



# 2026 APEC HEALTHY WOMEN, HEALTHY ECONOMIES

RESEARCH PRIZE



In partnership with:  
**MERCK**

**Healthy women,  
healthy economies**  
RESEARCH PRIZE

# 2026 APEC HEALTHY WOMEN, HEALTHY ECONOMIES

## RESEARCH PRIZE 2026 NOMINATION FORM

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**Deadline March 19, 2026**

### **Background:**

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum established in 1989 to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific. APEC's 21 members aim to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration. Every year one of the 21 APEC Member Economies hosts APEC meetings and serves as the APEC Chair. Chile is the first APEC host economy to select "Women, SMEs and Inclusive Growth" as one of its APEC host year themes. On November 17, 2018 President Sebastián Piñera announced Chile's intention to inaugurate an "APEC Healthy Women, Healthy Economies Research Prize" in partnership with Merck<sup>1</sup>.

Since 2014 the APEC "Healthy Women, Healthy Economies" (HWHE) initiative has been working on a public-private partnership basis across three APEC working groups - the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE), Health Working Group (HWG), and Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG) - to improve women's health so women can join, thrive, and rise in the workforce<sup>2</sup>. Merck, as the primary HWHE private sector partner, co-chaired development of the [2015 HWHE Policy Toolkit](#), which details the issues, actions, and implementing elements for improving women's health across five pillars: workplace health and safety; health access and awareness; work-life balance; sexual and reproductive health; and gender-based violence.

HWHE has found that sex-disaggregated data and gender-based research and analysis is lacking. Policymakers, business leaders and others do not have adequate data and evidence to draw from to identify gender-specific interventions appropriate for their economies and organizations. To spotlight and spur much-needed data and evidence, **Chile, along with Merck's support, has created an annual prize recognizing research that enables policymakers, business leaders, and others to identify and implement measures to improve women's health in APEC economies so women can join and rise in the workforce.**

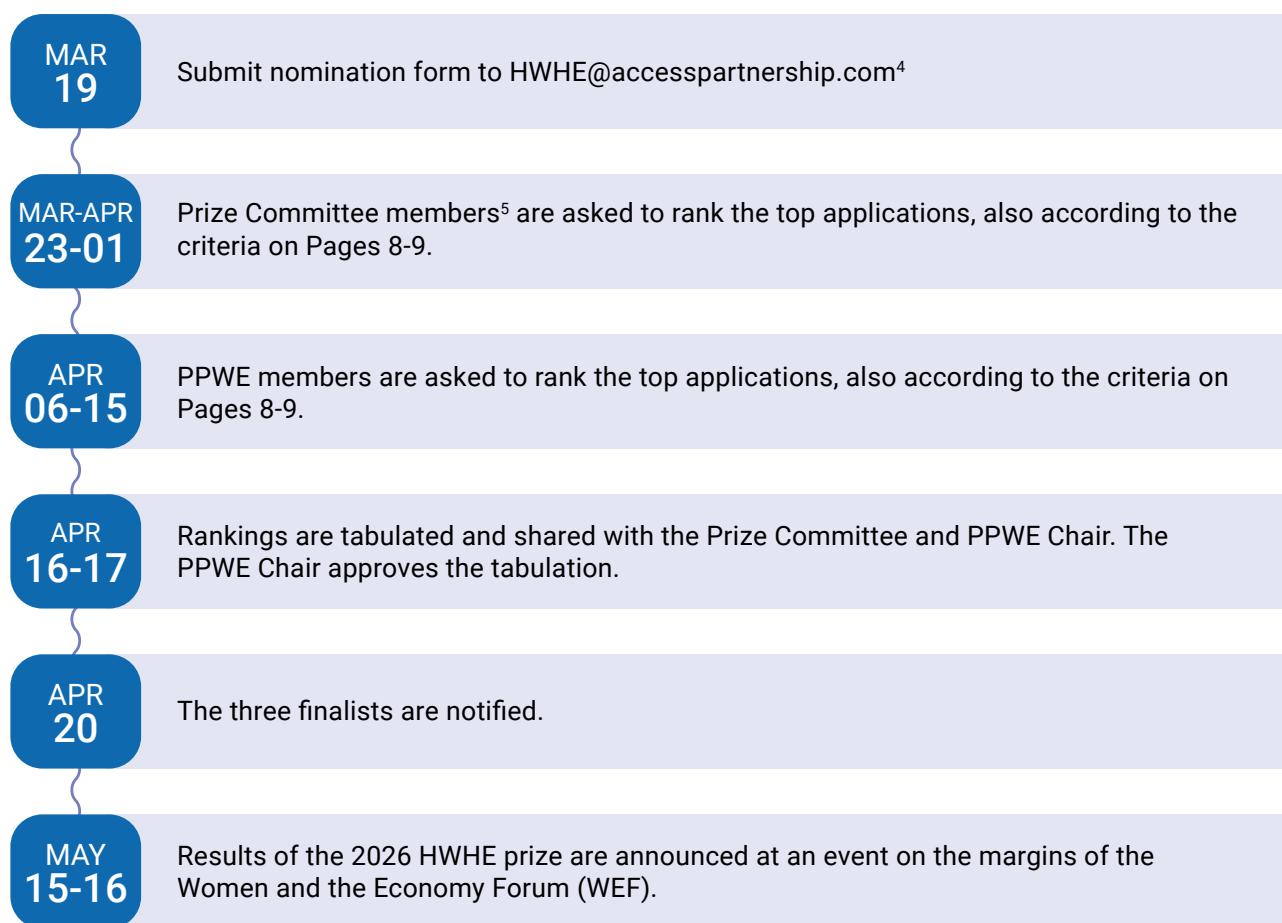
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1 There are two different, unaffiliated companies that use the name Merck. The lead HWHE private sector partner is headquartered in Darmstadt, Germany, and is known as Merck everywhere in the world except in the United States and Canada where it goes by "Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany" and also uses "EMD Serono" in biopharma. The other company, MSD, is headquartered in the United States. It is not affiliated with or related to Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. MSD is only known as Merck in the United States and Canada.

2 The APEC Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy, Health Working Group, and Human Resources Development Working Group have also endorsed the APEC Healthy Women, Healthy Economies Research Prize.

In order to be considered for this prize, individuals must submit an original piece of research that was published on or after January 1, 2024. All researchers from APEC economies are welcome to apply; you do not require a background in academia in order to be considered. However, the research must be evidence based. Furthermore, the research must be submitted in English. If the research was not originally written in English, please have it professionally translated. The winner of the prize will win USD \$20,000, while the 2 runners-up will win USD \$5,000 each. If the winner or runner up is from government then the prize money will be given instead to HealthyWomen (a women's health not-for-profit). Alternatively, the winner or runners-up may designate a not-for-profit entity to receive the prize money<sup>3</sup>. Please attribute the research to all involved in its making, but only one individual may be nominated and eligible to receive the prize money.

### Timeline:



<sup>3</sup> Not-for-profit entities must be unaffiliated with governments or government agencies to be eligible.

<sup>4</sup> Access Partnership is the prize sponsor's designated representative.

<sup>5</sup> The Prize Committee consists of: the PPWE Chair, the PPWE representative from next year's host economy, 1 representative from Chile (as the proposing economy), 1 representative from academia nominated by the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU), and 1 Merck executive.

**Documents:**

**Submit to HWHE@accesspartnership.com**

- 1. Nomination form;**
- 2. PDF version of the research;**
- 3. One letter of recommendation;**
- 4. A head shot of each individual involved in the research.**

**Section 1 of 5 - Nominee Information:**

APEC Member Economy<sup>6</sup>:

First name:

Last name:

Date of Birth (day/month/year):

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Title:

Institution/Affiliation:

**Section 2 of 5 - Biography (up to 300 words):**

Please include a short biography of all involved with the research<sup>7</sup>.

For nominated individual:

For all others:

<sup>6</sup> APEC member economies include: Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; Philippines; Russia; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States; Viet Nam.

<sup>7</sup> Note that while all contributors might be recognized, only the individual nominated will be eligible to win the prize money.

**Section 3 of 5 - Statement, Part 1 (300 to 500 words):**

Describe your research, how it can spur inclusive economic growth for women, and how it is applicable to APEC economies.

**Section 4 of 5 - Statement, Part 2 (300 to 500 words):**

Describe the methodologies employed to collect and use data in your research.

**Section 5 of 5 - Statement, Part 3 (300 to 500 words):**

Outline the policy recommendations borne out of the research you conducted, and as appropriate describe the role that both policymakers and industry can play to help implement those policies.

**Contact:** If you have any questions please email [HWHE@accesspartnership.com](mailto:HWHE@accesspartnership.com)

## Selection Criteria

### Relevance

Research under consideration should address at least one of the five pillars identified in the 2015 HWHE Policy Toolkit, unless it offers a compelling case for a new area of women's health that has the potential to dramatically increase women's economic and social wellbeing in APEC economies. The five pillars are: workplace and health safety; health access and awareness; work-life balance; sexual and reproductive health; and gender-based violence.

**Does the research address at least one of the five pillars identified in the HWHE Policy Toolkit? If not, does it make a compelling case for a new pillar that would improve women's economic and social standing in the APEC economies?**

Not at all compelling      Not very compelling      Neutral      Somewhat compelling      Very compelling

### Innovation

Submitted research should present not only original data, but also innovative solutions supported by said data. Furthermore, while researchers should make use of the literature in their respective fields by citing pieces where appropriate, research that contain new policy solutions or approach existing solutions from a unique angle will receive higher consideration.

**To what extent are the research and conclusions/recommendations original?**

Not at all original      Not very original      Neutral      Somewhat original      Very original

## Impact

Researchers should provide ample evidence for why their research has the potential to positively impact inclusive economic growth for women through discrete, actionable recommendations.

**Does this research demonstrate an ability to positively impact inclusive economic growth for women?**

Not ability at all      Not very strong ability      Neutral      Somewhat strong ability      Very strong ability

**Does the research include discrete, actionable conclusions/recommendations drawn from its research?**

Not discrete and actionable recommendations at all      Not very discrete and actionable recommendations at all      Neutral      Somewhat discrete and actionable recommendations at all      Very discrete and actionable recommendations at all

## Methodology and use of evidence-based research

Given the need for evidence-based research to identify discrete policy recommendations for gender-based inclusive economic growth, it is crucial that sound methodologies are employed for any research used to draw conclusions concerning policy. As a result, any research under consideration should include a detailed explanation of the data collection process. Moreover, to the greatest extent possible, disaggregated data should be used to in order to support the researcher's exploration of the topic.

**Was the data collection process explained thoroughly and does it appear that the data was collected in a methodologically sound manner?**

Not sound at all      Not very sound      Neutral      Somewhat sound      Very sound

**Are conclusions/recommendations justified with a robust set of data?**

Not justified at all      Not very justified      Neutral      Somewhat justified      Very justified

## Feasibility

The likelihood that they will enact change. Researchers that offer solutions likely to be implemented will be Any policy proposals borne out of the research ought to consider the feasibility of such recommendations and rated more highly than those who offer solutions without any consideration of their practicality.

**If any of the conclusions/recommendations were taken up, how feasible would it be to implement them?**

Not feasible at all      Not very feasible      Neutral      Somewhat feasible      Very feasible



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[www.apec.org](http://www.apec.org)