

GROUND\_  
BREAKERS

# BREAK THROUGH.

POWERED  
BY NATURE.

Join the **European  
GROUNDBREAKERS  
Challenge** and turn  
your idea into impact!

APPLY  
UNTIL  
**SEP  
30**

UTION >>> 100.000 €\* FOR YOUR NATURE-BASED SOLUTION >>> 100.000 €\* FOR YOUR NATURE-BASED SO

\* see conditions



# ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINATION



WHERE BUILDINGS DON'T  
JUST STAND TALL -  
BUT BREATHE, ADAPT,  
AND GIVE BACK.

A PLACE WHERE NATURE  
BREAKS THROUGH AND  
TURNS URBAN SPACES  
INTO CLIMATE-RESILIENT  
ECOSYSTEMS.

## THE CONSTRUCTION CHALLENGE IS REAL. SO IS THE SOLUTION.

Nearly 40% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from construction – yet traditional methods often work against nature instead of with it.

This makes it not only one of the most urgent challenges, but also one of the most powerful levers for change. What's needed now: groundbreaking, scalable, and climate-adaptive innovations.

Nature-based innovations are changing the game: They reduce heat, clean air and water, and increase climate resilience by bringing nature back into cities – transforming how we build and live.

**The European GROUNDBREAKERS Challenge (EGC) unlocks the full potential of nature-based solutions, by empowering start-ups to break through with their sustainable innovation.**

**Accept the challenge now and shape a sustainable urban future – where cities and nature grow together!**



**YOU ARE A START-UP IN NATURE-BASED CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS? THEN SUBMIT YOUR IDEA BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2025!**

EGC is looking for building innovations that rethink what's possible – like green façades that clean the air, sponge city systems that manage rainwater naturally, bio-based materials that reduce emissions or similar nature-based innovations.

What matters is innovation not just in design or materials, but in how we bring ideas to market. EGC is calling for nature-based solutions with real-world impact – backed by viable business models.

**Whether you're a student team or a seasoned startup: If your solution is ready to prove itself, and your vision is scalable – accept the European GROUNDBREAKERS Challenge!**



**BREAK  
THROUGH.**

**SEP  
30**  
APPLY  
UNTIL



#### >>> GAIN FUNDING & VISIBILITY

Get 100,000 € in funding to bring your solution to life in Stuttgart – with a public showcase around IBA'27, one of Europe's biggest stages in the building sector and a partner of the European GROUNDBREAKERS challenge. The ten best submissions will be exhibited.

#### >>> CONNECT WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS

As Germany's leading start-up alliance in construction, GROUNDBREAKERS stands by your side, connects you to the right partners and creates real-world implementation opportunities.

There's always more than one solution: Up to 10 additional projects receive recognition, pilot opportunities, and industry connections that open doors to the market.

#### >>> BE PART OF THE BUILDING REVOLUTION

As a startup in nature-based construction solutions, you are a key player in climate-resilient transformation and the building revolution. Connect with other founders and improve urban wellbeing!



# HOW TO JOIN THE EUROPEAN GROUNDBREAKERS CHALLENGE

## // WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

- Sustainable, nature-based innovations for buildings & adjacent space
- Ready-to-implement prototypes with viable business case (TRL 6+)
- Showcase potential within one year: existing buildings, demonstrators, or stand-alone
- **Fields of action:** Green surfaces, water systems, bio-based materials, and related innovations in building construction.

## // THAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

- **100,000€** to realize your winning solution in Stuttgart
- High profile showcase around IBA'27
- Direct industry access to GROUNDBREAKERS' network and expert mentoring
- There is always more than one solution: Up to 10 additional submissions receive recognition, visibility, and access to real-world partnerships.

## // HOW TO APPLY

- Submit via: [groundbreakers.io/european-challenge](https://groundbreakers.io/european-challenge)
- Submission: **July 15 – Sept 30, 2025 (12:00 CEST)**
- What you'll need: contact info, solution description, visuals, business model, impact assessment

## // THAT'S WHAT MATTERS

- The selection follows a two-step process:  
**Step 1:** Pre-selection by GROUNDBREAKERS team and experts.  
**Step 2:** Final decision by an interdisciplinary jury from science, business, public administration, architecture, and building ecology.
- **Evaluation criteria:** Feasibility, innovation, sustainability, showcase potential, business model (TRL 6+, scalable, long-term viability), team experience

# FAQ

## // WHO CAN APPLY?

- Startups, student teams, entrepreneurs – from all around Europe. All teams are welcome – as long as your idea is ready for real-world application.

## // WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO APPLY?

- **These details are required:** contact information, company data, solution description, images, competition analysis, reference projects or implementation plan, concept for realization in Stuttgart, team profile, sustainability impact, business model

## // HOW WILL THE WINNING IDEA COME TO LIFE?

- With 100,000€ funding and mentoring from GROUNDBREAKERS. The idea and implementation are in your hands – we support and connect.
- The project will be presented around IBA'27, one of Europe's most renowned platforms for building innovation and a partner of the European GROUNDBREAKERS Challenge.

## // GOT QUESTIONS ABOUT JOINING THE EGC?

- Take part in one of our official Info Calls for start-ups and teams interested in applying. We will provide a short overview of the European GROUNDBREAKERS Challenge and open the floor to your questions. No registration required.

### CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING DATES:

July 22, 2025 – 10:00 CEST  
August 19, 2025 – 10:00 CEST  
September 16, 2025 – 10:00 CEST

<https://hft-stuttgart-de.zoom-x.de/j/62184283757>

To see the applicable terms and conditions, scan the QR code:



# TIMELINE

2025

01 SUBMISSION BY  
SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

02 PRE-SELECTION BY GROUNDBREAKERS  
TEAM AND EXPERTS

03 FINAL JURY  
DECISION

03 AWARD IN  
NOVEMBER 2025

2026

05 IMPLEMENTATION AND  
GROUNDBREAKERS MENTORING

06 INDUSTRY ACCESS  
AND MATCHMAKING

2027

07 SHOWCASE AROUND IBA'27

JOIN THE EUROPEAN  
GROUNDBREAKERS  
CHALLENGE!



[https://www.groundbreakers.io/  
european-challenge](https://www.groundbreakers.io/european-challenge)

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