

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION PITCH COMPETITION **- Call for Croatian Start-ups and Scale-ups**

The Croatian Chamber of Economy (HGK) is delighted to invite the Croatian Startup Community to join the 2nd edition of the **PITCH COMPETITION for Croatian Start-up and Scale-up companies working in the field of sustainable innovation, and present projects at the „Support Sustainability 2026“ conference.**

Eligible to apply are all Start-up and Scale-up companies developing **sustainable innovative technological, product or service solutions** in the areas of renewable energy, recycling and reuse, circular design and production, waste disposal, water and marine, biodiversity and ecosystems, pollution, sustainable agriculture, mobility, climate, and built environment/construction.

Pre-selected six best projects from the “Sustainable Start-up” and the “Sustainable Scale-up” categories will have the opportunity to **present live at the PITCH COMPETITION** at the **“Support Sustainability 2026” conference on September 10** in Zagreb (Lauba). Competition finalists will be able to win valuable awards, gain media visibility, and receive comments and suggestions for increasing investment readiness from an expert jury made up of foreign and domestic investment experts.

This year, **all six finalists will win the prize of a study visit in Sweden**, consisting of organized meetings with Swedish investors, potential partners and the local Start-up community. Return airfare and hotel accommodation during the study visit will be covered for 1 representative of each finalist.

Winners in the categories “Sustainability Start-up Champion” and “Sustainability Scale-up Champion” announced at the PITCH COMPETITION will each receive the following rewards:

- A financial award of 5.000 EUR (net).
- A study visit to Sweden (return airfare and hotel accommodation during the study visit will be covered for 1 representative).
- Investment readiness suggestions for improvement and an opportunity for additional access to financing their projects through the expert jury's network of contacts and specialized ESG Project Funds.

Who can apply:

- All Sustainable/CleanTech technological, product or service solutions are welcome, within the themes of renewable energy, recycling and reuse, circular design and production, waste disposal, water and marine, biodiversity and ecosystems, pollution, sustainable agriculture, mobility, climate, and built environment/construction.
- Open to Croatian companies in their Start-up and Scale-up phase of development (pre-revenue, breakeven and post-revenue) that have so far

received less than 5 million EUR total investment. Preferable Technology Readiness Level is TRL 5 – TRL 8, but we will consider other maturity levels.

Pre-Selection Criteria:

The Advisory Board will use the following criteria to assess your company's and project's investment readiness:

- Is there clarity about the stage of growth of the business and the level of funding being sought?
- Is this a viable, sustainable, innovative and defensible technology/product/service which is scalable and responds to market demand?
- Is there a commercially viable business model and plan?
- Is the team ready and capable of developing this project as a viable business?
- Is this project/business likely to contribute to the sustainable economy i.e. make a difference to energy/waste/buildings/carbon reduction etc. for the broader benefits of society? We are looking for a clear demonstration of environmental impact.

Criteria for Success:

Your application to the PITCH COMPETITION will stand out if your solution directly contributes to meeting climate targets, whether it's through lowering energy consumption, reducing transportation emissions, or developing climate resilience.

If selected, you will be required to:

- Send a Pitch Deck in English (max. 10 slides) by **September 1, 2026**, to esg@hgk.hr
- Attend a PITCH COMPETITION and pitch in English (5 minutes) in front of the Investment Jury Board and audience at the "Support Sustainability 2026" conference held in Zagreb (Lauba) on **September 10, 2026** (*time schedule TBC*). Q&A with the Investment Jury Board will take place after the pitch (5 minutes).

Apply Here:

Please fill out the [application form for the PITCH COMPETITION in English](#) with details about your Start-up/Scale-up and the innovative solution you are proposing.

Application Deadline: Friday, July 31, 2026 (23:59 CET). We encourage you to apply earlier if possible.

Timeline overview:

- **May 25, 2026** – Launch: PITCH COMPETITION Call
- **July 31, 2026** – Application deadline (23:59 CET)
- **August 25, 2026** – Decisions for pre-selected best projects
- **September 1, 2026** – Pitch Deck submission deadline (23:59 CET)
- **September 10, 2026** – PITCH COMPETITION at the "Support Sustainability 2026" conference & awards

For inquiries, please contact:

Croatian Chamber of Economy

Sector for Energy and Sustainable Development

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With this project, the Croatian Chamber of Economy supports Croatian innovators in sustainability.

Apply for this competition and, with our support, ensure the international success of your start-up/scale-up company!

