



Project
Innovation
Awards

Reimagining the future of water



The IWA Project
Innovation Awards
Call for Entries



Welcome

to the IWA Project Innovation Awards

Awarded biennially at the IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition, the Project Innovation Awards recognise and promote excellence and innovation in water management, research and technology. The awards are presented at a prestigious event in front of an audience of water leaders from around the world.

Water underpins every aspect of human and environmental existence. The severe water challenges facing the world today require an unprecedented global response. Innovation plays a central role in achieving IWA's vision of a world in which water is managed wisely to satisfy the needs of human activities and ecosystems in an equitable and sustainable way.

The Project Innovation Awards recognise that we can overcome our shared challenges through the development and implementation of creative water solutions.

Find out more about the awards on the IWA PIA page at www.iwa-network.org/iwa-project-innovation-awards/

Call for Submissions



Could you be the next IWA Project Innovation Award winner?

Have you been part of a team working on an inspiring, innovative and impactful water project? Has your organisation collaborated on or led a project that has had a significant, positive and demonstrable impact? Then you could be one of our next IWA Project Innovation Award winners!

How the submission process works

The deadline for preliminary submissions for the Project Innovation Awards is 27 March 2026.

Nominees who successfully progress through the pre-judging stage will be notified and invited to make a full submission by 29 May 2026.

Nominations can only be submitted via the online awards platform – link available on the IWA PIA page, www.iwa-network.org/iwa-project-innovation-awards/

The IWA Project Innovation Awards will be presented during the IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition in Glasgow, UK on Tuesday 6 October 2026.

The Awards



The Project Innovation Awards

There are six Project Innovation Award categories, with each category celebrating excellence in a specific field within the water sector. An esteemed panel of experts will assess submissions from each category. The winner in each category will receive a gold award, and the two runners-up will receive silver and bronze awards.

Gold award winners will be considered for the IWA Grand Innovation Award.



Market-changing Water Technology & Infrastructure

This award celebrates innovations in water and wastewater technologies and infrastructure, which embrace forward-thinking applications and solutions to advance clean and safe water goals. These solutions can range from specific technologies to innovative approaches.

Breakthroughs in Research and Development

Research is the powerhouse of disruptive and breakthrough innovation. This award celebrates research that is challenging existing markets and addressing future needs to create new opportunities. It is open to research of all types, as well as early-stage business projects that are not yet market-ready.

Governance, Institutions and Social Enterprise

This award celebrates social innovation, social enterprise, and social entrepreneurship and their contribution to sustainable water management. In addition, it recognises innovations in governance and institutional transitions and the role this plays in supporting the circular and digital water economies.

Performance Improvement and Operational Solutions

Original thinking is essential for overcoming long-term challenges and delivering solutions for the future. This award celebrates new and innovative approaches that improve performance, efficiency, resilience, and sustainability in water operations and maintenance.

Exceptional Project Execution and Delivery

Innovation in the execution of water projects is critical for the sector. This award celebrates projects that developed and implemented creative practices during their execution, excellent client relationships beyond expectations, and outstanding responses to unexpected difficulties.

Smart Systems and the Digital Water Economy

This award celebrates digital solutions with the potential to reshape the water sector. Harnessing and aligning this technology between the physical and digital worlds creates a smarter way of managing and protecting water resources and building a water-wise society.

The Awards Gala Event



IWA Project Innovation Awards Celebration – Glasgow, UK

Now in their 15th year, the biennial global Project Innovation Awards will be celebrated on 6 October 2026 in Glasgow, in front of an expert audience of water leaders from around the world. The Gala event is one of the centrepieces of the IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition, taking place on 4-8 October.

An inspiring evening will celebrate those water professionals expanding the boundaries of excellence in the sector. The awards night will be a place where you can meet the teams behind the winning projects; network with world-renowned experts across the field of water management, science and practice; and hear the stories of the winning projects and innovations.

This will be a night to be inspired at a beautiful venue in one of the world's most dynamic cities.

WHEN: Tuesday, 6 October 2026

DRESS CODE: Cocktail attire



Application Criteria



Eligibility

The PIAs are open to applications from individuals, companies, organisations, public bodies or any combination of the above. Applicants do not have to be members of IWA.

Winning projects

Gold, silver and bronze awards will be made for each project category. The gold award winners will automatically advance to be considered for the IWA Grand Innovation Award.

Judging criteria

General

In every category we look for original, innovative projects that provide long-term value to the water sector. Successful submissions should demonstrate how the project supports the transition to a water-wise world, the complexity of the problem or situation and the performance against budgetary and timeframe constraints.

Specific

In addition to these general indicators, specific criteria will apply to each category. Please visit the IWA PIA webpage at www.iwa-network.org/iwa-project-innovation-awards/ for full details.

Contact us

Preliminary submission deadline: **27 MARCH 2026**

Full submission deadline: **29 MAY 2026**

Any questions?

Please contact us at pia@iwahq.org

How to apply

Submissions must be made online. Submission information are available online at: www.iwa-network.org/iwa-project-innovation-awards/

Your application should include the following:

1. Preliminary submission (deadline 27 March 2026)

- Name and contact details of the entrants and/or organisation submitting the application.
- Short summary of the project (maximum 450 words).

A review panel will assess all preliminary submissions, and advise all applicants on whether their submission has been accepted to the full submission stage.

2. Full submission (29 May 2026):

- Project description (maximum 1,200 words) containing the following information:
 - The context in which the project was devised;
 - The project timeframe;
 - The project objective(s);
 - The project budget;
 - The project strategy;
 - The project implementation;
 - The outcome and results achieved by the project.
- Up to five high quality images that best illustrate the project. These will support in the judging process and may be displayed on the IWA Awards webpage if your project is shortlisted for an award.
- Up to three supporting documents to highlight the key aspects of your project. This could include planning documents, press releases, presentations, media packs or any other material that would help our jury to assess the project.
- Up to three links to relevant websites, social media platforms or other online resources.
- A minimum of two testimonial letters.



Towards a world in which water is wisely managed to satisfy the needs of human activities and ecosystems in an equitable and sustainable way.



International Water Association
Export Building, 1 Clove Crescent,
London, E14 2BA, UK
Company registered in England No. 3597005
Registered Charity (England) No. 1076690

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www.iwa-network.org