



CDEMA and European Union Launch Caribbean Resilience Innovation Challenge 2026

Caribbean innovators invited to advance tested solutions through expert support, international partnerships and pitching opportunities at the 14th Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM 14)

23 October 2026 — The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), with assistance from the European Union, through its Global Gateway Initiative and the renewed partnership with the Caribbean, has opened applications for the Caribbean Resilience Innovation Challenge 2026, inviting innovators across eligible Caribbean countries to advance tested solutions that strengthen disaster and climate resilience.

The Challenge seeks practical innovations in disaster risk management, climate adaptation and community resilience. Start-ups, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, social enterprises, community-based innovators and applied research teams are encouraged to apply. Women- and youth-led ventures are particularly encouraged to participate.

Applicants must be based in one of CDEMA's 20 Participating States. They must demonstrate progress beyond the idea stage through a proof of concept, pilot or early operational use.

Fifteen selected innovators will participate in a virtual accelerator from 5 to 25 November 2026, receiving expert coaching, practical training and pitch preparation to strengthen their investment and partnership readiness.

Seven finalists will advance to the Grand Final at CDM 14 in Georgetown, Guyana, on 11 December 2026. Each will receive fully funded travel for one lead representative, an opportunity to pitch their solution and access to curated Deal Room meetings with European investors and technical partners.

Elizabeth Riley, Executive Director of CDEMA, emphasised: “Caribbean innovators understand the resilience challenges facing our communities and bring practical solutions rooted in that experience. This Challenge will help them strengthen tested solutions, build partnerships and prepare for wider application. We encourage eligible innovators across the region to seize this opportunity to help turn Caribbean ingenuity into lasting resilience.”

Her Excellency Fiona Ramsey, Ambassador of the European Union to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States, and the OECS, noted: “Our partnership with the Caribbean on disaster risk management goes back many years, and Global Gateway gives it fresh momentum. At CDM 14, through the Caribbean Resilience Innovation Challenge and the Deal Room, the European Union is helping bring together local ideas, investment, expertise and global partners, so that innovative resilience solutions can move from concept to reality.”

The Challenge provides a pathway for Caribbean innovators to engage with European expertise and networks, explore collaboration and strengthen the potential for their solutions to benefit more communities.

Applicants do not need an existing EU partner to apply. Joint Caribbean–EU teams, and proposals with strong potential for EU–Caribbean partnership, are welcome. Selection and participation do not guarantee investment or a commercial partnership.

Applications close on Friday, 30 October 2026, at 11:59 pm AST.

For eligibility requirements and applications, visit:

<https://cdmconference.com/innovation-challenge-2026/>

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