

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 address all of the criteria below. Projects will be reviewed against the following:

- The proposal **clearly explains the climate relevance of the project** and its potential impact.

Describe the project's background and broader context and clearly explain why climate change a central driver of your project is. Describe how the project links to the [UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 Climate Action](#) and its sub-targets (e.g. strengthening resilience to climate-related hazards, improving education and awareness, addressing the needs of low- and middle-income countries), provide a credible baseline, and identify the measurable climate indicator(s) the project will affect (e.g. tCO₂-eq avoided, energy saved, water saved).

- The project utilizes an **innovative** green and sustainable chemistry and chemical sciences approach.

For example: CO₂ reduction and utilization, cleaner production, energy conversion and storage; reducing or eliminating hazardous substances; more sustainable use of resources and cleaner low-energy production; increased reuse or recyclability of chemicals/products; or a new circular-economy business model.

- The proposal **highlights the novelty of your approach** and gives a short literature overview of what has been done before.

Be explicit about what makes your approach different from, and better than, the closest existing solutions, both by you and by others.

- The project is **feasible**, with a clear implementation plan and full budget.

The project must include an implementation plan and a full, detailed budget plan in USD, highlighting any funding already raised and how you plan to close any gap between the prize money of USD 25,000 and your total budget costs. The project must be at an early-stage or proof-of-concept stage; scaling up your own earlier-stage work is welcome, but proposals that are already commercially established are not eligible.

- The project is **applicable in and suitable for low- and middle-income countries**, and is replicable, scalable and sustainable.

Describe the project's social impact on local communities, and why the solution is replicable, scalable and sustainable beyond the grant period. The application must include a confirmed local implementation or research partner in the target low- or middle-income country, unless your own organization is already based in and directly implementing within it. If the project was developed in a high-income country, this partnership must also demonstrate contextually appropriate knowledge transfer to the local team.

- The project **must have an impactful gender component, and if relevant integrates 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 proposal demonstrates **evidence and team capacity** to deliver the project.

Describe the team working on the project, their relevant expertise, and any implementation partners. Provide the most relevant preliminary evidence available (e.g. results, publications, datasets, prototypes or pilot results) supporting the feasibility of the proposed work.

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/83504/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: scale-ups of projects that are already commercially established; 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 September 18 to November 15, 2026.
- **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 December 15, 2026.
- **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 in February 2027.
- **Final Presentation:** The Top 5 finalists will be invited to present their proposals at the [11th Elsevier Green & Sustainable Chemistry Conference](#) (dates and location to be confirmed) 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](#) by December 15, 2026.
- The Top 5 finalists will be announced on our website in February 2027.
- The winners of the Challenge will be announced at the [11th 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.