

TERMS AND CONDITIONS – NOMINATION AND APPLICATION FOR THE FALLING WALLS SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS OF THE YEAR 2026

(As of January 2026)

By ticking the respective box in the nomination or application form for the Falling Walls Science Breakthroughs of the Year 2026, nominees and applicants confirm that they have read, understood, and accept the following Terms and Conditions.

1. Who can participate?

- 1.1. By opting into Falling Walls Science Breakthroughs of the Year 2026, applicants confirm that their work has never been presented on the Falling Walls stage before.
- 1.2. Excluded from this term are participants of the Emerging Talents (Falling Walls Lab) category. Applicants who have presented their work on the Falling Walls stage as a Lab applicant have the chance to apply again in one of the Global Call categories.
- 1.3. Applicants may be nominated again or apply again with a different project or research topic, except for applicants in the Science Start-ups category. Science Start-ups applicants may apply again if they haven't been selected as a Finalist before.
- 1.4. At the time of nomination or application, nominees or applicants must be of full legal age according to their domestic legislation, and in any case not younger than 18 years old.
- 1.5. Nominations and applications are open to all scientific disciplines, as well as to all arts within the category "Art and Science".
- 1.6. All rights to the presented work must be held by the presenter and the work must be publicly accessible prior to submission or presentation. By presenting on the Falling Walls Stage, presenters guarantee that their research methods and academic practices comply with applicable laws and established ethical standards.

2. Process and selection

- 2.1. Partners of the respective Falling Walls category, members of the pre-selection committee, members of the Falling Walls Advisory Board, and jury members of the respective category have access to the full nomination or application documents and all data provided. The data is processed in accordance with the applicable data protection laws.
- 2.2. Nominations and applications must be submitted by the deadline published on the [Falling Walls Foundation's website](#).
- 2.3. Nominees and applicants will be informed of the outcome of their nomination or application following the respective submission deadline. All decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

- 2.4. The determination of the Finalists and the Falling Walls Science Breakthroughs of the Year 2026 is subject to the jury and the Advisory Board. All jury decisions are final.

3. Participation in Falling Walls events

- 3.1. Selected nominees or applicants may be invited to attend the Falling Walls Science Summit in Berlin from 6–9 November 2026. Participation is subject to organisational decisions and to local and international travel regulations. Selected participants will be informed of any changes to the event in due time.
- 3.2. Each project may be represented by only one person; team presentations are not permitted.
- 3.3. Should a nominee or applicant, for cause, not be able to participate in Falling Walls events, they must inform the Falling Walls Foundation immediately (at least 7 days before the event). The Falling Walls Foundation reserves the right to invite another suitable representative of the project as a substitute, invite a different nominee or applicant, or offer remote participation, in particular if deadlines for deliverables are not met.
- 3.4. Top applicants from the categories Science Start-ups and Science Engagement will be invited to present their ideas at the Pitches Day on 6 November 2026 as part of the Falling Walls Science Summit. The Science Breakthroughs of the Year in these categories will be selected by the jury on that day and will present the project again on stage on 9 November 2026.
- 3.5. There is no legal right to participation.

4. Travel, visa, and costs

- 4.1. Successful applicants must hold a valid passport and apply for any required visa to Germany immediately after receiving the official acceptance letter. The Falling Walls Foundation may provide an official invitation letter but cannot assist further with the visa application process. Any visa rejection must be communicated to the Falling Walls Foundation without delay.
- 4.2. Accommodation and travel reimbursement conditions are defined on a project-specific basis. The Falling Walls Foundation generally cannot cover travel or accommodation costs for more than one representative per project.

5. Visibility, media, and usage rights

- 5.1. During Falling Walls events, photo, video, and audio recordings may be made. By participating and by presenting on the Falling Walls Stage or submitting additional content (e.g. videos or interviews), nominees and applicants consent to the publication of such recordings and materials on the Falling Walls Foundation website, partner

websites, media outlets, and communication channels, including social media, newsletters, press releases, brochures, and printed materials.

5.2. Nominees and applicants grant the Falling Walls Foundation a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use the submitted and presented materials in whole or in part, provided that the presenter is credited accordingly. They confirm that they hold all necessary usage rights for the submitted content, including any third-party materials. The Falling Walls Foundation reserves the right to adapt submitted content in length and format in line with its brand identity. The working language of the Falling Walls Foundation is English.

6. Content standards and legal compliance

6.1. Submitted or presented content must not include unlawful, indecent, discriminatory, or extremist material. Content promoting inflammatory political or religious agendas is not permitted.

6.2. All content must comply with applicable laws, particularly design, patent, trademark, and copyright law. Nominees and applicants are solely responsible for clearing any third-party rights. The Falling Walls Foundation cannot be held liable for violations of the law and does not provide legal consultation.

6.3. The Falling Walls Foundation reserves the right to disqualify nominees or applicants for cause, in particular in the event of breaches of eligibility criteria or content obligations set out in these Terms and Conditions.

7. Data protection and communication

7.1. Personal data provided during the nomination or application process is shared with the Falling Walls Advisory Board, pre-selection committees, jury members, and partners of the respective category where applicable, and is processed in accordance with applicable data protection laws. Application materials may be archived to verify previous participation and to document granted usage rights.

7.2. Nominees, applicants, and nominating institutions consent to receiving information about Falling Walls events and activities. Unsubscribing is possible at any time without charge.

8. Liability

8.1. At Falling Walls events, the organiser assumes liability pursuant to statutory provisions. Arrival and departure are excluded from the event. No further liability shall exist. Liability is assumed by the participant in cases of damage to property or personal injury caused by the participant.

9. Equality and diversity

- 9.1. The Falling Walls Foundation is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion and to eliminating all forms of discrimination.

PROJECT-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL TERMS

10. Falling Walls Engage (Science Engagement)

- 10.1. A Science Engagement project may only participate once. Re-submission is permitted only if the project has undergone substantial changes and is approved as a new project.
- 10.2. Applicants must actively run a Science Engagement project or initiative.
- 10.3. The project must be operational at the time of application. Projects in the idea or funding stage are not eligible.
- 10.4. Physical participation in the Engage Pitches in Berlin is generally mandatory; exceptions may be granted in cases of force majeure.
- 10.5. The Falling Walls Foundation has a limited budget available to cover the travel costs of the project presenter (one person representing the project on stage in Berlin). The travel scholarship may only be used for an economy class flight or a 2nd class train journey. The maximum travel budget is EUR 300 for travel from within Europe and EUR 800 for travel from outside Europe. Any additional travel-related costs, including visa fees or document costs, cannot be covered. If travel costs exceed the available budget, participants must cover the surplus amount themselves. The Falling Walls Foundation cannot cover travel or accommodation costs for representatives of the nominating institution.
- 10.6. The Falling Walls Foundation will cover accommodation costs for the Engage Finalist's stay in Berlin at its partner hotel. Accommodation will be provided for the necessary number of overnight stays required to participate in the Falling Walls 2026 events. Any additional nights must be organised and covered by the participants themselves. Participants are requested to carefully assess all potential travel-related costs and their available budget before confirming participation.
- 10.7. Selected participants must deliver a five-minute pitch followed by a five-minute Q&A session in English.
- 10.8. Finalists remain engaged beyond the Summit and agree to potentially be featured as Falling Walls Engage Success Stories (stories published on the Falling Walls website highlighting project achievements). In addition, finalists may receive invitations to future events.

11. Falling Walls Venture (Science Start-ups)

- 11.1. Presenting at Falling Walls Venture is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that each start-up can only take advantage of once. By applying, the candidates confirm that their start-up,

has not participated in the Falling Walls Venture Pitches on stage before. Serial entrepreneurs may be nominated again and apply with a different start-up that has not been presented at Falling Walls Venture before. Start-ups may apply again if they haven't been selected as a Finalist before.

- 11.2. Falling Walls Venture is a competition for science-based start-ups (for-profit corporations) whose products or services are based on scientific research and advanced technology.
- 11.3. Each start-up must be endorsed by a nominating institution.
- 11.4. All participating start-ups must be legally incorporated. Companies founded on 1 January 2021 or after are eligible to apply.
- 11.5. Physical participation in the Falling Walls Venture Pitches on 6 November 2026 and in the Falling Walls Breakthrough Day on 9 November 2026 is obligatory for start-ups selected as Finalists.
- 11.6. The selected candidates agree to give a five-minute pitch followed by a four-minute Q&A session in English.
- 11.7. Finalists are encouraged to share annual updates on company development, milestones, financing, and valuations. These yearly updates serve the further development and improvement of Falling Walls Venture's value proposition to science-based start-ups, especially in terms of access to finance and the building of a larger network of investors and partners accessible to participants. This information can be shared with partners of Falling Walls Venture and used for publicity materials.
- 11.8. Accommodation will be provided for the necessary number of overnight stays required to participate in the Falling Walls 2026 events. Any additional nights of accommodation must be organised and covered by the participants or a third party (e.g. sponsor or partner).
- 11.9. Travel stipends are available to cover the travel cost of the start-up presenter (single person). If travel costs exceed the stipend, participants must cover the surplus amount themselves.

12. Falling Walls Women's Impact Award / Female Science Talents

- 12.1. The award recognises outstanding women whose work has not previously been presented on the Falling Walls Breakthrough Stage. Repeat nominations are permitted only with a different project or research topic.
- 12.2. The research project must be running and active at the time of the submission. Being in the funding or ideation phase is not considered eligible.
- 12.3. Travel stipends are available to cover the travel cost of the awardee. The Falling Walls Foundation will cover accommodation costs for the awardee's stay in Berlin at its partner hotel. Accommodation will be provided for the necessary number of overnight stays required to participate in the Falling Walls 2026 events. Any additional nights of accommodation must be covered and organised by the participants.