



The Secretary-General

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Contact: Ms. Gitanjali Sah
Tel: +41 22 730 6240
Fax: +41 22 730 6384
Email: wsis-prizes@itu.int

To: All WSIS Stakeholders

- Governments
- Private Sector
- Civil Society
- Academia
- International Organizations

Subject: World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2021 - Call for Submissions

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to announce the launch of the 10th edition of the contest of the WSIS Prizes and call for submissions through the website (www.wsis.org/prizes) by 25 January 2021. The WSIS Prizes 2021 is an exceptional international recognition of WSIS Stakeholders as Winners and Champions for their excellence in supporting the implementation of WSIS outcomes, in particular WSIS Action Lines supporting achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The WSIS Prizes contest was developed in response to requests from the WSIS stakeholders to create an effective mechanism to evaluate projects and activities that leverage the power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to advance sustainable development. Since inception, the contest of WSIS Prizes has attracted hundreds of thousands of stakeholders.

Following the outcomes of the United Nations General Assembly Overall Review on WSIS ([Res. A/70/125](#)) that called for a close alignment between the WSIS Process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([Res. A/70/1](#)), the WSIS Prizes is the unique global platform to identify and showcase success stories in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs.

[The United Nations Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\) Resolution 2020/12](#) on *Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society* reiterates the importance of sharing best practices at the global level, and, encourages all stakeholders to nominate their projects for the annual WSIS Prizes as an integral part of the WSIS Stocktaking process (www.wsis.org/stocktaking).

Based on constructive recommendations and input received from the WSIS stakeholders, we are introducing innovations to further improve the contest highlighting social, economic, and environmental impact of the submitted projects.

The eighteen Winners and Champions will be recognized at the [WSIS Forum 2021](#). The winning projects will be showcased in the WSIS Stocktaking: Success Stories 2021 publication, while all submitted descriptions of projects and activities will be reflected in the WSIS Stocktaking Report 2021. I invite all WSIS Stakeholders to participate in the contest of WSIS Prizes 2021 that is organized in five phases (see Annex 1), following the Rules and Guidelines (see Annex 2).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Houlin Zhao' in Chinese characters.

Houlin Zhao

Annex 1: The Contest of WSIS Prizes 2021

FIVE PHASES OF THE CONTEST

1. The first phase: Submission phase
5 November 2020 – 25 January 2021 (Deadline for last submission: 23:00 Geneva time)
2. The second phase: Nomination Phase. Revision of submitted projects that will result with a list of 360 nominated projects, twenty (20) projects per Action Line Category (18)
1 February – 26 February 2021 (twenty projects per each category will be nominated)
3. The third phase: Public online voting (identification of five projects per category with the highest number of votes)
1 March – 31 March 2021 (Deadline for casting last vote: 23:00 Geneva time)
4. The fourth phase: Selection of winning projects by the ITU Expert Group that will result with a list of winning projects
1 April – 12 April 2021
5. The fifth phase: Announcement of winners to the public during WSIS Prize 2021 Ceremony at WSIS Forum 2021, and the release of publication “WSIS Stocktaking: Success Stories 2021”, which is a compilation of extended descriptions of the 18 winning projects and 72 champion projects.

THE FIRST PHASE: Submission Phase

Phase one will open the call for submissions to the contest of the WSIS Prize 2021 at www.wsis.org/prizes. During the period from **1 November until 25 January 2021**, all stakeholders are invited to submit WSIS related projects to the WSIS Prize 2020 contest. In order to process the submission, stakeholders are requested to complete the submission form online at www.wsis.org/prizes.

The contest is open to all stakeholders, entities representing governments, private sector, international and regional institutions, civil society, and academia. No more than one project from the same entity is allowed to be submitted per category. Stakeholders are invited to consult the rules for project submission and nomination criteria at the WSIS Prizes website. All WSIS Stakeholders are encouraged to submit ICT projects for which they believe should be recognized and promoted, and for which they do not necessary hold ownership of.

THE SECOND PHASE: Nomination Phase. Review of Submitted Projects by the Expert Group

During phase two, the projects are being reviewed based on the rules for project submission and nomination criteria. The outcome of this phase will be a list of nominated projects (twenty projects per category) that will be announced to the public on **1 March 2021**. The Expert Group consists of professionals working on the implementation of WSIS outcomes. The decisions of the Expert Group are final and without appeal.

All nominated projects will also be part of the WSIS Stocktaking Report 2021. Please see the WSIS Stocktaking Report series at ITU Bookshop.

THE THIRD PHASE: Public Online Voting

Phase three will provide an online mechanism for all WSIS stakeholders to participate in the contest of WSIS Prize 2021. The list of nominated projects will be publicly announced on 1 March 2021 and WSIS multi-stakeholder community will be invited to participate and cast its votes at www.wsis.org/prizes.

The deadline for voting is **31 March 2021** (Deadline for casting last vote: 23:00 CEST). Voting process will result in identifying five projects with the highest number of appreciations/votes given for project descriptions by WSIS stakeholders. Voters are encouraged to read through the descriptions of projects carefully and cast votes considering social, economic, and environmental impact. The rules for voting should be strictly respected. They are available online at www.wsis.org/prizes.

THE FOURTH PHASE: Selection of Winning Projects

During phase four (**1 - 12 April 2021**), the Expert Group will make in-depth analyses of five most voted projects per category and will select one winning project per category, taking into account scale and impact of the project on the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and its contribution to the sustainable development. The outcome of this phase will be the list of eighteen winning projects that will be publicly announced during the WSIS Forum 2021 only. Decisions of the Expert Group are final and without appeal. Focal points of the winning projects will be contacted immediately after their selection. Please note that while the entities of the winning projects will be entitled as “Winners”, the four runners-up in each of the WSIS Action Line category will be entitled as “Champions”. Both Winners and Champions will be announced and promoted as Champion until the Winners announcement during the WSIS Prizes 2021 Ceremony.

THE FIFTH PHASE: Public Announcement of the Winners during WSIS Prize 2021 Ceremony at WSIS Forum 2021

During the phase five the winning projects will be announced officially during the Prize Ceremony, which will be held at the **WSIS Forum 2021**. Extended descriptions of the winning projects will constitute the basis for the ITU e-publication entitled “WSIS Stocktaking: Success Stories 2021” (please see the WSIS Stocktaking: Success Stories series at ITU Bookshop).

For more information regarding previous contests of WSIS Prizes, you are kindly invited to visit www.wsis.org/prizes portal. Please, contact the WSIS Team at wsis-prizes@itu.int for any further questions or need for assistance.

Annex 2: WSIS Prizes 2021 Rules and Guidelines (Submission, Nomination and Voting Phases)

SUBMISSION PHASE CRITERIA

1. All projects must be submitted through the online questionnaire.
2. For each project submission only one category should be selected, out of 18 categories.
3. One project per entity can be submitted per each category.
4. The same project may not be submitted twice.
5. All details requested in the questionnaire should be completed strictly respecting the type of stakeholder and the structure of the submission template. The incomplete submissions will not be accepted. Minimum number of words requested should be respected as requested in questionnaire.
6. All projects submitted to this competition should cover work that is completed or at the end of a major phase to provide evidence of results and its social, economic, and environmental impact.
7. The Short Description of the project will require minimum 150 words and maximum 200 words and this will be crucial information presented to the public online voting. Be advised to structure the Short Description of the project to reflect relevant, clear, and attractive information to voters, highlighting ICT component and impact.
8. Besides short description of the project, the Submission Form will also request the following information in separate boxes:
 - Provide examples of linkages between the WSIS Action Line the project has with each of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) it helps advance
 - Describe qualitative and quantitative economic, social, and environmental impact of the project
 - Highlight the project's partnership activities
 - List main challenges and project's future perspectives
9. The project submission deadline should be strictly respected. Late submissions will not be accepted.
10. Projects should be submitted in English only.
11. Winning projects of previous WSIS Prizes contests are not eligible to participate in the contest.

NOMINATION PHASE CRITERIA

1. The submission should be complied with rules for project submission. The requested information in the template should respond to all questions and provide detailed information on the goals, timeframe, project's added value and importance, results, and challenges. Minimum number of words requested should be respected as requested in the questionnaire.
2. It should highlight the relevance of the project to the respective WSIS Action Line as referenced in the Geneva Plan of Action.
3. The project description should clearly demonstrate the following:

- the results achieved and impact generated
- community empowerment
- relevance to SDGs
- ability of the model to be replicated
- sustainability of project
- partnerships development
- promotion of WSIS values in the Society

VOTING PHASE CRITERIA

1. The first five most voted projects are selected based on the appreciation/voting of projects by WSIS stakeholders representing WSIS online network. The stakeholders are invited to appreciate/vote for projects in all 18 categories.
2. Only registered members of the WSIS Stocktaking Platform with requested complete information may vote for/appreciate a project. The information should contain organization details: name, type, country, and user details (username and e-mail)
3. Entities are not allowed to vote for/appreciate their own project
4. Votes/appreciations of all registered stakeholders are weighted equally
5. Each registered stakeholder may only vote for/appreciate one project in each category
6. Voters are encouraged but not required to cast votes for one project in each of categories
7. Focal points of the submitted projects will be notified of the voting results progression at the end of each voting week
8. WSIS Stocktaking reserves the right to use the entity (organization) details submitted by stakeholders