

ADE Awards 2026

Guidance

The coming years are critical for ensuring our energy system sees the transformation required to squeeze every drop of value from an increasingly renewable based system. The ADE Awards have been a beacon of excellence across all sectors of Demand and Heat Networks; showcasing innovation, best practice and whole system achievements across all corners of energy infrastructure, services and products. The ADE awards provide an opportunity for organisations and professionals to celebrate success and collective attainment.

This guidance document gives some further detail and insight as to what we're looking for in the entries. It should be read in conjunction with the Award Rules which can be found on ADE's website. Entries which do not comply with the Rules will be rejected.

The Essence of the Awards

We are looking for good news stories to help celebrate and promote our industry's achievements. We want to hear how your project made a difference, about the journey you took people on and the impact you've made. **We're particularly interested in how you've excelled at customer service, contributed to a just energy transition to net zero and see the energy system as a whole. The judging panel will award bonus points for projects that sit across both heat networks and demand.**

The entry forms are short and have been designed to help you tell your story. The entries must be technically robust, but we're looking for a human angle too. How did it come about? What was the need? Who did you work with? What challenges did you face? What is your solution? What positive impact did it have?

Changes for 2026

The categories have changed slightly for 2026, reflecting our industry and the landscape in which we operate. The new categories are:

1. ADE: Heat Networks Award [Existing]
2. ADE: Demand Award [Existing]
3. Rising Star Award [Existing]
4. Showcasing Innovation – People's Choice Award **[NEW]**
5. Heat Networks – Champion in Compliance and Consumer protection **[NEW]**
6. Demand – Excellence in Customer Care and Consumer Experience **[NEW]**

Any scale of project can enter any of the categories, from industrial to domestic and everything in between.

What could you win?

ADE Awards presents a unique opportunity to showcase the incredible projects that are driving forward our sectors. As a shortlisted entry you will join 350+ delegates from across the industry to celebrate your achievements. Winning one of the awards increases your exposure and places you right in the spotlight of the energy transition. Winning includes:

- Invitation to the Awards Dinner on November 24th 2026 at Church House, London
- Presentation of a trophy on the night in front of industry leaders as well as key political stakeholders
- Inclusion in the Awards booklet, with a case study of your project

- Details of your company and project featured across ADE social media and website
- Support from ADE's External Affairs team to organise an MP site visit to your project

The Award Categories

The award categories are divided into three sections.

1: Project, Products and Service Awards

The Project awards celebrate operational demonstrations of ADE: Heat Networks and ADE: Demand in action. In all the Project Awards, the judges are looking for entries that:

- Showcase best practice in conceptualisation, planning and delivery
- Demonstrate innovative and creative solutions
- Enable users to better engage with the energy system
- Bring together all partners of the project in the application
- Combine a compelling story with solid data to demonstrate impact
- Provide excellent customer service and contribute to a just transition to net zero.
- Show the interactions between the decarbonisation of heat and the way in which we bring households and businesses more into the energy system. This could be for example, through incorporating a better understanding of users' energy needs into the design and delivery of projects or enabling them to participate more through flexibility.

The projects can be located anywhere in the world, as long as the company is based in the UK. Project awards must be operational for at least 6 months. You will need to complete an Entry Form and a Data Collection Form to enter these categories.

Category	Focus
ADE: Heat Networks	Recognising projects that are delivering real results in the supply of heat through heat networks (district, communal and SGLs) to customers as part of our journey to net zero 2050. Projects with a strong focus on consumer engagement and innovative approaches to integrating a demand-led system will be particularly favoured.
Heat Networks - Champion in Compliance and Consumer protection	Recognising products and services that have consumer protection at the very heart of the product/service mission; enabling fair practices that support heat network regulation and deliver the highest levels of compliance and customer satisfaction
ADE: Demand	Recognising projects that bring us closer to a demand-led system through empowering energy users to decarbonise and/or provide services to the grid through flexibility. Projects that show innovative approaches to heat decarbonisation as part of creating a demand-led system will be particularly favoured.
Demand - Excellence in Customer Care and Consumer Experience	Recognising products and service that deliver smart and innovative solutions to customers. Whether they are domestic, non-domestic or industrial, this award recognises that customer care and user experience should be at the forefront of companies' objectives as we move towards low carbon, decentralised energy solutions

Showcasing Innovation – People’s Choice Award	This award recognises innovation in all corners of the decentralised energy sector. From pipes and valves to innovative infrastructure and project design. No invention too small or project too bold. Shortlisted projects and products will be shared with Awards Dinner attendees and everyone will be invited to vote on the evening of the event.
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3. Individual Awards

This year’s individual award is the ‘Rising Star’. This is an opportunity for us to celebrate new talent in our sector. The judges are looking for people with vision and drive, who are already having an impact in their field. There is no age limit, however we would expect the entrants for this category to have been working in the sector for a maximum of five years. You will need to complete an entry form only for this category.

At their own discretion, ADE may also present a President’s Award to recognise an individual who has given exceptional service to the Association and its work.

4. People’s Choice Awards

This year’s award is the ‘Showcasing Innovation – People’s Choice Award’. This is an opportunity for us to celebrate new innovation, of all kinds, shapes and sizes in our sector. The judges are looking for projects, products and services that are unlocking barriers in the decarbonisation of heat through heat networks and that are enabling households and businesses to decarbonise and participate in the energy system in a way that works for them.

All successful entries will be listed in the annual ‘Showcasing Innovation Report’ which will include a QR for people to scan on the evening of the Awards Dinner and vote for their favourite project, product or service.

The entry forms

1: Project Awards

Project Awards entries will need to complete the main application form and a data collection form.

Below we take each question in turn and give some ideas as to what we’re looking for. The entries are very competitive, so it’s worth taking the time to make yours stand out. What makes yours particularly interesting or worthy of an Award?

It’s also really important that you submit at least three high-resolution colour photographs / graphics with your entry. These will be used in the Awards booklet and at the ceremony, so try to make them as interesting as you can. We would strongly encourage you to include photographs showing the human side to your story as well as the technology if at all possible.

a) Main application forms

Basic information

The name and location of the project, the name of your client (if appropriate) as well as your own contact details.

Who are your end users / customers?

This question asks for an early indication of the scale of your project: cities/communities, industrial, commercial or domestic (or a combination of any of the above).

**Project summary**

This is a short paragraph (60 words max) summarising your project. It's our entry-point into your project and will also be used when we're writing the Awards booklet, shortlisting all the entries. Try to include some project specifics (e.g. site, client, technology, size) as well as why it is a stand-out entry. What difference has it made? What have the key outcomes been?

Project detail

This is where you're given space to tell your story and to give us the detail of your project. You have 500 words and could for example include:

- The client
- The site
- The challenges
- The solution
- The technology
- The innovation
- The team
- The install
- The outputs
- The difference you made

Engagement

This is another opportunity for you to tell us the qualitative side of your story. How did you engage with your client/stakeholders and the wider community? What were the wider social benefits (for example, regeneration or impact on fuel poverty, supporting industrial competitiveness)? How did you contribute to the sustainability or carbon goals of your client? What is the difference your project will make in human terms? You could also include a testimonial from your client or scheme users about the difference the project has made. We're particularly looking for projects that demonstrate excellent customer service so make this section shine.

Impact

Your project must be technically robust. For the Awards to be valuable, we need to reward projects that really deliver. This is where you can tell us the story of how much carbon and cost savings you've made, and the extent to which you're reduced demand (and so improved security of supply). How much did the scheme cost? What are the savings in terms of its overall energy consumption/energy costs/carbon emissions? How are you contributing to the just energy transition?

You can also use this section to tell us about any technologically innovative features of your project.

The facts and figures of your project must also be submitted on the Data Collection Form.

Contribution to net zero carbon

We want to hear how your project is helping the energy system and energy users as we strive towards net zero carbon. How will it affect the way we tackle climate change and our approach to zero carbon pathways? Beyond the carbon savings of this particular project, how are you enabling / facilitating change on a wider scale?

The X Factor

This is your closing statement – what we'll be left with when we read your application. Use this space to really sell us your project – convince us why you should win. Why does your project dazzle? Why is it a cut above the rest? Why should it win this award? You can also use this space to (re)tell us your three most impressive statistics.

b) Data Collection form (excel spreadsheet)

All Project Awards entries must be accompanied by a Data Collection form.

The excel spreadsheet has separate worksheet tabs for ADE: Heat Networks and ADE: Demand. If your project sits across both of these then please add data to both tabs. Please complete the project details at the top of each worksheet, even though this will feel like duplication.

We're looking for facts and figures, which again need to be robust and demonstrable. Please use published energy prices (eg Energy Trends or supplier's published prices). Calculations should be shown: if you have some stellar numbers the judges need to understand why they are so good. If they can't understand why, they are likely to question them. The metrics required on each worksheet are slightly different, each tailored to the typical data relevant to each project type. If any of the data is confidential, please mark this on the sheet.

We also need to know what technical standards you comply with. These will vary depending on the technology you install; for example, for heat networks, we would expect adherence to CP1. Tell us how you complied too - or submit evidence of your compliance as an appendix.

The Data Collection forms will be assessed by our technical advisors before being submitted to the judges. If any of the questions are not relevant to your project, please answer N/A.

Further support

If you have any questions about the awards, categories or the entry forms do please get in touch. In the first instance please contact Liz Warren at liz.warren@se-2.co.uk.