**WFSA Innovation Award for Cleft Lip and Palate Disease (CLPD) 2026–2028**

**Summary:**

To support an innovation in the field of anaesthesia for cleft lip and palate disease (CLPD) that improves perioperative care and patient outcomes, with a focus on practical solutions that can be applied globally, particularly in low-resource settings.

We welcome applications for innovations that are practical, original, and ready to grow. Applicants should already have a basic concept or prototype and be ready to develop this further.

Award Objectives:

- Stimulate the development of innovative practices, systems, products and technologies, as well as services and delivery methods in the field of anaesthesia for the benefit of patients worldwide.
- Provide funding and support for projects that have demonstrated proof of principle and have the potential for clinical use.
- Help take the innovation to a stage at which it is sufficiently developed to be attractive to follow-on funders or investors and/or is ready for scale-up or roll-out for wider use.

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Selection Process:

Applications will be reviewed by a judging panel comprising:

- Members of WFSA's Paediatric Anaesthesia Committee.
- Representatives from Operation Smile.
- A non-clinical expert to assess market feasibility and scalability.

The panel will consider the innovation's originality, relevance to CLPD anaesthesia care, and potential for scale-up, especially in low-resource settings.

Scoring criteria:

- *Degree of innovation:* Judges are looking for proposals that introduce completely new solutions or major improvements to existing ones.
  - Is the idea a new concept, or does it build upon existing technology or practices?
  - Does it represent a significant advancement in CLPD anaesthesia care?

- Is the innovation creative in solving a current challenge?

- *Level of development:* Judges are looking for proposals that have moved beyond conceptual stages.
  - Has the idea been created/developed?
  - Has the idea been tested?
  - Is there any data supporting its efficacy or feasibility?

- *Impact on focus area:* Judges are looking for proposals that directly improves anaesthesia and perioperative outcomes in CLPD
  - How will the innovation contribute to improving patient outcomes in CLPD?
  - Does it address a significant unmet need?

- *Potential scale of impact:* Judges are looking for innovations with strong potential for global scalability, particularly those that are low-cost, easy to implement, and sustainable.
  - Is the solution affordable and adaptable for use in diverse healthcare settings, including low-resource settings?
  - Can it be replicated or adopted at scale with minimal resources or specialised training?
  - How feasible is large-scale production or implementation?

*Note that all applicants must be members of a WFSA Member Society (see list online) in order to be considered.*

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Support for the winner:

- *Grant*: USD 25,000 to develop the innovation.
- *Mentoring*: Funds allocated for mentoring to provide guidance in scaling innovations, market entry strategies and technical and regulatory matters.
- *Visibility*: Funds allocated to create a short film showcasing the innovation and promotion via WFSA social media and website.
- *Recognition*: Financial support to attend WCA2026 (up to a certain amount) with opportunities for presentation and recognition at this and at WCA2028.

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Timelines:

- *4 July 2025:* Announcement of the Award on WFSA's website.
- *7 July – 30 September 2025:* Applications open for submissions.
- *1-20 October 2025:* Applications reviewed by the judging panel. Winner selected.

- *30 October 2025:* Announcement of winner and issuing of grant agreement.
- *November 2025 to April 2026:* Development plans co-created; initial support and mentoring provided; promotion via WFSA social media.
- *15-19 April 2026:* Celebration of the winner at WCA2026 in Marrakech including at the welcome ceremony where they will receive their award. Sharing of information about the innovation and development plans during relevant scientific sessions and at the WFSA Booth in the Global Anaesthesia Village.
- *April 2026 to May 2028:* Continued innovation development by the winner; ongoing mentoring support; regular progress updates shared via WFSA channels; production of innovation film; final showcase at WCA2028 in Vancouver, including presentation during relevant scientific sessions and at the WFSA booth in the Global Anaesthesia Village, recognition during the welcome ceremony.