جائزة دبي الدولية لأفضل ممارسات التنمية المستدامة

Dubai International
Best Practices Award for
Sustainable Development

Dubai International Best Practices Award For Sustainable Development

Applicant Guidebook

About The Award

History of the Award:

Established in 1995—under the directive of the late Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum during the United Nations International Conference in Dubai—as an outcome of the Dubai Declaration.
This declaration created the international concept of sharing best practices for the accelerated development of the human settlements sector.

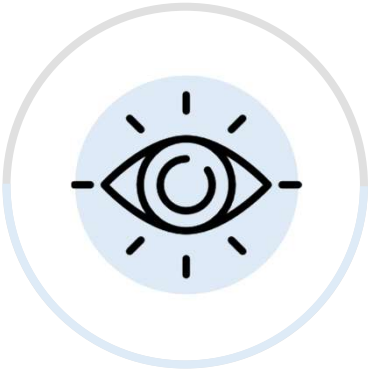
Purpose of the Award:

The Dubai International Best Practices Award for Sustainable Development aims to recognize excellence and support human settlements best practices and to create a global and unique knowledge sharing platform for best practices in human settlements.

***To be awarded in February 2026 during World Government Summit 2026 in Dubai.**
Total award prizes: $1 Million

Award Vision and Mission

Award Vision



Be a global platform to share futuristic practices achieving human happiness.

Award Mission

Recognize global innovative practices that made a positive impact and continue to improve the quality of people's life leading to the cities of the future.

Award Categories

Category 1: Best Practices Award in Urban Regeneration and Public Spaces

This category caters for addressing the cities of the future; finding ways in which cities ensure to provide affordable housing and access to food, water, clean air, mobility, public life and nature for continuously more numerous urban populations.

Category 2: The Most Beautiful, Innovative and Iconic Building

This category caters to recognize smart, innovative, human-centric sustainable projects that combine green design and construction practices with modern, intelligent architectural excellence in an innovative eco-human-cultural approach.

Category 3: Best Practices Award in Sustaining Urban Food Systems

This category caters for systemic change and much improved access to food by all people while maintaining a strong connection between food production, storage and supply to local, regional and global beneficiaries showing an impact on human settlements.

Category 4: Best Practices Award in Addressing Climate Change and Reducing Pollution

This category caters for solutions addressing climate change, pollution reduction, and the protection of a thriving biodiversity including long-term multilevel governance mechanics, stakeholder engagement, disaster management, and circular economy.

Category 5: Best Practices Award in Urban Infrastructure Planning and Management

This category caters for finding adaptable, local and resilient solutions, that will enable longer lifecycle of infrastructure, due to the fast-paced transformations in line with the 4th industrial revolution relying on innovative, futuristic and sustainable projects improving living conditions.

Who Can Participate

- National and local governments
- Academic institutions
- Non-governmental organizations
- Media entities
- Corporate and Private sector companies
- Individuals (Researchers, professional teams, etc.)

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants are expected to meet the following criteria:

1. The project, subject of the application, shall be implemented with tangible results for a period of at least one year (project launch should not exceed five years from the date of application)
2. Applicant should comply to the award eligibility criteria
3. Applicant should submit all requirements within the announced deadlines
4. Applicant should not participate in more than one project per category.
5. Submitted project cannot be used in more than one category
6. Applicant should complete the online application form and submit all requirements on the official award website
7. Applicant must provide official documents to prove his status in relation to the submitted project as individual, organization or corporate (ID documents, Authorization letter, Commercial / Registration license, etc.)
8. By applying to the award, the applicant gives full authorization to the award management to archive the submitted content and use it for specific publications. It is not of his/her right to request the recovery or restrict the team to publish or share some of the submission contents

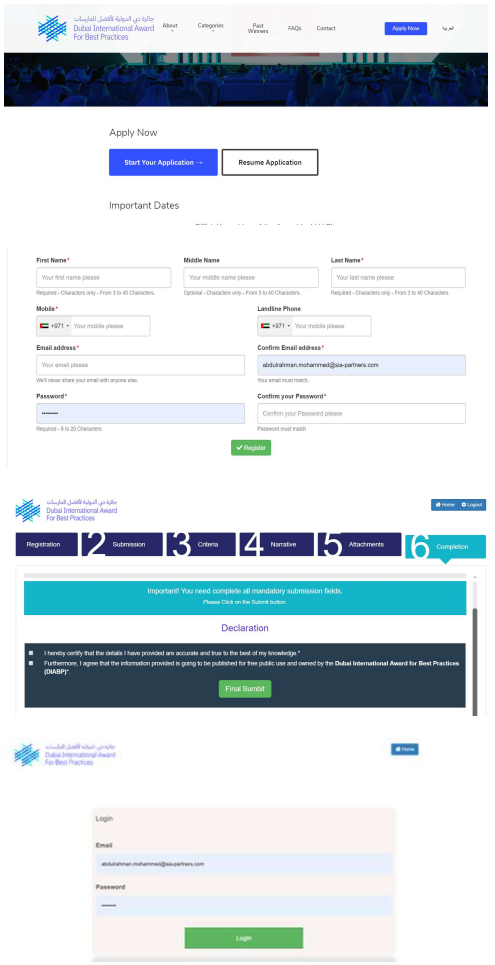
Submission Process

1. Register as a new user in dubaiaward.ae

2. Complete the online submission form on dubaiaward.ae

3. Review and submit the application form

4. Check the submission status through the platform

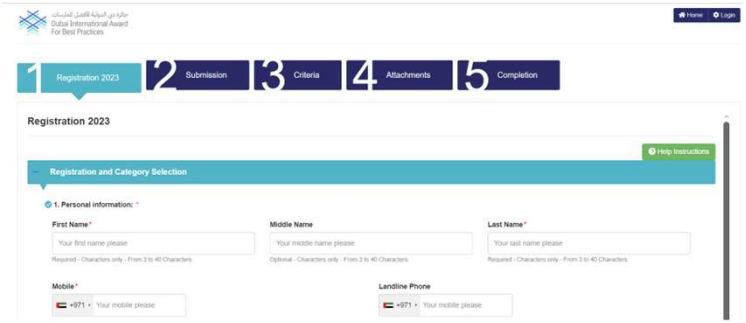


Online Application Process

1. Fill-in personal and project information
2. Choose category
3. Fill-in criteria requirements
4. Submit supportive documents as attachments

   The main attachment should follow the structure below:

   a) Project background and short description (Max. 250 words)
   b) Motivations, Inspirations and problems tackled (Max. 250 words)
   c) Technical details and information (Max. 500 words)
   d) Results and impact (Max. 1000 words)
   e) Proofs: Links to access related videos, Links to access related photos, press releases, project master plan adequate summary, related official documentation, proofs of results mentioned in the online submission form... etc.))
   f) Appendix for any other information
5. Review all submission contents
6. Review submission checklist to ensure all requirements are fulfilled
7. Complete your submission



Important Dates

Important Dates Dubai International Best Practices Award for Sustainable Development (14th Cycle)	
23rd Jun 2025	Registration opens for the 14th Cycle through the official award website
17th Oct 2025	Deadline to receive submissions
31st Jan 2026	Final recommendations of the award winners
Feb 2026	Awarding Ceremony of the 14th Cycle and announcement of the winners

Appendix: Award Categories Detailed Description and Criteria

Award Categories

Category 1

Best Practices Award in Urban Regeneration and Public Spaces

Category 2

The Most Beautiful, Innovative and Iconic building

Category 3

Best Practices Award in Sustaining Urban Food Systems

Category 4

Best Practices Award in Addressing Climate Change and Reducing Pollution

Category 5

Best Practices Award in Urban Infrastructure Planning and Management

Category 1

Best Practices Award in Urban Regeneration and Public Spaces

Description

Urban regeneration brings back underutilized assets and redistributes opportunities, increasing urban prosperity and quality of life. Public space is considered the backbone of cities. They are crucial for achieve sustainable cities and inclusive communities: providing ecosystem services, improving health and wellbeing, ensuring social inclusion and economic exchange.

This category caters for addressing the cities of the future; finding ways in which cities ensure to provide affordable housing and access to food, water, clean air, mobility, public life and nature for continuously more numerous urban populations.

Topics Covered

1. Affordable housing
2. Accessible and sustainable transport
3. Inclusive and participatory urban planning and design
4. Accessible, Inclusive and Safe Green and Public Spaces
5. Links to national and regional urban planning
6. Cultural and natural heritage
7. Environmental impact of cities
8. Disaster risk reduction and recovery
9. Urban regeneration tackling climate change

Potential applicants are expected to address, among others:

1. Urban regeneration, affordable housing, social cohesion and inclusion

- Adoption of smart cities new technologies and tools
- Efficient and effective use of technology
- Adoption of people-centered smart cities
- Facilitating unforeseen encounters for socio-economic development
- Safety, Inclusivity, and accessibility of public spaces
- Strengthen the links between national, regional and local development planning
- Achieving the SDG goals through urban regeneration

2. Climate change, disaster resilience, mobility

- Reaching carbon-neutral or carbon-negative cities
- Provide accessible, inclusive, and affordable mobility
- Increase resilience, ability to mitigate and adapt to natural hazards
- Increase urban green areas and urban biodiversity
- Harvesting rain water, floods or heat

3. Accessible, safe and inclusive public spaces

- Participatory methodologies and innovative public space design
- Implementation of high-quality public spaces in partnership with stakeholders
- Accessible and inclusive public spaces for all
- Safe and gender-sensitive public spaces design and use
- Inclusive and environmental friendly city-wide public space strategies

Category 1

Best Practices Award in Urban Regeneration and Public Spaces

Category 1 Criteria		
ID	***Criterion Name***	***Criterion Description***
1	Innovation in design and implementation	The project is expected to address successful usage of smart, innovative solutions and technologies in design and implementation
2	Affordable Housing	The project is expected to show the provision of significant number of affordable housing while promoting social mix
3	Housing Integration and Social Cohesion	The project should demonstrate the effective integration of affordable housing within broader urban regeneration efforts. It should promote social cohesion and diversity through participatory planning, while creating inclusive public spaces that foster community wellbeing and connectivity.
4	Urban and Rural Linkages	The project is expected to illustrate on the social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas, and national planning approaches (spatial)
5	Participation Inclusion and integration	The project is expected to depict the use of participatory approaches to urban planning and design, that address the needs of diverse groups and support positive economic, social cohesion, and environmental integration
6	Environmental planning and biodiversity	The project is suggested to show consideration for the natural environment and biodiversity taking in consideration existent green/blue corridors and public spaces networks
7	Mobility Solutions	The project is expected to include solutions that ensure safe, affordable, inclusive, and sustainable transportation systems and comprehensive mobility solutions
8	Zero emissions solution and used materials	The project is expected to include solutions that lead to zero emissions lifecycle, and carbon neutral/negative cities approaches, and techniques, plus the efficient use of local materials
9	Resources and pollution	The project is expected to include solutions that ensure efficient and effective resources usage, and waste and pollution reduction
10	Disaster management	The project is expected to address disaster management planning and measures plus ability to absorb heat and rain, in addition to safety and security sufficient measures
11	Infrastructure and nature-based solutions	The project is expected to address efficient infrastructure and nature-based solutions

Category 2

The Most Beautiful, Innovative and Iconic Building

Description

Sustainable and iconic building development require holistic local and life cycle data analysis in designing true bioclimatic and responsive developments. They balance preserving resources, habitats, heritage, visual appeal and optimizing wellbeing, quality, affordability, and performance.

This category caters to recognize smart, innovative, human-centric sustainable projects that combine green design and construction practices with modern, intelligent architectural excellence in an innovative eco-human-cultural approach.

Topics Covered

1. Sustainable and smart architecture
2. Innovation and smart building
3. Bioclimatic design and responsive building
4. Human-centric sustainable projects
5. Intelligent architectural excellence
6. Heritage preservation and restoration
7. Visual appeal and aesthetics in sustainable design
8. Waste reduction and sustainable building materials
9. Integration of nature and natural systems into built environments
10. Building energy and water efficiency
11. Vernacular architecture and locally sourced building materials and technology

Potential applicants are expected to address, among others:

1. Dynamic building

- Increase low utilization rate of the built environment
- Develop digital and augmented reality solutions
- Enabling security and justice in mixed-use and mixed-ownership models through regulatory innovation

2. People-centred smart building and innovation

- Leading design principle of a smart building development
- New technologies for the management of resources, security and telecommunication
- Digital participatory methods for people to influence their living environments.
- Improving human's standards of living

3. Green and sustainable building and efficiency in energy and water

- Utilization of latest and most efficient technologies (AI, M/L)
- Carbon-negative construction
- Significantly reduce life-cycle emissions of buildings
- Increase building's ability to resist, mitigate and adapt to climate change

4. Heritage preservation and restoration

- Restoring historic building or structure to its original design and purpose
- Renovating or rehabilitating buildings that have cultural or historical significance
- Establishing adaptive reuse of a historic building for new purposes
- Ensuring cultural sustainability of the housing and building blocks

Category 2

The Most Beautiful Innovative and Iconic Building

Category 2 Criteria		
ID	***Criterion Name***	***Criterion Description***
1	Responsible Design	The project is expected to promote sustainable measures factoring the local climate, culture, heritage, habitats, materials, wellbeing and minimize environmental and visual pollution as well as align with local and global sustainable goals and commitments.
2	Regenerative and adaptable design	The project is expected to implement measures resulting in a net positive impact on the natural systems via a holistic, integrated design and planning method for sustainable development that incorporates the principles of regenerative design, as well as an adaptive pattern language that re-establishes wholeness with nature, and considers the vulnerabilities of a changing climate, neighborhoods and landscape.
3	Digitization and technology in design and execution	The project is expected to demonstrate how it effectively utilizes smart and intelligent design tools and solutions to promote data-driven sustainable performance with evident results in indoor/ outdoor thermal comfort, carbon and environmental emissions, energy, water, waste, construction methods, user/system behavior and building operations.
4	Climate change resilience	The project is expected to help in increasing the climate change resilience of the built environment, with emphasis on greenery, gardens and sustainable buildings approaches and techniques and revitalization of the biodiversity in the built environment
5	Green building, emissions and materials technologies	The project is expected to adopt effective and efficient approaches that significantly reduce life-cycle emissions of buildings, while adopting carbon-neutral construction through design, materials, technology, construction, and efficient practices.
6	Sustainable and smart architecture	The project is expected to reflect architecture in its best form in terms of modernity, visual appeal, materials, environmental quality, construction, performance, innovation, artificial intelligence as well as maintenance and afterlife including social sustainability.
7	Sustainable Housing Design Excellence	The project should demonstrate excellence in sustainable housing design by integrating climate-responsive architecture, regenerative principles, and resilient building technologies. It should also reflect high standards in visual and cultural appeal, resource efficiency, and occupant wellbeing through smart, inclusive, and sustainable solutions.
8	Innovation in construction sector	The project is expected to show Innovation, new business and operational models of the construction sector, which enable sustainable production and consumption of the built environment.
9	Sustainable and resilient buildings	The project is expected to increase longevity with the use of sustainable materials, withstanding extreme weather brought on by climate change, and having a more positive impact on the environment in addition to supporting least development countries.
10	Waste and pollution management	The project is expected to manage its solid waste and waste water by effective smart planning and promote a circular, efficient, modular, flexible and durable design.
11	Quality of life	The project is expected to address human health, pollution, habitat restoration, connectivity, social justice and security in mixed use and mixed-ownership models through legal experimentations and regulatory innovation and empowerment, and include emergency preparedness management plan that addresses disaster risk reduction and resilience.

Category 3

Best Practices Award in Sustaining Urban Food Systems

Description

Food security is defined as the state of having reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable and nutritious food.
This category caters for systemic change and much improved access to food by all people while maintaining a strong connection between food production, storage and supply to local, regional and global beneficiaries showing an impact on human settlements.

Topics Covered

1. Food security
2. Zero Hunger
3. Preventing Malnutrition
4. Agricultural productivity and income
5. Sustainable food production
6. Crops and food diversity
7. Rural investment
8. Trade and food commodity markets

Potential applicants are expected to address, among others:

1. Climate, energy & biodiversity

- Promote sustainable and productive agricultural techniques
- Promote renewable energy in agriculture
- Decarbonize energy and material flows connected to food production
- Enhance biodiversity and genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and animals

2. Food technology

- Development of high-yield, genetically pure, pest- and disease-free crops
- Solutions that are less dependent on arable land or destructive weather patterns
- Encourage flow and adaptation of new technologies
- Investment in rural infrastructure, research and new technologies

3. Local community & markets

- Double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers
- Promote entrepreneurships, that aim to increase the incomes of small-scale food producers
- Providing new potential sources of revenue for smallholders
- Facilitate timely access to market information

Category 3

Best Practices Award in Sustaining Urban Food Systems

Category 3 Criteria		
ID	***Criterion Name***	***Criterion Description***
1	Resilience to climate change and productivity	The project is expected to include urban agricultural techniques and practices resilient to climate change, and other environmental change, while it is sustainable, resource-efficient and highly productive
2	Usage of renewable energy	The project is expected to use renewable energy, and have reduced fossil fuels dependency, and adopt approaches to reduce and decarbonize energy and material flows
3	Biodiversity and genetic diversity in plant and livestock gene banks	The project is expected to adopt approaches and techniques supporting biodiversity and genetic diversity of seeds, domesticated animals, farmed, and cultivated plants, as well as yield efficiency including urban agriculture, along with approaches for increasing investment in plant and livestock gene banks including technology promoting organic food production
4	Dependency on arable land, weather patterns, and waste management techniques	The project is expected to include solutions that are less dependent on arable land or destructive weather patterns, and waste management
5	Healthy crops	The project is expected to offer cultivation and development of high-yield, genetically pure, pest- and disease-free crops. The project should also produce healthy food that promotes better quality of food
6	Fragile ecosystems	The project is expected to support the fragile ecosystems including forests and green vegetation and wetlands
7	Food distribution	The project is expected to measures and support ensuring food is made available on local / accessible markets
8	Combating degradation, land erosion and displacements	The project is expected to ensure reduction of the degradation, erosion of cultivatable land, and displacement of local communities to reduce waste production to ensure reduction of degradation
9	Infrastructure linkage	The project is expected to strengthen the bonds with existing and future multi-level infrastructure, and the dependent human settlements
10	Dietary trends	The project is expected to have positive changes in dietary trends, linked health conditions, and healthy storage methods

Category 4

Best Practices Award in Addressing Climate Change and Reducing Pollution

Description

Living environment is defined as the natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity. This category caters for solutions addressing climate change, pollution reduction, and the protection of a thriving biodiversity including long-term multilevel governance mechanics, stakeholder engagement, disaster management, and circular economy.

Topics Covered

1. Resilience to climate-related hazards and natural disasters
2. Climate change integration into urban policies, planning & management
3. Education and awareness-raising
4. Freshwater ecosystems and water security
5. Urban ecosystems and Urban biodiversity restoration
6. Desertification and land degradation
7. Waste management
8. Sustainable lifestyles
9. Marine pollution

Potential applicants are expected to address, among others:

1. Climate change & energy

- Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
- Promote and/or adopt renewable energy
- Increase energy efficiency of buildings and transportation
- Raise awareness on climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation

2. Sustainable lifestyles

- Raise awareness on sustainable development and lifestyles
- Showcasing sustainable urban lifestyle through practices such as: reducing single-use plastics, engaging in urban farming, buying local good including sustainable fashion.

3. Pollution, waste & land degradation

- Reduce waste generation
- Enhance management of environmental resources and ecosystem services
- Reduce marine pollution of all kinds
- Contribute significantly to achieving land degradation neutrality

Category 4

Best Practices Award in Addressing Climate Change and Reducing Pollution

Category 4 Criteria		
ID	***Criterion Name***	***Criterion Description***
1	Integration of climate change policies	The project is expected to ensure integration of climate change measures into national, and regional policies, strategies and planning along with stakeholders participation in setting solutions
2	Renewable energy in buildings and transportation	The project is expected to use renewable energy, and reduce the usage of fossil fuels , and maximize the energy efficiency of buildings and transportation
3	Climate change planning, management and governance	The project is expected to include methods, and mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning, management, and functioning environmental governance
4	Disaster management	The project is expected to include or add institutionalized disaster management policies and techniques related to climate change including education, and awareness-raising on all community levels
5	Waste and pollution management	The project is expected to find pollution reduction and waste management methods and techniques starting from generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse
6	Reduction of marine pollution	The project is expected to show significant reduction of all marine pollution, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
7	Freshwater ecosystems	The project is expected to offer solutions in conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of terrestrial, and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services
8	Combating desertification	The project is expected to offer solutions in combating desertification, restore degraded land and soil affected by desertification, drought and floods
9	Awareness about sustainable lifestyle	The project is expected to include ways to achieve dissemination of essential knowledge, and raising awareness about sustainable lifestyle, and development
10	Attitude changes towards sustainable lifestyle	The project is expected to increase the motivation, and self-drive creation to lead attitude, and cultural community change, towards the required sustainable lifestyle

Category 5

Best Practices in Urban Infrastructure Planning and Management

Description

Infrastructure is defined as the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies, etc.) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.
This category caters for finding adaptable, local and resilient solutions, that will enable longer lifecycle of infrastructure, due to the fast-paced transformations in line with the 4th industrial revolution relying on innovative, futuristic and sustainable projects improving living conditions.

Topics Covered

1. Quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure
2. Environmentally sound technologies and processes
3. Local technology development, research and innovation
4. Inclusive and sustainable industrialization
5. Scientific research and upgrade of technological capabilities
6. Access to infrastructural information
7. Access to financial data

Potential applicants are expected to address, among others:

1. Retrofitting infrastructure

- New infrastructure replacement solutions
- More sustainable, cost-effective and resource-sensitive
- Encourage research and technology capabilities

2. Cutting-Edge technologies

- New leapfrog solutions
- Pre-evaluation of leapfrog models
- Increase the sustainability and resilience of the infrastructure
- Democratize access in least developed nation

3. Deconstructing silos

- Encourage mission-driven governance models
- Enable cross-sectorial solutions
- Foster multi-stakeholder collaboration
- Increase the overall sustainability and resiliency of the desiloed infrastructures

4. Rethinking the enablers of infrastructure construction

- Enable new financing models
- Increasing community participation and citizens engagement
- Social diversity and peaceful social mixing
- Adoption for more sustainable, resilient, and accessible infrastructure approaches

Category 5

Best Practices in Urban Infrastructure Planning and Management

Category 5 Criteria		
ID	***Criterion Name***	***Criterion Description***
1	Innovative and sustainable infrastructure	The project is expected to help in developing and supporting innovative, pro-equality, efficient, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, and use of advanced alternatives evaluation
2	Sustainable, cost-effective and resource-sensitive infrastructure	The project is expected to include adoption of widely spread or commonly used infrastructure solutions to be more sustainable, cost-effective and resource-sensitive (such as behavioral change solutions), and the introduction, and support of cross-sectorial solutions
3	Sustainable industrialization and employment	The project is expected to show inclusive and sustainable industrialization safeguarding industrial employment and gross domestic product
4	Multi-stakeholder collaboration	The project is expected to address the fostering of multi-stakeholder collaboration through governmental incentive structures or market regulations, and the promotion of mission-driven governance, and financing models
5	Sustainable lifestyle	The project is expected to increase the motivation, and self-drive creation to lead attitude, and cultural community change, towards the required sustainable lifestyle
6	Integrated Housing Infrastructure Systems	The project is expected to develop and implement integrated housing infrastructure systems that directly support sustainable urban living. This includes solutions that address affordability, resilience to climate change, efficient land use, and the social integration of communities.
7	Leapfrog models ethics	The project is expected to promote the ethical and equality pre-evaluation of leapfrog models (such as: mobility, or housing-as-a-service)
8	Cooperations and citizens engagement	The project is expected to help in encouraging the community co-creation, co-funding, co-ownership models to increase the citizens engagement
9	Relations with urban planning and food security needs	The project is expected to include methods and techniques to cater for, urban planning and development, food security requirements, smart cities and buildings needs
10	Social mixing techniques and models	The project is expected to include techniques and models the ensures social diversity, shared responsibility, citizen engagement, and peaceful social mixing
11	Developing local retrofit solutions	The project is expected to increase the support, and encouragement of domestic research and technology capabilities to develop local retrofit solutions, development, and innovation

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