



Lettinga Award 2026

The Lettinga Award 2026

Call is open!

The Call for the 2024 Lettinga Award is now open!

The Lettinga Award is a cash prize of €15,000 and was initiated in 2001 by the Lettinga Foundation. The goal of the award is to stimulate innovative ideas in the field of anaerobic technology aimed at cleaner energy production, resource recycling, sustainable development and/or resource conservation. It is always adjudged to a project, not an individual person or institute. This year's edition is sponsored by Biothane, LeAF and Paques.

Anaerobic digestion is considered a mature treatment technology for many organic residue streams. However, its potential has not yet been fully explored and its applications differ significantly between various contexts and countries. Anaerobic processes can play a crucial role in enabling the recovery of resources, especially in combination with additional physical-chemical technologies. Innovations are required to unveil new applications and products, and nature can be a source of inspiration. Hence this year's topic is **Innovative technological systems, that include anaerobic processes, for closing cycles.**

The winning idea should have a core technology based on an anaerobic process. It should not only include recovery, but also reuse aspects (full cycling) of one or more elements and can utilize both biological and physical-chemical technologies. The innovative idea should be in the discovery phase (TRL, Technology Readiness Levels 1 or 2) and should not be part of a bigger project. The award is meant to boost beginning ideas towards a proof of principle. Furthermore, all data publications should be open sourced and available for the public.

Successful implementation of technological innovations is not possible without adoption by its users, and society. Hence, social integration and sustainability are also important aspects that should be highlighted in the project idea.

Application

Present your idea in a PowerPoint presentation (max. 10 slides) and short abstract (max 500 words). In your application explain your proposed project, provide details on how you will use the funds, and describe the potential impact of your project. Please send your application package to info@leaf-wageningen.nl before the first of May 2026 and include "Lettinga Award 2026" in the subject line.

Deadline for submission is May 1st, 2026

The winner of the Lettinga Award will be announced during the closing ceremony of the IWA 19th World Congress on Anaerobic Digestion. This international conference, which is supported by the IWA Anaerobic Digestion Specialist Group, is an event to discuss recent advances in anaerobic digestion and related processes. The theme of the 19th World Congress on Anaerobic Digestion is "Fueling Sustainability." The conference will be held in Valencia, Spain on June 9-13, 2026. For additional information and to register for the conference, please visit <https://iwa-ad19.com>.

We are looking forward to your ideas!

Background of the Lettinga Foundation

The Lettinga Foundation (formally known as De Lettinga Stichting) was established in 2000 in Wageningen, the Netherlands. Its founding organization, the Foundation of Environmental Protection & Resource Conservation (EP&RC), now known as LeAF BV, recognized a need for the worldwide application of the anaerobic treatment technologies developed by Gatze Lettinga and his colleagues. Given that these anaerobic treatment technologies require low investment and operating costs, enable the recovery of energy in the form of biogas, and form a robust solution for environmental degradation associated with the discharge of concentrated residue streams, they were deemed very suitable for application in low- and middle-income countries, as well as countries in transition. However, EP&RC also found that there was a lack of funds, grants, and scholarships that focused on supporting environmental technologists in low- and middle-income countries.

Hence the Lettinga Foundation was founded, with the objectives to:

- Enhance the training of scientists or students, from Southern countries and countries in transition, in the field of sustainable environmental technology development.
- Promote the development, implementation and application of integrated sustainable environmental technologies in industries, agricultural businesses, and in the field of sanitation.

The underlying objective is to contribute to a sustainable and circular economy, in which resources are recovered from residue streams, the use of finite resources is reduced and greenhouse gas emissions are lowered. Through this, the Foundation seeks to continue the work of Prof. Gatze Lettinga, who retired on the 1st of April 2001.