# H&M Foundation’s Global Change Award spotlights climate-focused innovations in fashion sustainability



When the H&M Foundation launched the Global Change Award in 2015, its mission was clear: to discover innovations that could guide the fashion industry towards a more sustainable future. Now a decade in, the initiative has evolved, identifying climate change as the pivotal challenge. According to Annie Lindmark, the program director of the H&M Foundation, the organisation has crystallised its mission into a dual focus on both people and the planet. “We often see the holistic perspective being overlooked, resulting in well-meaning solutions that either create new problems or leave people behind,” she stated, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to sustainability.

The 2025 edition of the Global Change Award showcases ten pioneering ideas aimed at decisively reducing the fashion sector's carbon footprint through categories including responsible production, sustainable materials and processes, mindful consumption, and imaginative “wildcards.” With a global representation from innovators based in Sweden, China, Bangladesh, Germany, India, the United Kingdom, and Ghana, the range of submissions promises to address diverse aspects of the industry’s sustainability challenges.

Among this year's winners, standout innovations include an industrial heat pump developed by Thermal Cyclones in the United Kingdom, designed to drastically reduce energy consumption across garment production by replacing traditional fossil fuel boilers with an electric system. This advancement could reduce energy use by over 75%, marking a substantial step towards decarbonisation, as noted by Lindmark.

Another notable project is DecoRpet, an innovation from China that purifies mixed textile waste to produce 99.9% pure polyester for high-quality recycling. Lindmark describes it as “a smarter, cleaner way to recycle polyester at scale” that could lead to greater adoption of recycled materials in the industry.

The winners are not only celebrated for their ideas but also for the vision and impact of the changemakers behind them. Lindmark emphasises the importance of including individuals who may identify as researchers, nonprofit leaders, or other creators, not solely traditional entrepreneurs. The selection process for this year's final ten is meticulous, evaluating submissions based on their potential to scale, the uniqueness of the concept, support for decarbonisation, and the vision of the changemaker.

As part of their reward, each winning project will receive €200,000 and entry into the Changemaker Programme, which provides invaluable support in refining and launching their innovations. This philanthropic model is particularly beneficial for early-stage startups, which often struggle to secure the necessary funding and resources to bring their ideas to fruition. The H&M Foundation claims it has a unique position that allows it to absorb risk, enabling support for projects at the refining and prototyping stages without taking equity rights.

Across the winning projects, a common thread is the commitment to address waste and sustainability in innovative ways. For instance, the initiative by A Blunt Story in India aims to create sustainable footwear that avoids microplastic pollution, turning agricultural waste and recycled materials into plastic-free soles. Similarly, Loom, developed in the UK, serves as a technology platform that facilitates the transformation of unwanted clothing into bespoke pieces, thereby extending the life of garments and reducing the impact of overproduction.

The Revival Circularity Lab in Ghana exemplifies a community-driven approach, taking textile waste and using it to empower local artisans. This initiative highlights the intersection of environmental sustainability and social equity, reinforcing Lindmark’s assertion that true sustainability necessitates a system-wide perspective, addressing both ecological and human needs.

As the Global Change Award continues to grow and diversify, it aims to foster a new generation of solutions that will help achieve the ambitious goal of halving the textile industry’s greenhouse gas emissions every decade. With a deadline for achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, the need for creativity and innovation in this sector is more pressing than ever. Through its support, the H&M Foundation is not only recognising brilliant ideas but also nurturing the broader changes necessary for a sustainable future, ensuring that both our planet and its people are prioritised in the transition to a responsible fashion industry.

### Reference Map

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## 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, featuring innovative solutions aimed at decarbonizing the fashion industry. These include technologies like industrial heat pumps, metal-free RFID clothing tags, biodegradable dyes, and platforms connecting consumers with designers for upcycling. The finalists hail from countries such as Sweden, China, Bangladesh, Germany, India, the United Kingdom, and Ghana, reflecting a global effort to address climate change in fashion. The winners will receive €200,000 each and participate in a yearlong Changemaker Programme.
3. <https://hmfoundation.com/gca/> - The Global Change Award (GCA), initiated by the H&M Foundation, is an innovation challenge aimed at halving the textile industry's greenhouse gas emissions every decade, with a goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Each year, ten winners receive €200,000 and access to a yearlong Changemaker Programme, provided in collaboration with strategic partners Accenture and KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Since its launch in 2015, the GCA has supported 46 innovations with a combined grant of €8 million, focusing on transformative ideas in materials, production, recycling, design, and customer use.
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 announced 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.' The nomination process opened on October 23, 2024, with winners to be announced in April 2025. The GCA aims to support changemakers in halving the industry's greenhouse gas emissions every decade, promoting a just and fair transition for both people and the planet.
5. <https://hmfoundation.com/2025/03/17/meet-the-minds-expert-panel-screening-for-gca-2025-winners/> - The H&M Foundation's Expert Panel is screening the top 20 finalists for the Global Change Award 2025. The panel comprises experts from fashion, business, investments, entrepreneurship, and innovation, who are evaluating changemakers poised to transform the textile industry. This year, 476 ideas from 69 countries across six continents were received, and the panel is tasked with selecting the final ten winners. The GCA aims to drive a transformation towards a socially inclusive and planet-positive future by fast-tracking innovations that benefit both people and the planet.
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 announced 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.' The nomination process opened on October 23, 2024, with winners to be announced in April 2025. The GCA aims to support changemakers in halving the industry's greenhouse gas emissions every decade, promoting a just and fair transition for both people and the planet.
7. <https://hmfoundation.com/2025/03/17/meet-the-minds-expert-panel-screening-for-gca-2025-winners/> - The H&M Foundation's Expert Panel is screening the top 20 finalists for the Global Change Award 2025. The panel comprises experts from fashion, business, investments, entrepreneurship, and innovation, who are evaluating changemakers poised to transform the textile industry. This year, 476 ideas from 69 countries across six continents were received, and the panel is tasked with selecting the final ten winners. The GCA aims to drive a transformation towards a socially inclusive and planet-positive future by fast-tracking innovations that benefit both people and the planet.