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2025 Competition: Call for essays

The International Organization for Chemical Sciences in Development (IOCD), in collaboration with the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), is launching the third year of its annual essay competition on the role of the chemical sciences in sustainability. The competition is open globally to entrants under 35 years of age. The theme for the 2025 competition is:

From waste to wealth: how chemical sciences can sustainably transform waste into valuable products

Essays will be grouped into seven regions for shortlisting and selection of winners, based on the entrant's country of normal residence. Each regional winner will receive a prize of US\$500 and their entries will be published in *RSC Sustainability*. The shortlisted essays selected as finalists will be collected in an annual compendium, *Young Voices in the Chemical Sciences for Sustainability*, published as a PDF online and available on IOCD's website. Individual shortlisted entries will also be featured from time to time on IOCD's website. See [here](#) for the 2023 regional winners and [here](#) for the 2023 finalists. The seven regional groupings are:

- East Asia & Pacific
- Europe & Central Asia
- Latin America & Caribbean
- Middle East & North Africa
- North America
- South Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa

Global essay competition: *Young Voices in the Chemical Sciences for Sustainability*

1. Theme: Broad flexibility will be applied in assessing the approach taken by entrants to framing the theme, which might be addressed, for example, through (but not limited to) contexts such as those related to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, specific international challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss or plastics pollution, or critical resource shortages. Whatever framing of the problem is adopted, essays will be judged on how well they highlight the importance of scientific approaches grounded in the chemical sciences for solving sustainability challenges, as well as realism about what more needs to be done. Entrants are encouraged to take a broad, global perspective, including reflecting on the intersection of science, society and policy aspects, rather than to describe a particular scientific advance in great technical detail. Entrants should create their own title for their essay, related to the theme set.

2. Essay constraints and timelines: Essays must not exceed 1500 words of main text. Literature references to indicate sources should be given and original Tables or Figures may be included, in excess of the limit of 1500 words. However, the essay itself should be self-explanatory without requiring further background reading. Entries will initially be screened for compliance with competition rules (including entrant's age, word

count, relevance to the set theme, absence of plagiarism, conformity with the publication requirements of *RSC Sustainability*) and then reviewed for short-listing. Eligibility is limited to entrants who are under 35 years of age on the submission deadline day of 31 March 2025. The aim is for selection of short-listed candidates to be completed around the end of May and the regional finalists determined by the end of June.

3. Prizes: The regional winners of the annual competition will each receive a cash prize of US\$500 from IOCD and a Winner's Certificate and their entries will be published by the RSC in *RSC Sustainability*. The competitors short-listed for the final round of the Competition will each receive a Finalist's Certificate and their entries will be published by IOCD in the annual compendium, *Young Voices in the Chemical Sciences for Sustainability*.

4. Submissions: Essays must be submitted in English as a Word document, not later than midnight GMT on 31 March 2025 to essay@iocd.org accompanied by a completed Entry Form, which is available on IOCD's website along with the detailed rules of the Competition at http://www.iocd.org/v3_site/Essay/competition2025.html.

