

The 1st Global StorageVersity & AI Innovation Challenge

AI • Multi-Storage • Intelligent Infrastructure • System Integration

Organised By



Powered By



Program Framework & Guidelines

Strategical Partners



The 1st Global StorageVersity & AI Innovation Challenge 2026

Accelerating Storage Convergence for Intelligent Energy Systems #TogetherWeAreStronger

Organised by: CBC StorageVersity & AI Hub

Powered by: ACWA

Strategic Partners: SNEC • NEIAAP • APVIA • GNEEC • GCMEN

Opening of Global Submissions:

SNEC PV+, ES+, H2+ | Shanghai, China | June 2026

Submission Period:

16 June - 15 August 2026

 www.StorageVersity.com

 **Online Submission Form:** https://acwanet.acwapower.com/active_campaigns_details/79

Global Awards Ceremony:

ACWA Innovation Days China 2026 | October 2026

1. About the Challenge

The global energy transformation is entering a new phase.

The challenge is no longer only deploying renewable energy and isolated storage technologies. The next transformation requires **intelligent energy systems** integrating multiple storage technologies, artificial intelligence, infrastructure and real demand.

Today, storage ecosystems remain fragmented:

- Battery, hydrogen, thermal, mechanical and pumped hydro storage ecosystems often evolve independently
- AI remains underutilised at system orchestration level
- Technology providers, infrastructure players, investors and end-users frequently operate separately
- Few global initiatives focus on **storage convergence, intelligent systems and real deployment pathways**



The **Global StorageVersity & AI Innovation Challenge** was created to address this gap.

The initiative aims to accelerate:

Storage Convergence + AI + Infrastructure + Ecosystem Collaboration + Scale-Up

moving from:

Technologies → Systems → Pilots → Industrial Deployment → Global Scaling

Unlike traditional awards focused primarily on recognition, the initiative is designed as an **innovation sourcing, ecosystem development and scale-up platform**, identifying technologies, startups, integrated systems and future partners that could potentially contribute to pilot projects, strategic collaborations and large-scale deployment.

The Challenge brings together:

Technology Providers • Manufacturers • Academia • Research Institutes • Startups • Utilities • Infrastructure Players • Investors • Strategic Industry Partners

2. Global Award Categories

The first edition is intentionally designed to remain highly selective and prestigious, structured around **two main tracks** and a limited number of global awards.

Category A — Technology & Innovation Track

Focus: Technologies, components, AI and innovation



A.1. Storage & AI Innovation Award

Purpose

Recognising breakthrough technologies accelerating intelligent storage ecosystems and future infrastructure systems.

Who can apply?

- Storage manufacturers
- Technology providers
- Universities
- Research institutes
- Applied R&D centres
- Academia-industry consortiums
- Innovation teams

Examples

Battery systems • Hydrogen storage • Thermal storage • Long-duration storage • AI optimisation • EMS • Digital Twins • Predictive analytics • Software • Intelligent control systems

Evaluation Criteria

Innovation & differentiation – 25%
Technology maturity – 15%
Scalability potential – 15%
AI & digital integration – 15%
Infrastructure relevance – 10%
Potential deployment impact – 10%
Strategic scale-up potential – 10%

Why is it unique?

Unlike conventional awards separating technologies, this category promotes **cross-storage convergence and AI integration**, encouraging collaboration across storage ecosystems.



A.2. Breakthrough Startup Award

Purpose

Recognising emerging companies shaping the future of intelligent storage and energy infrastructure.

Who can apply?

- Startups
- Scaleups
- Spin-offs
- University ventures
- Innovation teams

Evaluation Criteria

Innovation – 20%
Business model – 20%

Growth potential – 20%
Execution capability – 15%
Fundability – 15%
Deployment readiness – 10%

Scale-Up Pathway

Selected participants may gain access to:

- Strategic industry partners
- Investors and ecosystem partners
- Pilot opportunities
- Collaboration and co-development pathways
- Potential future deployment discussions

Category B – Systems & Infrastructure Track

Focus: Integrated systems, deployments and infrastructure



B.1. Integrated Energy Systems Award

Purpose

Recognising intelligent integrated systems and infrastructure architectures.

Who can apply?

- EPC companies
- Utilities
- System integrators
- Developers
- Consortia
- Infrastructure operators
- Industrial players

Examples

Battery + Hydrogen + Thermal integration • Smart campuses • Utilities • Ports • Industrial systems • Data centers • Microgrids • Infrastructure ecosystems

Evaluation Criteria

System integration – 25%
Infrastructure relevance – 20%
Replication potential – 15%
Commercial readiness – 15%
Scalability – 15%
Strategic deployment potential – 10%

Why is it unique?

Most awards focus on technologies or equipment. This category recognises **complete intelligent energy systems**.



B.2. Commercial & Distributed Storage Award

Purpose

Recognising deployment of storage solutions across distributed environments.

Who can apply?

- Manufacturers
- Developers
- Installers
- Aggregators

- Utilities
- C&I players
- Hospitality operators

Examples

Residential storage • Commercial & Industrial systems • Hospitality applications • Golf resorts • Behind-the-meter systems • Distributed energy systems • Microgrids

Evaluation Criteria

Deployment impact – 25%

Business value – 20%

User impact – 15%

Scalability – 15%

Innovation – 15%

Replication potential – 10%

Why is it unique?

This category reflects one of the fastest-growing storage markets globally and bridges innovation with real deployment.



Global StorageVersity & AI Grand Prix

Awarded to the overall winner demonstrating outstanding:

Innovation • Deployment Potential • Scalability • Ecosystem Impact • Strategic Value

Open to all four finalists from both categories

3. What Makes This Challenge Unique Globally?

Unlike traditional competitions, the initiative combines:

Multi-Storage Convergence

Battery + Hydrogen + Thermal + Long Duration + Distributed Storage

AI & Digital Intelligence

AI optimisation • Digital Twins • Predictive systems • EMS • Intelligent control systems

Infrastructure Integration

Industry • Utilities • Hospitality • Data Centers • Smart Infrastructure • Mobility

Ecosystem Integration

Technology + Demand + Capital

Industry Partnership & Scale-Up Orientation

The initiative is designed not only to recognise innovation but to identify future technologies, partners and integrated systems with potential for pilot implementation, strategic collaboration and future large-scale deployment.

4. From Awards To Real Projects

The Challenge is directly connected to the **ACWA** and the **CBC StorageVersity & AI Hub execution platform**.

As one of the world's leading infrastructure developers, investors and operators across power, water, desalination and energy transition projects, ACWA is actively deploying large-scale infrastructure globally and plays a leading role in accelerating the energy transformation. Through its innovation activities, ACWA continuously explores emerging technologies, future partners and scalable solutions supporting next-generation infrastructure systems.

The Challenge therefore aims not only to recognise innovation, but also to identify technologies, startups, integrated systems and future partners with potential for **pilot implementation, strategic collaboration and future large-scale deployment**.

Selected projects may gain access to opportunities including:

- Pilot and demonstration projects
- Investor engagement and project structuring
- Strategic partnerships and co-development opportunities
- International deployment pathways through the CBC ecosystem

From innovation → to partnerships → to deployment → to global scaling

5. Timeline

03 June 2026

Opening of Global Submissions
SNEC PV+, ES+, H2+ | Shanghai, China

03 June – 31 July 2026

Submission Phase

02 August – 05 September 2026

Jury Evaluation • Ecosystem Activities • Partner Engagement

October 2026

Global Awards Ceremony at ACWA Innovation Days China 2026

6. Long Term Vision

The Global StorageVersity & AI Innovation Challenge aims to evolve beyond an awards programme into a global platform supporting:

Intelligence • Innovation • Deployment • Investment

accelerating intelligent energy systems worldwide.

From Storage Convergence → to Intelligent Infrastructure → to Global Impact

#TogetherWeAreStronger

7. The Jury Leadership

Honorary Chairs

- **(CleanTech Ecosystem)** Prof. Eicke R. Weber, Former Director, Fraunhofer ISE, Freiburg; Professor Emeritus, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, UC Berkeley; CBC Chair of R&D, Manufacturing & Supply Chain Hub; Chair of the World CleanTech Awards & Honorary Chairman of the World CleanTech StartUPS Awards
- **(AI Ecosystem)** Dr. Jose Miguel Zaldo, President and Founder, Unal 3000 Asociados; Honorary Consul of Morocco in the Basque Country, Spain; CBC Honorary Chair for Morocco

Chair

- **(Overall)** Thomas Altmann, Executive Vice President - Innovation & New Technology, ACWA Power; CBC Chair of Clean Water Hub; Co-Chair of the World CleanTech StartUPS Awards

Co-Chairs

- **(Strategic Partner)** Mi Yue, Founder of SNEC and GNEEC (Global New Energies Empowerment Center), Executive Vice Chairman & Secretary-General at NEIAAP (New Energy Industry Association for Asia and the Pacific); CBC Co-Chair for Asia
- **(Manufacturing Ecosystem)** Dr. Rashi Gupta "Batterywali", Managing Director, Vision Mechatronics; CBC Chair of StorageVersity & AI Hub & Chair of #WoMen4CleanTech Initiative
- **(Downstream Ecosystem)** Rami Fedda, Co-Founder & Supply Director, Solar Juice Pty; CBC Chair for Australia & Oceania

#TogetherWeAreStronger #在一起我们更强大 #معًا نحن أقوى

