# H&M Foundation’s Global Change Award backs breakthrough sustainable fashion innovations



In the pursuit of a more sustainable fashion industry, the H&M Foundation has risen to prominence with its Global Change Award (GCA), launched in 2015. This initiative aims to identify and support groundbreaking ideas that can shift the industry's focus towards greater ecological responsibility. Over the past decade, the foundation has invested 10 million euros (approximately $11 million) in 56 innovative projects, aligning its mission closely with the pressing issue of climate change through a dual-focus approach that prioritises both environmental impact and social equity.

Annie Lindmark, the programme director at the H&M Foundation, emphasises the importance of addressing the holistic nature of sustainability. “We often see the holistic perspective being overlooked, resulting in well-meaning solutions that either create new problems or leave people behind,” she noted. This insight informs the foundation’s strategy, which acknowledges the multifaceted nature of sustainability and the need for inclusivity in innovation.

The recently announced winners of the 2025 Global Change Award exemplify this vision through 10 innovative solutions targeting four key categories: responsible production, sustainable materials and processes, mindful consumption, and "wildcards"—the latter aimed at fostering unexpected innovations. Entries came from diverse locations including Sweden, China, Bangladesh, Germany, India, the United Kingdom, and Ghana. The selected innovations range from an industrial heat pump that dramatically reduces energy consumption to a biodegradable dye derived from cyanobacteria.

Among the highlighted winners is DecoRpet from China, which has developed a low-temperature process to purify polyester from mixed textile waste, achieving 99.9% purity for high-quality recycling. This innovation represents a significant step towards tackling the challenge of recycling mixed-composition fabrics and reducing energy use in the process by approximately 30%. Furthermore, the UK’s Thermal Cyclones aims to phase out fossil fuel-powered steam boilers in garment production, offering a cleaner alternative that can cut energy consumption by over 75%.

Another notable initiative is Pulpatronics, which has created a metal-free RFID clothing tag from laser-printed paper. This development not only simplifies the manufacturing process but also significantly reduces electronic waste, addressing a major environmental concern associated with the fashion industry. Meanwhile, CircularFabrics from Germany targets nylon waste with a portable technology capable of recovering high-quality nylon from blended post-consumer textiles, promoting a circular economy within garment production.

A Blunt Story from India has introduced a plastic-free shoe sole made from agricultural waste, plant-based materials, and recycled components, aiming to combat microplastic pollution while enriching the lives of farmers involved in the production process. Similarly, Brilliant Dyes from the UK utilises cyanobacteria to produce non-toxic, biodegradable dyes, promising a substantial reduction in carbon emissions and addressing health issues related to toxic dye runoff.

Emphasising research and development, Decarbonization Lab in Bangladesh seeks to modernise unsustainable textile production practices by creating low-impact treatment and dyeing processes. Renasens from Sweden addresses the simultaneous recycling of cellulose and polyester blends, turning waste into a resource without relying on harmful chemicals or excessive energy use.

Lastly, Loom, a UK-based platform, empowers consumers to connect with designers who can repurpose unwanted clothing, thus promoting a culture of mindful consumption. In Ghana, the Revival Circularity Lab embraces a community-driven approach, transforming textile waste into valuable products and providing artisans with the tools to innovate. This initiative not only addresses environmental challenges but also engages local communities in finding sustainable solutions.

The GCA’s approach, which prioritises early-stage startups and gives them room to experiment without taking equity or intellectual property rights, is particularly noteworthy. Lindmark states, “We’re a philanthropy, so we feel that we’re uniquely positioned to absorb risk,” allowing innovation to flourish in an industry often stifled by traditional business models.

In highlighting both the innovations and the “changemakers” behind them, the Global Change Award reinforces its commitment to a future where the fashion industry can thrive sustainably. As it aims for a net-zero textile industry by 2050, the GCA stands as a beacon for transformative change in an increasingly critical environmental landscape.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1-3, 6-8
2. Paragraphs 4, 5, 9
3. Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5
4. Paragraphs 2, 3, 4
5. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
6. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
7. Paragraphs 1, 4

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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 has announced the top 20 finalists for the 2025 Global Change Award, aiming to accelerate innovation for a net-zero textile industry by 2050. The finalists include initiatives like Loom from the UK, which connects individuals and brands with designers to upcycle unworn clothes into bespoke designs, and The Revival Circularity Lab from Ghana, a community-driven hub transforming textile waste into upcycled products. These innovations address areas such as sustainable materials, responsible production, mindful consumption, and 'wildcards' that support the GCA's mission.
3. <https://www.mynewsdesk.com/hmfoundation/pressreleases/global-change-award-2025-innovating-for-a-netzero-textile-industry-3372982> - The H&M Foundation has launched the 2025 Global Change Award with a mission to accelerate innovation for a net-zero textile industry by 2050. The award seeks innovative ideas addressing high emission areas across the textile industry value chain, including sustainable materials and processes, responsible production, mindful consumption, and 'wildcards' that support the GCA's purpose. Winners will receive €200,000 and participate in a yearlong Changemaker Programme provided by the H&M Foundation in collaboration with Accenture and KTH Royal Institute of Technology.
4. <https://hmgroup.com/news/hm-foundation-launches-global-change-award-to-accelerate-innovation-for-net-zero-textile-industry-by-2050/> - The H&M Foundation has announced a significant shift in its strategic direction, focusing on supporting the textile industry in halving its greenhouse gas emissions every decade by 2050. The Global Change Award (GCA) is now seeking innovative ideas addressing high emission areas across the textile industry value chain, including sustainable materials and processes, responsible production, mindful consumption, and 'wildcards' that support the GCA's purpose. Winners will receive €200,000 and participate in a yearlong Changemaker Programme provided by the H&M Foundation in collaboration with Accenture and KTH Royal Institute of Technology.
5. <https://texfash.com/update/global-change-award-winners-announced-hm-doubles-grant-and-winners> - The H&M Foundation has announced the winners of the 2023 Global Change Award, doubling the grant funding to €2 million. The winners include companies from the UK, Canada, India, Brazil, Kenya, and the US, offering material, recycling, and design innovations. Notable winners include Algreen (UK), focusing on biobased foams, adhesives, and coatings crafted from natural sources, and Nanoloom (UK), developing a powerful high-performance fiber fueled by graphene. These innovations aim to transform the fashion industry towards a more sustainable future.
6. <https://live.hmfoundation.com/2023/06/08/hm-foundation-doubles-gca-grant-and-winners/> - The H&M Foundation has announced the winners of the 2023 Global Change Award, doubling the grant funding to €2 million. The winners include companies from the UK, Canada, India, Brazil, Kenya, and the US, offering material, recycling, and design innovations. Notable winners include Algreen (UK), focusing on biobased foams, adhesives, and coatings crafted from natural sources, and Nanoloom (UK), developing a powerful high-performance fiber fueled by graphene. These innovations aim to transform the fashion industry towards a more sustainable future.
7. <https://hmfoundation.com/gca/about-global-change-award/> - The Global Change Award (GCA) is an innovation challenge initiated by the H&M Foundation, aiming to accelerate early-stage innovation to support the textile industry in halving its greenhouse gas emissions every decade, reaching net-zero by 2050. Since its launch in 2015, 46 innovations have received support and a combined grant of €8 million. Each year, ten winners receive €200,000 and participate in a yearlong Changemaker Programme, equipping them with textile industry knowledge, tools, connections, and a holistic mindset to promote solutions that benefit both people and the planet.