

Equitable and Sustainable Nutrition Award

Overview

Ensuring equitable and sustainable access to nutritious food is critical for global public health, economic stability and social equality. According to [the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#), food insecurity and malnutrition, resulting from both undernutrition and overnutrition, continue to pose significant health challenges and diminish economic productivity. The [FAO's 2024 report](#) highlights that global efforts to combat hunger and food insecurity are off track for 2030, with billions still lacking access to sufficient, nutritious, and safe food. Malnutrition, in all its forms, continues to rise, with one in nine people facing hunger and one in three individuals suffering from overweight or obesity, leading to significant health and economic consequences worldwide. Moreover, [FAO](#) stresses that climate change and environmental degradation are worsening food insecurity, as changing weather patterns and biodiversity loss increasingly disrupt food production systems. These challenges threaten food availability and access, further exacerbating global malnutrition and hindering progress towards achieving food security ([FAO, 2024](#)). Addressing both malnutrition and environmental challenges is essential for building resilient food systems that promote public health, protect ecosystems and ensure sustainable development.

The Equitable and Sustainable Nutrition Award aims to identify and support youth-led innovative solutions that improve nutritional quality, streamline food distribution, reduce food waste and enhance sustainable agricultural practices, thereby fostering healthier communities and more resilient agrifood systems. This award directly contributes to achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Targeted solutions

- Technological and logistical innovations enhancing access to affordable, safe and nutrient-rich foods;
- Advanced sustainable agricultural techniques to boost nutrient density and crop yields;
- Initiatives that strengthen neglected and underutilized local crops, enhance local supply chains and promote nutrient-rich crops;
- Systems and technologies that minimize food losses, optimize resource use and facilitate food recovery and redistribution;
- Digital platforms connecting producers directly to consumers, improving supply chain efficiency and reducing wastage;
- Scalable solutions improving nutrition while promoting climate resilience and ecosystem health; and
- Innovations in sustainable agricultural practices that enhance food security and protect biodiversity.

Objectives

The **Equitable and Sustainable Nutrition Award** specifically seeks to:

- Support and scale innovative solutions that ensure equitable access to nutritious and sustainably produced food;
- Promote initiatives that substantially enhance food quality, accessibility and resilience, particularly for vulnerable communities in the Global South; and
- Encourage sustainable agricultural, distributional and consumption practices to achieve food security and nutritional equity globally.

Eligibility criteria

This award is open to youth-led startups (pre-seed and seed stage) innovating in nutrition, food accessibility, sustainable agriculture, and digital agrifood chains. We are looking for youth-led startups with a founder or C-level executive between 18 and 35 years old at the time of submission of the application. Applicants must provide validated evidence or data demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of their innovations. Priority will be given to inclusive and scalable solutions from the Global South.

Important dates & timeline

- Application deadline: 22 May 2025
- Semi-finalist announcement: 2 July 2025
- Finalist announcement: 24 July 2025
- Final pitch and award ceremony: 15 October 2025, World Food Forum (WFF) flagship event, FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy.

Prize and benefits

- Up to USD 15 000 cash prize awarded to the winner;
- Potential inclusion in a Startup Accelerator Programme offering implementation support to Startup Innovation Awards winners;

- Travel allowance for two finalists to attend and pitch at the WFF flagship event in Rome in October;
- Comprehensive virtual communication and pitch training boot camp;
- Extensive visibility and promotional opportunities via WFF global communication platforms and FAO and United Nations networks; and
- Qualified semi-finalists can compete for the [MassChallenge Switzerland](#): **Fighting Malnutrition and Enhancing Food Security Prize** ([more information here](#)) for an additional prize of EUR 10 000 and further benefits.