



Terms & Conditions

The Emerging Composter Competition (the “Competition”) is organized by the Young Professionals Group of the US Composting Council (USCC) (the “Organizer”). The USCC is a national, non-profit trade and professional organization promoting the recycling of organic materials through composting.

The Emerging Composter Competition is an annual business pitch/poster Competition, open to Young Professionals looking to showcase their research project or business concept within the composting, compostable products, and organics recycling/Zero Waste space.

The Competition is organized in collaboration with the following collaborators (the “Collaborators”): The sponsors of the Competition.

The aim of these Terms & Conditions is to govern the participation in the Competition. By submitting an application form for this Competition, the participant fully and unconditionally agrees to comply with these Terms & Conditions listed below, which include Eligibility, Confidentiality and Intellectual Property, Media Disclaimer, Modification and Cancellation, and Limitation of Liability. If the participant does not agree with any of these Terms & Conditions, they must not submit an application form.

To take part in the Competition, the participant must submit a completed application form by **November 30th, 2026, at 11:59 pm (PST)**.

To apply, the participant must truthfully and accurately complete the required information, such as full name, email address, etc, in the online application form of the Competition.

The participant is solely responsible for the information they provide in their application form. Any intentional or unintentional mistake, anomaly or inconsistency, regarding this information, may result in the participant’s disqualification. The Organizer reserves the right to proceed to all necessary verifications regarding the participant’s identity, postal and/or email addresses.

Application for and participation in the Competition is free, with no purchase or payment obligation.

If the participant is selected to be one of the finalists, it is their responsibility to timely prepare a poster presenting their research project or business concept to be showcased during the in-person COMPOST2027 - USCC Conference and Trade Show at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center in Jacksonville, Florida, planned for February 1-4, 2027 (the “Conference”). Finalists will

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receive a half Conference registration waiver to attend the Conference and present their research project or business concept posters on **Wednesday, February 3rd, 2027** and it is their sole responsibility to cover all related costs.

Eligibility

This Competition is open and offered to:

- Research projects or business concepts in the compost, compostable products, and organics recycling/Zero Waste space that contributes to final composting of the materials.
- The business concepts can be presented by startups or established businesses, complying with the following requirements:
 - Have been in business for a maximum of five years (if applicable).
 - Generate less than \$100,000 USD in revenue annually (if applicable).
- The applicants must have less than five years of industry experience.
- Eligible countries:
 - Any country with no exception. This Competition is void in countries where it is prohibited or restricted by law.
 - US participants or participants with a bank account in the US will have priority over the final selection.
- This Competition is not open to employees and representatives of the Collaborators and members of their families.
- This Competition is not open to past winners and finalists.
- New participants will be given priority over past participants during the screening of the application forms.
- All the documents that may confirm the participant's eligibility will be required prior to awarding any prizes (e.g., identity document, US bank account).

Competition Process

Applications are accepted through **November 30th, 2026, 11:59 pm (PST)**.

- First round:
 - Conducted online via an online application.
 - The Organizer screens applicants for eligibility, and chooses final applicants based on the previously mentioned criteria, plus their clarity, relevance, feasibility and importance.
 - Finalists will be announced by December 19th, 2026.
- Second round:
 - Conducted **in-person** during the Conference on February 3, 2026.

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- The voting will be conducted over the first day of the Conference Tradeshow duration, where in-person attendees will vote for their favorite three projects. The voting process will close on February 3rd, at 06:00 pm (PST).
- The winners announcement will take place in the Conference Closing Ceremony on February 3th, 2027.

All finalists are requested to:

- Send a digital copy of their poster by January 15, 2027. The poster should have the following characteristics:
 - Poster size: 24"x36"
 - Format: vector
 - ECC team will confirm with the finalists if they should bring their own soft copy of the poster to be presented over the Conference.
 - All finalists are required to create a 1-minute video pitch and upload it to YouTube, and add a QR code on the bottom right corner of the poster that redirects to the video.
- Attend the conference in person and present on the dates listed above.

Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

Collaborators will keep the information contained in the application forms confidential. In general terms, when submitting any information, the participant understands, agrees and accepts that any information contained therein may be used for the only purpose of the Competition.

By submitting any material and participating in this Competition, the applicant is not granting the Organizer and Collaborators any rights to any intellectual property, and they cannot make any ownership claim of the participant's material or any intellectual property that it may contain.

When submitting any information, the participant understands that it might be distributed to a group of industry professionals who act as judges. It is therefore strongly encouraged that any participant with concerns regarding intellectual property such as patent or copyright potential to contact competent legal counsel before submitting their proposal to the Competition.

Collaborators are not responsible for any proprietary information and/or intellectual property included in any submitted materials.

Ultimately, protection of sensitive materials is the sole responsibility of the individual or team participating in the Competition.

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Media Disclaimer

By attending the Organizer's online or in-person events, participants grant the Organizer and Collaborators permission to the rights of their image, likeness, and recorded voice, without payment or consideration, for non-commercial use. Participants must understand that there is no time limit on the validity of this release, nor are there any geographic limitations on where these materials may be distributed.

Participants, presenters, and judges, and all other related parties to the Competition may request photos or video clips for use following the Competition, pending resource availability to service the request, and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Attribution/Courtesy must be included with all photo/video use. The Organizer and Collaborators reserve the right to request the removal of photos/audio/video from third-party websites, distributed materials, and/or other media.

Modification and Cancellation

- Update of the Terms & Conditions:

The Organizer reserves the right to amend these Terms & Conditions at any time, including the Competition duration in case of operational imperatives, without prior notice to participants regarding the enforcement or the validity of these amendments. Participants are encouraged to consult these Terms & Conditions regularly. Participants expressly waive all claims or disputes related to any amendment to these Terms & Conditions by the sponsors of the Competition.

- Competition Cancellation or Suspension

The Organizer reserves the right in its discretion, to (i) cancel, terminate, modify or suspend the Competition and these Terms & Conditions, for any reason, at any time and without any liability, and (ii) to limit or restrict participation in the Competition. The Organizer will not be held liable for the modification, cancellation or suspension of the Competition and no compensation or remuneration will be due to the participants.

Limitation of Liability

The Organizer will not, in any case, be held liable for damages resulting from faults or delays in the submission of materials by participants or participants' lack of cooperation during and after the Competition.

The Organizer will not, in any case, be held liable for damages resulting from services provided

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by a third party relating to the prizes.

The Organizer will not be held liable for the consequences of a participant's disqualification from the Competition as a result of their violation of these Terms & Conditions.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

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