

Student Team Eligibility and Application Procedure

1. Eligibility

- a. State
 - i. There must be at least 2 members in the team.
 - ii. The team must be composed of at least 65% of students.
 - iii. The team must be recognized by a university
 - iv. Student Members (Bachelor, master, doctorate) must collectively control at least 65% of the voting rights to elect the presidency or any other governing body of the team.
- b. Innovation
 - i. The team should provide an innovation which can have an impact on at least one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
 - ii. Some results of the research should be available at the start of the event.

2. Selection process

- a. A maximum of 10 teams will be selected for the 2026 edition of SIC
- b. The teams will have to fill a form in which they will **answer the following questions:**
 - i. Scope of the problem: How does your chosen challenge and solution fit within the current sustainability discussion? What makes this challenge a complex problem? Why hasn't it been solved already? What are the existing solutions and why are they not satisfactory? (Maximum 250 words)
 - ii. Complexity of the problem: Who are the involved stakeholders (individuals, organizations, institutions, communities), and how are they interconnected within the system? What are the causes and consequences of your approach? Demonstrate how your design reflects a holistic and feedback-aware understanding of the system, and how it addresses social equity, access, or inclusion among stakeholders. (Maximum 300 words)
 - iii. Relevance: How does your solution contribute to more sustainable futures at local and global levels? How does it align with one or more UN Sustainable Development Goals and the 2025 Donut Economics model? (Maximum 200 words)
 - iv. Deployment: What resources support the feasibility of the idea? Are you able to identify and use the right means and partnerships to make it viable? Is the project socially,

economically, and technologically feasible? Why are you the right team to realize and implement the solution, what qualities do you bring? (Maximum 250 words)

- c. **Teams will be required to create a short video** (no longer than two minutes) to introduce their team and present their project. The video could include a brief presentation of the team members, followed by a concise overview of the project and, if available, a demonstration of the prototype. High production value is not necessary; a simple, well-filmed video is sufficient. The focus should be on clarity, engagement, and effective communication. The purpose of the video is to clearly convey your project idea, demonstrate your team's dynamic, and show how your work aligns with this year's theme: "What is Sustainable Innovation?"

3. Documentation and intellectual property

- a. The team should provide documentation and evidence on the work done if needed.
- b. All information provided within all materials given into the competition must be factual.
- c. All documents must be handed in before the given deadlines.
- d. The team must be aware of the [Intellectual Property at the EPFL](#).

4. Judging criterias

Note: The following outline presents the criteria for team selection. The exact evaluation criteria and their respective weights for the two stages of the competition will be communicated upon admission.

- a. The following questions on the systemic approach will be judged:
 - i. Does the project clearly map the systemic context (actors, flows, and feedback loops) in which it operates?
 - ii. How well does it identify root causes and leverage points?
 - iii. Does it demonstrate awareness of interconnections, trade-offs, and long-term feedback effects?
- b. The following questions on social benefit will be judged:
 - i. How well does the project contribute to social sustainability and equity within its system?
 - ii. Does the project respect ethical principles and anticipate possible negative social or environmental consequences?
 - iii. How well does it integrate social responsibility into its design and execution?
- c. The following questions on alignment with sustainability will be judged:

- i. How well does the project align with one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the 2025 Donut Economics model?
 - ii. Is the link to sustainability explicit and meaningful?
- d. The following questions on measurable impact will be judged:
 - i. Does the project quantify its expected improvement compared to a baseline?
 - ii. Are results expressed in measurable terms (e.g. % emission reduction, waste minimization, or social gain)?
- e. The following questions on innovation and creativity will be judged:
 - i. How original, inventive, or forward-thinking is the proposed idea compared to existing solutions?
 - ii. Does it introduce a genuinely new perspective, method, or technology that challenges the status quo?
- f. The following questions on feasibility will be judged:
 - i. How realistic is the proposed implementation given current technology, resources, and constraints?
 - ii. Does the team demonstrate a clear understanding of potential barriers and credible strategies to overcome them?
 - iii. Is there a well-structured plan for execution, resource management, and long-term maintenance?
- g. The following questions on the current evolution of the project will be judged:
 - i. Are claims supported by solid data, research, or credible references?
 - ii. Does the proposal show analytical rigor and realistic projections instead of assumptions?