



Europäisches
Patentamt
European
Patent Office
Office européen
des brevets

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 his/her field of technology and society at large.

In addition, the European Inventor Award features two additional special prizes:

- **Young Inventors Prize:** this prize aims at acknowledging and rewarding the work of younger generations in the field of sustainability. More particularly, this prize is open to initiatives by young innovators under 30 worldwide which tackle a problem within the frame of the UN Sustainable Development Goals using a solution in any of the fields of technology.
- **Popular Prize:** This additional prize is awarded to the finalist who receives the largest number of votes from the public on the Popular Prize microsite in the run-up to the ceremony.

**Rules & Eligibility applied to the
Industry / Research / Non-EPO countries / SMEs / Lifetime Achievement categories**

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 6 March to 1 October 2023.

- 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 is invited to vote for their "favourite" on 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 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](#).

Rules & Eligibility applied to the Young Inventors Prize

Eligibility criteria:

- This prize is open to any national, regardless of the nationality. Citizens of EPC (European Patent Convention) & non-EPC countries are welcome to submit nominations for the Young Inventors Prize.
- Public/published initiatives comprising a technological concept: the initiative shall comprise a solution in one of the fields of technology. Only initiatives and supporting information which is already public or published will be accepted.
- [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) related applications: the initiative shall aim at solving a problem within the frame of one or more of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

- Maximum age at the time of the award of 30 years old: participants will be eligible as long as they have a maximum age of 30 years old at the time of the award ceremony. There is no minimum age requirement for participants, minors can therefore also participate.
- Previous finalists and winners are ineligible for selection in future editions of the Young Inventors Prize.

Any idea, project or product in any field of technology which is supported by written or audio-visual material is to be considered as an “initiative” in the context of the Young Inventors Prize.

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 drive or by any other person, entity or institution that wishes to propose a candidate.
- You can apply for the Young Inventors Prize and if fulfilling the eligibility criteria also for the other five categories, but only once per category.
- The period for submission of entries is from 6 March to 1 October 2023.
- 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.
- Applicants considered a minor under their national legislation, must also submit together with the nomination form, the granting of rights and declaration of parental consent form document.

Award

- The panel of judges may nominate up to three finalists for the Young Inventors Prize.
- The nominated finalists will be asked by email to confirm their acceptance of the nomination and consent to the award.
- A list of these finalists will be published on the official competition website and in other publications relating to the Award.
- Finalists of the Young Inventors Prize 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 the Young Inventors Prize will receive a trophy, a monetary cash reward of EUR 20,000 and a winner's certificate. The second and third finalists will receive a cash reward of 10,000 and EUR 5,000, respectively, and a certificate of nomination.
- Finalist and winners will be featured on the European Inventor Award page and other EPO website, and other EPO's internal and external channels. They 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 if applicable 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. Nevertheless, in case the winner of the Young Inventors Prize is a minor, additional measures to safeguard minor's rights are to be taken and the processing of data is to be restricted according to the [data protection statement](#) of the competition.

Jury and evaluation criteria

- The independent jury that judges proposals for the European Inventor Award consists of inventors who are all former finalists of the European Inventor Award or Young Inventors Prize. The jury of the Young Inventors Prize will consider the following hierarchy when evaluating the supportive documentation submitted with the nominated initiatives (listed in order of descending importance):
 1. IP documents: granted patents/utility models, patent/utility model applications, trademarks, copyright, etc.
 2. Scientific publications: published scientific papers, university/PhD theses, scientific articles, case studies, etc.
 3. Other written or audio-visual published material: business plans, reports, videos, summaries, one-pagers, books, publications, websites, blogs, drawings/sketches, etc.
- The jury selected for the European Inventor Award will be also judging shortlisted candidates for the Young Inventors Prize and will select the three finalists (including one winner).
- The evaluation will be performed on the basis of originality and innovativeness of the proposal, potential or proven technological impact, potential or proven benefit to society and potential or proven impact on UN Sustainable Development Goals.

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 winner, 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

- To apply for the Young Inventors Prize, applicants are asked to only provide information that has already been disclosed to the public about their initiative. In case applicants think that their initiative may be patentable, they are responsible for analysing the consequences and

disadvantages of disclosing for the first time to the public important information that would give them the possibility of obtaining a patent. Furthermore, they are responsible to take the necessary steps to ensure that their participation in the Award will not impact on their rights to patent the invention. Therefore, the European Patent Office is not liable if a patent application has not been filed prior to the disclosure of such information.

- The Young Inventors Prize acknowledges and rewards the work done by younger generations in the field of sustainability, but it does not in any case constitute a statement of patentability. The pursuit of a patent application runs under the provisions of the EPC and is to be assessed independently by examining and opposition divisions. Hence, a selection for the Young Inventors Prize which is done by an independent international jury has no bearing on the patent granting or opposition processes. No claims, rights or expectations may be derived from participation in the Young Inventors Prize, or from any form of acknowledgment or reward in connection with the Young Inventors Prize.
- 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

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