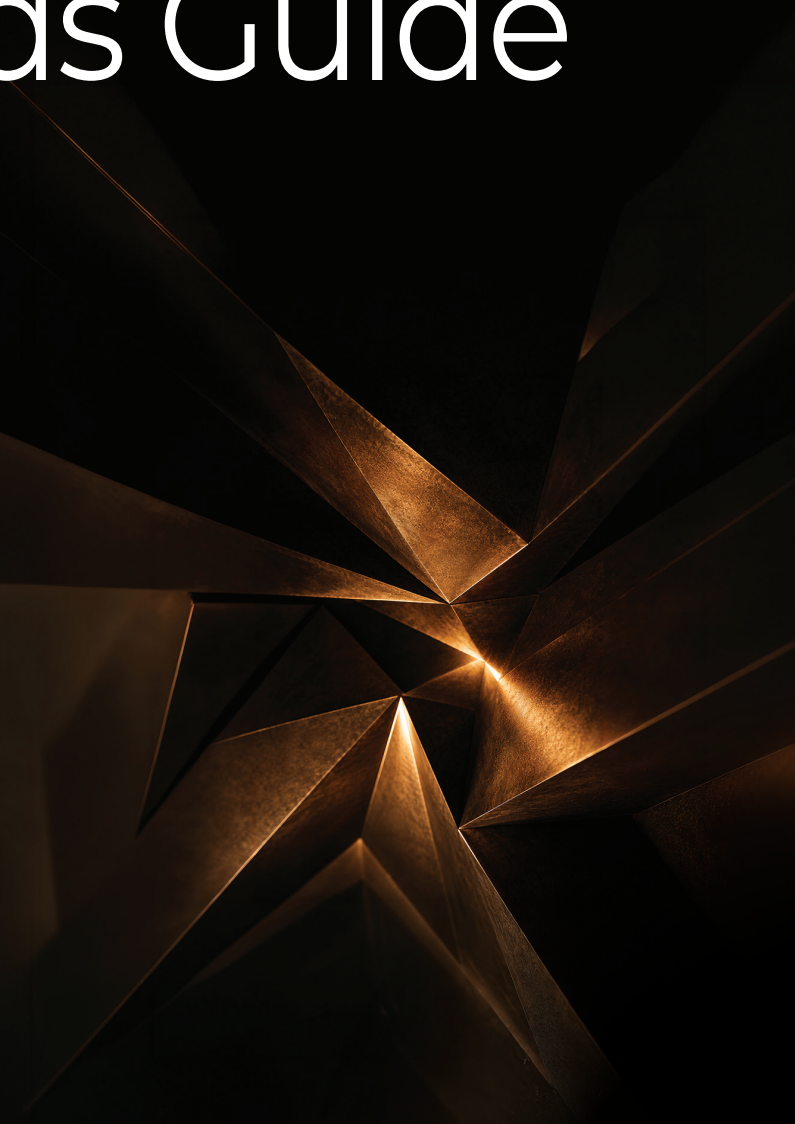




جائزة بطل التجمع  
CLUSTER CHAMPION  
AWARDS 2026



# Official Awards Guide



Presented by





Cluster Champion Awards were established to recognize the organizations that are driving meaningful impact across the food ecosystem.

From innovation and sustainability to talent development, trade, and food safety, these Awards celebrate the achievements that strengthen our industry and contribute to the UAE's long-term vision. Through recognition and knowledge sharing, we aim to inspire a culture of excellence that benefits the entire sector.

### H.E. ABDULLA BIN TOUQ AL MARRI

Minister of Economy and Tourism, UAE



UAE food sector is a key pillar of our nation's economic diversification, industrial growth, and food security ambitions. The Cluster Champion Awards recognize the organizations and leaders whose innovation, resilience, and commitment to excellence are helping shape a more competitive, sustainable, and future-ready food ecosystem.

By celebrating these achievements, we not only acknowledge success but also inspire continued progress across the industry

### SALEH LOOTAH

Chairman, UAE Food Cluster



جائزة بطل التجمع  
CLUSTER CHAMPION  
AWARDS 2026

# 01

## FOREWORD

# Celebrating Excellence across the UAE Food Ecosystem

Cluster Champion Awards were established to celebrate the organizations, initiatives, and individuals that are helping shape the future of food in the United Arab Emirates. Presented by the UAE Food Cluster, the Awards recognize achievements that are driving progress across the food ecosystem—from innovation and sustainability to talent development, trade expansion, food safety, and industry collaboration.

The Awards provide a platform to showcase success stories, highlight best practices, and recognize the organizations that are making a meaningful contribution to the growth, competitiveness, and advancement of the UAE food sector. As the industry continues to evolve, organizations across the value chain are embracing new opportunities, investing in innovation, strengthening capabilities, and creating value for customers, communities, and the wider economy. Their efforts deserve recognition, and their stories deserve to be shared.

Cluster Champion Awards seek to inspire excellence, encourage continuous improvement, and celebrate the achievements that are helping build a stronger, smarter, and more competitive food ecosystem for the future. We invite organizations across the UAE food sector to participate, share their success stories, and gain recognition for the initiatives that are creating lasting impact.

# 02

## UAE FOOD CLUSTER

# Building a stronger, smarter and more competitive food ecosystem

UAE Food Cluster is a strategic industry platform established to strengthen the competitiveness, resilience, innovation capacity, and sustainability of the UAE food ecosystem.

Bringing together manufacturers, processors, retailers, distributors, exporters, technology providers, investors, research institutions, academia, startups, and government stakeholders, the Cluster serves as a catalyst for industry development and collaboration.

The food industry is one of the UAE's most strategically important sectors. It contributes to economic diversification, food security, industrial development, job creation, export growth, and technological advancement.

Recognizing the opportunities and challenges facing the sector, the UAE Food Cluster focuses on creating an environment where businesses can innovate, grow, collaborate, and compete effectively on a regional and global scale.

## The Cluster's Strategic Priorities

UAE Food Cluster supports initiatives that advance



**Sustainable manufacturing practices**



**Collaboration and ecosystem engagement**



**Industry competitiveness and productivity**



**Innovation and technology adoption**



**Talent development and workforce readiness**



**Export growth and market expansion**



**Investment attraction and industrial development**



**Food security and resilience**

By connecting stakeholders and facilitating collective action, the Cluster plays an important role in supporting the long-term development of a future-ready food ecosystem.

# 03

## WHY CLUSTER CHAMPION AWARDS

# Celebrating Excellence. Inspiring Progress.

Recognition is one of the most powerful drivers of organizational excellence.

While many organizations are creating meaningful impact, their achievements often remain known only within their own businesses or immediate stakeholder networks. Valuable innovations, successful partnerships, sustainability initiatives, workforce development programmes, and operational improvements frequently go unrecognized beyond the organizations that implement them.

The Cluster Champion Awards seek to change this.

The Awards have been established to identify, celebrate, and showcase organizations that are delivering measurable value to the food ecosystem.

## By recognising outstanding initiatives, the Awards aim to



### Promote Best Practices

Highlight successful approaches that can be adopted and replicated by others across the industry.



### Encourage Innovation

Recognize organizations that challenge conventional thinking and create new solutions to industry challenges.



### Strengthen Competitiveness

Support the development of a world-class food sector capable of competing regionally and globally.



### Foster Collaboration

Encourage partnerships and collective action across the ecosystem.



### Inspire Continuous Improvement

Motivate organizations to pursue higher levels of performance and excellence.



### Showcase Industry Leadership

Recognize individuals and organizations that are helping shape the future of food in the UAE.

The Awards are ultimately designed to create a culture of excellence that benefits the entire industry.

# 04

## AWARDS PHILOSOPHY

# Excellence through Impact

Cluster Champion Awards are founded on a simple principle - **Recognition should be earned through measurable impact.**

The Awards do not seek to recognize intentions, aspirations, or future plans. Instead, they celebrate initiatives, programmes, projects, investments, and achievements that have already been implemented and have demonstrated meaningful outcomes.

## The Awards recognize excellence across multiple dimensions including



### Leadership

Demonstrating vision, commitment, and organizational direction.



### Innovation

Creating new products, services, technologies, and approaches.



### Sustainability

Driving environmental responsibility and resource efficiency.



### Economic Contribution

Generating value, growth, investment, and competitiveness.



### Collaboration

Building partnerships that strengthen the wider ecosystem.



### Talent Development

Investing in people and future capabilities.



### Resilience

Creating stronger, more adaptive organizations.



### Food Safety

Promoting excellence in quality, compliance, and consumer trust.

The Awards are designed to be inclusive while maintaining high standards of assessment and recognition.

Participation is encouraged from organizations of all sizes, from startups and SMEs to multinational corporations and large manufacturers.

# 05 Award Categories at a glance

Cluster Champion Awards recognize excellence across nine strategic categories that reflect the key drivers of growth, competitiveness, innovation, sustainability, and resilience within the UAE food ecosystem.

Awards are presented under 9 categories. Applicant organisations can decide to participate under three categories at the maximum per cycle. Application must be made separately for each category.

## 01 Innovation and Product Development

Recognising breakthrough products, technologies, processes, and innovations that create value across the food ecosystem.

## 02 Corporate Social Responsibility

Honouring organizations creating positive social impact through community engagement, employee wellbeing, food access initiatives, and social responsibility programmes.

## 03 Collaboration and Ecosystem Engagement

Celebrating partnerships and collaborative initiatives that strengthen the food ecosystem through collective action.

## 04 Market Expansion and Trade

Recognising successful efforts to expand market reach, increase exports, strengthen trade relationships, and enhance global competitiveness.

## 05 Economic Impact and Growth

Acknowledging initiatives that contribute to economic growth, investment attraction, industrial development, localisation, and value creation.

## 06 Talent Development and Workforce Integration

Recognising organizations investing in workforce development, capability building, skills enhancement, and future talent.

## 07 Resilience and Agility

Celebrating organizations that demonstrate adaptability, business continuity, operational resilience, and strategic preparedness.

## 08 Sustainability and Environmental Impact

Recognising initiatives that reduce environmental impact, improve resource efficiency, and advance sustainability objectives.

## 09 Food Safety and Regulatory Compliance

Honouring organizations that demonstrate excellence in food safety management, quality assurance, compliance, and consumer protection.

# Understanding the Award Categories

Cluster Champion Awards recognize excellence across nine strategic areas that contribute to the growth, competitiveness, sustainability, and future development of the UAE food ecosystem. The following pages provide detailed guidance on each category, including the types of initiatives recognized and the key outcomes assessors will consider during evaluation.

## CATEGORY 01

# Innovation and Product Development

## Driving the next generation of food innovation

Innovation is one of the most important drivers of competitiveness, growth, and long-term sustainability within the food industry. As consumer expectations evolve, technologies advance, and global food systems become increasingly complex, organizations must continuously innovate to remain relevant and create value.

This category recognizes organizations that are transforming the future of food through the development of innovative products, technologies, services, production methods, ingredients, packaging solutions, and business models. It celebrates organizations that challenge conventional approaches, embrace new ideas, and create meaningful solutions that improve efficiency, enhance consumer experiences, strengthen competitiveness, or address emerging industry challenges.

The category welcomes initiatives ranging from breakthrough product launches and research-driven innovations to digital transformation programmes, advanced manufacturing technologies, automation solutions, artificial intelligence applications, and novel food concepts.

### Examples include

Product Innovation

Research & Development Programmes

Food Technology Solutions

New Ingredient Technologies

Automation & Smart Manufacturing

Digital Transformation Initiatives

### What judges look for

Originality & Creativity

Technological Advancement

Market Relevance

Scalability & Future Potential

Commercial Impact

Contribution to Industry Advancement

## CATEGORY 02

# Corporate Social Responsibility

## Creating positive impact beyond business

Successful organizations recognize that their responsibilities extend beyond financial performance. Businesses play a critical role in supporting communities, creating opportunities, improving wellbeing, and contributing to broader social progress.

This category recognizes organizations that demonstrate a strong commitment to social responsibility through initiatives that create measurable and lasting value for employees, communities, consumers, and society. It celebrates organizations that integrate purpose into their operations and actively contribute to building stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities.

Whether through food donation programmes, educational initiatives, employee wellbeing programmes, community engagement projects, inclusion and diversity efforts, or social impact partnerships, this category honours organizations that use their capabilities, resources, and expertise to make a meaningful difference.

The category seeks to recognize initiatives that demonstrate genuine commitment, measurable outcomes, and long-term social value creation.

### Examples include

Food donation programmes

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Community outreach initiatives

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Employee wellbeing programmes

Education and awareness campaigns

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Inclusion and diversity initiatives

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### What judges look for

Social impact

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Community benefit

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Stakeholder engagement

Long-term sustainability

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Measurable outcomes

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Positive societal contribution

## CATEGORY 03

# Collaboration and Ecosystem Engagement

## Building stronger partnerships for collective success

No organization succeeds in isolation. The future of the food industry depends on collaboration across the value chain and the ability of stakeholders to work together in addressing shared challenges and unlocking new opportunities.

This category recognizes organizations that demonstrate leadership in building meaningful partnerships and fostering collaboration across the food ecosystem. It celebrates initiatives that bring together businesses, government entities, academic institutions, research organizations, startups, industry associations, and community stakeholders to create collective impact.

The category acknowledges that some of the industry's most significant achievements are realised through cooperation, knowledge sharing, and coordinated action. Whether addressing innovation, sustainability, workforce development, food security, or market development, collaborative initiatives often create outcomes that cannot be achieved independently.

This category honours organizations that recognize the power of partnerships and actively contribute to a stronger, more connected, and more resilient food ecosystem.

### Examples include

Public-private partnerships

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Industry collaborations

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Academic partnerships

Startup engagement programmes

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Cross-sector initiatives

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### What judges look for

Quality of collaboration

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Collective impact

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Stakeholder engagement

Knowledge sharing

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Ecosystem contribution

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Sustainability of partnerships

## CATEGORY 04

# Market Expansion and Trade

## Expanding the Reach of UAE Food Excellence

As global food markets become increasingly interconnected, the ability to successfully enter new markets, strengthen trade relationships, and build internationally competitive brands has become a critical driver of growth for the UAE food sector. Market expansion not only creates new commercial opportunities for businesses but also contributes to national economic development, export diversification, and the international recognition of UAE food products and capabilities.

This category recognizes organizations that have demonstrated outstanding achievement in expanding market reach, increasing exports, entering new geographies, strengthening distribution networks, developing strategic trade partnerships, and enhancing the global competitiveness of their products and services.

The category celebrates organizations that have successfully navigated complex market environments, identified new growth opportunities, adapted products and strategies to meet market demands, and built sustainable commercial success beyond their traditional markets.

Whether through international expansion, export growth, strategic partnerships, regional market leadership, or successful market diversification initiatives, this category honours organizations that are helping position the UAE as a globally recognized centre for food manufacturing, innovation, and trade.

### Examples include

Export development programmes

Trade promotion programmes

Entry into new international markets

Market access projects

International distribution partnerships

Strategic retail expansion initiatives

Brand internationalisation initiatives

Cross-border growth programmes

### What judges look for

Market growth and expansion

International competitiveness

Export performance

Market diversification

Revenue generation

Strategic execution

Brand development

Long-term commercial sustainability

## CATEGORY 05

# Economic Impact and Growth

## Driving Sustainable Economic Value for the UAE

The food industry plays a vital role in supporting the UAE's economic diversification agenda, industrial development objectives, and long-term growth ambitions. Investments in manufacturing, infrastructure, technology, localisation, and capacity expansion create significant value for businesses, communities, and the national economy.

This category recognizes organizations whose initiatives have delivered measurable economic impact and contributed to the growth, competitiveness, and resilience of the UAE food sector. It celebrates businesses that have generated meaningful economic value through expansion, investment, productivity improvements, job creation, localisation, and industrial development.

The category acknowledges organizations that have gone beyond individual business success to contribute to broader economic outcomes, including strengthening local supply chains, attracting investment, increasing production capabilities, enhancing productivity, reducing import dependency, and supporting national economic priorities.

Through their achievements, these organizations help strengthen the UAE's position as a leading destination for food manufacturing, investment, and industrial innovation.

### Examples include

Expansion of manufacturing facilities

New investments in food production infrastructure

Local sourcing initiatives

Import substitution programmes

Industrial development projects

Productivity enhancement programmes

Supply chain localisation initiatives

Capacity expansion projects

### What judges look for

Economic value creation

Investment impact

Business growth

Job creation

Industrial development

Productivity improvements

Contribution to the UAE economy

Long-term economic sustainability

## CATEGORY 06

# Talent Development and Workforce Integration

## Investing in People to Build the Future of Food

People are the foundation of every successful organization and the driving force behind innovation, productivity, and sustainable growth. As the food industry continues to evolve, organizations must invest in developing the skills, capabilities, and leadership required to meet future challenges and opportunities.

This category recognizes organizations that demonstrate excellence in workforce development, talent management, skills enhancement, and employee engagement. It celebrates initiatives that empower individuals, strengthen organizational capability, and contribute to building a highly skilled and future-ready workforce for the food sector.

The category honours organizations that actively support professional development, create opportunities for career advancement, promote workforce inclusion, and invest in long-term talent pipelines. This includes programmes that support leadership development, technical training, Emiratisation, graduate development, vocational education, and workforce integration.

By investing in people, these organizations are helping create a stronger, more competitive, and more resilient food industry for future generations.

### Examples include

Workforce training programmes

Leadership development initiatives

Graduate development schemes

Internship programmes

Emiratisation initiatives

Upskilling and reskilling programmes

Technical and vocational training partnerships

Employee development frameworks

### What judges look for

Workforce development outcomes

Skills enhancement

Employee engagement

Career progression opportunities

Workforce inclusion

Talent retention

Leadership development

Long-term workforce impact

## CATEGORY 07

# Resilience and Agility

## Building stronger organizations for an uncertain future

The ability to adapt, respond, and thrive in a rapidly changing environment has become a defining characteristic of successful organizations. From supply chain disruptions and market volatility to changing consumer expectations and emerging risks, resilience and agility are essential capabilities for long-term success.

This category recognizes organizations that have demonstrated exceptional adaptability, operational resilience, and strategic agility in the face of challenges and change. It celebrates initiatives that strengthen business continuity, improve risk management, enhance operational flexibility, and build robust systems capable of sustaining performance during periods of uncertainty.

The category acknowledges organizations that proactively anticipate challenges, invest in preparedness, strengthen supply chains, diversify sourcing strategies, and create adaptive operating models that enable sustainable growth and long-term stability.

The category celebrates initiatives that strengthen business continuity, supply chain security, risk management, operational flexibility, and organizational resilience.

### Examples include

Supply chain diversification strategies

Business continuity planning

Risk management programmes

Crisis response initiatives

Digital transformation for resilience

Operational efficiency projects

Inventory optimisation programmes

Contingency planning initiatives

### What judges look for

Organizational adaptability

Risk mitigation effectiveness

Supply chain resilience

Operational continuity

Agility in response to disruption

Strategic preparedness

Resource optimisation

Long-term resilience capability

## CATEGORY 08

# Sustainability and Environmental Impact

## Advancing a more sustainable food future

Sustainability is no longer an option—it is a business imperative. As organizations seek to balance growth with environmental responsibility, the food industry has an important role to play in reducing environmental impact, improving resource efficiency, and supporting the transition toward more sustainable production and consumption systems.

This category recognizes organizations that are demonstrating leadership in environmental stewardship and sustainable business practices. It celebrates initiatives that reduce waste, conserve resources, lower emissions, improve efficiency, and create positive environmental outcomes while delivering business value.

The category acknowledges organizations that are integrating sustainability into their operations, supply chains, products, and business models. Whether through circular economy initiatives, energy efficiency programmes, water conservation projects, sustainable sourcing practices, or carbon reduction strategies, these organizations are helping shape a more sustainable future for the industry.

Their efforts contribute not only to environmental improvement but also to long-term business resilience, competitiveness, and responsible growth.

### Examples include

Food loss and waste reduction programmes

Circular economy initiatives

Water conservation projects

Energy efficiency programmes

Renewable energy adoption

Carbon reduction initiatives

Sustainable sourcing programmes

Sustainable packaging innovations

Resource optimisation projects

### What judges look for

Environmental impact reduction

Resource efficiency

Sustainability outcomes

Measurable environmental performance

Innovation in sustainability

Circular economy contribution

Long-term environmental value

Scalability and replication potential

## CATEGORY 09

# Food Safety and Regulatory Compliance

## Strengthening trust through excellence and accountability

Food safety is the cornerstone of consumer confidence, public health, and industry reputation. In an increasingly complex food environment, organizations must go beyond compliance and establish robust systems that ensure product integrity, quality, traceability, and continuous improvement.

This category recognizes organizations that demonstrate excellence in food safety management, quality assurance, regulatory compliance, and risk prevention. It celebrates businesses that have established strong food safety cultures and implemented systems that consistently protect consumers while supporting operational excellence.

The category honours organizations that proactively invest in food safety, embrace best practices, leverage technology, strengthen traceability, and continuously improve compliance performance. It recognizes those that set high standards for quality and accountability while contributing to the advancement of food safety across the wider industry.

By safeguarding consumer trust and promoting excellence, these organizations play a critical role in strengthening the credibility and competitiveness of the UAE food sector.

### Examples include

Advanced food safety management systems

Quality assurance programmes

Product traceability systems

Regulatory excellence initiatives

Compliance innovation projects

Digital compliance solutions

Food safety culture programmes

Supply chain food safety initiatives

### What judges look for

Food safety performance

Compliance excellence

Quality management effectiveness

Consumer protection

Traceability and transparency

Continuous improvement

Industry leadership

Contribution to higher food safety standards

# Choosing the Right Category

Organisations may submit a maximum of three applications across a maximum of three categories.

Each application must represent a distinct initiative, programme, project, or achievement. The same initiative may not be submitted to more than one category.

Applicants are encouraged to select the category that best reflects the initiative's primary objective, strongest impact, and most significant contribution to the organization, industry, community, or wider food ecosystem.

Where an initiative could potentially fit more than one category, applicants should choose the category in which the initiative demonstrates the greatest measurable impact and strongest evidence of achievement.



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CLUSTER CHAMPION  
AWARDS 2026

# 06

## RECOGNITION LEVELS

# Celebrating Achievement across the Food Ecosystem

The Cluster Champion Awards recognize organizations that demonstrate measurable achievement, industry leadership, innovation, and contribution to the advancement of the UAE food ecosystem.

Recognition is awarded at two levels.

### UAE Food Cluster Champion

*The highest distinction awarded under the Cluster Champion Awards.*

This recognition is reserved for organizations that demonstrate exceptional achievement, industry leadership, measurable impact, and clear distinction within their chosen category.

Champion organizations serve as benchmarks for excellence and represent leading examples of best practice within the UAE food ecosystem.

Champion status is awarded only where assessors and the Jury determine that the initiative demonstrates outstanding performance against the evaluation criteria.

Champion status is not guaranteed and may not be awarded in every category.

### Champion Organizations Typically Demonstrate



**Sustainable  
manufacturing  
practices**



**Collaboration  
and ecosystem  
engagement**



**Industry  
competitiveness  
and productivity**



**Innovation  
and technology  
adoption**



**Talent  
development  
and workforce  
readiness**



**Export  
growth and  
market  
expansion**



**Investment  
attraction and  
industrial  
development**



**Food  
security and  
resilience**

### Excellence Recognition

Excellence Recognition is awarded to organizations that have successfully implemented initiatives and demonstrated positive contribution to the food ecosystem.

Recipients have shown commitment to improvement, innovation, and organizational development.

# 07

## RECOGNITION LEVELS

# Eligibility Criteria

## Who Can Apply?

Applications are open to organizations operating within the UAE food ecosystem.

Eligible applicants may include:

**Food manufacturers**

**Food processors**

**Ingredient suppliers**

**Packaging companies**

**Logistics providers**

**Retailers**

**Foodservice operators**

**Technology providers**

**SMEs**

**Industry associations**

**Startups**

**Research institutions**

**Multinational companies  
operating in the UAE**

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## General Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must:

- Hold a valid UAE trade licence
- Have implemented the initiative being submitted
- Demonstrate measurable outcomes
- Provide supporting evidence
- Agree to participate in assessment activities
- Comply with Award rules and timelines

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## Ineligible Submissions

The following are not eligible:

- Planned initiatives
- Concept-stage projects
- Unimplemented programmes
- Incomplete applications
- Applications submitted after the deadline
- Initiatives without supporting evidence

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## Multiple Applications

Organisations may submit applications across multiple categories, but limited to 3 per organisation.

Each application must represent a separate initiative. The same initiative may not be submitted under multiple categories.

Where multiple applications are submitted, each submission will be assessed independently against the criteria of the selected category.

# 08

## Application process

### STEP 1

#### Review the categories carefully

Review all award categories and identify the category that best aligns with the initiative being submitted.

Applicants should select the category that reflects the initiative's primary objective and strongest area of impact.

### STEP 2

#### Prepare your submission

Gather information relating to

- Initiative objectives
- Outcomes achieved
- Supporting evidence
- Implementation activities
- Stakeholders involved

### STEP 3

#### Complete the Application Form

Applicants are required to complete all mandatory sections of the official application form.

Incomplete applications may not proceed to assessment.

### STEP 4

#### Submit supporting evidence

Attach relevant supporting documentation that validates the claims made within the application.

Quality is more important than quantity.

### STEP 5

#### Submit before the deadline

Applications must be submitted through the official Awards portal before the published closing date.

**Late submissions may not be accepted.**

# 09

## APPLICATION JOURNEY

# Assessment Process

The Awards follow a structured and transparent evaluation process.



### STAGE 1

## Submission

Application received by the Awards Secretariat.



### STAGE 2

## Eligibility Review

Verification of eligibility requirements and documentation.



### STAGE 3

## Technical Assessment

Independent review against the assessment framework.



### STAGE 4

## Validation

Review of supporting evidence and, where applicable, site validation activities.



### STAGE 5

## Jury Review

Review of assessment outcomes and recommendations.



### STAGE 6

## Final Ratification

Approval of final recognition outcomes.



### STAGE 7

## Awards Ceremony

Presentation of recognitions and celebration of achievements.

# 10

## SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

# Demonstrating Impact

**Applications are assessed based on evidence.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit supporting materials that demonstrate implementation, outcomes, and impact.

## Examples of Supporting Evidence

### Business Performance

- Sales growth
- Revenue growth
- Export performance
- Productivity improvements

### Sustainability

- Carbon reduction data
- Water savings
- Energy efficiency results
- Waste reduction metrics

### Talent Development

- Training records
- Employee participation data
- Certification programmes
- Workforce development results

### Food Safety

- Audit reports
- Certifications
- Compliance records
- Quality performance indicators

### Innovation

- Product launches
- Patent registrations
- Research reports
- Pilot programme outcomes

## EVIDENCE TIPS

### Provide evidence that is

- Relevant
- Credible
- Verifiable
- Recent
- Directly linked to the initiative

# Ensuring Fairness and Consistency

All applications are assessed using a structured evaluation framework.

The process is designed to ensure

- Fairness
- Consistency
- Transparency
- Credibility
- Independence

## Assessment Framework

Applications are evaluated across five dimensions

Strategic Leadership & Commitment	20%
Implementation & Execution Excellence	20%
Results & Measurable Impact	25%
Ecosystem Contribution & Collaboration	20%
Innovation & Distinction	15%

## Assessment Methodology

Assessors evaluate

- Quality of implementation
- Strength of evidence
- Measurable outcomes
- Organizational commitment
- Industry contribution
- Distinction from peers

Detailed scoring guidance is available in the Applicant & Assessor Handbook.

# 12

## ASSESSMENT PROCESS

# Benefits of Participation

### Why Participate?

Participation provides organizations with the opportunity to benchmark performance, gain recognition, and showcase achievements.



#### Recognition

National recognition for excellence and achievement.



#### Visibility

Increased exposure among industry stakeholders, partners, and decision-makers.



#### Industry Positioning

Strengthened reputation and market credibility.



#### Employee Engagement

Recognition of employee contributions and organizational achievements.



#### Networking

Access to industry leaders, partners, and ecosystem stakeholders.



#### Knowledge Sharing

Opportunity to showcase best practices and success stories.



#### Future Opportunities

Potential participation in future Cluster programmes and initiatives.

# 13

## Frequently Asked Questions

### GENERAL

#### What are the Cluster Champion Awards?

The Cluster Champion Awards recognise organisations, initiatives, and partnerships that are driving excellence, innovation, sustainability, competitiveness, and growth across the UAE food ecosystem.

#### Who presents the Awards?

The Awards are presented by the UAE Food Cluster under the patronage of the Ministry of Economy & Tourism.

#### Why were the Awards established?

The Awards celebrate organisations that are contributing to the advancement of the UAE food sector while supporting national priorities related to economic growth, food security, sustainability, innovation, and talent development.

#### Why should my organisation apply?

Participation provides an opportunity to:

- Benchmark achievements against industry best practices
- Gain national recognition
- Showcase innovation and impact
- Strengthen brand credibility
- Highlight contributions to the UAE food ecosystem
- Inspire future growth and collaboration

#### Who can participate?

Participation is open to organisations operating across the food value chain, including manufacturers, processors, retailers, distributors, technology providers, startups, service providers, academic institutions, and ecosystem partners.

### ELIGIBILITY

#### Does an organisation need to be based in the UAE?

Yes. Applicants must have a significant operational presence in the UAE and demonstrate impact within the UAE food ecosystem.

#### Can multinational companies apply?

Yes. Multinational organisations with operations in the UAE may apply, provided the submission highlights achievements and impact within the UAE.

#### Are startups eligible to participate?

Yes. Startups are encouraged to apply, particularly where they can demonstrate innovation, growth, collaboration, or measurable impact.

#### Can government entities apply?

Government entities, semi-government organisations, and public-private initiatives may apply where relevant to the award categories.

### APPLICATIONS

#### How many categories can an organisation apply for?

An organisation may submit applications for a maximum of three (3) award categories.

#### Can the same project be submitted under multiple categories?

Yes. A project or initiative may be submitted under multiple categories if it meets the objectives and criteria of each category.

#### Is there an application fee?

There is no fee for organizations to apply for the awards, but all submissions are subject to an approval process.

#### What language should applications be submitted in?

Applications should be submitted in English unless otherwise specified by the Awards Secretariat.

#### What supporting documents can be submitted?

Applicants may provide supporting evidence such as:

- Reports
- Videos
- Case Studies
- Research Findings
- Performance Data
- Testimonials
- Certifications
- Media Coverage
- Photographs

## JUDGING PROCESS

### How are applications evaluated?

Applications are assessed against category-specific criteria by an independent panel of industry experts and subject matter specialists.

### What do judges look for?

Judges evaluate submissions based on factors such as:

- Impact
- Sustainability
- Innovation
- Scalability
- Effectiveness
- Industry Contribution
- Measurable Results

### Are all categories judged using the same criteria?

No. Each category has its own assessment framework aligned with the objectives of that category.

### Will applicants receive feedback?

The Awards Secretariat may provide general feedback where appropriate. Detailed scoring and assessor notes remain confidential.

### Is the judging process confidential?

Yes. All applications, supporting materials, and judging deliberations are treated as confidential.

## FINALISTS & WINNERS

### How are finalists selected?

Applications achieving the highest evaluation scores within each category may be shortlisted as finalists.

### Will site visits be conducted?

The Awards Secretariat reserves the right to conduct verification reviews, interviews, or site visits where required.

### How will finalists be notified?

Finalists will be contacted directly by the Awards Secretariat and announced through official Awards communication channels.

### When will winners be announced?

Winners will be announced during the Cluster Champion Awards Ceremony at the FutureFood Forum 2026.

### Can an organisation win more than one category?

Yes. Organisations may be recognised in multiple categories where they demonstrate excellence across different areas.

## CATEGORIES

### What award categories are available?

The Awards currently recognise excellence across the following categories:

- Innovation & Product Development
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Collaboration & Ecosystem Engagement
- Market Expansion & Trade
- Economic Impact & Growth
- Talent Development & Workforce Integration
- Resilience & Agility
- Sustainability & Environmental Impact
- Food Safety & Regulatory Compliance

### How do I choose the right category?

Applicants should review the category descriptions and judging criteria carefully and select the categories that best align with their achievements and demonstrated impact.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Can previously submitted projects be entered?

Yes, provided the initiative remains relevant and significant progress or measurable outcomes can be demonstrated within the eligibility period.

### Who can I contact for support?

For application assistance, eligibility clarification, or technical support, please contact the Awards Secretariat through the official contact details provided on the website.

### Where can I download the Awards Guide?

The Official Awards Guide, Applicant Handbook, category criteria, timelines, and supporting resources can be downloaded from the Awards website.

### How can I stay updated?

Follow the UAE Food Cluster and Cluster Champion Awards official communication channels for announcements, deadlines, and event updates.

# Key Dates

**Indicative timeline** operate on an annual cycle.

<b>22nd Jun, 2026</b>	-	<b>Applications Open</b>
<b>17th Aug, 2026</b>	-	<b>Submission Deadline</b>
<b>20th Aug to 10th Sep, 2026</b>	-	<b>Eligibility Review and Assessment</b>
<b>11th to 16th Sep, 2026</b>	-	<b>Validation Activities</b>
<b>17th to 22nd Sep, 2026</b>	-	<b>Jury Review</b>
<b>24th Sep, 2026</b>	-	<b>Final Ratification</b>
<b>29th Sep, 2026</b>	-	<b>Awards Ceremony</b>

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Official dates will be announced each year by the Awards Secretariat.

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## Contact Information

For application support, eligibility queries, category guidance, sponsorship opportunities, and technical assistance, applicants are encouraged to contact the Awards Secretariat.

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UAE Food Cluster Awards recognize the organizations, initiatives, and leaders shaping the future of food in the UAE.

By celebrating excellence and sharing success stories, the Awards contribute to building a stronger, more innovative, more sustainable, and globally competitive food ecosystem.

We invite organizations across the value chain to participate and showcase the initiatives helping drive the future of food in the UAE.



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