CIEH Leading Innovation Award Criteria 2026

This category recognises an individual, team or organisation that has delivered a novel, evidence-led solution to a clearly defined environmental health challenge, achieving measurable benefits for people and/or the environment. It is intended for practical innovations (tools, processes, policies, services or partnerships) that others in the profession could adapt or adopt.

Who should enter

- Open to individuals, teams, partnerships and organisations worldwide working in any environmental health discipline (e.g., food safety, environmental protection, housing, health protection, occupational health, port health).
- Entries may be self-nominated or nominated by others. The nominator must be a CIEH member and, for team/organisation entries, at least one team member should be a CIEH member (to align with other 2026 categories).
- Previous winners may enter with a different project or demonstrably new phase of work.

Eligibility period

Work must have been active between 1 January 2025 and 10 May 2026. Projects need not have concluded, but judges will place particular emphasis on progress to date and the quality of evaluation.

What to submit

1. Overarching summary (max 100 words). Provide a concise overview of the innovation, who it serves and the value it delivers. This may be used in shortlisting and event materials.
2. Entry narrative **(up to 800 words)** covering: context and problem definition; objectives; the innovative solution (what's new and why it matters); strategy and delivery; collaboration and stakeholder engagement; measurement and evaluation; outcomes and community impact; lessons learned and next steps.

3. Supporting evidence (max four attachments; total size up to 16MB). Examples: data charts or dashboards, independent testimonials, photos, short videos, case studies, protocols or code repositories. If larger files are essential, provide a link or submit via a secure file-transfer service and label clearly with your entry name.

How entries will be judged

- **Innovation & originality:** Demonstrates a clear departure from standard practice and a strong fit to the stated problem; creativity is purposeful and evidence-informed.
- **Relevance & problem definition:** Defines the need, Shows material, evidenced benefits for people, teams and/or communities and the environment.
- affected populations and context; shows understanding of constraints and risks.
- **Evidence, measurement & evaluation:** Uses appropriate data and methods to track outputs, outcomes and learning; includes independent feedback where possible.
- **Value for money** Delivers strong outcomes relative to resources invested; demonstrates efficiency and prudent use of funds.