The INNO-vation Program



Generation Award
FY2026 Application Guidelines

Organized by: UPDATE EARTH Foundation
Secretariat: KADOKAWA ASCII Research Laboratories, Inc.

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I. A Message from the UPDATE EARTH Foundation

Following on from last year, the UPDATE EARTH Foundation is pleased to host the INNO-vation Generation Award. Carrying forward the spirit of the INNO-vation Program, which ran for ten years from FY2014 to FY2023 as an initiative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the award has been reborn as a joint public–private program. This year marks a milestone: the 10th edition of the award.

The INNO-vation Program has long worked toward a society that gives rise to disruptive innovation, supporting people who boldly take on wildly imaginative and ambitious technological challenges without fear of failure.

In FY2017, the program launched the Generation Award, a category in which partner companies recognize outstanding proposals. Since then, it has steadily broadened its reach, attracting more than 20,000 applications and doing much to foster a culture that embraces the challenge of disruptive innovation.

Together with the partner companies and network hubs that have joined us over the years, we will stay true to the INNO-vation philosophy of "taking on challenges without fear of failure" as we hold this award to discover new unconventional talent from all over Japan.

At a time when the world is undergoing great change and transformation, the UPDATE EARTH Foundation plans to pursue a wide range of initiatives to update the world through the power of innovation. As the award reaches its 10th edition, the public and private sectors are joining forces to expand the program, so that taking on this challenge can become a real opportunity to open up new worlds. Let's shape a new future together.

II. Generation Award

1 What We're Looking For

We welcome a wide range of submissions, from small ideas to fully developed technologies and products, with awards presented by partner companies that champion unconventional talent. This year's Generation Award is open to entries of any kind—whether it's "a small idea or technology," "a business, research project, or product you're already working on," or "a business idea." We look forward to your entries, and hope the Generation Award becomes a springboard for your work to connect with a diverse range of partner companies and grow even further.

(Last year: Corporate Special Awards were presented by partner companies, with 43 nominations in total.)

- Before applying, be sure to read Section 11, "Important Notes for Applicants."
- Award-winning proposals will be given the opportunity to work with partner companies toward implementation and realization.

2 Who Can Apply

- No age limit. Open to anyone on Earth who can be contacted individually

(regardless of nationality or place of residence).

- Applying yourself: individuals, groups, or corporations
- Nominating someone else*: individuals, groups, or corporations around you whom you would like to recommend

  * Nominators' information will not be disclosed to nominees.

3 Application Period

Monday, October 26, 2026 – Sunday, January 31, 2027, 11:59 p.m. (JST)

4 How to Apply

Please apply using the application form on the official website.
For details, see the "How to Apply" section of the website.
https://inno-vation.jp/

5 Schedule

Application period	Monday, October 26, 2026 – Sunday, January 31, 2027, 11:59 p.m. (JST)
Selection by partner companies	Early to late February 2027 (planned)
Announcement of winners (including nominees)	Early March 2027 on the official website (planned)

* The award ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday, March 17, 2027.
Further details will be announced on the website once confirmed.

6 Awards

Nominees for the Generation Award will be selected from among all submissions, and partner companies will then choose award winners from among the nominees. Each Corporate Special Award comes with an additional prize of the presenting company's own choosing.

Corporate Special Awards Presented by partner companies that champion unconventional talent!
• Proposals that a partner company sees as a good match for its business • Ideas that haven't taken shape yet—the kind that make you wonder why no one thought of them before • Businesses, research projects, or products you're already working on …and much more. Entries of any kind are welcome—we look forward to your proposal!

The organizer may also present a special award to proposals such as the following.

We plan to recognize proposals that go beyond “the five senses of animals” or “the four dimensions of space-time.”
Examples: “Isn't this amazing?!” “Look, look—I discovered something!” “I made this!” “Bet you didn't see that coming!” “Oh, how handy!” “Delivering deliciousness!” “Sharing something newly seen!” “Sharing something newly heard!” “Sharing the sense of touch!” “Delivering fun!” “Communicating through scent!” “Conveying affection!” “I made it this small—or this light!” “Opening up a new era in space!” “Truly connecting with others—anywhere, anyone, anytime, while staying safe and keeping distance!” …and much more. Beyond the examples above, we look forward to your free-thinking ideas!

7 What to Submit

Please enter the following information using the application form on the official website.

- Proposal title (up to 100 characters)
- Proposal summary (up to 1200 characters of text, or a video, documents, etc.)

8 Matching with Partner Companies

If a partner company finds a proposal it would like to be matched with during the Generation Award selection process, it will notify the Secretariat after selection is complete. The Secretariat will then contact the applicant, and if the applicant wishes to proceed, the company and the applicant will be matched.

9 Selection and Announcement of Results

After the Secretariat checks that submissions meet the formal requirements, partner companies of the INNO-vation Program will carry out the selection. Proposals are evaluated solely on their content (gender, age, background, and track record are not considered). Once selection is complete, the names, prefecture or region of residence, and proposal titles of nominees and award winners will be published on the official website.

Please note that applicants who are not selected will not be contacted individually.

10 Handling of Personal Information

“Personal information” refers to addresses, names, telephone numbers, email addresses, and any other information that can identify a specific individual (including information that can easily be cross-referenced with other information to identify a specific individual).

Personal information provided when applying will be handled in accordance with the Privacy Policy of the UPDATE EARTH Foundation, the organizer of the INNO-vation Program.

(1) Purposes of use of personal information

(a) Notifications regarding award nominations and awards
(b) Confirmation of and responses to inquiries
(c) Communications about projects and events related to or affiliated with this program

(2) Management of personal information provided with applications
(a) Strict security measures will be taken to prevent unauthorized access, loss, leakage, and falsification.
(b) Data encryption technology is used to protect your information in transit when you enter personal details.
(c) Except as required by law, personal information obtained by the organizer in connection with applications will not be used for any purpose other than those stated above without the prior consent of the person who provided it.

[Contact for Inquiries Regarding Personal Information]
Organizer: UPDATE EARTH Foundation
Email: info@update-earth.com

◆ The organizer's Privacy Policy is available at:
URL: https://updateearth-foundation.org/privacy_en.html

11 Important Notes for Applicants (Please Read Carefully)

1 Application Requirements and Handling of Intellectual Property

The handling of intellectual property and related matters for the Generation Award within the INNO-vation Program is set out below.

To apply for the Generation Award, applicants must also meet and agree to all of the following requirements.

(1) At the time of application
(a) From the standpoint of security export control*, there must be no issues with any of the following:
- The applicant does not appear on the End User List published by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) or similar lists.
- The proposal is consistent with what has been agreed under the international export control regimes.
- Activities can be carried out in accordance with METI's Guidance on the Management of Sensitive Technologies for Security Export Control.
- Social credibility and freedom are ensured, with no risk of violating the rules of a market economy, including the fair and equitable trading of intellectual property rights.

(Reference)
- Security Export Control (including the international export control regimes) https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/anpo/link.html
- End User List https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/anpo/20221104-3.pdf
- Guidance on the Management of Sensitive Technologies for Security Export Control

https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/anpo/daigaku/guidance5.pdf

(b) The proposal does not fall under the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act, so that there is no risk of it reaching parties that may engage in activities of concern such as military diversion, including developers of weapons of mass destruction and terrorist groups.

(c) The applicant has no involvement with anti-social forces or anyone associated with them.

(d) Because this category is run primarily by the partner companies, any patents or other intellectual property rights arising for applicants within this category belong to the applicants themselves.

(e) Application details will be disclosed to partner companies. If you wish to keep the content completely confidential, please do not apply.

* Here, "the standpoint of security export control" refers to preventing weapons, as well as goods, technologies, and intellectual property that could be diverted for military use, from reaching states, terrorists, or other parties that may engage in activities of concern and threaten the security of Japan and the international community.

(2) After application

(a) Any award-winning proposal found to be subject to export controls under the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act will be disqualified.

(b) If an award winner is a minor, the consent of a parent or guardian is required. The Secretariat will provide support if coordination with the parent or guardian is needed to obtain this consent.

2 Confidentiality

Please note that participants in the Generation Award of the INNO-vation Program are subject to the following confidentiality provisions.

(1) Confidentiality of proposals through the Generation Award selection

Except for the information specified in Section 9, "Selection and Announcement of Results," no information about proposals—including information related to their evaluation—will be disclosed under any circumstances.

(2) Confidentiality obligations of award winners

Award winners may not disclose confidential information about companies or other parties obtained through this program to any third party, or use it for any purpose unrelated to this program.

3 Protection of Human Rights and Compliance with Laws and Regulations

When participating in the INNO-vation Program, please note that laws and regulations set by the relevant government ministries—particularly those concerning life science proposals—may have been revised, so be sure to check the latest versions. Other laws and regulations may also apply depending on the content of your proposal. Selection results may be revoked if any relevant laws, regulations, or guidelines are violated.

For details on bioethics and safety from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), please refer to the website below.

- Life Science Square: "Initiatives on Bioethics and Safety" (in Japanese)
  https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/lifescience/bioethics/mext_02626.html

4 Requirements for Passing Selection

To pass the selection, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Willingness to actively participate in meetings, networking events, and other gatherings related to this program after receiving an award.
- If you belong to a company or other organization, the ability to submit a letter of consent from your organization upon receiving an award. The Secretariat will provide support if coordination with your organization is needed to submit this letter.
- Agreement that, if you are selected as a nominee or award winner, your name (a nickname is acceptable), prefecture or region of residence, and proposal title will be published on the official website.
- Being the originator, or originating group, of the proposal.
- Rights to the application content (including any additional materials) will be managed as belonging to the applicant(s). However, as it cannot be ruled out that the partner companies conducting the selection may already be exploring similar ideas, technologies, or challenges, please do not apply if you wish to keep your proposal completely confidential.

5 Notes on Selection and Related Matters

(1) Originality of applications and technology development

Plagiarism or infringement of third-party ideas and intellectual property is strictly prohibited at all times in connection with this program. Please be aware that great care must be taken to avoid such plagiarism or infringement from the application stage onward.

(2) Handling of misconduct

In this program, “misconduct” refers to any act that violates general laws or ordinances.

(3) Obligation to cooperate with post-award surveys

Award winners may be asked to take part in follow-up surveys on their current status after the award. We ask all award winners to cooperate with these surveys.

(4) Award administration

- The Secretariat will not disclose personal information without the applicant's permission.
- Applicants may not negotiate with partner companies, either directly or indirectly (e.g., via the Secretariat), through this program.
- After the Generation Award selection, partner companies may continue to view applicants' proposals, even after the winners have been announced.

12 Contact Information

INNO-vation Program Secretariat
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Email: inno@lab-kadokawa.com