

RULES & ELIGIBILITY OF THE EUROPEAN INVENTOR AWARD

As one of the most prestigious competitions of its kind, the European Inventor Award pays tribute to the creativity of inventors the world over, who use their technical, scientific and intellectual skills to make a real contribution to technological progress and economic growth and so improve people's daily lives.

Launched by the EPO in 2006, the Award gives inventors the public recognition of their deserving work. It helps to protect ideas and encourage innovation.

Categories

Anyone can submit an entry: whether you work in industry, at a university or research institute or for a professional association, are an individual inventor, or simply have an interest in the work these people do, there are no restrictions. If you are an inventor, you can even put yourself forward.

The European Inventor Award is presented in five categories:

- **Industry:** The Industry Award is presented in recognition of inventors of outstanding and commercially successful technologies patented by large European companies. These are companies that have more than 250 employees and an annual turnover of more than EUR 50 million.
- **Research:** This Award honours inventors working at universities or research institutions. Inventions presented in this category will often have led to major technological progress and enhanced the reputation of the inventor's institution.
- **Non-EPO Countries:** This category is open to all inventors from outside the EPO's 39 member states, regardless of the size or turnover of the company applying their patented invention. However, the invention or related products must be available and enjoy considerable commercial success in Europe.
- **SMEs:** This Award is presented to the people behind inventions at small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). SMEs are companies that had fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover of less than EUR 50 million when the patent was granted. Ideally, the invention will have been a commercial success and helped the SME to expand its business.
- **Lifetime Achievement:** This category honours the long-term contribution of an individual European inventor whose dedication and tireless efforts – and patented landmark inventions – have had a major impact on their field of technology and society at large.

In addition, the European Inventor Award features one additional special prize:

- **Popular Prize:** This additional prize is awarded to the finalist who receives the largest number of votes from the public on the EPO website in the run-up to the ceremony.

Eligibility criteria*:

- An inventor must be granted at least one European patent for an invention by the European Patent Office.
- The patent must be maintained in force in at least one EPO member state (except for the Lifetime Achievement category).
- The patent should show a high degree of inventiveness, display a recognisable benefit to society or the environment and demonstrate proven or potential economic success in Europe.
- Inventors nominated for the Industry, Research, SMEs and Lifetime Achievement categories must be citizens of one of the [EPO's 39 member states](#). Inventors from outside the EPO's member states can only be nominated for the Non-EPO Countries category.
- Inventions from all fields of technology for which a European patent can be granted can be nominated for the European Inventor Award.

Not eligible

Entries will **not** be considered if:

- the patent has not yet been granted by the EPO
- the relevant patent is subject to pending opposition or appeal proceedings
- the relevant patent is within a nine-month notice of opposition period
- the patent has been revoked
- the patent has lapsed or expired in all EPO member states
- the inventor has already been a finalist or winner in a previous European Inventor Award competition (see the list of past finalists and winners).

** It has been updated according to the current number of EPO Member States.*

Submission of entries

- Applicants must submit their entries using the online application form accessible on the EPO website www.epo.org/nominate
- Entries may be submitted either on the candidate's own initiative or by any other person, entity or institution that wishes to propose an inventor.
- You can apply for different categories, but only once per category.
- The period for submission of entries is from 18 June to 30 September 2025.
- There is no entry fee.
- Entries that do not include the required information specified in the rules will not be accepted. They will be informed accordingly.
- The organiser may request evidence of the complementary information included in the entry form.

- The submission of an entry implies full and unconditional acceptance of all rules.

Award

- The panel of jury members may nominate up to three finalists (including one winner) in each of the four categories: Industry, Research, SMEs and Non-EPO Countries.
- For the Lifetime Achievement, the panel of jury members selects one candidate who will be automatically the winner of this category.
- The nominated finalists will be asked by email to confirm their acceptance of the nomination and consent to the award. The awards for each category cannot be split between two entries.
- A list of these finalists will be published on the official competition website and in other publications relating to the Award.
- All finalists will be invited to the European Inventor Award ceremony. It may be an online or physical ceremony. More information on when and where it will take place will be announced in due time and form.
- If applicable, travel and accommodation costs will be borne by the organiser.
- The winner of each category will receive a trophy and a winner's certificate.
- All other finalists will receive a certificate for their nominations.
- Finalists and winners will be featured on the European Inventor Award pages on the EPO website and other EPO's internal and external channels. To achieve the widest possible coverage, the EPO is supported by media partners each year. Consequently, finalists and winners will also be featured in newsletters, other promotional and multimedia material published for disseminating information about the Award and their nomination. Information on the company, the inventors and the selected invention and its patent will also be included in press dossiers for specialised press and media and may be used for other promotional activities organised by the Office.
- The winner of the Popular Prize is chosen by the public who may vote for their favourite from the day of the finalists' announcement. The Popular Prize goes to the winner with the largest number of votes.

Jury and evaluation criteria

- The independent jury team consists of inventors who are all former finalists of the European Inventor Award or winners of the Young Inventors Prize.
- The jury is led by a chair.
- The evaluation will be performed on the basis of technological originality, economic impact and social impact.

Intellectual Property disclosure

- In the event of being selected as finalists, they agree to cooperate with the organiser of the European Inventor Award by providing access to the press and other media for interviews or for the photographing or filming of the finalists, their invention and the company.

- The organiser reserves the right to publish finalists' and winners' inventions and related information on its website and in promotional material (publications, exhibition, media, etc.) without remuneration for the finalists.
- The organiser also reserves the right to record and publish videos and pictures from the award ceremony without remuneration for the finalists.

Waiver of responsibility

- In the event of force majeure or if circumstances so dictate, the organiser reserves the right to suspend, postpone or cancel the Award at any time and without prior notice; in this event, finalists understand and accept not be entitled to claim compensation.

Data protection

Protecting your privacy is of the utmost importance to the European Patent Office (EPO). We are committed to protecting your personal data and ensuring respect for data subjects' rights when performing our tasks and providing our services. All data of a personal nature that identify you directly or indirectly will be processed lawfully, fairly and with due care.

The processing operations described below are subject to the EPO Data Protection Rules ([DPR](#)).

The information in this statement is provided in accordance with Articles 16 and 17 DPR

For further information about the European Inventor Award please read the [data protection statement](#).