

The Sustainability Award supported by the Nobel Sustainability Trust Foundation

Nomination guidelines

(November 2024)

Preamble

Sustainability was defined in 1987 by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development as the economic development activity that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Translated into research and innovation, sustainability covers a wide range from application-open to application-oriented research and the marketability of new technologies and suggests an interdisciplinary approach to all sciences including natural sciences, engineering, economics, societal, health, and environmental sciences.

Sustainability initiatives and programs that impact our societies and change their awareness are worthy of support.

“The Sustainability Awards supported by the Nobel Sustainability Trust Foundation” take this up and build a bridge from scientific research to applied projects and international political initiatives aimed at the sustainable development of the economy and society.

A) The Awards

1. The Nobel Sustainability Trust offers annual awards to support the idea of sustainability in science, entrepreneurship, and civil society. In accordance with the contract between the Nobel Sustainability Trust (NST) and the Technical University of Munich (TUM) of 2022, the two contract partners determine the topics of the “Sustainability Award supported by the Nobel Sustainability Trust Foundation” yearly.
2. The awards, which recognize breakthroughs in science and implementation, are intended to align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. The rules and principles applied in the Award competition comply with the ethical principles and values characterized by general standards of codes of conduct in research such as loyalty, independence, integrity, respect, and confidentiality mentioned in the [TUM Research Code of Conduct](#).
4. The Sustainability Award for Leadership in Implementation will recognize individuals or organizations whose actions, either on a local or global level, have a significant impact on the adoption of sustainable approaches, or the implementation of sustainable solutions. These actions may be related to scientific breakthroughs, entrepreneurship and innovation transfer, civil society engagement, and diplomacy.

5. The Sustainability Award for Outstanding Research and Development will recognize the innovative and technological impact of research activities presenting a potential for practical solutions and business opportunities.

B) Eligibility

1. Eligible for the awards are candidates such as individuals, teams, or groups, organizations from civil society (e.g., NGOs), and enterprises (start-ups, SMEs, or business units of larger companies). Heads of state, of governments, or of governmental institutions are excluded.
2. Candidates can be nominated by individuals from the public or private sector with proven experience and expertise in sustainability-related topics.
3. Nominations coming from NST representation offices, TUM professors, and members of the Award Committees are eligible. However, nominated candidates must be external to the organizations represented by the nominators of the above-mentioned parties.
4. The NST awards should not be given to individuals or organizations – donors and sponsors – that have supported or donated to the NST in the last five years before nomination. Inversely, those individuals or organizations that received an NST award should not donate to the NST in the five years after having received the award. The Award Committees should be informed about any donations or sponsoring that occurred in the past or are planned in the near future.
5. Self-nominations, nominations for the recognition of lifetime achievements, posthumous nominations, and project proposals for funding will not be accepted.
6. The number of nominations per nominator is not defined. Nominators are allowed to submit more than one nomination.
7. Nominators should avoid situations leading to any conflicts of interest and, therefore, take into consideration the circumstances listed under E) Final general aspects.
8. Nominations that would, from the perspective of TUM and NST, compromise the Sustainability Awards and the reputation of both institutions, will not be considered in the selection process. This condition will be not misused.

C) The nomination process

1. Nominations must be submitted to the submission email address communicated on the NST homepage using the nomination form provided. Nominations sent to a different email address and/or without using the template will not be accepted.
2. The nominators must consider quality criteria that are summarized in the Addendum and the nominations should reflect them. The nomination proposals should focus on the main characteristics and merits of the nominee's sustainability work.

3. The category and the field the nominee is nominated for, must clearly appear on the front page of the nomination. Nominees nominated in more than one category cannot be accepted.
4. The abstract is limited to 500 words and summarizes the most important ideas, achievements, inventions, or outcomes and impact of the nominee.
5. The NST, the TUM, and the members of the Award Committees should be able to recognize from the first page that the nomination is coming from qualified individual experts, organizations, TUM, or NST representatives.
6. The nominator must indicate his or her affiliation and sign the nomination. Digital signatures are accepted.

D) The two-phase selection process

1. The selection process is conducted by two Award Committees under the coordination of the Institute for Advanced Study of the Technical University of Munich (TUM-IAS). The committees oversee the evaluation and the shortlisting of the nominations until the final selection of the awardees. The evaluation and deliberation within the Committees remain confidential.
2. The members of the Award Committees are yearly identified by the NST and the TUM-IAS, depending on the topics of the award. Aspects such as interdisciplinarity, gender balance, diversity in terms of organizational affiliation, and geographical region are considered.
3. Nominations are reviewed according to the respective award category they have been submitted for.
4. At first, the nominations are screened and checked under formal aspects by the NST and by the project manager at the TUM-IAS responsible for the selection process and all affairs related to the NST Sustainability Award.
5. The project manager at TUM-IAS considers whether the nominators have addressed the quality criteria mentioned in the Addendum such as the main characteristics and merits of the sustainability work of the nominee, the list of publications and/or patents, the description of transfer into praxis, and indicators of success.
6. At the beginning of the selection process, the TUM-IAS and the NST will examine all the nominations.
7. Only the nominations that fulfil the described criteria are qualified to be reviewed by the members of the Pre-Selection and the TUM Final Selection Committee.

The pre-selection process by international experts

1. The Pre-Selection Committee consists of 10 to 15 highly renowned experts, international professors, researchers, and entrepreneurs.
2. Each member will be asked to evaluate the nominations and provide a shortlist of the nominations that most deserve the award regarding the ambition and idea of the Sustainability Award supported by the NST taking into consideration the criteria

mentioned in the Addendum. For each award, they will establish a first shortlist without ranking that will constitute the basis for further discussions within the Pre-Selection Committee.

3. The pre-selection process will be made based on at least two virtual conferences and via email exchange. The TUM-IAS will organize virtual conferences, which will be chaired by its director.
4. The decision on a final shortlist for each award will be based on the simple majority. Members of the Pre-Selection Committee will vote, e.g., via hand signals or using the voting function of the videoconference tool. The votes will be recorded by the TUM-IAS project manager. The pre-selection phase ends when all members of the Pre-Selection Committee agree on the final shortlist for each award. The final shortlists will be forwarded to the TUM Final Selection Committee.

The final selection of awardees by TUM

1. TUM professors from different TUM Schools and institutions, familiar with sustainability-related research and entrepreneurship will support the final selection process. The final selection will take place at TUM under the lead of the director of the TUM-IAS.
2. The members of the TUM Final Selection Committee will receive the shortlist of the Pre-Selection Committee for each award.
3. The discussions take place at TUM-IAS and are moderated by its director.
4. The TUM Final Selection Committee identifies the award winners under consideration of the quality criteria as summarized in the Addendum. The decision will be based on a simple majority. The vote will be recorded by the TUM-IAS project manager but will stay confidential within the TUM Final Selection Committee.
5. The members of the Pre-Selection Committee will be informed about the final decision after the final selection.

E) Final general aspects

1. NST does not intervene during the two-phase selection process.
2. The list of the submitted and shortlisted nominations will not be made public.
3. During the selection phase, members of the Pre-Selection and the TUM Final Selection Committee who submitted a nomination are kindly asked not to participate in the discussion and evaluation of their respective nominee(s).
4. To ensure that there is no actual or potential conflict of interest, nominators should not submit nominations if the following circumstances apply:
 - First-degree relationships, marriage, life partnership, and domestic partnership with the nominator/nominee.
 - Personal (financial) interest in the nomination's success or (financial) interest by persons listed above.

- Any other situation that would compromise the ability to unbiasedly evaluate the proposal.
5. Collected personal data regarding the nominators and the nominee will only be processed in the frame of the above-described nomination processes. For this purpose, data submitted in the proposals will be stored by the TUM-IAS and the NST and distributed to the members of the Award committees involved in the evaluation process. The committees will be informed that documents must be kept strictly confidential and that personal data must be handled in accordance with the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
 6. Members of the Pre-Selection and the TUM Final Selection Committee will be asked to treat information related to the selection process, including the nomination proposals, with confidentiality and not to disclose the names of the awardees before any official publication from the NST and TUM.

Addendum

Quality criteria:

The following quality criteria should be addressed in the nominations by the nominators. Both selection committees will also take into consideration these criteria and aspects for the evaluation of the nominations and establishment of the shortlists.

- **Relation** of the nomination to the **Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)** of the United Nations. The relation must shortly be characterized by the nominators as well as the reviewers of the Award Committees.
- **Contribution** of the nominee to research activities, technology development, and implementation.
- **Originality** and **creativity of the concept** compared to international competitors.
- If applicable: the three **most important prizes** of the nominee.
- **Merits of the nominee** in terms of achievements and commitments, leadership personality, and readiness to take risks.
Any achievements of the nominees should be illustrated by tangible elements and concrete examples.

With respect to the category Outstanding Research and Development:

- **Novelty** of the method and the concept in the defined topics with the perspective of business opportunities.
- **Quality** of the nominee's best publications.

With respect to the category Leadership in Implementation:

- **Transfer into praxis** and **parameters of success** indicating the technological innovation power and significant potential of marketability, such as patents, raised venture capital, start or ongoing entrepreneurship, etc.
- **Impact/influence** on economic, political stakeholders and/or decision-makers.
- **Approach to change**, move forward, and implement ideas.