

GBA Award for Impact and Leadership in Bioeconomy 2026

Guidelines on the nomination, submission and selection process

Preamble

The Global Bioeconomy Alliance (**GBA**) e. V. is a network of institutions from all over the world, which play a leading role in the field of bioeconomy with the mission to strengthen the cooperation in research and development, innovation transfer, as well as teaching to accelerate the turnaround to a more sustainable society and planetary health.

The GBA Award for Impact and Leadership in Bioeconomy, funded by the Novo Nordisk Foundation (grant number: NNF24SA0098034), has the aim to boost the global bioeconomy and to raise awareness about its significance by recognizing achievements that enhance a rapid transition towards a sustainable bioeconomy.

The Award

1. The GBA Award for Impact and Leadership in Bioeconomy recognizes individuals or teams whose work, either at a local or global level, has a significant impact on the turnaround to a more sustainable society and planetary health.
2. Topics for the GBA Award for Impact and Leadership in Bioeconomy 2026 include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Development of novel technologies enabling the decarbonisation of industrial processes or advancing existing decarbonisation technologies from low TRL to pilot scale;
 - b. Development of completely novel bio-solutions with large potential for sustainability impact through the replacement of unsustainable current practices;
 - c. Initiating policy changes or societal acceptance and implementation at local, regional or larger scale, which may set a trend for knock-on effects;
 - d. Development of solutions that demonstrate the immediate societal impact of innovative processes or practices, especially in emerging economies.
3. The award consists of three components:
 - a. A personal prize of €15,000 for discretionary use;
 - b. A one-year grant of €100,000 to support and progress research and/or activities related to the work recognized by the award;
 - c. Optional: a one-year complimentary membership of the GBA of the awardee or their institution.

Eligibility

1. Eligible for the award are individuals and teams of individuals.
2. Candidates can be nominated by individuals from the public or private sector with proven expertise in bioeconomy-related topics.
3. Self-nominations are possible.
4. Nominators are allowed to submit more than one nomination.
5. Nominations for the recognition of lifetime achievements, posthumous nominations, and project proposals for funding not dealing with the awarded work will not be accepted.
6. Nominators should avoid situations leading to any conflicts of interest and, therefore, take into consideration the circumstances listed under “Final general aspects”.
7. The following persons cannot be nominated:
 - a. Members of the GBA Board;
 - b. Members of the GBA Strategic and Leadership Committee;
 - c. Board Members, directors, or employees of companies within the Novo Group and the Novo Nordisk Foundation;
 - d. Members of the Award Committees.

However, nominations made by these persons are permitted, with the exception of Members of the Award Committees.

8. Nominations that would, from the perspective of the GBA and the Novo Nordisk Foundation, compromise the GBA Award for Impact and Leadership in Bioeconomy and the reputation of both institutions will not be considered in the selection process. This condition will not be misused.

The nomination process

1. Nominations must be submitted using the nomination form provided on the [GBA website](#). Nominations sent via email and/or without using the nomination form will not be accepted.
2. Nominators and nominees must consider the timeline provided in the Annex.
3. For the pre-selection phase, nominators have to provide the following within the nomination form (detailed information is given in the Annex):
 - a. Personal information about the nominator and the nominee;
 - b. The nominee’s achievements;
 - c. The nominee’s CV;
 - d. If applicable: up to ten relevant key publications and/or patents;
 - e. If applicable: up to three relevant prizes.
4. Nominees are encouraged to assist nominators in completing the nomination.
5. Nominations must be signed by the nominators and the nominee using the Confirmation File (see Annex). Digital signatures are accepted.
6. If needed, the Global Bioeconomy Alliance e.V. will contact the nominators at the beginning of the selection process.
7. For the final selection phase, nominees have to provide a detailed description of their research, focusing on the main characteristics and merits of the nominee’s bioeconomy work. It should summarize the most important ideas, achievements, inventions, or outcomes and impact of the nominee’s work (max. 6 pages).

Two-phase evaluation and selection process

Preparation phase:

1. At first, the nominations are screened and checked under formal aspects, the selection criteria, and quality parameters (see Annex) by the GBA office.
2. Furthermore, the contact person of the GBA, Professor Dr. Volker Sieber, and the contact person of the Novo Nordisk Foundation, Dr. Torben Borchert, will examine if nominations, from the perspective of the GBA and the Novo Nordisk Foundation, are suitable for the GBA Award for Impact and Leadership in Bioeconomy and aligned with the reputation of both institutions. Nominations that do not fulfill these criteria will be excluded from the further selection process.
3. Only the nominations that fulfill the described criteria are qualified to be reviewed by the members of the Award Committees.
4. The Members of the Award Committees are identified by the GBA in consultation with the Novo Nordisk Foundation. Aspects such as interdisciplinarity, gender balance, diversity in terms of organizational affiliation, and geographical region are considered. Nominators are excluded from the Award Committees.

First evaluation and selection phase:

1. The Award Committee of the first evaluation and selection phase (i.e. the Pre-Selection Committee) will consist of up to five representatives from different GBA member institutions. They cannot be part of the Final Selection Committee (see below).
2. The GBA office will grant the Members of the Award Committee access to the nominations and the evaluation template.
3. The Members of the Pre-Selection Committee will be asked to evaluate the nominations according to the selection criteria and quality parameters defined and rank them according to the terms mentioned in the Annex. They will establish a shortlist containing the top five nominations (based on the average scores from the Pre-Selection Committee members). The Committee will have to provide a short summary explaining their ranking decisions.
4. The selection process will include up to two virtual meetings and email exchanges. The GBA office will organize the virtual meetings, which will be led by a member of the Board of the GBA.
5. The first evaluation and selection phase ends when the members of the Pre-Selection Committee agree on a final shortlist by simple majority.
6. The top five nominees on the shortlist will be invited to submit an extended nomination.

Second evaluation and selection phase:

1. The Final Selection Committee will consist of:
 - a. One representative from the Novo Nordisk Foundation;
 - b. Two representatives from different GBA member institutions;
 - c. Four external international experts with a broad insight into bioeconomy.
2. The GBA office will grant the Members of the Award Committee access to the full nominations, the evaluation of the Pre-Selection Committee, and the evaluation template.
3. The Members of the Final Selection Committee will be asked to evaluate the nominations according to the selection criteria and quality parameters defined and rank them according to the terms mentioned in the Annex. The selection process ends when the members of the Final Selection Committee agree on the award winner by simple majority. The Committee will have to provide a short summary explaining their decision.
4. The selection process will include up to three virtual meetings and email exchanges. The GBA office will organize the virtual meetings, which will be led by a GBA representative. This representative will not be part of the Final Selection Committee.

Conditions for the awardee

1. The awardee is expected to present a keynote lecture at the GBA Conference on Key Technologies in the Bioeconomy (GBA 6) and to participate at the whole GBA conference, held from October 26 to October 30, 2026 in Monterrey, Mexico.
2. The award fund of €100,000 will be transferred to the institution where the awardee conducts their work.
3. No overhead costs may be charged from the award fund of €100,000.
4. The awardee is obliged to report to the GBA every four months on the use of the funds (proof of use, reports on work progress, etc.).
5. Equitable Access Commitment:
 - a. Information sharing and transparency must be ensured for the knowledge and data gained from the funded activities
 - b. If relevant to the funded activities, the awardee should make a plan for how to obtain global access for commercialised research protected by intellectual property rights to ensure availability and accessibility at an affordable price in relevant low and lower-middle income countries
6. The awardee acknowledges that data and results of the activities funded by this award should, if reasonably relevant and possible, be promptly and broadly disseminated through Open Access Publication. "Open Access Publication" means publication in a peer-reviewed journal or other method of relevant and broad public dissemination in which the research outputs originating from the activities will be distributed online, free of access charges or other barriers. Publication may be delayed for a reasonable period for the purpose of seeking patent protection. Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring Open Access Publication in contravention of any applicable ethical, legal, or regulatory requirements.

Final general aspects

1. To ensure that there is no actual or potential conflict of interest, nominators should not submit nominations if the following circumstances apply:
 - a. First-degree relationships, marriage, life partnership, and domestic partnership with the nominator/nominee;
 - b. Personal (financial) interest in the nomination's success or (financial) interest by persons listed above;
 - c. An interdependent relationship between nominator/nominee, extending six years beyond the conclusion of the relationship;
 - d. Any other situation that would compromise the ability to evaluate the proposal unbiasedly.
2. The submitted nominations as well as the evaluation results will not be made public.
3. Members of the Award Committees, will be asked to treat information related to the evaluation and selection process, including the nomination documents, with confidentiality and not to disclose the names of the awardee before any official publication from the GBA.
4. Collected personal data regarding the nominators, the nominees, the Members of the Award Committees and other involved persons will only be processed in the frame of the above-described processes. For this purpose, data will be stored by the GBA and distributed to the Members of the Award Committees and other involved persons dealing with the nomination, evaluation, and selection process. This also includes the transfer of data to countries outside the EU/EEA. All persons involved will be informed that documents and information must be kept strictly confidential and that personal data must be handled in accordance with the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the German Data Protection Regulation (DSGVO), and the Federal Data Protection Act (BDSG). Detailed information can be found on <https://bioeconomy.world//privacy-policy/>.

Annex

The following personal information about the nominator and the nominee are asked:

- Title
- Gender
- Name
- Date of birth
- Institution/Organisation/Company and position
- Email and phone number
- Address
- Website (optional)

In case of a team-nomination, please fill out the information about the head of the team. We will contact you per e-mail for additional information about further team members.

Description of the nominee's achievements in the following aspects (each max. 600 characters):

- Contribution to bioeconomy, technology development, and implementation
- Relation of the nominee to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations
- Originality and novelty of the research/innovation method(s) and concept(s) and its comparison to international competitors
- Impact/influence on economic, political stakeholders and/or decision-makers
- Merits of the nominee in terms of achievements, commitments and leadership experience
- Optional: Quality of the nominee's best publications/patents (max. 300 characters)
- Optional: Quality of the nominee's important prizes (max. 300 characters)

These aspects are also the selection criteria and quality parameters both Award Committees will take into consideration for generating the shortlist and for selecting the awardee.

Optional entry of:

- up to 10 publications and/or patents of the nominee
- up to 3 prizes, that the nominee won

Nominee's CV and work experience in tabular form:

- Start and end date
- School/University
- Employer/Institution and position

We recommend that you gather the necessary information before filling out the nomination form. In particular, if the nominator and the nominee are not the same person, please ensure that the information is **shared with their consent**.

To guarantee that both nominee and nominator agree to the sharing, processing, and storing of their data and research work, it is mandatory that both sign the [Confirmation File](#). Please sign the file and upload it at the end of the nomination form.

The GBA reserves the right to reject or delete nominations that are submitted without a signature or contain incorrect information.

Evaluation terms:

The Pre-Selection Committee establishes its shortlist by categorizing the nominations according to the following terms:

- outstanding (A)
- excellent (A/B)
- very good (B)
- average (B/C)
- below average (C)

Timeline:

- Submission deadline for the pre-selection phase: Thursday, June 11, 2026.
- Pre-selection phase: tbd.
- Submission deadline for the final selection phase: tbd.
- Final Selection Phase: tbd.
- Submission of a work and budget plan by the successful nominee: tbd.