



3rd edition

UIC SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT AWARDS 2026

APPLICATION

in partnership with the
Sustainable Development Foundation



**Application
deadline:**

27 February 2026

Award ceremony:

September 2026,
Innotrans Berlin



The UIC Sustainability Impact Awards 2026

A prestigious competition organised by the International Union of Railways (UIC) in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Foundation. The aim of the awards is to honour and showcase outstanding achievements in the global railway sector, with a strong emphasis on sustainability.

Building upon the success of the previous edition, held in 2024, the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards is continuing its mission to recognise and shine a spotlight on the best practices, innovative technologies, and effective management strategies from railway companies that contribute to making transport even more environmentally friendly, more efficient, and ethically responsible.

The International Union of Railways is the worldwide organisation for the promotion of rail transport at a global level and for the collaborative development of the railway system. It brings together **more than 200 members across all five continents**, including railway undertakings, infrastructure managers, and railway service providers.

UIC also maintains close cooperative links with all stakeholders in the rail transport domain around the world, including manufacturers, railway associations, and public authorities, as well as in other domains and sectors whose experience may be beneficial to rail development.

UIC's main tasks include understanding the business needs of the rail community, developing innovative programmes to identify solutions to those needs, and preparing and publishing documents, such as reports, specifications, guidelines, and IRSs that facilitate the implementation of these new solutions.

For more information

www.uic.org
  **#UICrail**



An award ceremony
organised during Innotrans,
the International Trade Fair for
Transport Technology



An opportunity to meet
as a community and highlight and
share the transformative action
being taken in rail



**5 different categories of
innovation and sustainability:**
from stations to rolling stock,
and from social outreach to cities
and the environment

The importance of sustainability



The current climate emergency and the imperative need for global action underscore the critical need for railways to adopt sustainable practices



Taking action to transform the way we live, work and move has never been so urgent



Transport is at the core of environmental and social transition. Railways must play an even bigger role in creating a sustainable transport system



Why nominate your organisation?

For:

- The chance to win or be shortlisted for a high-level international award
- The possibility to show how your organisation is making positive sustainable change
- A way to promote your organisation's cutting-edge innovation to international stakeholders

Who is eligible to apply for the award?

Nominations are open exclusively to UIC members

When do nominations close?

All projects/initiatives must be submitted by
27 February 2026

Award Categories

The UIC Sustainability Impact Awards 2026 categories recognise the range of innovation which is transforming the rail sector today.

The categories are divided into 5 macro-subjects, each devoted to a different aspect of sustainability. Each category aligns with the UIC 2030 vision “Design a better Future” and connects to a number of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

These categories celebrate the best of the best, and will be given to the projects, initiatives and individuals who have made the most notable contribution to sustainable development.

The projects submitted should be able to demonstrate that they had an impact in 2024-2025.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Accessibility, diversity and inclusion

Recognise projects and programmes that go beyond regulatory requirements to create an inclusive and accessible railway environment. This includes measures to improve physical accessibility and social inclusivity, provide assistance for passengers with additional needs, and implement policies that embrace diversity and inclusion for both passengers and staff.



Climate change adaptation and resilience

Recognise projects that actively contribute to climate change adaptation and resilience, ensuring that railway services can withstand and recover from the impact of extreme weather events and other climate-related challenges.

CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Modal shift

Recognise initiatives, strategies, and projects within cities and communities that successfully promote the transition of passengers or freight from traditional, less sustainable modes of transport to rail services.



Healthy cities and communities

Acknowledge efforts that enhance the quality of life in cities and communities by prioritising health. This can include measures to reduce air pollution, noise, and the overall environmental impact of transport.

SEAMLESS CONNECTIVITY

Acknowledge and celebrate partnerships that improve overall connectivity by enabling a seamless transition and efficient interchange between various modes of transport.

This encompasses initiatives aimed at enhancing accessibility, minimising transfer times, and offering passengers convenient and integrated travel options.

As part of this, improving accessibility involves integrating information, digitisation, and ticket sales, as well as physical connectivity, which all contribute to a more harmonious and connected travel experience.





INNOVATION

Energy and decarbonisation

Recognise projects and technologies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability by lowering energy consumption, increasing the use of renewable energy sources, and actively participating in efforts to combat climate change within the railway industry.

Natural resources

Highlight projects and technologies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainable practices by minimising the depletion of natural resources, optimising the use of resources, and adopting environmentally friendly approaches, with a particular focus on promoting biodiversity and circular initiatives in railway development and operations.



GREEN COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

Recognising communication initiatives that effectively promote sustainability in the rail sector, this category rewards campaigns that raise awareness, inspire behavioural change, and engage passengers, employees, or communities in supporting a greener future for transport.

Projects may include creative use of digital media, public relations, internal communication, or stakeholder engagement strategies that demonstrate a measurable and innovative impact in spreading sustainability messages. Central to this category is the use of credible data as a foundation for communication—initiatives that demonstrate transparency and reliability through data-driven storytelling will be especially valued for their role in building trust and driving meaningful change.



Judging Process

1. Your nomination will be reviewed for **completeness, eligibility and adherence** to the application guidelines.
2. The judges for each category will score your application according to the following parameters:
 - 30% Impact on SDGs (with a high score if several SDGs are being contributed to)
 - 30% Demonstrable and quantifiable impact for the category
 - 20% Demonstrating staff and/or community engagement (collaboration and communication)
 - 20% Longevity, scalability, replicability -> fostering long-term change

This score determines the shortlist for each category.

3. If your application is shortlisted, the judges will meet to discuss and decide on a winner
4. For each category, a final ranking will be compiled with the shortlisted applications being invited to the awards ceremony
5. The winners will be announced during the award ceremony, organised as part of InnoTrans, the International Trade Fair for Transport Technology.

How to apply

Step 1

Read the application guidelines below

Step 2

Create an account on the website:
uic.org/event/uic-sustainability-awards/

Step 3

Complete in the online form on the website and select your category.
You can also save a draft application at any time and complete it later.

Step 4

Submit your application online

Step 5

Wait for our feedback,
if you are shortlisted you will be invited to the awards ceremony

Awards Ceremony 2026 Edition

The final awards ceremony will take place on **September 2026** during the InnoTrans trade fair, at the Alstom stand. In addition to being a celebratory event, it will also offer an opportunity to reflect on the central themes of transport sustainability and to network with companies and institutions from the sector.



A Look Back at the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards 2024

Celebrating Innovation and Impact in Rail Sustainability

On the evening of 25 September 2024, the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards Ceremony took place during the InnoTrans, at the event's Platinum Sponsor Alstom's booth, in partnership with the Sustainable Development Foundation. The event brought together a diverse group of participants from across the rail sector to celebrate outstanding sustainability achievements.

Out of all applications received from **12 countries across 4 continents, 17 projects were shortlisted**

for their innovative and impactful approaches. The ceremony welcomed over **100 participants**, creating a warm and celebratory atmosphere.

A standout moment was the recognition of the Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System by India's NCRTC, which was named

overall winner for its transformative approach to regional mobility, drastically reducing travel times and setting a benchmark for sustainable urban transit.

Presiding over the jury, Christian Kern, former Federal Chancellor of Austria, highlighted the rail sector's significant impact on sustainability, noting that its full potential is only beginning to be unleashed. His remarks underscored the tireless efforts and forward-thinking innovation that are propelling the industry toward a more sustainable future.

Looking ahead, the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards 2026 will again take place in Berlin in September, during InnoTrans, promising an evening full of appreciation for great efforts, inspiring stories, and meaningful connections across the rail community.

Platinum Partner **ALSTOM** | Silver Partner **AECOM**



Innotrans is the world's leading trade fair for transport technology and provides a comprehensive overview of the innovations in the mobility sector. With the segments "Railway Technology", "Railway Infrastructure", "Public Transport", "Interiors", and "Tunnel Construction", the event is an ideal business platform for both buyers and decision makers who represent transport companies, vehicle manufacturers and their suppliers.

THE UIC SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT AWARD

Guidelines

The International Union of Railways (UIC), in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Foundation, is organising the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards 2026. The aim of this competition is to honour and showcase outstanding achievements in the global railway sector, with a strong emphasis on sustainability.

Building upon the success of the previous edition held in 2024, the UIC Sustainability Impact Award is continuing its mission to recognise and shine a spotlight on best practices, innovative technologies and effective management strategies that contribute to making rail more attractive, efficient and ethically responsible, and to reducing its environmental impact.

The UIC award 2026 is divided into four thematic categories, each devoted to different aspects of the UIC '[Design a Better future](#)' vision 2030.

The categories are aligned with key UN Sustainable Development Goals and consideration is given to the contribution to the targets of each.

For the 2026 edition, we are introducing a new special award: **Green Communications Campaign**. This award recognises communication initiatives that effectively promote sustainability in rail. Unlike the other awards, it is overarching and does not focus on a specific topic or Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

1. Cities and communities

Modal shift



Recognise initiatives, strategies and projects within cities and communities that successfully promote the transition of travellers or freight from traditional, less sustainable modes of transport to rail services.

Healthy Cities and Communities



Acknowledge efforts that enhance the quality of life in cities and communities by prioritising health considerations. This can include measures to reduce air pollution, noise and overall environmental impact associated with transportation.

2. Innovation

Energy and decarbonisation



Recognise projects and technologies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability by lowering energy consumption, increasing the use of renewable energy sources and actively participating in efforts to combat climate change within the railway industry.

Natural resources



Highlight projects and technologies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainable practices by minimising the depletion of natural resources, optimising resource utilisation and adopting environmentally friendly approaches, with a particular focus on promoting biodiversity and circular initiatives, in railway development and operations.

3. Seamless Connectivity



Acknowledge and celebrate partnerships that improve overall connectivity by enabling seamless transitions and efficient interchanges across various transportation modes. This encompasses initiatives aimed at enhancing accessibility, minimising transfer times and offering passengers convenient and integrated travel options. Accessibility, in this context, involves the integration of information, digitisation, ticket sales, as well as physical connectivity, all contributing to a more harmonious and connected travel experience.

4. Customer Service

Accessibility, diversity and inclusion



Recognise projects and programmes that go beyond regulatory requirements to create an inclusive and accessible railway environment. This includes measures to improve physical accessibility or social inclusivity, provide assistance for passengers with disabilities and implement policies that embrace diversity and inclusion among both passengers and staff.

Climate change adaptation and resilience



Recognise projects that actively contribute to climate change adaptation and resilience, ensuring that railway services can withstand and recover from the impacts of extreme weather events and other climate-related challenges.

Please refer to the descriptions of the individual categories for information on eligibility to enter a particular category. The nomination must clearly demonstrate impacts relating to the specific category.

5. Green Communications Campaign

Recognising communication initiatives that effectively promote sustainability in the rail sector, this category rewards campaigns that raise awareness, inspire behavioural change, and engage passengers, employees, or communities in supporting a greener future for transport.

Projects may include creative use of digital media, public relations, internal communication, or stakeholder engagement strategies that demonstrate a measurable and innovative impact in spreading sustainability messages. Central to this category is the use of credible data as a foundation for communication—initiatives that demonstrate transparency and reliability through data-driven storytelling will be especially valued for their role in building trust and driving meaningful change.

Who is eligible to apply

Only UIC members (active, associate or affiliate) are eligible to nominate a project or initiative for an award, and the project must have the direct involvement of the UIC member. However, the project may additionally have the involvement or partnership of other non-UIC members.

Organisations can submit projects or initiatives that have demonstrated impact between 1 May 2024 and 27 February 2026. Projects that are in development or planning stages are not eligible. UIC members can submit an unlimited number of nominations under the same or multiple categories, but each nomination must be for distinctly different projects or initiatives.

How to apply

Participation in the UIC award is free, and applications must be submitted by **27 February 2026** (nominations submitted after 27 February 2026 will not be considered) through the following steps:

1. Read the application guidelines carefully.
2. Decide which category you wish to enter (entries must be submitted under one of the five categories online: uic.org/event/uic-sustainability-awards). Fill in the application form, in English, following the instructions provided within the document. (It is important to use the application form provided only and to keep strictly within the word count limits provided. Any details provided beyond the word counts will not be passed on to the judges).
3. Wait for our feedback. If you are shortlisted, you will be asked to make a presentation to the judges and invited to the Award Ceremony.

Submissions should be supported wherever possible and appropriate with evidence of impact from the project or initiative. It is therefore permitted to provide links to awards, articles, certificates, proof of project completion/initiative launch, images, videos, and evidence of environmental improvements across specific areas within the organisation.

Supporting information for submissions should be provided in English and cannot be considered confidential.

Please note. If the project or initiative has been submitted to the UIC for a previous awards scheme, it cannot be submitted a second time unless it has undergone sufficient development to be effectively considered a new entity.

Evaluation parameters

The judges will score applications on the basis of the following judging parameters:

- 30% Impact on SDGs (high score if co-benefits are hitting several UN SDGs)
- 30% Demonstrable and quantifiable impacts for the topic
- 20% Demonstrating staff and/or community engagement (collaboration and communication)
- 20% Longevity, scalability, replicability and fostering long-term change

For each of the parameters, the jury will assign a score ranging from 1 to 10 points. The ranking of entrants will be determined by the sum of the points obtained.

In the event of a tie between two or more entrants in the same category, the entrant with the highest score in the Impact parameter will prevail.

Judging process overview

1. Application forms will be reviewed for completeness, eligibility and adherence to the application guidelines.
2. Entries will be evaluated by the members of the jury, divided into different categories, who will score the entry according to the judging parameters. This scoring will decide the category shortlists.
3. Shortlisted organisations will be invited to present their projects/initiatives virtually to the presidents of the juries and the category judges, who will then convene to discuss, agree on a final score and decide the winners.
4. A final ranking will be compiled and a shortlist from each category will be invited to the Award Ceremony. In the event of a tie, the president of the judges will make a decision on the final winner.
5. The winners will be announced and presented their awards at the Award Ceremony organised within InnoTrans, the International Trade Fair for Transport Technology.

Please note. All nominations are free of charge, and there is no financial or other prize beyond a trophy and certificate of small cost.

Judges may decide to award discretionary recognition to individual projects, in addition to the winners of the four categories, in the event of particularly noteworthy nominations. Individual judges' grading and comments during deliberation will remain confidential.

Judges must declare any possible conflict of interest and will not score any nominations in which they have been involved.





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 #UICrail