PVH Corp.-owned brand Tommy Hilfiger has announced the finalists for the 2019 Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Frontier Challenge, marking the initiative’s second year since its 2018 launch.

The program, dedicated to supporting start-up and scale-up businesses developing solutions that promote inclusive and positive change in fashion, selected a total of six finalists. These six will now move on to the competition’s final event, scheduled for February 13 at Tommy Hilfiger’s Campus of the Future in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

There, they will pitch their business concepts to a jury of business and sustainability leaders, including designer Tommy Hilfiger; Ankiti Bose, co-founder and CEO of Zilingo; journalist and activist Noor Tagouri; Daniel Grieder, CEO of Tommy Hilfiger Global and PVH Europe; Martijn Hagman, CFO of Tommy Hilfiger Global & COO, Tommy Hilfiger Global and PVH Europe; Willemijn Verloop, founding partner of Social Impact Venture; Steven Serneels, CEO and board member of EVPA; and Katrin Ley, managing director of Fashion for Good.

Finalists include Bangladesh-based scale-up Apon Wellbeing, a company that gives factory workers access to daily necessities and health services; American scale-up Stony Creek Colors, which offers natural indigo sustainable crops to small and mid-size tobacco farmers; Dutch start-up A Beautiful Mess, which helps refugees to access social and economic independence by creating sustainable apparel products; U.S.-based start-up company Lab 141, which makes small batches of made-to-fit clothing using 3D printing; Indian scale-up pajama company Sudara, which helps women who have escaped from or are at high risk of being sex trafficked to develop professional and sewing skills; and French scale-up company Constant & Zoe, which creates clothing for men, women and children with disabilities.

In the end, the jury will award €150,000 (over $166,990 USD) between two winners to provide funding to their business proposals. In addition, the winners will be given a year-long mentorship with Tommy Hilfiger’s and INSEAD’s global experts, as well as a place in the INSEAD Social Entrepreneurship Program (ISEP).

An additional €10,000 will be awarded to the finalist team who wins the “Audience Favorite Vote.”
“We are committed to championing bright, innovative solutions to some of our industry's big challenges, and I'm looking forward to returning as a jury member to recognize this year’s entrepreneurs,” Tommy Hilfiger said. “Their shared optimism and commitment to a positive future should inspire us all in the impact we can make together.”

The upcoming final round of the Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Frontier Challenge comes after parent company PVH kicked off its green initiatives for 2020 by donating $1 million to Fordham University’s Gabelli School of Business, as part of a partnership to establish an academic hub for the study of corporate responsibility and sustainability.

By Gabriella Lacombe