

Zayed Sustainability Prize Closes 2027 Submissions with Strong Global Participation

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- Over 10,000 entries from 177 countries mark the highest participation in the Prize's history
- Submissions increased 32% year-on-year, reflecting sustained local led momentum for scalable global impact
- Through 139 winners, the Prize has positively impacted more than 411 million lives worldwide

The Zayed Sustainability Prize, the UAE's pioneering award for innovative solutions to global challenges, has officially closed submissions for its 2027 awards cycle, receiving an unprecedented 10,233 entries from 177 countries across its six categories of Health, Food, Energy, Water, Climate Action and Global High Schools.

Now in its 18th year, the Prize continues to attract a diverse and growing pool of small and medium-sized enterprises, nonprofit organisations and high schools developing solutions that improve lives, particularly in vulnerable and underserved communities.

This year's submissions point to a growing emphasis on resilience, adaptability and systems-level impact. Across regions, applicants are addressing complex global challenges through practical, community-focused solutions. From AI-enabled healthcare and agricultural technologies to decentralised energy, improved groundwater access, and circular economy approaches, applicants are developing solutions that expand access to essential services and foster more inclusive progress.

Submissions increased by 32% compared to the previous cycle, underscoring sustained global momentum for scalable, locally led innovation.

H.E. Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and Director-General of the Zayed Sustainability Prize, said: "This historic level of participation reflects the growing global demand for practical solutions that build resilience, strengthen essential systems and deliver lasting impact. This year's applicants have shown how AI, adaptability, innovation and local leadership can come together to address urgent challenges in communities where access, affordability and reliability remain limited. Guided by the legacy of the late Sheikh Zayed bin

Sultan Al Nahyan, the Prize will continue to support pioneers whose solutions are practical in purpose, grounded in service, and measured by the positive difference they make in people's lives."

Over two-thirds of submissions originated from developing and emerging economies, with particularly strong participation from Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Kenya and the UAE. Developed markets, including the USA and UK, also showed robust engagement, highlighting the Prize's expanding reach across diverse innovation ecosystems.

The Climate Action category received the highest number of submissions (2,505), followed by Food (2,261), Health (1,807), Global High Schools (1,710), Energy (994), and Water (956).

Across categories, key trends emerged:

- **Health:** Solutions focused on expanding access to care in underserved and fragile settings, with strong representation from AI-enabled diagnostics, low-cost medical devices, healthcare delivery models and health financing solutions that support stronger and more responsive health systems.
- **Food:** Strong emphasis on farmer-facing solutions, including farmer support and advisory services, agricultural technologies, food safety technologies, food processing, and value chain improvements that contribute to more resilient and efficient food systems.
- **Energy:** Solutions focused on energy efficiency and storage, decentralised renewable energy, smart grids and productive-use energy applications, reflecting increased focus on affordability, reliability and demand-side energy management.
- **Water:** Innovations focused on groundwater access and monitoring, wastewater treatment and reuse, desalination, water quality management and efficient water use, supporting improved access and conservation in water-stressed communities.
- **Climate Action:** Strong focus on adaptation and community resilience, alongside circular economy models, waste reduction, nature-based solutions, natural resource conservation and mitigation approaches that respond to immediate climate pressures.
- **Global High Schools:** Student-led projects increasingly focused on nexus solutions, spanning renewable energy, water filtration, waste management, food production, biodiversity and community awareness initiatives, demonstrating how young people are applying systems thinking to local challenges.

Following the close of submissions, the Prize enters its evaluation phase. All entries will undergo an independent review and due diligence process, followed by assessment from a Selection Committee of international experts. Final winners will be selected by the Jury in September

2026.

Winners will be announced at the Zayed Sustainability Prize Awards Ceremony on 12 January 2027. Each organisational category winner will receive US \$1 million, while six high schools—representing global regions—will each receive US \$150,000 to implement or expand their projects. Each organisational finalist will receive US \$150,000, while each high school finalist will receive US \$25,000.

To date, through its 139 winners, the Prize has positively impacted more than 411 million lives worldwide, reinforcing its role as a leading platform for advancing inclusive and sustainable development.

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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 that advance sustainable progress and strengthen resilience for communities.

Through its 139 winners, in 18 years, the Prize has positively impacted over 411 million lives across the globe, inspiring innovators to amplify their impact and turn ambition into lasting progress.

The Zayed Sustainability Prize is an affiliate of Erth Zayed Philanthropies.

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