

Global Prize for Innovation in Desalination (GPID) 2024

Using Wazoku's community, process, and global reach to power a leading awards program



Global Prize
Innovation
in Desalination

wazoku

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About GPID

The Global Prize for Innovation in Desalination, or GPID, was inaugurated in 2023 and aims to advance the research and development of innovative approaches to desalination, to address the widespread global issue of water scarcity.

With 26% of the world's population living in water-stressed regions, access to clean, safe, and usable water is a critical need. The GPID was set up to promote advancements in research and support breakthrough solutions, through direct funding, pilot programs, and a specialist accelerator network of support and expertise. This Prize was founded in 2023 by SWCC (Saline Water Conversion Corporation) now SWA (Saudi Water Authority). SWA is one of the world's largest producers of desalinated water, supplying 34 million people in Saudi Arabia and producing more than 20% of the world's desalinated seawater.

In 2024, the second year of the prize, Wazoku was proud to support the GPID in gathering applications from the Wazoku Crowd of experts and beyond, promoting the prize opportunity, and conducting Market Intelligence and Scouting projects.

1.6m+ impressions
across social media

209 applications
from **37 countries**

Featured in
620+
publications
globally



The Opportunity

In 2023, in GPID's first edition it received 105 applications from 22 different countries, resulting in 7 awarded winners and numerous special mentions and recognitions.

Following the success of its first year, the GPID increased its prize fund to \$10m USD and broadened its categories of applications, in order to further support innovation in desalination. Applicants could win up to \$100,000 for the Grand Prize in each category, up to \$200,000 in pilot funding, and \$50,000 in other cash awards for impact prize winners. In 2024, the prize categories and increased awards were split across Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs), meaning that anyone - from individuals without affiliation to mature start-ups and university research groups - could submit their innovations in the sector and still find success.

GPID was looking to discover, support, and supercharge everything from ideas to existing success stories in the desalination space. The 2024 application categories and subtopics were also highly-specialized, with everything considered, across: innovations in environmental impacts of desalination, energy consumption reduction, breakthrough technologies and use cases, and business model transformations.

How could the organizers of the 2024 prize discover, engage, and gather applications as from leading innovators across the water sector?



Wazoku's Support for GPID 2024

Wazoku, as a leader in ecosystem innovation and crowdsourcing, has a long history in identifying experts and their capabilities to give our enterprise customers the solutions to their problems or opportunities. As part of our support for the 2024 edition of the GPID, Wazoku provided the **platform, process, and participation** from our Wazoku Crowd.

Following 2023's 105 submissions from 22 countries, GPID wanted to broaden and deepen its reach into the water sector – aiming to gather over 200 submissions of great quality, from a wide range of technology readiness, while building the global reputation of the prize.



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The second year of the prize fund has met our greatest expectations, with some truly remarkable entries in responses to the Challenges we set. Access to clean, affordable drinking water is a fundamental human right. This year's winners have presented transformative solutions with the potential to create global change.

Dr. Mohammed Almaghrabi
Secretary General of the Global Prize
for Innovation in Desalination (GPID)

Platform

Hosting award entries on a platform with enterprise-level security and a comprehensive evaluation suite of tools.

Wazoku set up 5 open innovation Challenges across the TRL spectrum to capture relevant interest, direct outreach more effectively, and enable GPID to separate ideas from more mature proposals.

Our Crowd regularly visits, explores opportunities, and submits applications on the platform – a natural home for the exciting two-month awards program.

GPID wanted to use a **platform with in-built security, trust, and compliance** to safeguard the awards program.

The Discovery Award (TRL1-3), Breakthrough Award (TRL4-7), Venture Capital Deal of the Year, Most Innovative Idea in Water Production, and Most Impactful Lab/Accelerator in Water Challenges were the highest-performing and most-visited pages by our Crowd in 2024 – with 26,288+ page views in just 2 months!

Process

- Bringing 20+ years of awards management experience, including on high-price prizes like the \$1m Prize4Life.
- Consistent monitoring of activity and impact metrics – to ensure the Challenges received the right levels of web traffic and that Solvers with drafts/problems were guided safely through to application.
- Each GPID Challenge’s application portal was equipped with a **customized submission form**, making sure GPID evaluators received pertinent and required information from applicants. Utilizing a custom form allowed GPID to discover early-stage ideas, mid-stage tech, and later-stage deployment of approaches and maintain effective evaluation criteria for success.
- Wazoku hosted 3 webinars around the topic, inviting interested teams, individuals, and businesses to ask questions to the evaluation team and learn more about the critical problem of water security.
- Endorsement from experts – Wazoku’s partner conducted an interview with the CIO & CISO at Vitens, one of Europe’s premier drinking water companies, to position the GPID opportunity across social media with a leading voice.
- By leveraging paid media across Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn, Wazoku achieved at minimum 1.6m impressions in just 2 months.
- By pushing press releases to specific newswires (scientific journals, VC outlets, and traditional media centers), we achieved at minimum 620 publications worldwide!

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It was inspiring to search within and beyond our Wazoku Crowd community for innovative teams, start-ups, and incumbent businesses to participate in the 2024 GPID. Directly engaging with Solvers, learning their business’ capabilities, and seeing how passionate they are about ending water security was remarkable.



It was rewarding to support the GPID mission, as it aligns with our own: transforming the world, one idea at a time.

Catalina Gómez

Community Development Manager at Wazoku

Participation

Supporting and guiding the Wazoku Crowd and new joiners to make the best applications possible.

The Wazoku Crowd of experts, innovators, and start-ups is a time-tested and incredibly-successful community of problem solvers – but finding those with the right capabilities and desire to apply was paramount. Additionally, Wazoku also focuses on net-new registrants, to invite new applications from a whole world of problem solvers and innovators in desalination and water production.

Wazoku's Community team outreached directly to 74 previous winners in water and desalination Challenges, and more widely to the 5,200+ participants in similar Challenges run on our platform.

Staff took part in **1-1 interviews and capability deep dives with 100+ companies** on our shortlist – including MayMaan, Columbia University, and Aquasolis!

Extended invitation to participate to 9,000+ Solvers from the MIT Climate CoLab – an esteemed global research community in sustainability that is part of the Wazoku Crowd.

Using Market Intelligence and Scouting tools, we contacted more than 2,500 relevant companies, individuals, and research organizations to inform, educate, and bring them to apply to the GPID opportunities.

We reposted and featured the GPID across our global network of partners, including the IWRA (International Water Resources Association), Transforme (based in Chile), Ibtakir (based in the Gulf region), and Innovation Village (based in Uganda).

GPID 2024's Success

At the end of the GPID's open stage, in August 2024, the platform had received 209 high-quality submissions from 37 countries, ranging from early-stage to market-ready innovations. In November, 32 shortlisted of the GPID applicants attended a three-day innovation-driven water sustainability event in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The winning applicants were identified at the prize ceremony on the 25th November, which was opened by H.E. Eng. Abdullah Alabdulkareim.

GPID 2024 Journey



Following the exciting event in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, we were pleased to see the success of 5 Wazoku Applicants:



Ngai Yin Yip from Columbia University (United States)

Impact Award Winner for TRL4-7 in Water Quality Improvement and Reclamation; and awarded Special Mention prize in Most Impactful Lab/Accelerator in Water



Tayyar Bayrakci from CyFract (Turkey)

Impact Award Winner for TRL4-7 in Wastewater solutions



Maarten Ter Keurst from Natural Ventures (The Netherlands)

Mark Kriek from MayMaan Research (United States), and Øyvind Stenberg from Aquasolis (Norway) – Special Mention prize winners in Venture Capital Deal of the Year in Water Production

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I couldn't be happier with the incredible solutions presented by the Wazoku Crowd. GPID is leading the way in water innovation and brings together a global ecosystems of innovators, industry partners and academia that will make the world more sustainable, habitable and improve access to water.



Schønning Eysturoy
Senior Director Innovation
Ecosystems at Wazoku

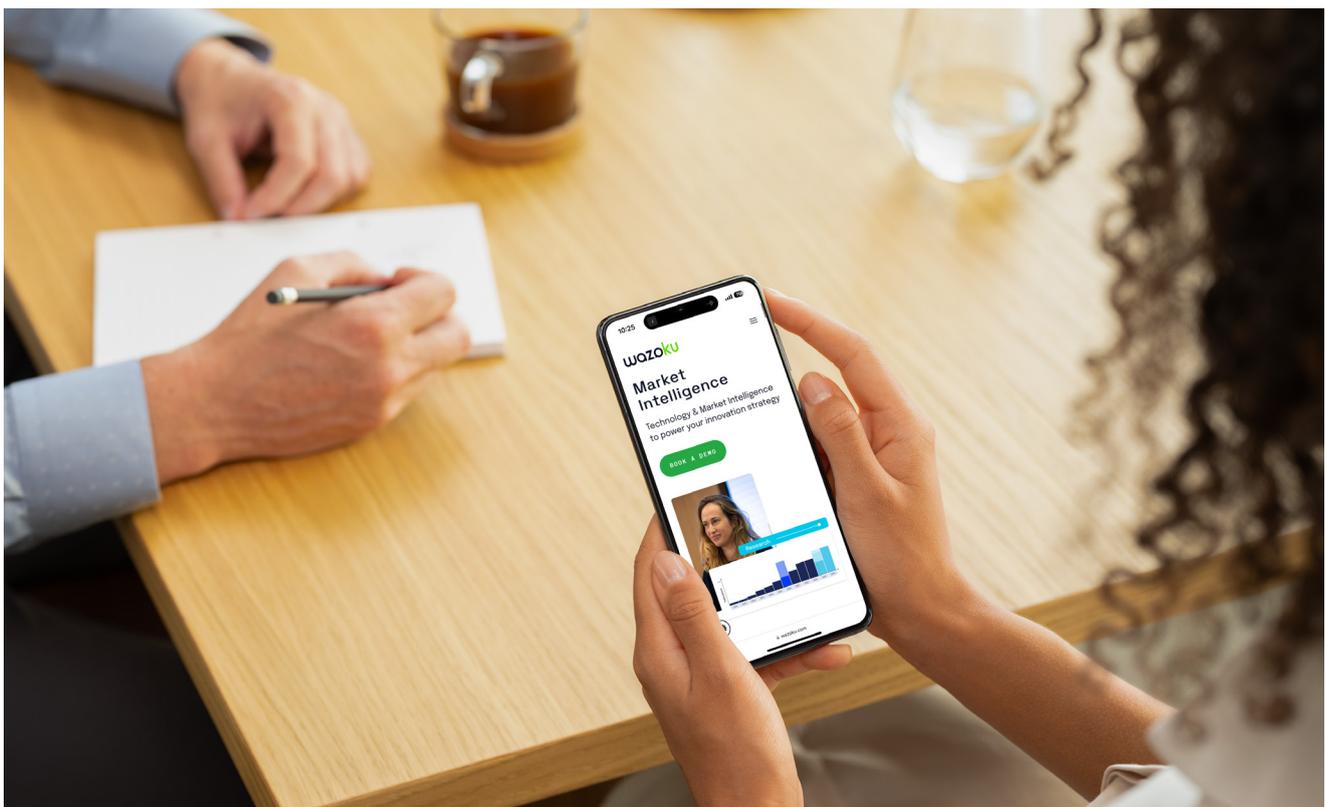


Successful applicants to the 2024 GPID have been awarded, offered ongoing prototyping and piloting support and funding, and are given the opportunity to take part in the Saudi Water Innovation Center (SWIC), a leading incubator and accelerator in the environment sector focusing on desalination and water technology.

About Wazoku

Wazoku is an innovation SaaS company revolutionizing how organizations tackle challenges, drive growth, and achieve measurable results through Total Innovation. As the world's only Networked Innovation Marketplace, Wazoku connects people, ideas, and technology to create scalable, impactful solutions. From empowering your employees to share ideas, collaborating with global partners, or exploring the limitless potential of open talent, Wazoku enables organizations to embed innovation into their core operations.

Through the Wazoku Total Innovation Suite, we provide market intelligence, innovation and ecosystem management, modular consultancy, and access to the world's first accredited open talent crowd of over 730,000 solvers. Our AI-powered platform and proven methodologies deliver efficiency, scalable outcomes, and sustainable value. By fostering diversity and collaboration, Wazoku ensures that everyone has a voice and role in the innovation process, driving transformative change one idea at a time.



**Change the world,
one idea at a time**



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