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# 2025 LOCAL ADAPTATION **CHAMPIONS AWARDS**

**APPLICANTS' GUIDEBOOK**



# ABOUT THE AWARDS

## 2025 LOCAL ADAPTATION CHAMPIONS AWARDS

The GCA Local Adaptation Champions Awards spotlight and reward innovative, exemplary, inspiring, and scalable locally led efforts that address the impacts of climate change and build effective climate resilience among the most vulnerable communities, sections of society, and individuals who are at the frontlines of the greatest existential threat faced by humankind. This year, the Awards will feature four new thematic categories: Nature-Based Solutions, Women's Livelihoods, Citizen Science, and Health.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

The Awards are open to any organization or group of partners worldwide, who are in the process of implementing climate change adaptation/resilience solutions that follow one of the eight **Principles of Locally Led Adaptation**.

### DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS

The call for applications will be open from **5 June to 6 July 2025**.

## PRIZES IN 2025

 **20 NOMINEES** 

20 nominees will benefit from publicity around their nomination for the Awards.



**4 WINNERS**  
**€15,000 EACH**

Four winners will receive a cash prize of €15,000 and be invited to an Award Ceremony at **COP30 in Belém**, which will take place from **10 to 21 November 2025**.

Winners will be required to provide a proposal of how they intend to use the cash prize and to report on their progress up to one year after the disbursement of the prize.



### ADAPTATION FUND

## ADAPTATION FUND CONTRIBUTION TO THE 2025 LOCAL ADAPTATION CHAMPIONS AWARDS

Winners will be sponsored by the Adaptation Fund and invited to participate in prominent speaking engagements at upcoming Adaptation Fund readiness events, including the Fund's annual seminar for its national implementing entities, an interactive forum for capacity building and other learning-and-sharing events that bring together accredited implementing entities of the Fund. These events will provide the winners with opportunities to speak about their experience and knowledge to an international audience of professionals who design and implement adaptation projects in vulnerable communities in developing countries globally. Learn more about the Adaptation Fund: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/>

# AWARDS CATEGORIES



## NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

This category honors locally designed, community-led initiatives that use nature-based solutions to protect critical local infrastructure—such as water, energy, and transport systems—from climate change, especially those vital to everyday life. Proposed solutions must be community-owned and managed, strengthen ecosystem services, and deliver climate resilience while respecting local governance and knowledge systems.



## WOMEN'S LIVELIHOODS

This category recognizes community-led initiatives that enhance women's entrepreneurship, economic empowerment and resilience in the face of climate change. Eligible entries should demonstrate how they improve access to climate-resilient jobs, finance, skills, markets, and assets for women—particularly those from marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Initiatives must also actively challenge discriminatory norms and structural barriers that undermine women's well-being before, during, and after climate-related shocks and stressors.



# AWARDS CATEGORIES



## CITIZEN SCIENCE

This category celebrates community-driven research initiatives that are needs-based, solutions-oriented, and have measurable impact on climate-vulnerable populations. Strong entries engage local people as equal partners in designing and conducting research, incorporate traditional and local knowledge, and generate practical outcomes that inform local planning, decision-making, or adaptation actions. Emphasis is placed on bottom-up approaches that depart from traditional, top-down research models.



## HEALTH

This category recognizes locally led initiatives that strengthen community health and psychosocial resilience in response to climate-related stressors by (1) enhancing people's agency and coping mechanisms for dealing with slow-onset or compounding climate impacts; or (2) improving equitable access to health services, particularly for women, youth, persons with disabilities, displaced populations, indigenous peoples, and marginalized ethnic groups during and after climate shocks.

# AWARDS **TIMELINE**



**6 June 2025**

**APPLY**

Call for applications opens.



**6 July 2025**

**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS CLOSES**

Screening of applications starts.



**21 July – 8 August 2025**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Applicants may be invited to provide further information.



**29 August 2025**

**SHORTLISTING**

Technical Advisory Group (TAG) selection of finalists.



**8 September 2025**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARD NOMINEES**

20 Award Nominees announced.



**22 September 2025**

**FINAL ASSESSMENT**

High-level Jury selection of winners.



**10–21 November 2025**

**AWARD CEREMONY AND UNVEILING OF WINNERS**

Winners announced at COP30 in Belém, Brazil.

# SELECTION PROCESS

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Only applications that meet all of the following criteria will be considered for the 2025 competition:

- 1** The intervention is being implemented and results are demonstrable.
- 2** The intervention addresses adaptation to climate change impact or builds resilience against climate impacts.
- 3** The intervention aims at the most vulnerable communities, sections of society, and individuals experiencing climate impacts.
- 4** The intervention adheres to one or more Principles of Locally Led Adaptation.

Your entry must also fit into one of the four Awards categories:



**NATURE-BASED  
SOLUTIONS**



**WOMEN'S  
LIVELIHOODS**






**CITIZEN  
SCIENCE**



**Health**

## REQUESTED MATERIALS

The application form contains a series of questions and spaces to upload files. Please make sure to respond to all the questions and provide:

-  A written description of the intervention or solution in a story format.
-  A short, simple video: interviews, presentation of the intervention, footage of the solution (2 minutes maximum). We are not looking for high-quality, polished videos.
-  Photos, infographics or other visual material to support your story.

*Incomplete applications will not be considered.*

## SELECTION OF WINNERS

Applications will be ranked according to a points-based system that takes into account:

- Innovation
- Adherence to the Principles of Locally Led Adaptation
- Community leadership in decision-making
- Leadership by the most vulnerable sections of society, including women
- Scalability and replicability
- Devolution of decision-making on the use of funds
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Relevance of use of prize money

The top 20 applicants will be nominated for the Awards and requested to provide additional information.

After further screening by a Technical Advisory Group composed of locally led adaptation experts, the winners will be selected by a High-Level Jury.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What are the GCA Local Adaptation Champions Awards?

The Local Adaptation Champions Awards spotlight and reward innovative, exemplary, inspiring, and scalable locally led efforts that address the impacts of climate change and build effective climate resilience among the most vulnerable communities, sections of society, and individuals who are at the frontlines of the greatest existential threat faced by humankind.

## What are the prizes?

20 nominees will benefit from publicity around their nomination for the Awards. Four winners will receive a cash prize of €15,000. The winners will be invited to an Award Ceremony at COP30 in Belém, which will take place from 10 to 21 November 2025.

## Who can enter the competition?

The Awards are open to any organization, or partner network that has implemented or is in the process of implementing, climate change adaptation or resilience interventions that follow one of the eight Principles of Locally Led Adaptation.

We invite applications from:

- Women-led groups
- Non-governmental organizations (local, national, and international)
- Universities
- Research institutes
- Think tanks
- Governments
- Entrepreneurship support organizations
- Small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)



with core business models focused on local climate adaptation initiatives

- Women-led businesses
- Tech and non-tech enterprises
- Locally grown corporates or organizations promoting local climate adaptation along supply chains

If you represent an organization or a group of partners, make sure to request permission to submit an application on their behalf to be considered for these Awards.

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## How can I apply?

Access the GCA LLA Awards website at [gca.org/llachampions](https://gca.org/llachampions) and click on “Apply here” for the online application form.

## What is the deadline for applying?

The call for applications will be open from 6 June to 6 July 2025.

## What type of information should I submit?

You will be asked to provide:

- A short description
- Photos or infographics
- A video of 2 minutes or less (we are not looking for high-quality, polished videos)
- News articles or media coverage (if available)

Use your creativity to build your case. Remember that we want to hear your story. Please refrain from copying and pasting intervention design documents. Instead, use your voice and the voices of those who have participated in or benefited from your solution to tell us what you did, how you got there and what difference it has made.

## What kind of videos are we looking for?

Videos should be shorter than two minutes. Your submission should help us get a better sense of your achievement, such as interviews with community members who have participated in or benefitted from your intervention or footage of the proposed solution in action. **We are not looking for high-quality, polished videos.** A video taken with your cellphone camera will do. What’s important is that it contributes to your story and that it gives us a glimpse of the impact of your work.

## What kind of photos and infographics are we looking for?

We are not looking for professional and high-definition photos or graphs. Rather visual elements that will illustrate your short descriptive

text and be complementary to the two-minute video. Photos can show people (participants in developing, implementing, and benefitting from your solutions) or products. They can showcase a situation before and after your initiative was put in place, or show the evolution of your intervention, or your work. In case you add infographics, those can show processes, maps, diagrams – anything that will help the overall understanding of your intervention. You can upload up to five photos and/or graphic elements and unlimited links to add to your application.

## What happens if I am shortlisted in the top 20?

If you make it to the top 20 nominees for the Awards, we may request permission to use your videos, photos or infographics as part of our promotional campaign for the Awards. Please ensure you seek permission from those appearing in your video/photos before filming them/taking their pictures and sending us the footage.

## Can I fill out my application in a language other than English?

Yes. You can apply in the language of your choice if you include a transcript or subtitles for your videos. Please bear in mind that text may be machine-translated, a process that sometimes entails the loss of meaning and inaccuracies.

## Can I fill out the form offline?

You cannot fill out the form offline, but you can download a copy to prepare your answers. You can also start and come back later to complete it if you use the same computer and browser. Once submitted, you will not be able to make changes to your application.



## Can I submit more than one application for the same intervention?

No. You may only submit one application for each intervention. Please ensure that you only have one person in your organization submit an application.

## Can I submit applications for more than one intervention?

Yes. If you manage several eligible interventions, you may submit an application per intervention.

## What are the eight Principles of Locally Led Adaptation?

The eight [Principles of Locally Led Adaptation](#) are as follows:

1. Devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level.
2. Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, disabled and displaced people, indigenous peoples and marginalized ethnic groups.
3. Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily.
4. Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy.
5. Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty.
6. Flexible programming and learning.
7. Ensuring transparency and accountability.
8. Collaborative action and investment.

## What are examples of eligible interventions?

Both adaptation and resilience building interventions are eligible. Adaptation refers to specific processes or actions that enable individuals or systems to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate, whereas resilience describes the capacity or ability of individuals or systems to anticipate and cope with shocks, and to recover from climate impacts. Interventions that are not specifically identified as adaptation



activities but build climate resilience and demonstrate models for strengthening local leadership in projects / initiatives / activities are also welcome.

## What are the minimum criteria for eligibility?

- The intervention addresses adaptation to climate change impact or builds resilience against climate impacts.
- The intervention aims at the most vulnerable communities, sections of society, and individuals experiencing climate impacts.
- The intervention adheres to one or more [Principles of Locally Led Adaptation](#).
- The intervention is being implemented and results are demonstrable.

### **I have only recently started implementation. Can I still be considered for the Awards?**

Winning entries will have to show that they are indeed effective and have an impact. It may be too early for your intervention to be considered for the 2025 Awards but make sure to document your work as you go along and save it for next year's Awards.

### **My intervention has helped communities build resilience to climate change, but it is not strictly an adaptation intervention. Can I still apply for the Awards?**

Yes. If you can make a compelling case that the people you have been working with have been able, because of your action, to build resilience or adapt to climate change, and if your intervention follows one of the eight **Principles of Locally Led Adaptation**, then you are welcome to submit an entry.

### **How does the selection process work?**

Applications will be screened against a set of pre-defined criteria after the call for applications closes. The top 20 applicants (five from each category) will be reviewed by the Technical Advisory Group, and two entries per category will be forwarded to the High-Level Jury for final selection of winners.

### **What happens after I am nominated?**

Nominees will be requested to provide evidence to support their entry and will have one week to provide such evidence. Delays in providing the requested documentation will result in disqualification from the Awards process. Nominees who send in their supporting documents will be listed on the GCA website.

### **Are there any conditions/obligations for the use of the €15,000 cash prizes?**

Although there are no conditions attached to the cash prize per se, the intent of the Awards in general, and of the cash prize in particular, is to allow for small initiatives to gain visibility and to scale up and develop.





# AVOID POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

**Conflict of interest** is generally recognized as a situation where there is a risk that a professional judgment or decision could be influenced by some secondary interest.

In the context of the GCA Awards team, Technical Advisory Group members and the Jury, conflicts of interest may derive from a member's relationship with a nominee and/or affiliation with a nominee's institution. To avoid the appearance of any impropriety, members of the GCA Awards team, Technical Advisory Group and the Jury will adhere to the following guidelines:

- **If conflicts of interest are identified, the conflicted members will recuse themselves from discussions related to the corresponding nominations.**

Recusal means that the GCA Awards team, Technical Advisory Group members and Jury members will refrain from any commentary or input regarding the conflicted nomination before or during the decision-making process and will absent him/herself during discussions of the conflicted nomination.

- **The GCA Awards team, Technical Advisory Group members and Jury members do not serve as nominator or endorser** for any nomination submitted for an Award.

- **The GCA Awards team or GCA Technical Advisory Group members cannot be directly involved in nominations prior to their submittal.** Members of the GCA Awards team, Technical Advisory Group and the Jury must maintain confidentiality about internal discussions. Information about deliberations should not be shared with anyone not involved in the selection process, nor should the Award recipient be discussed until GCA has announced them publicly.
- **Members of the GCA Awards team, Technical Advisory Group and the Jury do not provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates.** If a member is asked for feedback, this policy should be cited.
- **At the Awards selection stage, members of the GCA Awards team, Technical Advisory Group and the Jury will be asked to self-identify any relationships/affiliations that might be perceived as a source of potential bias and inform the team of the conflicts of interest before any candidates have been discussed.** Members of the GCA Awards team, GCA Technical Advisory Group members and the Jury will be asked to identify any candidates with whom they have had personal or working relationships, any other case where judgment could be affected, or identify any candidates from their current institution or one where they worked previously.