# H&M Foundation’s Global Change Award propels groundbreaking innovations to decarbonise fashion



The H&M Foundation, renowned for its commitment to sustainable fashion, has made significant strides since the inception of the Global Change Award in 2015. Designed to spotlight pioneering ideas poised to reshape the fashion industry, this initiative has evolved to confront a pressing singular challenge: climate change. Over ten years, the Foundation has championed 56 innovations, distributing nearly 10 million euros (approximately $11 million) in grants. The Foundation's program director, Annie Lindmark, emphasises a dual focus—benefiting both people and the planet—stressing that a holistic approach is essential to avoid well-meaning solutions that could inadvertently exacerbate existing issues or neglect certain communities.

In this year's competition, the winners of the Global Change Award were announced, showcasing ten remarkable innovations deemed vital for the decarbonization of fashion. These winning concepts spanned four key categories: responsible production, sustainable materials, mindful consumption, and an intriguing category dubbed “wildcards”—which targets unforeseen ideas with the potential to instigate transformative change across the industry.

The diverse global entries included innovations from Sweden, China, Bangladesh, Germany, India, the United Kingdom, and Ghana. Among the most notable winners are:

1. **DecoRpet** from China, which has developed a method for purifying and decolorizing polyester waste at low temperatures, resulting in exceptionally high-quality recyclables.

2. **Thermal Cyclones** from the United Kingdom, offering a groundbreaking substitution for conventional steam boilers in garment production. Their heat pumps could cut energy usage by over 75%, representing a significant leap in reducing emissions across the industry.

3. **Pulpatronics**, also from the UK, has introduced a metal-free RFID tag that is recyclable or compostable, aiming to mitigate the considerable e-waste generated from conventional clothing labels.

4. **CircularFabrics** from Germany, which aims to recover nylon from blended post-consumer textiles without chemical breakdown, thereby establishing a recyclable nylon supply that meets industry standards for performance.

5. **A Blunt Story** from India has created a plastic-free shoe sole that utilises agricultural waste, championing an inclusive value chain that benefits local farmers while addressing microplastics.

6. **Brilliant Dyes** from the UK harnesses cyanobacteria to produce biodegradable dyes, significantly reducing the carbon footprint associated with traditional dyeing processes.

7. **Decarbonization Lab** in Bangladesh is creating low-emission techniques for textile treatment and dyeing, merging research with practical applications to modernise the industry.

8. **Renasens** from Sweden presents an innovative recycling method for blended textile waste, aiming to transform this waste into reusable materials while decreasing pollution and microplastic release.

9. **Loom** in the UK connects consumers with designers to upcycle unwanted garments into unique pieces, thus promoting mindful consumption and extending clothing lifespans.

Lastly, **The Revival Circularity Lab** in Ghana offers a community-driven approach to upcycling, empowering local artisans to transform textile waste into valuable products while fostering self-sufficiency.

The H&M Foundation is strategically invested in supporting these early-stage startups, recognising a significant gap in resources available to emerging entrepreneurs. Lindmark highlighted that the Foundation’s philanthropic nature allows for the absorption of risk, facilitating necessary prototyping and testing phases without claiming equity or intellectual property. This nurturing environment not only celebrates innovative thinkers—from entrepreneurs to researchers—but also broadens the definition of who can be considered a changemaker in this vital arena, promoting diversity in solutions.

Beyond the monetary grants of €200,000 (around $225,000) each, winners enter the Changemaker Programme, a year-long initiative aimed at amplifying their impact. This commitment aligns with the Foundation’s overarching vision to halve the textile industry's greenhouse gas emissions every decade.

As the challenge of climate change continues to loom large, the advancements showcased through the Global Change Award represent a beacon of hope. They not only serve as a testament to the potential of innovative thinking but also underline the critical need for a collaborative, inclusive approach to sustainability in fashion.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1-3, 8
2. Paragraphs 4-5, 9
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5. Paragraphs 12
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://sourcingjournal.com/sustainability/sustainability-news/h-and-m-foundation-global-change-award-2025-winners-1234748610/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://hmfoundation.com/2025/03/10/top-20-finalists-in-global-change-award-2025-revealed/> - The H&M Foundation announced the top 20 finalists for the Global Change Award 2025, showcasing innovative solutions aimed at decarbonizing the fashion industry. These finalists include technologies like industrial heat pumps, metal-free RFID clothing tags, biodegradable cyanobacteria-based dyes, and platforms connecting consumers with designers for upcycling garments. The initiative focuses on early-stage startups to support innovations that can lead to significant industry-wide transformations.
3. <https://hmfoundation.com/gca/> - The Global Change Award (GCA), initiated by the H&M Foundation, is an innovation challenge supporting early-stage changemakers aiming to halve the textile industry's greenhouse gas emissions every decade. Each year, ten winners receive €200,000 and participate in a year-long Changemaker Programme, designed to elevate their innovations and foster a holistic mindset that benefits both people and the planet.
4. <https://hmfoundation.com/2024/10/23/new-round-of-global-change-award-launched-with-a-mission-to-accelerate-innovation-for-a-net-zero-textile-industry-by-2050/> - The H&M Foundation launched a new round of the Global Change Award, focusing on accelerating innovation for a net-zero textile industry by 2050. The initiative seeks innovative ideas addressing high emission areas across the textile value chain, including sustainable materials, responsible production, mindful consumption, and 'wildcards' that support the GCA purpose. The nomination process for the 2025 award opened on October 23, 2024.
5. <https://hmfoundation.com/2023/06/08/hm-foundation-doubles-gca-grant-and-winners/> - The H&M Foundation doubled the grant funding for the Global Change Award winners to €2 million, aiming to speed up the textile industry transformation. The 2023 winners include companies from the UK, Canada, India, Brazil, Kenya, and the US, offering material, recycling, and design innovations. These include recyclable and biodegradable polyurethane, food waste polyester, circular dyeing, natural bio-colours, ultra-high-performing textiles, seaweed material, AI textile sorting, corn husk and sugarcane fabric, zero waste pattern system, and textile-to-textile recycling for polyesters.
6. <https://hmfoundation.com/2024/10/23/new-round-of-global-change-award-launched-with-a-mission-to-accelerate-innovation-for-a-net-zero-textile-industry-by-2050/> - The H&M Foundation launched a new round of the Global Change Award, focusing on accelerating innovation for a net-zero textile industry by 2050. The initiative seeks innovative ideas addressing high emission areas across the textile value chain, including sustainable materials, responsible production, mindful consumption, and 'wildcards' that support the GCA purpose. The nomination process for the 2025 award opened on October 23, 2024.
7. <https://hmfoundation.com/2025/03/10/top-20-finalists-in-global-change-award-2025-revealed/> - The H&M Foundation announced the top 20 finalists for the Global Change Award 2025, showcasing innovative solutions aimed at decarbonizing the fashion industry. These finalists include technologies like industrial heat pumps, metal-free RFID clothing tags, biodegradable cyanobacteria-based dyes, and platforms connecting consumers with designers for upcycling garments. The initiative focuses on early-stage startups to support innovations that can lead to significant industry-wide transformations.