



will bee

Second édition

2026

WILL BEE - Rules & Guidelines

Innovation Award for Sustainable Construction

3 ème édition

prix innovation
construction durable

Lausanne
Casino de Montbenon

SECTION 1: Background and objectives

1.1 Duration of WILL BEE - Sustainable Innovation Awards

WILL BEE - Innovation Award For Sustainable Construction through Circularity and Bio & Geo-Based Materials runs from 8 May 2025 to the date of the final, scheduled for 16 November 2026.

1.2 Organisation

The entity known as "WOOD BEE", an association governed by the legal provisions of Articles 60 to 79 of the Swiss Civil Code (SCC) dated 10 December 1907, with its registered office at c/o ELITE SA, En Roveray 198, 1170 Aubonne, hereinafter referred to as "WOOD BEE", together with the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH), located at 102 Solothurnstrasse, 2504 Biel, and integrated within the BFH based in Bern, hereinafter referred to as "BFH", have jointly initiated WILL BEE – Sustainable Innovation Award – Bio- & Geo-Based Materials & Circularity in Construction.

This initiative aims to highlight and reward innovative projects, products, and approaches that utilise wood and other bio- and geo-based materials, while promoting the principles of circularity.

For the purposes of this regulation, the term "the organisers" shall collectively refer to WOOD BEE and BFH.

1.3 Scope: Sustainable construction, local sourcing, and regional economic impact

The primary objective of WILL BEE is to stimulate the development of eco-construction and the use of bio- and geo-based building material supply chains, with a focus on wood and its derivatives, as well as other materials such as hemp, straw, cork, flax, and raw earth (non-exhaustive list).

In line with this vision, WILL BEE also promotes locally sourced and minimally processed materials, as well as those derived from reuse, recycling, or the upcycling of waste and by-products, such as cellulose wadding, recycled textiles, pallet wood, cardboard, and more.

Beyond the construction sector, WILL BEE is committed to promoting low-carbon materials across all areas of daily life, highlighting their two key environmental benefits:

- the sequestration effect (carbon storage capacity, particularly high for wood), and
- the substitution effect (the ability to replace more polluting alternatives).

Through the visibility and awards it offers to applicants, WILL BEE seeks to support short supply chains and the local economy, while catalysing the emergence of more responsible business models.

1.4 Key Stages

To achieve its objectives, WILL BEE – Sustainable Innovation Award – Bio- & Geo-Based Materials & Circularity in Construction is structured around five distinct stages:

1. Submission of applications
2. Pre-selection
3. Pitch submission (*optional but strongly recommended*)
4. Invitation of finalists
5. Public finale and closing ceremony

1.5 Eligibility Criteria

Innovative projects may focus on the following areas:

- Forestry upstream: any project aimed at supplying high-quality wood to the industry, combating climate change, and adapting forests to its impacts while preserving biodiversity
- Harvesting and processing industries: including primary, secondary, and tertiary wood processing
- Use of wood and bio- & geo-based materials in construction, renovation, furniture, interior design, decoration, product design, textiles, fashion, packaging, paper, and cardboard industries
- Recycling, reuse, and repurposing of materials to extend carbon sequestration over time
- Energy production using bio- and geo-based resources
- Chemistry, including cosmetics, adhesives, and related applications

The innovative nature of the project and its added value are the main evaluation criteria. In this context, applicants are strongly encouraged to:

- Clearly identify the challenges their solution aims to address
- Provide an overview of the context, including a brief state of the art at the European level
- Highlight existing barriers and the resources and strategies used to overcome them

These elements will strengthen the relevance and credibility of the proposal.

SECTION 2: Awards and Distinctions

Participation in the competition is free of charge and open to various categories.



"Launch" Category – open to:

- academics (students, teachers, researchers, etc.)
- companies less than two years old
- individual applicants (natural persons)
- non-profit organisations and associations

proposing an innovative idea in one of the aforementioned fields



"Development" Category – open to:

- companies that have been established for more than two years



"Public Favourite" Award – open to:

- all projects that have passed the pre-selection phase. They will be submitted to a public vote.



Special "Health" Award – open to:

- all projects that have passed the pre-selection phase
- projects that include a **salutogenic dimension** (promoting general human health or specifically benefiting end users)
- projects that help **reduce the health impact** of the production, processing and/or use of wood or other bio- or geo-based materials

With the agreement of the applicants, the organisers reserve the right to reassign projects between the “Launch” and “Development” categories.

SECTION 3: Application Submission Guidelines

Application files, written in French or English, must be submitted via the online form available on the WOOD BEE website under the “WILL BEE Innovation Award” tab:

<https://www.woodbee/prixinnovationwillbee.ch>

The submission deadline is 30 September 2026 at midnight (CET).

Applicants are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the personal information provided. By submitting an application, the applicant confirms that they have obtained the necessary authorisations from all stakeholders involved in the project.

Applications will not be returned to the candidates.

For administrative questions, applicants may contact: info@woodbee.ch

Each applicant may submit only one application and must choose between the “Launch” or “Development” category, depending on the project’s maturity and scale.

All applications that pass the pre-selection phase will be automatically entered for the “Public Favourite” Award and, where applicable, considered for the Special “Health” Award.

 Incomplete applications at the submission deadline will be rejected.

SECTION 4 : Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Level of innovation in the proposed technology, process, or service
→ What makes your innovation unique? What justifies its above-average potential compared to the current state of science and existing market solutions?
- Contribution to sustainable development (societal, economic, and environmental)
→ Does your innovation contribute to the sustainable development of society, the economy, and/or the environment (e.g., the UN Sustainable Development Goals)?
- Environmental impact of the innovation
→ For example, what is the project's decarbonisation potential (in terms of CO₂ tonnes sequestered, substituted, or stored over the long term)?
- Social impact of the innovation
→ If successfully implemented, does it lead to measurable social benefits such as reduced poverty, improved quality of life or education, lower inequalities, or biodiversity preservation?
- Economic implications
→ Does your innovation create value for the economy (e.g., at the cantonal, regional, national, or European level)? Does the project have the potential to attract partners for the economic exploitation of research results?
- Scalability and industrialisation potential
→ The capacity to implement and scale up the innovation and bring it to market.
- Likelihood of success
→ How realistic and achievable is the project?
- Quality of the presentation (both written and oral)
→ Clarity, coherence, and effectiveness of communication.

SECTION 5: Competition Process

1. Applications open on 8 May 2026
2. **Submission of applications until midnight on 30 September 2026**
3. Announcement of the shortlist: 5 October 2026
4. **Submission of video pitches until 22 October 2026**
5. Invitation to the final on 2 November 2026
6. Closing ceremony and presentation of awards on **16 November 2026**.

5.1 Pre-selection

Applicants selected to proceed to the pitch stage will be notified by email no later than 5 October 2026.

5.2 Elevator Pitch Presentations

Pre-selected applicants must submit their project in the form of a video pitch (maximum 180 seconds) by 22 October 2026.

This step is strongly recommended and beneficial for project leaders, but it is not mandatory.

5.3 Final Selection

On 2 November 2026, the finalists will be selected by a jury of experts.

5.4 The Finale and the Awards

The finale will take place in Lausanne (Switzerland) on 16 November 2026 at the Casino de Montbenon.

Finalists will present their projects before the jury and a public audience, after which the winners will be announced and awarded on the same evening.

The organisers reserve the right to modify the venue and dates of the competition if necessary.

5.5 The Awards

The prizes include financial awards as well as coaching opportunities offered by BFH.



Award for the “Development” Category

- 1st Prize: a financial award of CHF 5 000.-



Award for the “Launch” Category

- 1st Prize: a financial award of CHF 3 000.-
- All finalists: free participation in the BFH Changemaker coaching programme (value: CHF 3 500.-)



Award for the “Public Favourite” Prize

- 1st Prize: a financial award of CHF 2 000.-



Award for the Special “Health” Prize

- 1st Prize: a financial award of CHF 2 000.-

SECTION 6 : Jury Composition and Role

The pre-selection will be carried out by the organisers, who may consult external experts if necessary.

The composition of the final jury will be determined by the organisers and published on the official website.

The jury's decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

SECTION 7 : General Provisions

The full regulations are available on the WOOD BEE website under the “WILL BEE Innovation Award” tab:

<https://www.woodbee/prixinnovationwillbee.ch>

and will remain accessible throughout the duration of the competition.

Participation in the competition implies full and unconditional acceptance of these rules.

The organisers shall not be held liable under any circumstances for any postponement, interruption, adjournment, extension, cancellation, or modification of the competition due to circumstances beyond their control or in the event of force majeure, including the replacement of a prize with another of equivalent nature and value.

SECTION 8 : Data Protection

The organisers are responsible for processing the participants' personal data, which will be used solely for the management of the competition and the awarding of prizes. Personal data may be accessed by the organisers and members of the jury.

In accordance with Swiss data protection legislation, participants have the right to access, rectify, update, transfer, or delete their data.

They may also restrict or object to the processing of their data by contacting: info@woodbee.ch.

In case of a complaint, participants may contact the relevant supervisory authority.

SECTION 9 : Confidentialité

By accepting the rules, participants authorise the organisers to record their image and statements in the context of the competition.

These recordings may be published on the organisers' website, by media partners, in the press, and other communication channels, without access restrictions or financial compensation, and for an unlimited duration.

SECTION 10 : Intellectual Property

Participants are responsible for protecting the intellectual property rights related to their project.

The organisers disclaim all liability in the event of any infringement of intellectual property rights.

SECTION 11 : Dispute Resolution

Submitting an application implies full and unconditional acceptance of these rules.

The decisions of the juries are final and may not be contested.

Any dispute related to the competition shall be governed by Swiss law.

SECTION 12 : Contact

For any questions regarding the rules or the organisation of WILL BEE - Sustainable Innovation Award - Bio- & Geo-Based Materials & Circularity in Construction (2026 edition), please contact the organisers at:

info@woodbee.ch

Un événement

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IMAGINATIVE BY NATURE

The WOOD BEE association brings together individuals, public or private organisations, and companies who share a common interest in the role of bio- and geo-based materials in advancing the three pillars of sustainable development:

- Economic (construction, energy, finance, industry, distribution, agriculture, etc.)
- Environmental (climate, biodiversity, etc.)
- Social (health, social cohesion, culture, etc.)

WOOD BEE operates as a collaborative platform, a social network, a space for debate, training, and knowledge exchange, and a dynamic, interactive information hub.

woodbee.ch	info@woodbee.ch
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