

BSC Connects - Tech for Impact Awards 2026 Aina Project

Terms and Conditions

These Terms and Conditions (T&C) are intended to govern the relationship between the organisers and the spin-offs, start-ups and SMEs that decide to register and participate in the BSC Connects - Tech for Impact Awards 2026 event organised by the Barcelona Supercomputing Center through BSC Connects programme, within the Barcelona Deep Tech Summit 2026.

Registering for the call and submitting a proposal imply full acceptance of these T&C.

For the purposes of this Agreement, the parties agree that, when used in capital letters in this document, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated, unless otherwise defined in this Agreement.

1. Purpose

The BSC Connects - Tech for Impact Awards is an open innovation activity organised by the Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC) through BSC Connects with the participation of leading corporations, to promote the ideation of new solutions that respond to real needs, through an open innovation methodology and a collaborative ecosystem between industry, start-ups and spin-offs.

Its main objective is to connect industry with start-ups and SMEs to foster public-private collaboration.

2. Definitions

Organiser: The Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC), through BSC Connects programme, email: connects@bsc.es

Participant: Any start-up or SME that registers for the event, accepts these T&C and competes in the BSC Connects - Tech for Impact Awards.

Other Parties: Any person who registers, accepts these T&C and participates in another role, such as Jury, Participating Corporation, attendee or Organiser.

Event: Refers to the BSC Connects - Tech for Impact Awards AINA Project, an open innovation challenge organised by BSC.

Participating Corporation: A company that takes part in the Awards by proposing one or more real challenges to be addressed by the Participants.

3. Clauses

The objective of the BSC Connects - Tech for Impact Awards is to promote innovation through the ideation of new solutions to real needs that add value, through an open innovation methodology and in a collaborative ecosystem between industry, start-ups and spin-offs.

This programme especially seeks to connect industry with start-ups and SMEs, to facilitate public-private collaboration.

4. Who can participate

The event is aimed at start-ups, spin-offs and SMEs passionate about innovation in the field of Artificial Intelligence, data, supercomputing, language technologies and other advanced technologies. It is particularly focused on founders of Deep Tech SMEs.

5. Participation rules

Persons over 18 years of age belonging to any start-up or SME working in the field of Artificial Intelligence and Deep Tech within the R&D&I ecosystem, who register within the established deadlines, may participate.

Each participant may submit only one proposal per challenge, and may submit proposals to more than one challenge provided each one specifically addresses that challenge.

Participants guarantee that the information provided is true and complete. Providing false or misleading information will lead to exclusion.

The costs of preparing the proposal and of attending the Event (travel, accommodation, materials) are borne by each participant.

6. Registration

Registration must be made individually, indicating the company (start-up or spin-off) in the Typeform created for this purpose. Participation in this event is completely free of charge.

Participants will have access to a registration form in which they must provide information about their profile, the start-up or SME they belong to, contact details, interests and the proposal they submit to address the challenges set by the participating corporations, among others.

Only proposals submitted through the Typeform within the deadline will be accepted. Incomplete, duplicate or late proposals may be excluded.

7. Deadlines

Registration opens: Week of 21 September 2026.

Registration closes: 19 October 2026 (23:59 CEST).

Semi-finalists notified: Last week of October 2026.

Event: Within the Deep Tech Summit, 5 November 2026.

If needed, the Organiser may extend the submission deadline.

8. Challenges

The challenges will be aligned with the technological areas, research lines and focus of the participating corporations. Their general aim is to solve real problems they face in their daily activity.

The complete list of challenges, including the Aina Project challenges, is published on the official website.

8.1. Aina Project challenges

This edition includes a special Aina Project line. To be eligible, proposals submitted to an Aina Project challenge must:

- use the Aina Kit (the open models, datasets and documentation of the Aina Project, available at <https://langtech-bsc.gitbook.io/aina-kit>) or any of its components, stating in the proposal which components are used; and
- acknowledge the Aina Project in the proposal and, if selected, in the pitch.

Proposals that do not meet these conditions will not be eligible for the Aina Project challenges or their prize.

9. Jury

The jury will be composed of representatives of the participating corporations, BSC professionals, opinion leaders, technologists and experts in related fields.

The jury's decisions are final.

10. Selection process

The process will consist of two phases:

Phase 1 – Pre-selection

Once registration has closed, the Organiser will carry out a preliminary assessment to verify eligibility and alignment with the scope of the challenge.

The jury will select the most outstanding proposals for each challenge, depending on the number and quality of the proposals received. Not every challenge is guaranteed a semi-finalist.

The pre-selected teams will be notified by email.

Semi-finalists must confirm their in-person attendance within the deadline indicated in the notification; otherwise, the place may be offered to the next best-rated proposal.

Phase 2 – Final Presentation (Final Pitch)

The pre-selected proposals will take part in the final event, within the Deep Tech Summit (5 November 2026), where they will present their ideas to the jury in a 5-minute pitch.

The jury will score the proposals according to the evaluation criteria and select the winners.

Only proposals that pass the pre-selection may take part in the final phase and compete for the prizes.

11. BSC Connects - Tech for Impact Awards Finals

The selected start-ups and SMEs will present their idea to the jury in a 5-minute pitch, which must include:

- Initial objective of the proposal.
- Level of development achieved.
- Advantages and limitations.
- Technology used.
- For Aina Project challenges, the Aina Kit components used.
- Any other information relevant to the evaluation.

Pitches are delivered in person in Barcelona. Not attending without justified cause means losing the place in the final.

The jury will select the three best proposals, which will receive the prizes.

12. Prizes

Within the framework of the Deep Tech Summit, the Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC) recognises and rewards the three most innovative SMEs (start-ups, spin-offs) able to respond to the technological challenges set by the participating corporations.

The three winners of the BSC Connects - Tech for Impact Awards will obtain unique recognition and the boost needed to take their solution to the next level:

Main prizes

- Strategic support and personalised guidance
Direct access to experts from BSC and the innovation ecosystem to refine and accelerate the implementation of the proposed solution.
- High-level mentoring
Mentoring sessions with BSC experts and industry leaders to strengthen the business model, growth strategy and international outreach.
- Privileged access to BSC infrastructure
Possibility of using cutting-edge resources such as the AI Factory, as well as advanced tools in supercomputing and disruptive technologies, in accordance with the access conditions of each infrastructure.

2026 edition prizes

- Tailored AI Factory introductory session (winners and semi-finalists)
A curated introduction to AI Factory services for start-ups, with the AI Factory managers.

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- Aina Project technical session (winners and semi-finalists of the Aina Project challenges)
A session with the Aina Project technical team to explore Aina resources and their possible applications.

Additional prizes

- International visibility and outreach
Dissemination of the winning projects through BSC communication channels, as well as media coverage during the event.
- Strategic connections
Access to the network of corporations and organisations linked to the Deep Tech Summit.
- Participation in BSC projects
Opportunity to collaborate in future calls and European innovation projects.
- Official recognition
Distinction as Winning Startup of the BSC Connects - Tech for Impact Awards, with official certification and seal to strengthen its market positioning.

Conditions applicable to prizes

Prizes are non-monetary, personal and non-transferable, and cannot be exchanged for cash. Awarding a prize does not oblige the participating corporations to contract or implement the awarded solution. Sessions, mentoring and access will be scheduled with the awarded start-ups after the Event, subject to the availability of the teams involved.

13. Evaluation criteria

The criteria and scores will be as follows (maximum 20 points each, total 100; all criteria carry equal weight):

Strategic alignment of the idea with the challenge – 20

Impact and scope of the idea – 20

Experience of the proposing company – 20

Potential and adaptability – 20

Technical feasibility – 20

14. Intellectual Property

All ideas and solutions developed by the participants will remain their property, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Participants confirm that their proposals are original and do not infringe third-party rights.

The Organiser may request permission to publish non-confidential summaries or descriptions of the winning projects for communication and dissemination purposes.

15. Confidentiality

Participants undertake to keep confidential any proprietary information shared by the Organiser or other Participants during the challenge.

The Organiser will treat Participants' information confidentially and will use it solely to organise and evaluate the challenge.

Proposals will be shared with the participating corporation that owns the challenge and with the jury, solely for evaluation purposes.

Pitches delivered at the Event are public, so participants should not disclose information during their pitch that they wish to keep confidential.

16. Data Protection

The Organiser complies with the EU GDPR and applicable data protection laws.

Participants' personal data will be processed exclusively for the management of the event and related communication.

Participants may exercise their rights of access, rectification, erasure and objection by contacting connects@bsc.es

17. Image rights

The Event will be photographed and filmed. By participating, participants authorise the Organiser to use images and videos of the Event, together with their company name and proposal title, on the communication channels of BSC and the Barcelona Deep Tech Summit, free of charge. Participants may object by writing to connects@bsc.es before the Event.

18. Changes and cancellation

The Organiser may modify, suspend or cancel the call for justified reasons. If a participating corporation withdraws, its challenges may be cancelled.