

CO-CREATING THE FUTURE

Science, Technology, and Innovation for Development



15-16 DECEMBER 2026



TOKYO, JAPAN

HOSTED BY
GDN
Global Development Network

PROGRAMME

Tokyo · 15 and 16 December 2026

Two days across four host venues. The first day opens with the finals of the 2026 Global Development Awards Competition and turns to hands-on work in the Co-Creation Labs. The second moves to policy at Europa House and closes with the awards and 25 years of the competition.

WHEN

Tuesday 15 and Wednesday
16 December 2026

WHERE

Sasakawa Peace Foundation, ADBI,
World Bank Group TDLC and Europa
House

TIME ZONE

All times are Japan Standard
Time (JST, UTC+9)

ONLINE

Every session is streamed
except the Co-Creation Labs

THE TWO DAYS AT A GLANCE

■ SPF (Day 1) and Europa House (Day 2)
■ ADBI
■ World Bank Group TDLC

DAY 1 Tuesday 15 December

DAY 2 Wednesday 16 December

09:00

Welcome and GDAC 2026 Finals09:00 to 13:00 · Sasakawa Peace Foundation
ORD round, then MIDP round

STREAMED

10:00

11:00

12:00

13:00

Lunch and transfer

13:00 to 14:00 · to ADBI or TDLC

14:00

Co-Creation Labs14:15 to 17:00 · Hub 1 at ADBI, Hub 2 at TDLC
Fourteen tables, seven per venue

IN PERSON ONLY

15:00

16:00

17:00

Evening free

Global Policy Symposium09:00 to 13:00 · Europa House
Keynote, high-level panel, Voices of the Global South

STREAMED

25-Year Impact Lunch

13:00 to 15:00 · Europa House

GDAC Awards Ceremony and Closing

15:00 to 17:00 · Europa House

STREAMED

Closing reception

From 17:00 · to be confirmed

DAY 1 MORNING

Tuesday 15 December · Sasakawa Peace Foundation

09:00

to 13:00 JST

SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION

STREAMED

WELCOME AND GDAC 2026 FINALS

The conference opens with the live finals of the 2026 Global Development Awards Competition, held this year under the theme "Science, Technology, and Innovation for Peace and Human Security". Six finalists, selected from 225 applications, present their work in person to the jury and to the conference audience. Each finalist pitches and then takes the jury's questions. Winners are announced on the afternoon of 16 December.

09:00 · Welcome remarks

Speakers to be announced

09:30 · Round 1 · Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development (ORD)

Three early-career researchers from low- and middle-income countries present their research.

11:00 · Coffee break

11:30 · Round 2 · Japanese Award for the Most Innovative Development Project (MIDP)

Three civil society organisations present development projects.

The competition is administered by GDN, funded under the Policy and Human Resources Development Fund managed by the World Bank, and supported by the Ministry of Finance of Japan since 2000.

ORD FINALISTS

US\$30,000 · US\$20,000 · US\$10,000

Open to researchers in low- and middle-income countries. 52 applications from 25 countries, 46 percent of them led by women. Projects run for 12 months, with a follow-up Collaborative Grant of up to US\$20,000.

INDONESIA

Hazard-Ready Communities: Citizen Science, Science Diplomacy, and Community-based Governance on Technological Risk in Indonesia's Energy Transition

Charina Chazali, AKATIGA Institution

BRAZIL

Cooling the City: Urban Trees, Public Health and Human Security for Heat Mitigation in Fortaleza

Hygør Piaget Monteiro Melo, University of Fortaleza

CAMEROON

Leveraging Digital Startups for Peace and Human Security: Micro-Level Evidence from Conflict-Affected Communities in Cameroon

Thierry Messie Pondie, University of Buea

MIDP FINALISTS

Two 1st prizes US\$50,000 · 2nd prize US\$25,000

Open to NGOs and civil society organisations in low- and middle-income countries. 173 applications from 49 countries. Projects run for 12 to 24 months, with a follow-up JSDF grant of up to US\$200,000.

NIGERIA

Increasing Access to SRHR Information and Services for Internally Displaced Women in Benue State

Lawyers Alert Justice Initiative, project director Rommy Mom

MOZAMBIQUE

KOLEKT: Empowering Coastal Communities Through Digital Plastic Certification in Mozambique

Mozambican Recycling Association (AMOR), project director Angelica Miranda João

PAKISTAN

Digital MicroSchools

Teach the World Foundation, project director Adnan Ahmed Qureshi

The juries for both awards will be announced.

DAY 1 AFTERNOON

Tuesday 15 December · ADBI and World Bank Group TDLC

13:00

to 14:00 JST

LUNCH AND TRANSFER TO THE LAB VENUES

Participants in the Co-Creation Labs move to ADBI or the World Bank Group TDLC. Each will know beforehand which venue and which table they join.

14:15

to 17:00 JST

ADBI

WORLD BANK GROUP TDLC

IN PERSON ONLY

CO-CREATION LABS

Fourteen GDN grantees and alumni each lead a table, seven at each venue. Around each table sit Solution Partners, a Scaler, Peer Innovators and a facilitator, who work with the host on one concrete obstacle to scaling. Each table produces a two-page Project Scale-Up Concept, and together these form the Tokyo Portfolio, presented on Day 2. The Labs run in English and are not streamed.

■ A · Scale and Optimise ■ B · Innovation Pivot ■ C · AI Frontier

HUB 1 · ADBI

Inclusive Digital Transformation and Sustainable Economies

Machine-readable corporate disclosure, Bangladesh
Mizanur Rahman, University of Dhaka

C

AI-assisted teaching for adaptive classrooms, Bangladesh
Korvi Rakshand, JAAGO Foundation

C

Mechanical water kiosk, Philippines
Auke Idzenga, AIDFI

A

Solar cold chain to reduce food loss, Ghana
Mathias Yabe, AkoFresh

A

Digital twin for city waste, Malaysia
Vincent Woon Kok Sin, HKUST (Guangzhou)

B

Digital tools for peace and shared natural resources, Benin and Mali
Brice Bio Bone, University of Parakou

B

Radio classrooms with AI feedback, Pakistan
Fakhira Najib, POWER99 Foundation

B

HUB 2 · WORLD BANK GROUP TDLC

Health Innovation, Governance and Resilient Societies

Scaling locally owned AI evidence platforms, Sierra Leone
Regina Mamidy Yillah, Institute for Development

C

Civic Data Commons for care economy data, Sri Lanka
Nishan de Mel, Verité Research

C

Health fund for migrants, Thailand
Nicolas Durier, Dreamlopmements Foundation

A

Child-led pathways to financial resilience, India
Rita Panicker, Butterflies

A

Compostable banana-fibre pads, Rwanda
Paula Naiga, Bloom

B

Scaling a family poverty reduction model, Brazil
Sabrina Porcher, Instituto Dara

B

Research systems ready for digital transformation, El Salvador
Helga Cuéllar-Marchelli, FUSADES

B

AFTER THE AFTERNOON

The typed concepts go back to each table to check, the Tokyo Portfolio goes to partners and funders in January, and the strongest concepts become candidate pilots in 2027. Nothing is committed in the room. The evening of 15 December is free.

DAY 2 MORNING

Wednesday 16 December · Europa House, Delegation of the European Union to Japan

09:00

to 13:00 JST

EUROPA HOUSE

STREAMED

GLOBAL POLICY SYMPOSIUM

The symposium brings together donors, Japanese public institutions, foundations and researchers to look at what it takes to move a locally tested pilot to national scale, and at the place of research cooperation between the Global South and North in that process. The concepts drafted in the Co-Creation Labs the day before give the discussion real cases to work from.

09:00 · Opening and keynote · The Importance of Global South-North Research Cooperation

How research partnerships between institutions in the Global South and North build the evidence donors look for before they scale, and how that cooperation also builds trust between countries.

Speaker to be announced

09:30 · High-level panel · Beyond 2030: Co-Creating Financing Mechanisms to Move Local Pilots to National Scale

Many innovations work at small scale while the routes from pilot to national policy remain poorly understood. The panel takes this up with the people who fund that step.

Panellists to be announced

11:00 · Coffee break

11:30 · Voices of the Global South

GDN alumni from Africa, Asia and Latin America describe how early-career funding changed the policy course of their work and, in some cases, of their countries.

Speakers to be announced

13:00

to 15:00 JST

25-YEAR IMPACT LUNCH

A networking lunch with posters drawn from the impact stories, tracing 25 years of the Global Development Awards Competition through the people and projects it has supported, alongside displays from other GDN programmes and from the Japanese partners and co-hosts of the conference.

DAY 2 AFTERNOON

Wednesday 16 December · Europa House, Delegation of the European Union to Japan

15:00

to 17:00 JST

EUROPA HOUSE

STREAMED

GDAC AWARDS CEREMONY AND CLOSING

15:00 · 25 years of evidence

What has been learned about the competition since 2000: earlier evaluations, a new analysis of the ORD award, and the findings of the 2026 evaluation of its impact on researchers, organisations and communities.

Jean-Louis Arcand, President, GDN

Impact premiere

Screening of the GDAC 25-Year Impact Documentary.

Building on 25 years

The training curricula GDN has developed for applicants, grantees and alumni, available to grantees and alumni on GDN's learning platform, beyond the life of the competition.

Jean-Louis Arcand, President, GDN

16:00 · Awards presentation

Announcement of the 2026 ORD and MIDP winners.

Presenters to be announced

16:30 · Closing vision

GDN leadership and the competition's funding partners mark the end of its first 25 years and discuss where it goes next, including science diplomacy and development cooperation that pools several donors behind implementation, with the Tokyo Portfolio as a first example.

Speakers to be announced

Announcement of the 2027 Global Development Conference

17:00

TO BE CONFIRMED

CLOSING RECEPTION

A closing reception at Europa House is planned.

GDAC AT 25 AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Venues, streaming and partners

25 YEARS OF THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS COMPETITION

Supported by the Ministry of Finance of Japan since 2000, the competition identifies, mentors and amplifies locally led research and development projects across the Global South. Many awardees have gone on to secure further funding from bilateral, multilateral and philanthropic donors. On 16 December the President of GDN presents a 25-year study of what the competition has changed, combining an independent evaluation and film with a new analysis by GDN, followed by the premiere of the documentary.

SINCE 2000

Supported by the Ministry of Finance of Japan

US\$4.2M+

Invested in research and project grants

420+

Researchers and civil society organisations supported

IMPACT STORIES AND EVALUATIONS

Fifteen stories from Benin to Uganda, with more being added
gdn.int/gdac/impact-stories-japanese-awards

20 YEARS OF GDAC

Two films marking the 20th anniversary
 YouTube · Global Development Network · playlist "20 years of GDAC"

KNOW MORE ABOUT GDAC

Videos from winners and finalists
 YouTube · Global Development Network · playlist "Know more about GDAC"

VENUES

DAY 1 MORNING

SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION

Sasakawa Peace Foundation Building
 1-15-16 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8524

DAY 1 AFTERNOON · HUB 1

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK INSTITUTE

Kasumigaseki Building 8F
 3-2-5 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-6008

DAY 1 AFTERNOON · HUB 2

WORLD BANK GROUP TOKYO DEVELOPMENT LEARNING CENTER

Fukoku Seimei Building
 2-2-2 Uchisaiwai-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0011

DAY 2, ALL DAY

EUROPA HOUSE

Delegation of the European Union to Japan
 4-6-28 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0047

GOOD TO KNOW

TIME ZONE

All times in this programme are Japan Standard Time (JST, UTC+9).

MOVING BETWEEN VENUES

Day 1 moves from the Sasakawa Peace Foundation to ADBI or TDLC over lunch. Day 2 stays at Europa House throughout.

WATCHING ONLINE

The welcome and finals, the Global Policy Symposium and the Awards Ceremony are streamed. The Co-Creation Labs are in person only. The link will be published on the conference website.

CHANGES

The programme may change, and speakers will be added as they are confirmed. The latest version is on the conference website.

PARTNERS

GDC 2026 is organised by the Global Development Network in partnership with the Delegation of the European Union to Japan, the Asian Development Bank Institute, the World Bank Group Tokyo Development Learning Center and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.