

Rules and Guidelines

The competition closes on September 30st. If any of your photographs are selected for publication, you will be contacted in October regarding next steps. The winners and shortlisted entrants will be announced late October.

Before entering, please read the Rules and Guidelines carefully as all entrants have to acknowledge acceptance of them during the online registration process.

Competition rules

The Water Is Life competition is organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The competition aims to promote and reward excellence in international water photography and to enhance the understanding of the causes and consequences of water challenges on daily life.

All entrants must read and abide by the competition rules. By submitting an entry, entrants agree to the competition rules and acknowledge that their entry must comply with all the competition requirements.

1. Technical requirements

- 1.1. The competition is open to both amateur and professional photographers of ages 16 and older and from around the world.
- 1.2. Entries must be received by 23:59 CET on 30 September 2022.
- 1.3. Each entrant may submit up to two (2) still photographs.
- 1.4. All photographs submitted must have been taken after 01 Jan 2020.
- 1.5. Each photo must be submitted under one of the three categories published on the competition website.
- 1.6. Each photo must be submitted with a completed form in English answering the below requirements:
 - 1.6.1. details about the date and location where the photo was captured;
 - 1.6.2. description of the photo's content, its context or background (including declaring any staging for artistic or creative ends);
- 1.7. All entries should be a faithful representation of the original scene and maintain integrity of the photo's content and context. Some digital adjustments and editing is allowed (see the digital guidelines in section 7 of the competition rules), but entrants should understand that the objective is to remain faithful to the original scene, and to never deceive the viewer or misrepresent reality.
- 1.8. Entries with overlay signatures, watermarks or stencils will be disqualified automatically.
- 1.9. Entries must be submitted as digital files only, in a high-res JPEG format with a maximum file size of 199MB. If selected, entrants must be able to supply images as RAW files or original JPEGs.
- 1.10. The organization takes no responsibility for entries that are lost, delayed or incomplete or cannot be delivered or entered for any technical or other reason. Proof of delivery of the entry is not proof of receipt.

2. Ethics and consent

- 2.1. Entrants must be the sole author and owner of the copyright for all the entries they submit, or they must have obtained permission from the copyright holder to submit the entries on their behalf. A copy of any such written permission must be supplied to the organiser on request.
- 2.2. The organisation will not accept photos of children and young people under the age of 16.

2.3. Entrants must obtain all permissions needed prior to submitting their entry. This includes abiding by national and international law, and acquiring permits and permissions for accessing the area where the photograph was taken. Entrants who are unable to provide sufficient evidence or a rationale for lack of evidence upon request will be disqualified.

2.4. Entrants must obtain full consent from any people featured in their photo. Entrants guarantee that all people have expressly and unequivocally consented to the capture of their likeness for the photograph, as well as for its reproduction, distribution, and public communication. Entrants unable to provide evidence upon request will be disqualified.

2.5. Entrants indemnify the organisation against all claims brought by third parties in respect of any breach of their copyrights, or any other claim with respect to their entries.

2.6. Entrants must apply ethical practices in the collection and presentation of photos.

Photographers should consider the rights, safety, and wellbeing of humans and wildlife. They must be able to describe steps taken to minimize negative physical, emotional, or behavioural impacts from their work to ensure photos do not exploit people or remove their humanity.

2.7. People and communities should be represented as accurately as possible while avoiding the perpetuation of stereotypes. All entries must be submitted in the spirit of raising public awareness, not exploitation of public sympathy. Entrants have a duty of care and are responsible for ensuring the rights, safety, and wellbeing of all people and wildlife portrayed in their photos are respected.

2.8. The Jury's decision also about ethical questions is final and binding and no further correspondence will be entered into.

2.9. While the organisers will make reasonable efforts to ensure that all evidence is accurate and up to date, there are no warranties or representations regarding the accuracy, correctness, reliability, or otherwise of such information, and assumes no liability or responsibility for any omissions or errors.

3. Judging process

3.1. Judges appointed by the organisers will select the competition winners and the shortlist of exhibition photos. More information about the Jury can be found on our website.

3.2. The organisers reserve the right to cancel this competition at any stage.

3.3. The organisers reserve the right to amend, remove or introduce additional judging categories, including prizes and conditions, at any stage during the competition.

3.4. Any entrant found to not comply with the competition rules at any stage of the competition will be disqualified and any prizes awarded will be forfeited.

3.5. The decision of the organisers on all matters relating to the competition is final and binding.

4. Young Photographer 'Water is Life' award

4.1. Submissions from anyone born on or after 30st September 2001 are automatically entered into this category. Photographers outside this age range are ineligible for this award. Minimum age to compete is 16 at closing date.

4.2. Proof of date of birth may be required upon request.

4.3. For entrants between the age of 16 and 18, written permission from the parent or guardian is required upon entry.

5. Copyright and licensing

5.1. Photos previously entered into other competitions are permitted, however entries that have won a top prize in a competition on or before the time of entry are not eligible.

5.2. The photographer retains the copyright to all their entries into the Water =Life competition. The photographer will be credited. The entrant agrees that the Government of the Netherlands will not be liable in the event of inadvertent omission of the credit.

5.3. Entrants agree to participate in related publicity and to the use of their name and entry for the purposes of advertising, promotion, exhibition, transmission and publicity of the competition without additional compensation.

5.4. Entrants grant the Government of the Netherlands a non-exclusive sub-licensable licence to reproduce, publish, exhibit and communicate their entry through all media throughout the world in relation to the Water = Life competition and other non profit activities not related to the competition, always with full credit given to the photographer. This includes but is not limited to: the competition judging process; an exhibition and exhibition tour (including virtual); inclusion in exhibition catalogue or book; online galleries; private viewings, websites and microsites, corporate communications, on partner's network platforms and apps, reports, promotional, press, PR and marketing activities including digital and social media (paid and organic) and press and marketing materials, educational support and associated merchandising.

5.5. Entrants are granting the Government of the Netherlands permission to sub-license its rights to partners under the same terms and conditions contained herein. 5.6. The Government of the Netherlands is not liable for the misuse of entries and or failure of any third party to comply with the terms and conditions.

6. Digital Specifications

6.1. Initial entry: all still photographs must be submitted as JPEGs, saved at a high-quality level with a maximum file size of 199MB. Each image file must be named with your surname, first name and brief title (e.g. SmithJohn_Title.jpeg). Whilst image titles may be too long to be used as image names, a section of your title would be adequate.

6.2. Proof of authenticity: original digital camera RAW files will be required if your image is shortlisted. Digital images captured as JPEG are allowed, providing the original un-retouched JPEG is available for inspection. Any work created from more than one original (e.g. stitched images), must be declared as such, and the original captured images should be available for inspection when requested.

6.3. Printing: for printing in all media and for inclusion in an exhibition, a high-resolution image (preferably TIFF) will be requested if your image is selected.

7. Digital Adjustments Guidelines

7.1. The following digital adjustments are allowed: • removal of sensor dust spots and chromatic aberration, and lens vignetting • levels, curves, colour, saturation, contrast work, shadow and highlights, neutral density gradients (in moderation) • cropping, sharpening, including selective sharpening, dodging, burning, and toning (in moderation) • panoramas i.e. panoramas created from several images that have been taken from the same location and at the same time, and then combined or stitched using digital techniques, resulting in a wider view than can be achieved with most wide-angle lenses. (NB: stitched panoramas must be declared in caption information) • multiple exposures are only allowed if this is a feature of the camera and the result is one single file. Entrants must state in the caption if their image is a multiple exposure.

7.2. The following digital adjustments are not allowed: • adding or removing animals, parts of animals, plants, distractions, people etc. • composites and sandwich shots that add elements • pixelation • images that have been digitally manipulated outside of the allowed adjustments.

8. Data Protection

8.1. The personal data of entrants will be managed by the Government of the Netherlands in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

8.2. The Government of the Netherlands will collect personal data about entrants (and when

applicable, parents/guardians) at the time of entry, and as otherwise provided in order to administer the competition and its associated activities only.

View the privacy policy at [Privacy declaration | Government.nl](#)