ISC3 Launches Innovation Challenge 2026: Advancing Sustainable Chemistry for Electronics

Apply now for the €25,000 endowed seventh international start-up competition

The International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre (ISC3) has launched the ISC3 Innovation Challenge 2026. The seventh edition once again invites innovators, entrepreneurs, start-ups and research teams worldwide to submit groundbreaking ideas in the field of Sustainable Chemistry. This year, the international start-up competition will focus on the topic of 'Sustainable Chemistry and Electronics`. The global call for applications is now open until May 4th, 2026.

Applicants will benefit from:

- Tailored support through the ISC3 Global Start-up Service incl. pitch training, visibility via ISC3 channels, and participation in a key matchmaking event with industry in 2026
- Cash prizes, including €15,000 for the overall winner and two €5,000 "Special Impact" Awards

"Electronics are essential to modern life, but they also present urgent sustainability challenges. Through this year's Innovation Challenge topic, ISC3 aims to accelerate chemistry-driven innovations that enable safer, cleaner, circular, and socially responsible electronic products and value chains," said Dr. Alexis Bazzanella, Director of the ISC3 Innovation Hub.

Join the competition and apply here: https://www.isc3.org/page/innovation-challenge.

Sustainable Chemistry for the Electronics of Tomorrow

The Innovation Challenge 2026 focuses on sustainability challenges in electronics by promoting Sustainable Chemistry-based solutions for materials, manufacturing, and circularity. Submissions may address innovations related to:

Innovation in Design & Performance

- Eco-design for durability, repairability, recyclability, disassembly
- Reducing material intensity while maintaining performance
- Etc.

Resource Efficiency & Critical Materials

- Alternative technologies for scarce and critical elements
- Use of abundant, non-toxic, recycled / recyclable feedstocks
- Etc.

Sustainable Manufacturing

- Low-energy, low-waste fabrication methods
- Biodegradable electronic components using polymers and organic materials
- Sustainable alternatives to hazardous reagents and byproducts
- Socially responsible supply chains
- Etc.

End-of-Life & Circularity

- Chemical methods for disassembly, selective separation, and recycling
- E-waste recycling and recovery of valuable materials
- Etc.

Alternative & Emerging Materials

- Organic and polymer electronics
- Advanced materials (2D materials, metal–organic frameworks (MOFs), etc.)
- Sustainable alternatives to fossil-based plastic materials used in electronics
- Etc.

Novel Devices

- More sustainable energy-storage & conversion devices
- Organic electronics, photonics & optoelectronics
- Etc.

Applications from innovators worldwide, including those working on solutions for underrepresented or resource-constrained regions, and particularly women-led teams are encouraged. The finalists selected by the international jury will be officially announced at the end of June 2026. Further details on the Innovation Challenge final pitch event and Award Ceremony will be disclosed in due time.

For more information and to submit your application, please visit:
https://www.isc3.org/page/innovation-challenge

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About ISC3
The International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre promotes Sustainable Chemistry for a sustainable world. ISC3 supports the chemical industry and chemical-related sectors in their transformation process

through sustainable, innovative approaches from Sustainable Chemistry. The goal is a circular economy that integerates multiple aspects of sustainability throughout the entire product life cycle and encourages a shift in stakeholder behaviour. To advance the dialogue between different sectors and actors worldwide, including Europe and other regions as well as emerging and developing countries, ISC3 follows a multi-stakeholder approach with the networking of policymakers, public and private sectors, education, science and society. It contributes to international chemicals policy, develops professional and academic training programs, advises companies, and promotes start-ups and research. Founded in 2017 by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection, Nature Conservation und Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) and the Federal Environment Agency (UBA), the centre is implemented by the German Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ; Englisch: Society for International Cooperation) and supported by the Society for Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology (DECHEMA e.V.) as ISC3 Innovation Hub. www.isc3.org