



This document outlines the information required to fill out the Ciena Solutions Challenge Submission Forms. Educators are encouraged to make a copy of this form and the [Slide Template](#) below and share them with students so that students can prepare the slide presentation and related project information.

Note that the student reflection video is only required for any projects that are included as part of a Sustainability Award Application. Educators must login to www.cienachallenge.org and go to [My Submissions](#) to submit student projects and apply for a **Submission deadline: March 5, 2026, 11:59 PST.**

Project Gallery Submission Form

- **Project Name**
- **How many students worked on this project?**
- **Big Idea.** (1-3 words) *Challenge Based Learning starts with identifying a big idea. The big idea should be something important to your life such as community, water, gender equality, and climate change. What is your big idea?*
- **Essential Question.** (15 word max) *Essential questions provoke deep thought, are often not easy to answer, and provide a framework for the challenge. What is your essential question?*
- **Project Description.** (200 word max) *Share what your project is about, including the challenge it relates to and how your actions or proposed solution addresses it.*
- **What [Sustainable Development Goals](#) does this team's big idea relate to?** *Choose up to three related Goals.*
- **Featured Image.** (Upload only files of the following formats: png, jpg) *This image should be one that can represent the project if selected for the Ciena Solutions Challenge Project Gallery.*
- **Slide Presentation.** (15 slide max, uploaded as a .pdf. File Size Limit: 100MB). *As part of your slide presentation, tell the story of your investigations, the actions you have taken so far, and the impact (if any) of these actions. Include related outputs like podcasts, digital games, apps, data visualizations, interactive maps, or something else leveraging digital tools and technologies to address the challenge. If the solution is not in digital form, include media such as photos, videos, or design files that demonstrate the solution or actions taken. If you are sharing links in your submission, make sure that judges have access to view them. We recommend you use the Share setting "Anyone with the link can VIEW". You can test that your links are shareable by trying to open them in an 'incognito or private window'. (Use this [Slide Template](#) as a guide)*
- **Student Reflection Video Link.** (3 minute max). *This video is required for any project that will be referenced as part of a Sustainability Award application. This short student-produced video should synthesize the project and include insights from activities, what was investigated and learned, an overview of actions taken, the impact (if any) of these actions on the local community, and how these actions relate to the Sustainable Development Goals. More guidance can be found on this [Student Reflection Video Tip Sheet](#). If you are not including this project in a Sustainability Award application, the student reflection video is optional.*

The [Ciena Solutions Challenge Sustainability Award Form](#) below will appear once an educator has submitted at least one project to the project gallery. Educators may then optionally apply to be considered for funding to sustain or scale one or more of the Challenge projects shared in the gallery.

Sustainability Award Form

- **Award Submission Title** (300-character max) *In a short statement, provide a description of the Ciena Solutions Challenge activities you are applying to sustain or scale.*
- **What challenge project(s) do you want to sustain or scale?** *[auto-select up to 3 projects from submissions to project gallery]*
- **How does the project(s) creatively use technology?** (300 word max) *Judges are not looking for the fanciest or most expensive tools available, but rather they will be looking for creative use of the digital media and technology that is available in each context and how it is strategically integrated as part of actions taken by students.*
- **How would a \$3,000 Sustainability Award enable the team to improve upon, sustain, and/or scale their Ciena Solutions Challenge activities?** (300 word max)
- **How would a \$3,000 Sustainability Award benefit additional current or future students in the organization or school community as it relates to Ciena Solutions Challenge activities?** (300 word max)
- **What existing resources in your school and/or community can you use to sustain your Ciena Solutions Challenge activities?** (300 word max) *This might include key people, community support, and organizational structures, along with creative use of existing tools and equipment, to sustain the work. Submission review will consider how sites are planning for continued impact without additional funding or once additional funding ceases.*
- **Provide a budget breakdown detailing how you will use \$3,000 to sustain your work.** *If you are receiving or have access to additional funds for this work please include them in this budget and identify the source of supplemental/additional funds.*
- **(Optional) As part of the review process, judges will consider how and if the school or youth organization that is applying serves underserved and excluded students, including low-income, minoritized, and marginalized students. This includes students that fall into the categories below. If any of these apply to your participating students, please share more in the space below.** (300 word max)
 - *Free and Reduced Price Lunch or equivalent SES (socioeconomic status) indicators used in the country/region such as lack of adequate housing, low household income, or unemployment.*
 - *Language learners (students whose home language is not the primary language of instruction at the school)*
 - *Special education/504/IEP or equivalent students with disabilities indicators used in the country/region*

Sustainability Award Judging Rubric

	Beginning (1)	Developing (5)	Exemplary (10)
PROJECTS			
Student Reflection Video(s) (15%)	Video(s) does not provide a clear overview of the project activities.	Video(s) provides a clear overview of the project activities. Two or more of the following elements are missing: related investigations and what was learned, an overview of actions taken, and the impact (if any) that these actions have had or will have on the community.	Video(s) provides a clear overview of the project activities, including related investigations and what was learned, an overview of actions taken, and the impact (if any) of that these actions have had or will have on the community.
Student Project Portfolio (20%)	Portfolio(s) does not convey a clear social purpose in response to a real-world problem or concern. It is unclear how action concepts and/or products could have a beneficial impact.	Portfolio(s) conveys a clear social purpose in response to a real-world problem or concern but it's unclear how the action concepts and/or products could have a beneficial impact.	Portfolio(s) conveys a clear social purpose in response to a real-world problem or concern and related investigations. The action concepts and/or products could have a beneficial impact.
Creative Use of Technology (20%)	Submission includes outputs that are not original. Technology has been used to copy ideas, products, or solutions from others rather than demonstrating originality.	Submission includes outputs that are original, but reflect minimal use of technology beyond documentation of activities.	Submission includes outputs that showcase students' creative use of technology to address the challenge. Technology is strategically integrated as part of actions taken by students.

Sustainability Award Judging Rubric

	Beginning (1)	Developing (5)	Exemplary (10)
CASE FOR FUNDS			
Use of Existing Resources (15%)	Team does not describe how they will use existing resources (e.g. key people, community support, and systems, along with creative use of existing tools and equipment) to support their challenge activities	Team identifies existing resources (e.g. key people, community support, and systems, along with creative use of existing tools and equipment). It is unclear how these resources will support their challenge activities.	Team identifies existing community resources (e.g. key people, community support, and systems, along with creative use of existing tools and equipment). The resources identified will provide sufficient support to sustain their challenge activities after supplemental funding is used.
Use of Award Funding - Team describes how the award funding will be used to improve upon, sustain, and/or scale their Ciena Solutions Challenge project activities and benefit additional current or future students in the organization or school community.			
Direct Benefit (10%)	Team provides a limited or unclear explanation of how award funding will be used to improve upon, sustain, and/or scale their challenge project activities.	Team provides an adequate explanation of how award funding will be used to improve upon, sustain, and/or scale their challenge project activities.	Team provides a thorough and detailed explanation of how award funding will be used to improve upon, sustain, and/or scale their challenge project activities.
Extended Benefit to Organization / School Community (20%)	Proposal demonstrates little to no potential for long-term impact or benefit to additional current or future students in the organization or school community.	Proposal demonstrates a potential for impact and benefit to additional current or future students in the organization or school community.	Proposal demonstrates a strong potential for long-term impact and benefit to additional current or future students in the organization or school community.

Sample Judge Comments

	Areas for Improvement	Strengths
PROJECTS		
Student Reflection Video(s) (15%)	Reflection videos that received low scores received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video could have used a practice run. - Audio quality could be improved. - Hard to understand speaker; captions or transcript recommended. - Would benefit from a visual demonstration of the device or project. 	Reflection videos that received high scores received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearly showed the time, effort, and process behind the students' work. - Provided helpful context and background about the problem the solution addresses. - Made a difficult idea easy to digest. - Students shared what they learned and the skills they developed.
Student Project Portfolio (20%)	Project portfolios that received low scores received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lacked clear evidence of this being a student led initiative. - Unclear or minimal student involvement throughout the project. - Needed clearer differentiation from existing solutions. - Missing discussion or evidence of impact and results. - No action or implementation shown beyond research. - Too many ideas; lacked focus on top priorities or prototyping. - Unclear what specific local issue the project aimed to solve. 	Project portfolios that received high scores received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong teamwork and problem-solving to solve the issue. - Tackled real-world problems with meaningful community impact. - Clear, professional presentation. - Excellent data collection and interpretation to support actions. - Well-structured presentations made complex ideas easy to understand. - Demonstrated significant time, effort, and thoughtful execution. - Clearly explained project goals and methodology. - Solutions demonstrated creative thinking and innovative approaches.
Creative Use of Technology (20%)	Teams that received low scores on creative use of technology received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unclear how technology supports the project. - Weak or missing connection to technology and innovation. - Lacked novel or creative use of technology. 	Teams that received high scores on creative use of technology received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectively used technology to address real-world issues and engage diverse audiences. - Integrated eco-friendly tech solutions to solve important problems. - Showcased innovative use of technology.

Sample Judge Comments

CASE FOR FUNDS

Use of Existing Resources (15%)	Teams that received low scores on use of existing resources received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did not demonstrate use of existing resources. - Missed opportunity to engage the local community and available assets. 	Teams that received high scores on use of existing resources received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Made effective use of available resources to create meaningful community impact.
Use of Award Funding - Team describes how the award funding will be used to improve upon, sustain, and/or scale their Ciena Solutions Challenge project activities and benefit additional current or future students in the organization or school community.		
Direct Benefit (10%)	Teams that received low scores on direct benefit of award funding to sustain or scale their Ciena Solutions Challenge project activities received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appeared to be written by AI without personal input - I would prefer authenticity, even if it is just simple words and language. - Did not explain how the project would be sustained after initial funding. - Missing or unclear breakdown of how funds would be used. - Unclear how proposed items would support long-term project impact. - Strong project overall, but funding explanation was insufficient. 	Teams that received high scores on direct benefit of award funding to sustain or scale their Ciena Solutions Challenge project activities received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided a clear, detailed plan for how funding would be used. - Funding plan supported project expansion and impact. - Budget breakdown was specific and well-organized.
Extended Benefit to Organization / School Community (20%)	Teams that received low scores on extended benefit to the organization/school community received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unclear what the project status or rollout plan is. - Seemed like a one-time effort without plans for sustainability. - No strategy to ensure the project's continuation at the school after student graduation or departure. - Not clear that there is current need or added value in receiving funding. 	Teams that received high scores on extended benefit to the organization/school community received comments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated strong local impact through inclusive community engagement. - Clearly explained how funding would benefit the community and beyond. - Effectively showed direct community benefits from the proposed activities.