**Blue Sky Young Researchers Innovation Awards**

**for the Global Forest Products Sector**

**2024-2025**

**The Idea**

The Blue Sky Young Researchers Innovation Awards is a global competition for students and young researchers who are passionate about a range of activities relevant to forest-based science, products using forest-based raw materials, process improvements, or other innovations throughout the forest sector value chain.

The Blue Sky Young Researchers Innovation Awards are not just about research and development – they are also about showcasing the work of students and early-career researching professionals who are passionate about climate positive forestry and forest products, clean manufacturing, and the forest bioeconomy.

Taking place every two years and sponsored by the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA), the Blue Sky Young Researchers Innovation Awards are presented to three worthy recipients from around the world. The three winners will have the opportunity to share their projects at the ICFPA CEO Global Roundtable in May 2025 in New York City, United States (specific location and date to be confirmed by late 2024).

**Eligibility**

Applicants must be students or researchers who are 30 years old or younger on 19th September 2024. Applicants must be carrying out research and innovation projects relevant for forestry, forest products, and/or forest products processing technologies – with links to academia, public or private research centers, and/or corporate research and innovation departments.

**Theme: Time for the forest-based sector to showcase its innovative solutions for conservation, forest management, restoration and wood bioindustry**

To carry out research work that promotes innovation and decarbonization in the forest products sector either in the forest, at production facilities, along the supply chain, or via product innovation, some of the topics related can be (but are not limited to):

* Artificial intelligence
* Social and inclusive innovations (better life for people and natural resources)
* Efficiency improvements in using resources
* Faster restoration techniques
* Forest tree breeding and biotechnology
* Precision forestry, measurements and inventory
* Bioproducts and wood chemistry , material substitution with wood
* Facilities, instrument and process control
* Recycling, de-inking and environment (circular economy)
* Analysis and properties of pulp and paper, panels and energy-products
* Timber for construction (mass timber, CLT, etc.)

**Regional Competitions and the International Awards**

* Each ICFPA member organization[[1]](#footnote-2) will be asked to run their own regional/national competition and will advance up to 2 candidates to compete internationally.
* Applicants advancing to the international competition will be requested to submit a short video describing their project.
* Three submissions will be shortlisted by an international judging panel to receive the international awards.
* Travel and accommodation expenses for the three international finalists will be covered to present at the ICFPA CEO Roundtable in May 2025 in New York City, United States.

**Schedule**

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| **PERIOD** | **ACTION** |
| September 2024 | Announcement and Call for Applications in Country Regions |
| By 19 December 2024 | Regional Evaluation of Applications (Short List) and Regional Award |
| By 20 December 2024 | Global Pre-Selection (2 Candidates per Country/Region Advance to International Judging Round) |
| 20 December 2024 to 07 February 2025 | International Judging and Global Final Selection |
| By 14 February 2025 | Country Regions notified of international finalists |
| 5 or 6 May 2025 (TBD) | Presentations And International Awards – CEO Roundtable: New York City, USA |

**Application**

Applicants are invited to submit their application containing the following documents:

* + Short CV (maximum one page)
  + Summary of the project, including:
    - 550 words; double spacing; font Calibri 12
    - Objectives
    - Description of the project
    - Summary of Methodology
    - Expected results
    - Why is it relevant for the forest products industries
    - What makes it innovative
    - How is it fitting with the selected theme
    - Direct and indirect links to each of the [UN SDGs](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300)
  + Please disclose whether, and to what extent, applicant used artificial intelligence to develop this project or prepare this application
  + One letter of support

Applications and deadlines for national award selection will be defined by local/regional associations. Please contact your association should you require any additional information.

For general information, please contact insert regional email.

**Evaluation**

A jury composed by industry representatives and well-respected researchers will evaluate the finalists both in regional and international level, based on evaluation form with pre-defined premises.

1. <https://icfpa.org/who-we-are/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)