INNOVATE 4 NATURE

I4N AWARD 2025
GUIDELINES

23 May 2025

INNOVATE 4 NATURE

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ABOUT
INNOVATE
4 NATURE

ABOUT INNOVATE 4 NATURE

Purpose, vision & mission

PURPOSE

The purpose of I4N is to accelerate 100+ nature-positive solutions in collaboration with strategic partners to transition towards a regenerative economy by 2030.

VISION

To achieve a nature positive future where business thrives, ecosystems flourish, and our planet is regenerated for generations to come.

MISSION

I4N aims at accelerating the implementation of nature-positive solutions by:

- Building and incentivising a portfolio of high-quality nature-positive solutions
- Fostering an ecosystem bridging nature-positive solutions and partners
- Providing thought leadership

THE STORY OF OUR HUMMINGBIRD

In the face of today's environmental challenges, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. At Innovate 4 Nature, we believe in the power of action, no matter how small.

That's why we take inspiration from Iri, our hummingbird—a symbol of agility, persistence, and transformation. Like the legendary hummingbird carrying water to fight a forest fire, we are accelerating 100+ solutions that, together, create a wave of positive change for nature and the planet.

With speed, precision, and purpose, we don't wait for someone else to act—we do the best we can, amplifying solutions that regenerate ecosystems, restore biodiversity, and drive sustainable impact.

ABOUT INNOVATE 4 NATURE

Four focus areas

Innovate 4 Nature accelerates nature-positive solutions across four focus areas, which are related to the most **significant socio-economic systems** in view of **biodiversity loss** stated by the World Economic Forum.

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF ECOSYSTEMS

NATURE AS INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANET-COMPATIBLE CITIES

REGENERATIVE FOOD SYSTEMS

CIRCULAR NATURE-POSITIVE SOLUTIONS

➢ Solutions focus on conservation, restoration, monitoring and protection of ecosystems, incl. through nature-positive finance, technology, and governance
➢ Examples: biodiversity and carbon credit solutions, digital MRV tools, data platforms tracking ecological health

➢ Solutions redefine how we build, live and move through space by integrating nature into infrastructure and urban define
➢ Examples: green construction materials, ecological sanitation, urban greening, water-saving innovations, nature-based tourism

➢ Solutions improve food systems while restoring ecosystems and enhancing rural livelihoods
➢ Examples: nature-positive farming practices, bio-based fertilizers, alternative proteins, smart ag-tech, and transparent ingredient supply chains.

➢ Solutions redesign the flow of materials, energy, and behavior to minimize waste and regenerate natural systems
➢ Examples: nature-based materials, sustainable consumer goods, material innovations, and behavior-change tools shifting consumption patterns

More info on the focus areas under https://i4n.ch/2025/04/25/innovate-4-natures-four-focus-areas/.

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ABOUT THE
I4N AWARD

ABOUT THE I4N AWARD

Its purpose

The annual I4N Award is our key driver for identifying and accelerating high-quality nature-positive solutions in collaboration with partners to halt and improve nature loss by 2030.

The award recognises and spotlights high-quality solutions, across four focus areas (p. 5).

The award journey is a multi-stage process that rigorously evaluates nature-positive solutions based on their environmental impact, business viability, and governance. It culminates in recognising and supporting the most promising solutions through an award, mentorship and a dedicated event.

DEFINITION
NATURE POSITIVE

Nature Positive is a global societal goal defined as 'Halt and Reverse Nature Loss by 2030 on a 2020 baseline and achieve full recovery by 2050'. To put this more simply, it means ensuring more nature in the world in 2030 than in 2020 and continued recovery after that.

For more information, refer to the Nature Positive Initiative.

ABOUT THE I4N AWARD

What you can win

The I4N Award offers both **financial and non-financial** benefits worth a minimum of CHF 150,000, with the aim to accelerate nature-positive solutions.

Four cash prizes of CHF 25,000 each across four focus areas, and one grant of CHF 15,000, sponsored by Wyss Academy for Nature

Access to the I4N ecosystem, including corporates, investors and experts

Tailored training and mentorship opportunities

Increased visibility through I4N channels and exclusive events

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ABOUT THE I4N AWARD

Requirements for applicants

The application requirements for the award are as follows:

Business model
Your solution needs to have a source of income that is not fully relying on donations.

Scalability or replicability
Your solution needs to be scalable or replicable, and not highly reliant on one particular location.

Maturity
Ideally around pre-seed or seed stage. Minimum requirement: existence of a business model, business plan, marketable pilot product, or MVP. Annual revenues should not exceed USD 1 million.

Form
There are no specific requirements regarding legal form, ownership structure or age of entity. Please do not apply if your solution is considered 'a project'.

Applicants
We only accept applications directly from founders and not from fundraisers. Previous I4N Award Winners are excluded. Previous I4N Award Finalists can reapply after 2 years, unless they have a new project.

Availability
Should you be selected, at least one founder or executive director must be available either in person or via video call on the Pitch Day: Tuesday, 21st October 2025, in Switzerland

Geographies
Global; organisations active in or from countries at high risk of money laundering are excluded.

Language
Only applications in English are accepted.

Cost
Participation is free of charge

ADDITIONAL GRANT

The Wyss Academy for Nature Grant

This year, in addition to I4N's *global* award with four cash prizes worth CHF 25,000, the Wyss Academy for Nature is sponsoring a *thematic* grant of CHF 15,000.

Under the topic '**Nature-positive value chains for regenerative local economies**', this special grant invites early-stage solutions addressing environmental and socio-economic challenges in biodiverse landscapes and building on or innovating existing local value chains.

Eligible solution **categories**:

Regenerative **land use or economic livelihood strategies**, including but not limited to **non-timber forest products (NTFPs)**	**Emerging technologies or business models** that reduce pressure on ecosystems & create nature-positive economic opportunities	Solutions with **local embeddedness and ownership, potential for replication, or scalability within or across regions**.

Thematic relevance must be demonstrable* in at least one of the following **regions**:

Savanna ecosystems (Northern Kenya)	Amazonian forests (Madre de Dios – Peru)	Humid tropical forests (Northeastern Madagascar)
Forest frontier landscapes (Northern Laos & Northern Thailand)	Swiss landscapes (Canton of Bern)	

*Demonstrable does not refer to its current application, but having the potential to be applied in these regions.   10

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PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE

The I4N Award journey 2025

15 MAY

ROUND 1 OPEN: NATURE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Nature-positive solutions are invited to apply via https://shorturl.at/KUflW

12 JUN

ROUND 1 CLOSED
(6pm CET)

Round 1 assessment on nature impact

11 JUL

ROUND 2 OPEN: BUSINESS & GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT

Submission of documents for round 2 assessment on business & governance

31 JUL

ROUND 2 CLOSED
(6pm CET)

Round 2 assessment on business & governance

29 AUG

ROUND 3 SELECTION

Selection of finalists and start of preparation phase for pitch day

21 OCT

ROUND 3: PITCH DAY

Solution pitches in front of I4N Jury

LATE 2025/ EARLY 2026

I4N AWARD CEREMONY

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PROCEDURE

Three Rounds

To ensure that we accelerate the most impactful solution providers we need to get a clear understanding of how your solution impacts nature and biodiversity. We do this along a three-step approach.

Round 1
Nature focus

- **Round 1 opens on**
  15th May 2025

- **Round 1 closes on***
  12th June 2025 at 18:00 CET

- **Feedback from I4N**
  11th July 2025;
  a maximum of 150 organisations will be selected for Round 2

Round 2
Business focus

- **Round 2 opens on**
  11th July 2025

- **Round 2 closes on***
  31st July 2025 at 18:00 CET

- **Feedback from I4N**
  29th August 2025;
  a maximum of 20 organisations will be selected for Round 3

Round 3
Jury & Award

- **Pitch Day**
  21st October 2025 in the afternoon
  - online participation possible
  - At least one founder or executive director must be available in person or via video call
- **I4N Award Ceremony**
  Late 2025/early 2026
  - Award ceremony with solution providers, investors, and corporates
  - I4N Award winners invited in person
  - All other finalists invited to join virtually

*No application will be accepted after this deadline.

PROCEDURE

Start your Round 1 application

Step 1

- Go to i4n.ch/i4n-award/ and 'click here to apply'
- **Create an account** on the platform to start your application

Step 2

- Download the **Guidelines** and the **PDF application form**

Step 3

- Prepare your **application**
- Estimated time: **2-4 hours**

Step 4

- Complete the application form and submit it

PROCEDURE
Award winners and grant recipients

Award winners and grant recipients will be expected to fulfill the following post-award requirements:

- **Interim Report**: Provide a one-year progress update, outlining the status of the solution one year after grant
- **Impact Metrics** : In the first year, I4N and the recipient will co-develop meaningful quantitative and qualitative metrics, with an annual review
- **Final report**: Deliver a narrative report detailing the outcomes and overall impact, along with a complete financial report on the grant usage
- **Impact stories**: Sharing stories and testimonials that reflect the grant's impact on both the ecosystem and the wider community
- **Consent & Data**: Ensure all shared photos, videos, and quotes have proper consent from individuals featured

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EVALUATION

EVALUATION
Round 1 assessment criteria: nature focus

In Round 1, we focus on the assessment of your solution's biodiversity impact, specifically over the next five years and want to understand the basic details of your business.

Biodiversity & Nature

Theory of change	Ability to identify and articulate the solution's positive impact
Extent	Potential size of area positively affected by the solution
Condition change	Potential size of the positive ecosystem condition change
Significance	Relative importance of the impacted area for biodiversity
Transformation	Solution potential to transform economic/social systems

Ability of the solution to solve the selected problem	**Problem-fit**
Potential ability of business-model to self-sustain at scale	**Financial Viability**
Stage after initial idea, before growth phase	**Maturity**
Composition and skills of team	**Team**

Business

Furthermore, to allow for fair comparison we will ask a set of questions to cluster you with similar peers.

In 2024, out of over 400 applicants, approximately 290 met the minimum requirements. From this pool, we selected 150 candidates for the second round.

EVALUATION

Round 2 assessment criteria: business focus

In Round 2, we'll validate assumptions from Round 1, assess the positive and negative impacts of your business model, and explore key activities in more depth. We'll also request financial and funding details to help quantify impact pathways and support jury comparisons. The biodiversity and nature elements can be understood as enhancement of the Round 1 assessment.

Business

Funding needs	Appropriate ask for next step in business plan
Customers	Identification of current & future customers
Competitive edge	Identification of and potential of competitive edge
Revenue & financials	Realistic financial model based on existing operations
Market understanding	Realistic estimation of market size & competition
Governance and social	Ability to identify impacts & risks

Ability to identify and articulate the solution's negative impact.	**Negative impact**
Ability to adapt to changing environmental, social, and technological conditions	**Adaptability & Resilience**
Does the solution follow principles of circularity and regeneration	**Circularity & Regeneration**
Inherent links between business model and nature impact.	**Economic activities & nature**

Biodiversity & Nature

In 2024, we then narrowed down from 150 to 20 solutions spanning four key areas.

EVALUATION

Round 3 assessment criteria: I4N Jury

In Round 3, the I4N Jury will assess your organisation's solution during the **Pitch Day** on the following criteria on a scale from 1 to 5.

Impact

Evaluate the solution's **demonstrated or expected contributions** to ecosystem regeneration, biodiversity conservation, and community well-being, ensuring alignment with ecological limits.

Innovation & adaptability

Assess the **novelty and originality** of the solution, considering whether it introduces new approaches or builds upon existing ideas while adapting to changing environmental, social, and technological conditions.

Evidence & design

Evaluate the use of **scientific evidence, feedback mechanisms, and circular design principles** to support measurable outcomes, efficient use of resources, and continuous improvement.

Equitable governance & participation

Evaluate the **inclusiveness and fairness** of governance, ensuring transparent decision-making, meaningful stakeholder engagement, & shared ownership throughout the solution's development and implementation.

Purposeful growth

Consider the potential for the solution to **scale or replicate** responsibly, ensuring growth aligns with **ecological resilience, cultural values, and social priorities.**

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EVALUATION

Round 3 assessment criteria: I4N Jury

The I4N Jury is comprised of a **diverse set of individuals**, including science, business, finance, NGO and philanthropy representatives and a government representative.

Patti Chu
Silverstrand Capital

Gina Domanig
Emerald Ventures

Lena Gampp
Fourfold

Hannah Jones
Earthshot Prize

Janine Kuriger
FDFA

Prof. Dr. Peter Messerli
Wyss Academy for Nature

Jonathan Normand
B Lab (Switzerland)

Thomas Vellacott
WWF Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Judith Walls
Institute for Economy and the
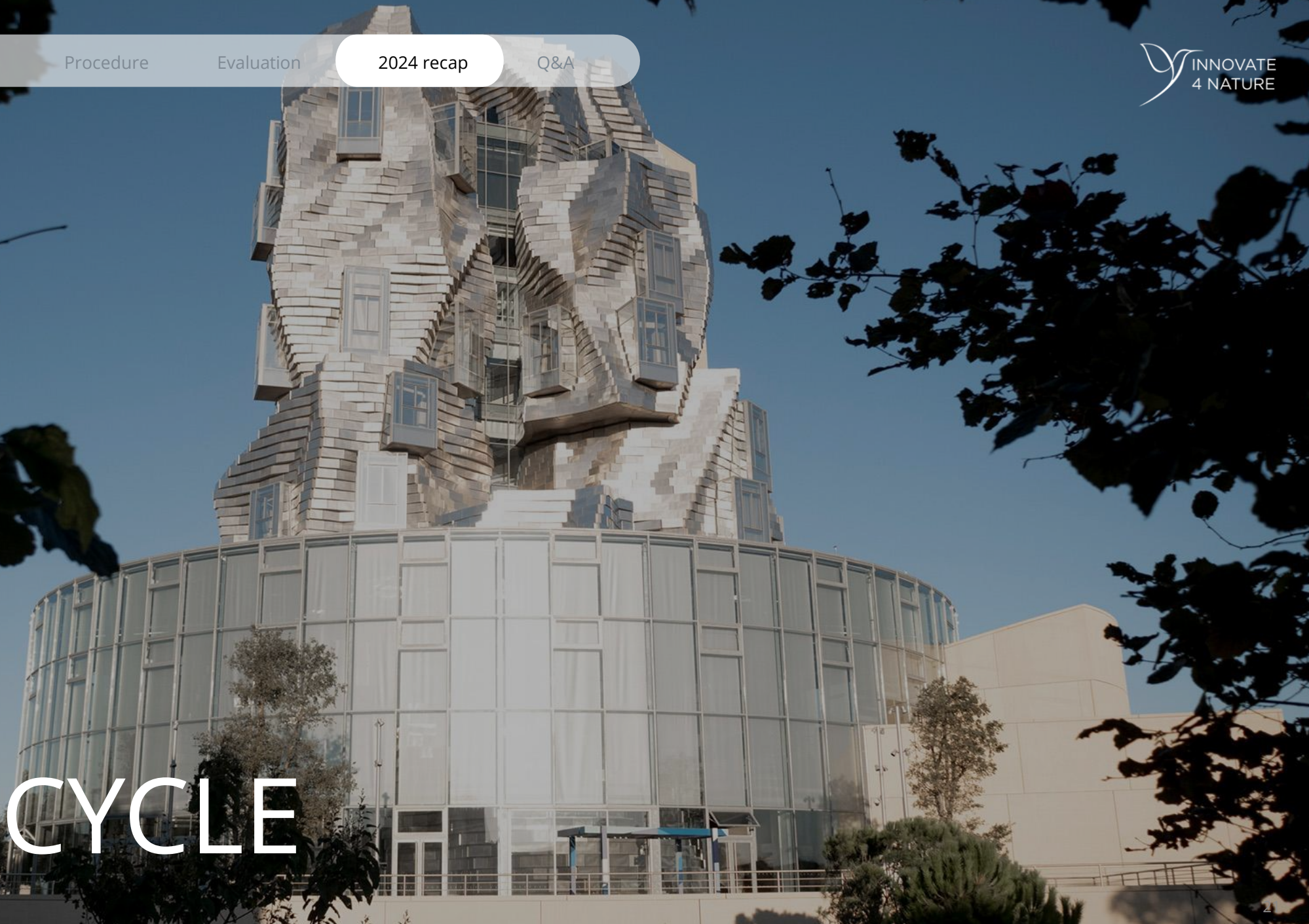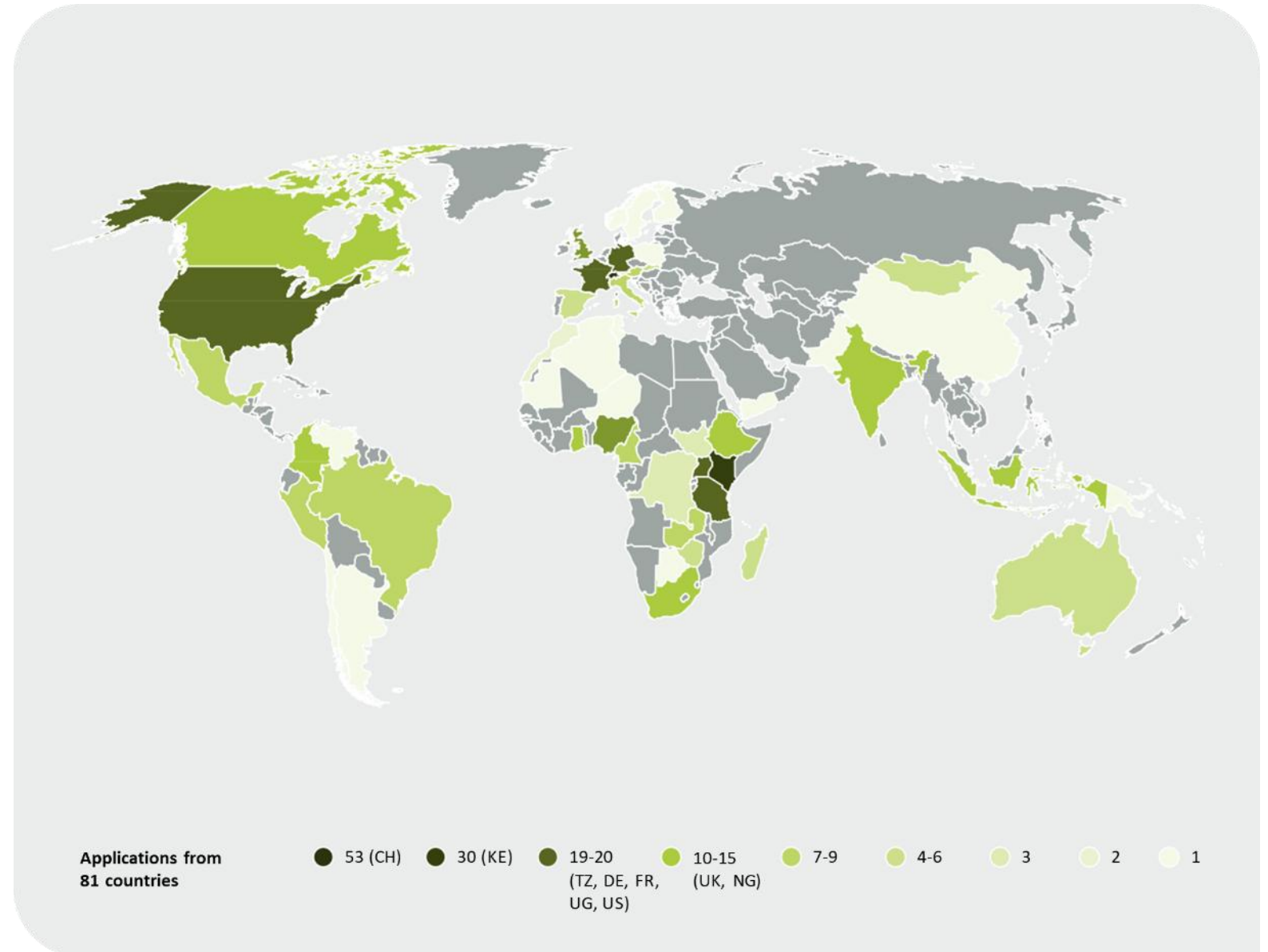Environment, HSG

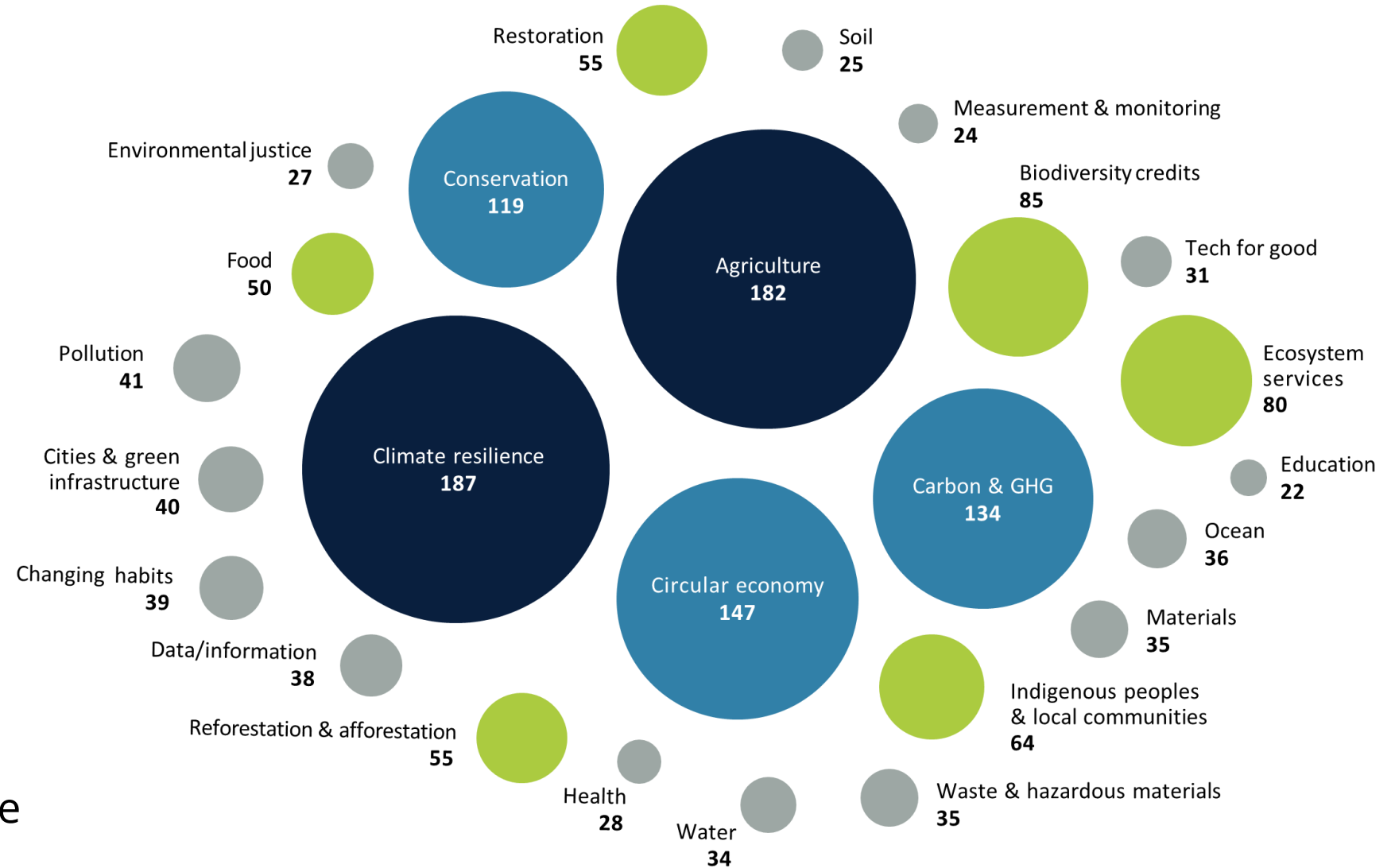Eva Zabey
Business for Nature

Simon Zadek
Nature Finance

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2024 CYCLE

2024 CYCLE

Geographic distribution

In the 2024 cycle, we received over 400 applications from **81 countries**.

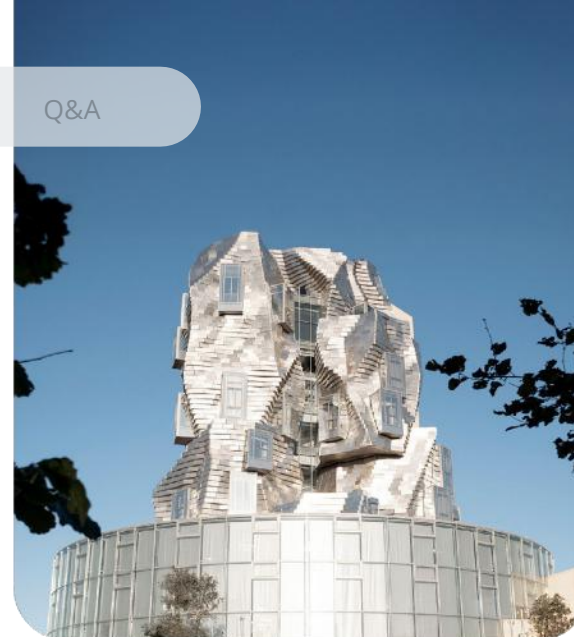**Applications from 81 countries**

- 53 (CH)
- 30 (KE)
- 19-20 (TZ, DE, FR, UG, US)
- 10-15 (UK, NG)
- 7-9
- 4-6
- 3
- 2
- 1

2024 CYCLE
Themes

The 400+ applications covered a **diverse set of themes** ranging from climate resilience to education.

Restoration **55**
Soil **25**
Measurement & monitoring **24**
Environmental justice **27**
Conservation **119**
Biodiversity credits **85**
Agriculture **182**
Tech for good **31**
Food **50**
Ecosystem services **80**
Pollution **41**
Climate resilience **187**
Carbon & GHG **134**
Education **22**
Cities & green infrastructure **40**
Ocean **36**
Changing habits **39**
Circular economy **147**
Materials **35**
Data/information **38**
Indigenous peoples & local communities **64**
Reforestation & afforestation **55**
Health **28**
Water **34**
Waste & hazardous materials **35**

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2024 CYCLE

Impressions of the I4N Day 2024

ARLES,
FRANCE

INNOVATE
4 NATURE

2024 CYCLE
The I4N Awardees 2024

I4N Award Winners

Chemolex

Guaro Farms

rrreefs

Savimbo

I4N Grant Winners

Coral Bioworks

Proteofy

Ulysses

Honorary Mentions

Landbanking Group

Ponera Group

Terraformation

I4N Training Winners

Alien Limited

DNAir

I4N Audience Award

ER LAB

"Winning the I4N Award last year and being part of a diverse portfolio of nature-positive solutions has opened a whole new ecosystem for us. I4N stands out by bridging the gap between innovation, sustainable development, and finance."

Josephine Graf
Co-founder & co-CEO, rrreefs

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2024 CYCLE
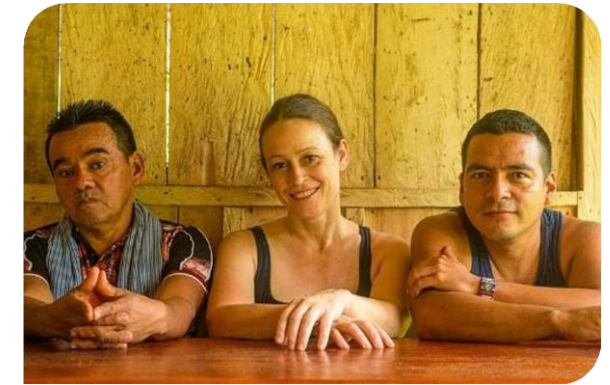# The I4N Award winners 2024

Chemolex develops biopactic material film, an advanced, eco-friendly packaging solution that enhances brand differentiation and boosts product sales by up to 70% while reducing packaging costs by 25%. Leveraging scientific research and innovative technologies, Chemolex provides sustainable solutions in plastic waste management and renewable energy, driving both environmental and economic impact.

Guaro Farms' mission is to deliver the rich flavors of Ethiopian spices while honoring their cultural heritage. By partnering with local farmers, Guaro Farms ensures that their spices are not only of the highest quality but also sustainably sourced. This commitment to ethical practices supports communities and preserves rich agricultural heritage.

rrreefs rebuilds degraded coral reefs to regenerate marine life. After a few months, the first impacts are measurable. Their structures turn into resilient reefs within a few years. By attracting coral larvae – the offspring of corals that survived until today – the created reefs develop higher climate resilience.

Savimbo is a company created by, and for, Indigenous Peoples and local communities. They pay Indigenous Peoples and subsistence farmers in tropical forests to preserve ecosystems. They then certify credits, sell them internationally, and split gross revenue, leading to effective, inexpensive, and globally-beneficial climate action.

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

For further questions, please refer to the **FAQ** on our homepage: https://i4n.ch/i4n-award

Or send us an email to award@i4n.ch.

Kindly avoid contacting I4N staff for individual presentations or demos, as they will not be factored into the evaluation process.

INNOVATE 4 NATURE

Apply for round 1 here on this page:
https://shorturl.at/KUfIW

Application deadline: Thursday, 12th June 2025, 18:00 (6pm) CET.

No application will be accepted after the deadline.

If you apply for the I4N Award 2025, you confirm that you read and understood the guidelines of this presentation.

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