challenges, today announced the cohort of 2026 winners, celebrating 18 years of empowering communities and driving inclusive, sustainable progress around the world.

In a ceremony held during Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW) and attended by Heads of State, Ministers, and business leaders, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, President of the UAE, awarded the winners for their outstanding contributions to advancing sustainable development worldwide.

H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan said: "The UAE remains firmly committed to supporting efforts that enhance people's well-being and strengthen the foundations of stability and progress around the world. The Zayed Sustainability Prize continues to encourage practical solutions that uplift communities and expand opportunity through innovation and cooperation. Through this enduring platform, we honour the legacy of Sheikh Zayed, whose vision of compassion, unity, and shared prosperity continues to shape a better future for all."

H.E. Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and Director General of the Zayed Sustainability Prize, praised the winners for advancing scalable innovations that deliver tangible social and environmental benefits.

H.E. Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber said: "This year's winners demonstrate how practical, real-world solutions can transform lives — from strengthening health and food systems to expanding access to clean energy and water. The UAE has long believed in connecting capability with need, and in building bridges across sectors and regions to deliver lasting, measurable impact. It is a

conviction rooted in inclusive progress, and through the Zayed Sustainability Prize, this vision is translated into action by supporting innovations that put people first and open new pathways for growth.”

Since its establishment in 2008, the Prize has become a catalyst for impact, rewarding small and medium-sized enterprises, nonprofit organisations, and high schools that are addressing critical challenges across the six categories of Health, Food, Energy, Water, Climate Action, and Global High Schools. Through its 128 winners, the Prize has impacted over 411 million lives.

This cycle, a record 7,761 submissions were received from 173 countries, reviewed through a rigorous, multi-stage evaluation process by technical experts, the Selection Committee, and a distinguished Jury chaired by H.E. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, former President of Iceland.

H.E. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson said: “The 2026 winners reflect a growing maturity in sustainability innovation — where technology, local knowledge, and execution come together. These solutions are designed to work in real-world conditions and to grow responsibly over time. They offer clear examples of how practical ingenuity, informed by experience, can strengthen access to essential services and improve everyday lives. As these approaches continue to expand, they point the way toward a more inclusive and effective path for sustainable development in the years ahead.”

In the Health category, Jade, an SME from the UAE, was honoured for reimagining neurodevelopmental screening through AI and play. Its gamified platform, combining cognitive assessments, eye-tracking, and personalised learning, is now used in over 450 institutions across 179 countries. By reducing diagnostic wait times and improving engagement, Jade has already supported more than 180,000 children worldwide and is setting a new benchmark for inclusive early intervention.

The Food category award went to N&E Innovations of Singapore, recognised for its breakthrough biodegradable antimicrobial packaging and coatings that extend food shelf life while tackling waste at its source. Made from upcycled food waste and plant-based ingredients, the company’s patented technology delivers 99.9% antimicrobial effectiveness, achieving bacterial counts 4.5 times lower than conventional materials. Food-safe, compostable, and circular by design, more than 400,000 sustainable packs have already reached consumers.

In the Energy category, Switzerland’s BASE Foundation was recognised for transforming how communities access sustainable cooling. Its Cooling-as-a-Service model eliminates upfront costs and makes low-carbon cooling both efficient and affordable. Operating in 68 countries, BASE has created 2,500 jobs, while its model saves 130 GWh of electricity and prevents 81,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year, demonstrating how market-based innovation can scale environmental impact.

The Water category recognised Status4, an SME from Brazil, whose AI- and IoT-enabled

technology helps utilities detect and fix leaks with unprecedented speed and precision. Monitoring more than 5,000 kilometres of distribution networks and identifying over 22,000 potential leak points, Status4 saves around 5.56 billion litres of water every day, strengthening water security for over four million people and transforming the efficiency of urban water systems.

In the Climate Action category, Build up Nepal, a nonprofit organisation from Nepal, was celebrated for reinventing brickmaking as a tool for climate resilience and economic empowerment. To date, the organisation has produced over 3.3 million earthquake-resistant eco-bricks and supported the construction of more than 12,000 resilient homes, creating nearly 2,000 green jobs, housing 58,000 people, and avoiding 110,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions in the process.

Finally, the Zayed Sustainability Prize continues to empower the next generation of sustainability leaders through its Global High Schools category, enabling youth to turn local challenges into practical solutions that benefit their communities. Each year, six high schools representing the world's regions receive up to US \$150,000 to implement innovative, student-led projects that create meaningful social, economic, and environmental impact. To date, the Prize's 56 previous Global High Schools winners have impacted the lives of over 56,599 students and 480,660 people across the globe.

The 2026 recipients of the Global High Schools awards are Mamawi Atosketan Native School (Canada), representing The Americas; Kyanja High School (Uganda), representing Sub-Saharan Africa; Al Rajaa School for the Deaf (Jordan), representing the Middle East & North Africa; Bodrum Anatolian High School (Türkiye), representing Europe & Central Asia; Faafu Atoll Education Center (Maldives), representing South Asia; and Ruamrudee International School (Thailand), representing East Asia & Pacific.

As the world accelerates its pursuit of sustainable development, the Zayed Sustainability Prize stands as a testament to the UAE's holistic vision of progress driven by technological innovation and long-term economic growth. The Prize reflects the nation's belief that true leadership lies in empowering others to lead, fostering collaboration among governments, enterprises, civil society, and youth to build a more prosperous and equitable world.

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About the Zayed Sustainability Prize

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 groundbreaking solutions to our planet's most pressing needs.

Through its 128 winners, in 18 years, the Prize has positively impacted over 411 million lives across the globe, inspiring innovators to amplify their impact, and chart a sustainable future for all.

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