

The Elsevier Foundation Chemistry for *Climate* Action Challenge

The Chemistry for Climate Action Challenge is one of the Elsevier Foundation's flagship partnerships. Together with Elsevier's Sustainable Chemistry journals, the Elsevier Foundation provides funding of 25,000 dollars (USD) for 2 winning projects per year, implementing green & sustainable chemistry solutions in the Global South - advancing both Climate Action (SDG13) and Gender Equity (SDG5).

Climate change is the most important challenge affecting the future of our planet as underscored by the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports. The need for sustainable ideas to tackle global issues is now more pressing than ever, and chemistry can play a key role in finding practical solutions to urgent challenges, advancing the achievement of the UN SDG agenda.

Chemical sciences play a critical role in developing a sustainable future: whether it's CO₂ reduction and utilization, cleaner production, energy conversion and storage, entire lifecycles of chemical products, or waste reduction. Over the years, the Challenge has demonstrated excellent outreach in low- and middle- income countries and many winning projects that make a difference for local communities.

The Challenge also supports SDG5 Gender Equality, recognizing the pivotal role that women play in combating climate change. Climate [change disproportionately affects women and girls](#), amplifying existing inequalities and posing unique threats to their livelihoods, health, and safety. Projects submitted to the Challenge must therefore take into consideration gender components such as addressing the role of women in adapting to climate shifts and participating in policymaking and leadership roles.

Challenge Criteria

Proposals need to have all the criteria described below, namely have a strong green & sustainable chemistry component, using a novel approach for a solution to an urgent problem, be applicable in and suitable for low- and middle-income countries, replicable, scalable, sustainable and, have an impactful gender component.

Projects will be reviewed according to the criteria below:

- The proposal clearly describes the **urgency** of the problem.

Provide a description of the project background and include a description of the broader context, the urgency of the problem, and highlight how the project links to the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Particularly describe how the project links to [SDG13 Climate Action](#) and the sub-targets of this SDG such as: strengthening resilience to climate-related hazards, improve education and awareness, address the needs of low- and middle-income countries. Additionally, describe if and how the project interlinks with

other SDGs (e.g., SDG3 Good Health and Well-being, SDG5 Gender Equality, SDG15 Life on Land, etc.), resulting in co-benefits.

- The project utilizes **innovative** green and sustainable chemistry and chemical sciences approach, for example:
 - CO2 reduction and utilization, cleaner production, energy conversion and storage
Reduces or eliminates the use or generation of one or more hazardous substances or materials;
 - More sustainable use of resources and cleaner low energy production;
 - Increase reuse or recyclability of chemicals/product;
 - Designs a new business model related to the circular economy.
- The project is **replicable, scalable, sustainable** (make sure to specify why), and sets a benchmark for innovation – new ideas or concepts in development will be given preference over more advanced projects.
- The proposal **highlights the novelty of your approach** and gives a **short literature overview** of what has been done before, both by you and others (“background”).
- The project is **applicable in and suitable for low- and middle- income countries**. Describe the project’s social impact on local communities, including gender equality either in design or implementation.
- The project **must have an impactful gender component, and if relevant describing the sex/gender dimensions of the research**. For more information, you can refer to [Gendered Innovations](#) (Stanford University) on practical methods of sex, gender and intersectional analysis for scientists.
- The project must include an **implementation plan**. Please note that if the project has been developed in a high-income country, contextually appropriate knowledge transfer to the lower income country is needed to be demonstrated, for instance through a developing country implementation or research partner(s). If the idea presented is already patented, it will not be eligible.
- The project must also disclose a **full and detailed budget plan** in USD highlighting any funding already raised and plans to close any funding gap between the prize money of USD 25,000 and your total budget costs.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I submit my proposal?

You can submit your proposal on the Elsevier Foundation Chemistry for Climate Action Challenge platform via the link below.

<https://app.oxfordabstracts.com/stages/79044/submitter>

2. What is in scope and out of scope for the Challenge?

In-scope: scale ups of early-stage projects where the prize represents most of the overall needed budget; innovative green & sustainable chemistry solutions implemented in the Global South. For example, projects looking at Sustainable Chemistry Solutions: Waste Utilization; Alternative Energy Sources; Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health; Climate Change Mitigation; Community Empowerment; Sustainable Agriculture; Water Resource Management; Health and Well-being:

Out-of-scope: projects to be implemented outside of low-and-middle income countries; projects with no gender component, educational projects without a strong scientific green & sustainable chemistry component; prize money mainly used on expensive equipment; prize money mainly used on personnel; projects in the global South without a local implementation partner.

3. What are the Challenge's process and deadlines?

The Elsevier Foundation Chemistry for Climate Action Challenge is articulated in the following phases.

- **Submission phase:** Proposals can be submitted during the general submission period from July 7, 2025, to October 1, 2025.
- **Reviewing phase:** A panel of expert reviewers will evaluate all submissions and select a shortlist of proposals to advance to the judging phase. The list of the shortlisted proposals will be announced by October 30, 2025.
- **Judging phase:** Our [scientific jury](#) will thoroughly assess the shortlisted proposals to identify the Top 5 finalists. The finalist proposals will be announced on our website on January 15, 2026.
- **Final Presentation:** The Top 5 finalists will be invited to present their proposals at the [10th Elsevier Green & Sustainable Chemistry Conference](#) (18-20 May 2026, Dresden, Germany) to compete for the two Challenge prizes. The winners will be announced at the end of the conference.

4. What are the prizes of the Elsevier Foundation Chemistry for Climate Action Challenge?

The Elsevier Foundation Chemistry for Climate Action Challenge awards 2 prizes of 25,000 dollars (USD) each.

The Challenge awards projects that use green and sustainable chemistry solutions to tackle some of the Global South's greatest sustainability challenges – encouraging researchers to come up with new solutions.

5. When will I know the results of my application?

- The list of the shortlisted proposals advancing to the judging phase will be published on the [Elsevier Foundation website](#) on October 30, 2025.

- The Top 5 finalists will be announced on our website on January 15, 2026.
- The winners of the Challenge will be announced on May 20, 2026 – at the [10th Elsevier Green & Sustainable Chemistry Conference](#) and on our website.

6. Can I get feedback on my proposal?

Unfortunately, due to the high number of applicants, it is not possible to offer individual feedback.

7. Can I receive a certificate confirming that my proposal was shortlisted?

Yes, certificates are available upon request. Please send your certificate requests to chemistry.challenge@elsevier.com.

8. Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

For any questions or clarifications, please contact us at chemistry.challenge@elsevier.com.