

35th anniversary DAME Design Awards opens for entries

Friday, 19 June 2026

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Rich history of promoting outstanding product design

Promoting the use of excellent design across all leisure marine equipment has never been more vital at a time when discretionary consumer spend is fiercely contested by many industries, and improving manufacturing efficiency is paramount.

Since 1991, the DAME Design Awards have championed excellence in every aspect of design, including styling, construction, functionality, fulfilment of purpose, ease of use, sustainability, originality, innovation, interoperability, and price-to-performance. This unique competition, organised and fully funded by Metstrade, is the most aspirational prize globally for leisure marine equipment companies. Winning or even being nominated provides a proven boost for products, their parent companies and distribution networks.

A volunteer jury of renowned multidisciplinary designers and end-user experts gets hands-on with all entries during assessment. Their collective objective is to highlight products that offer the best blend of design disciplines and those with outstanding design features. The competition focuses equally on brand-new, never-before-seen products and on entries where the application of design has incrementally improved an older piece of equipment or a long-standing concept.

Entries now open

The DAME Design Awards are open to entries from all Metstrade exhibitors until 18 September 2026. Submissions are made via an online entry portal, and accepted products are shipped to arrive in Amsterdam no later than 5 October 2026. The judging process includes virtual assessment of entry materials,

followed by an in-depth, two-day product examination at RAI Amsterdam.

The DAME Jury uses this unique process to select a shortlist of nominated products, which will then compete for category awards and a discretionary Environmental Design Award. One of the category

winners will ultimately take the coveted DAME Design Awards Overall Winner title. More details and entry submission information can be found at damedesignawards.com.

Boost your visibility and knowledge at Metstrade

DAME Design Award winners will be announced during Metstrade's Official Opening of the show on Tuesday, 17 November 2026.

All nominated products will feature in the DAME Design Awards Showcase in Hall 13 at Metstrade, a high-profile exhibition space visited by many thousands of marine professionals across the three days of the show. Nearly 700 products have been showcased this way since 2013, bringing global visibility and tangible commercial benefits to successful entries.

New for this year, all DAME Design Awards nominated companies will also be eligible for free fast track sustainability training on the day before Metstrade. Participants in the 16 November afternoon programme at RAI Amsterdam, run by the Marine Impact Lab and co-hosted by The Sustainability Toolbox and MarineShift 360, will learn how to assess, strengthen, and communicate the sustainability value of their products. This invaluable session will include workshops, expert guidance and industry networking.

Enter the DAME Design Awards and save lives

Each year, 100 per cent of the entry fees from all DAME Design Awards submissions are donated to a charity chosen by the Metstrade Exhibition Committee from a field of suggestions.

For 2026, the Committee is proud to support the Royal Netherlands Sea Rescue Institution (KNRM), one of the world's oldest and most respected voluntary rescue organisations. Founded in 1824, the KNRM's mission is to save lives and prevent accidents at sea and on the Dutch inland waterways network. Its professionally trained volunteers are available 24/7 year round providing help free of charge in all weather conditions.

The organisation operates 75 lifeboats from 45 stations across the Netherlands and is supported by more than 1,600 volunteers. In 2025, the KNRM responded to 2,178 emergency calls, assisting 3,592 people and rescuing 161 animals. In addition, the KNRM Help Assistance Centre handled 1,038 requests for non-emergency assistance, while the Radio Medical Service provided 846 medical consultations to vessels at sea.

The KNRM carries out five core tasks: search and rescue, coastal assistance, beach surveillance, a radio medical service and incident prevention. The KNRM receives no government funding – its work is entirely funded through donations, gifts, sponsorships and legacies. Read more about the work of the KNRM at www.knrm.nl/

Nominate your chosen charity for 2027

Metstrade is about to make the nominations process for DAME charities even more accessible. The 2026 show will feature a suggestions box where exhibitors and visitors can submit ideas for a rewarding cause in 2027. More than €300,000 has already been granted to charities through the DAME Design Awards entry fees of Metstrade exhibitors, so the rewards are potentially significant for any nominated organisation. Look out for further details later in the year.