



# Solar Innovation Challenge 2026

## Got a bright idea? We want it.

### **This is your moment to change the future.**

Your generation has the power to spark real change using solar energy and clean-tech and this is your chance to prove it.

### **Think big. Think smart. Think revolutionary.**

From cutting carbon to powering new possibilities to inventing tech that inspires your entire community. We want ideas that show how young people can lead the charge toward a Net Zero future.

If your idea can save energy, inspire others, make a real measurable impact then it belongs in this challenge.

### **What's up for grabs?**

- Student award
- Sustainability Fund donation for your school.

### **The future needs your spark.**

Submit your solar solution and shine a light on tomorrow.



**Talk to your teacher today or scan the code and let your ideas shape the future.**

**Closing date for entries 30 January 2026**

# Teacher guidance pack.

## Solar Innovation Challenge 2026.

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### Purpose of the competition.

The Solar Innovation Challenge helps students connect their new **school solar installation** with **real decisions** about reinvesting savings and accelerating progress towards **Net Zero 2030**. It's designed to:

- Encourage **pupil voice** and leadership on sustainability
- Join the dots between **solar, savings, behaviour change and wider projects**
- Generate practical ideas that schools may wish to explore further

### Who can take part?

- Open to **secondary** pupils at schools in the **GBESP Midlands Lot 1** programme
- Entries can be **individual or team-based**

### How to introduce it to students (suggested approach).

- Frame the context:
  - Your school is receiving / has received a **solar array** that will cut electricity bills and carbon emissions by **circa 20%**.
  - There is an opportunity to think about **how savings and momentum from solar** could be used to go further.
- Share the Challenge:
  - *"If you could work with your teachers to reinvest those savings to further reduce energy use and carbon in your school or community, what one key initiative or innovation would you prioritise – and why?"*
- Encourage students to think about:
  - Where the school uses the **most energy**
  - Where **behaviour change** could make a big difference
  - How ideas could be **realistic by 2030**

### What entries should include.

Each entry should clearly set out:

- The idea/initiative (what it is)
- How it would work in the school or community

- Why this is the top priority use of savings or momentum from solar
- The expected impact by 2030 (e.g. energy saved, carbon reduced, people influenced)

Accepted formats:

- Written explanation (up to 500 words)
- Drawings/diagrams (scanned or photographed)
- Short video (up to 5 minutes)
- Model or prototype (photographed/filmed, plus a short explanation)

### Suggested timing and delivery.

- Can be run as:
  - A lesson or double lesson in science, geography, PSHE, or design & technology
  - A club / eco-committee project
  - An enrichment or homework challenge
- We recommend allowing:
  - One session to explore Net Zero 2030 and brainstorm
  - One session (or homework) for students to develop and refine their entries

### Judging criteria (for you to share with students).

Entries will be judged on:

- **Creativity (30%)** – Is the idea original, bold, and imaginative?
- **Practicality (25%)** – Could it realistically be delivered by 2030 in a school setting?
- **Impact (25%)** – Would it make a real difference to your school or local community?
- **Presentation (20%)** – Is the idea clearly explained or shown, so others can easily understand it?

### Submission process.

- Collect entries and ensure they:
  - Include student names and year group(s)
  - Clearly identify the school name
- Submit your school's entries by **5pm, 30 January 2026** to:

[innovation.challenge@eenergy.com](mailto:innovation.challenge@eenergy.com)

- Use the file name format of: name\_yeargroup\_school.pdf
- Please confirm in your email that:
  - Entries are the students' own work

- You have followed your school's policies on **parental consent** and **use of images/videos** where relevant

### What happens next.

- Entries will be reviewed by the judging panel.
- Winners will be notified via the school and invited to be recognised at the **Great British Energy Solar Partnership (GBESP) closing ceremony, location and date to be confirmed.**
- Winning ideas may be shared with **MACE, RAFT**, and across eEnergy's channels (subject to school consent).

# Terms & Conditions.

## Solar Innovation Challenge 2026.

### 1. Promoter.

The promoter of the Solar Innovation Challenge 2026 (the “Competition”) is eEnergy Group plc (“eEnergy”), in partnership with delivery partners under the GBESP Midlands Lot 1 programme.

### 2. Eligibility.

2.1 The Competition is open to pupils attending secondary schools participating in the GBESP Midlands Lot 1 programme in England.

2.2 Entries must be submitted via a teacher on behalf of the school. Individual pupils may not submit entries to us directly.

2.3 Employees of eEnergy and their immediate family members may participate only via their eligible school, and shall not receive any additional advantage in the judging process.

### 3. Competition period.

3.1 The Competition opens on the date notified by eEnergy to participating schools and closes at 5pm on 30 January 2026 (the “Closing Date”).

3.2 Entries received after the Closing Date will not be considered.

### 4. How to enter.

4.1 To enter, pupils must create a submission responding to the Competition brief provided on the official landing page and in teacher guidance.

4.2 Accepted formats include:

- (a) Written explanation (maximum 500 words);
- (b) Drawings or diagrams (scanned or photographed);
- (c) Short video (maximum 5 minutes);
- (d) Model or prototype (photographed or filmed, with a short explanation).

4.3 Each entry must be submitted by a teacher by email to [innovation.challenge@eenergy.com](mailto:innovation.challenge@eenergy.com) by the Closing Date.

4.4 Teachers must include the school name, pupil name(s) and year group(s) with each entry.

## 5. Entry requirements.

5.1 Entries must be the original work of the pupil and must not infringe any third-party rights (including copyright, trademarks or privacy rights).

5.2 Entries must not contain any material that is offensive, discriminatory, unlawful, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate for a school setting. eEnergy reserves the right to disqualify any such entries.

5.3 Each entry must be from an individual pupil. Group, joint or class entries are not permitted and will be disqualified. Teachers may support and guide pupils, but only one named pupil can be the entrant and prize recipient.

## 6. Judging and selection of winners.

6.1 All eligible entries will be assessed by a judging panel appointed by eEnergy, anticipated to include:

- Harvey Sinclair – CEO, eEnergy
- Cass Swallow – CMO, eEnergy
- Shaun Beattie – Commercial Director - Solar, eEnergy
- Mark Dolling – Chief Partnership Officer, eEnergy
- Cleo Ibberson – Cluster Lead, RAFT (Retrofit Action for Tomorrow)
- Gemma Taylor - Associate Director, Sustainability – Education Sector Lead, Mace

6.2 Entries will be judged against the published criteria: Creativity (30%), Practicality (25%), Impact (25%), Presentation (20%).

6.3 The panel's decision is final and binding and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the outcome.

## 7. Prizes.

7.1 There will be two prize-winning entries in total across all eligible entries, awarded as follows:

### (a) First Prize – “Solar Trailblazer”

The First Prize winner will receive:

- One *Solar Innovation Pack* for the winning pupil, comprising: solar-powered headphones, solar speaker, solar torch and solar power bank;
- 100 trees planted in the pupil's name; and
- A £350 donation to the winning pupil's school Sustainability Fund.

## (b) Runner-Up Prize – “Solar Changemaker”

The Runner-Up will receive:

- One *Solar Innovation Pack* for the pupil, comprising: solar-powered torch and solar power bank;
- 50 trees planted in the pupil’s name; and
- A £150 donation to the pupil’s school Sustainability Fund.

7.2 Prizes are non-exchangeable and non-transferable. eEnergy reserves the right to substitute any element of a prize (including specific items within the Solar Innovation Packs and the tree-planting provider) with an alternative of equal or greater value if necessary.

## 8. Notification of winners.

8.1 Winning schools will be notified by email using the contact details provided on entry.

8.2 If a school does not respond within a reasonable period of 1 week, eEnergy reserves the right to select an alternative winning entry.

## 9. Use of entries and publicity.

9.1 By entering, schools grant eEnergy a non-exclusive, royalty-free, worldwide licence to use, reproduce, display, publish and communicate entries (in whole or in part) in connection with:

(a) The Dudley College event (Feb 2026);

(b) Promotion of the GBESP Midlands Lot 1 programme;

(c) eEnergy’s educational and marketing materials, including digital and social channels.

9.2 Where reasonably practicable, pupils will be credited by first name, initial and school (e.g. “Sam H, Greenfield School”).

9.3 Any use will be subject to the school’s safeguarding and consent requirements.

## 10. Data protection.

10.1 eEnergy will process personal data (including pupil and teacher names, school details and contact information) in accordance with applicable data protection laws and its privacy notice.

10.2 Personal data will be used solely for the purposes of administering the Competition, judging entries, prize fulfilment, and any agreed publicity.

## 11. Safeguarding.

11.1 Schools are responsible for ensuring that appropriate parental/guardian consents are obtained for pupil participation, including for any images or videos submitted.

11.2 No images of pupils will be used publicly by eEnergy without confirmation from the school that relevant consents are in place.

## 12. General.

12.1 eEnergy reserves the right to cancel, suspend or amend the Competition where it becomes necessary to do so due to circumstances beyond its reasonable control.

12.2 These Terms & Conditions shall be governed by English law, and any disputes shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.