



Challenge Overview

Cambridge Edge AI Innovation for Sustainability Challenge 2026

Hosted by



MICROIP

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**ARCULUS
SYSTEM**

In partnership with the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership

Thank you for registering your interest.

A new phase of artificial intelligence (AI) is emerging, marked by a shift from centralised computation to collaboration across distributed edge systems. The central question of this challenge is:

When every node must keep its own raw data, and compute and energy resources are limited, can a system nonetheless – by exchanging the knowledge it has learnt – produce a collective intelligence that surpasses the capability of any single node while upholding sustainability values?

This challenge invites you to redefine the boundaries of distributed cognition under real-world constraints – helping shape the resilient, energy-efficient edge ecosystems of tomorrow.

Key dates

Stage	Date	Details
Submissions open	July 2026	Online submission platform opens, entries accepted (you will be notified by email when the platform opens)
Submission deadline	24 August 2026 23:59 BST	Submission platform closes; judging begins immediately
Preliminary judging	24 August 2026 to mid-September	Judging panel reviews submissions and ranks teams to select those advancing
Semi-finalists announced	mid-September 2026	Top 8 teams are announced and advance to the semi-final

Stage	Date	Details
Semi-final on-site presentation	28 September 2026	Semi-finalists present in person at the University of Cambridge ; judges select 3 finalists
Final (on-site) and prize award	29 September 2026	3 finalist teams give a final presentation and Q&A with a panel of judges comprising leaders across academia, industry and finance; prize award ceremony takes place

Entry requirements

We welcome individuals, groups, and multidisciplinary teams with at least one researcher, postdoctoral researcher from a UK university or student currently enrolled at a UK university, and a lead representative who is in or able to travel to Cambridge for final judging and prize award (reasonable travel expenses – limited to in-land travel for those located elsewhere within the UK – will be reimbursed). All team members must be 18 years of age or above.

All submissions must include:

1. **Research document:** Detailed explanation of your core idea, design, approach to measurement etc.
2. **Presentation:** An overview of your proposed solution, forming the foundations of the in-person presentation for semi-finalist and finalist teams.
3. **Executable source code:** With run instructions to demonstrate your solution in at least one scenario.

Submissions will be judged for their sustainability impact, ease of integration and feasibility, technical maturity and creativity.

See the [Official Problem Statement](#) document for additional information, including suggested application scenarios, scoring criteria, intellectual property policy, and further details about the submission documents.

What participants stand to gain

- Successful finalists will showcase their work as part of a forum hosted at the University of Cambridge on 29 September 2026 – attended by global leaders in AI, sustainability, semiconductors, investment, research and innovation.
- Further collaboration is encouraged for solutions with clear industry potential.
- The winning solution will earn a **£6,000 first prize**.

Questions and queries

If you wish to ask questions about your submission, you should visit the challenge submission portal for further direction. Navigate to the links in the footer to view frequently asked questions or submit a question of your own.



For practical queries about the challenge such as travel reimbursements, eligibility, commitment expectations etc please speak to our team by emailing Accelerators@cisl.cam.ac.uk.

For media enquiries, please contact zoe.kalus@cisl.cam.ac.uk.