TATA STEEL FOUNDATION

CIRCULAR

SABAL AWARDS – 6th EDITION 2026

Celebrating Talent. Recognising Resilience. Enabling Change.

The SABAL Awards celebrate the spirit, talent, resilience, and contribution of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), recognising individuals who are expressing themselves through art, creating positive change in society, overcoming barriers and developing innovative solutions for a more inclusive world.

The Awards aim to provide a platform to recognise and celebrate talent among Persons with Disabilities, challenge stereotypes around disability, and amplify stories of achievement, resilience, creativity, and innovation.

The 6th Edition of the SABAL Awards invites applications across three broad themes:

1. SABAL Awards for Spirit of Expression
2. SABAL Awards for Spirit of Resilience
3. SABAL Design Thinking for Rural Innovation

Important Date:
Last date for submission: 5 November 2026, 11:59 PM IST

A. SABAL AWARDS FOR SPIRIT OF EXPRESSION

The SABAL Awards for Spirit of Expression aim to discover, recognise and celebrate the talent and creativity of Persons with Disabilities in the performing and creative arts.

The Awards seek to create counter-narratives around disability, normality and beauty by challenging stereotypes and celebrating the diverse ways in which individuals express their emotions, ideas and imagination through art.

Categories:

i. SABAL Vocalist – Singing Competition
ii. SABAL Visual Artist – Painting Competition
iii. SABAL Dancer – Dance Competition
iv. SABAL Exceptional Performer – Inclusive Arts (Exclusively for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities)
v. SABAL Wordsmith – Poetry & Essay
vi. SABAL Musical Maestro – Instrumental Music
vii. SABAL Band – Musical Ensemble

1. SABAL Vocalist – Singing Competition

1.1 Eligibility:

- The applicant should be a citizen of India.
- The applicant must have a valid disability certificate issued by the competent authority under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act).
- Individuals of all ages and genders are encouraged to apply.
- All types of disabilities recognised under the RPwD Act are eligible, except Intellectual Disability, for which a separate category, SABAL Exceptional Performer, is available.
- All singing styles and genres are welcome.

1.2 Submission Guidelines:

- The applicant must submit a video recording of the performance through the SABAL Application.
- The video must not exceed 3 minutes / 180 seconds.
- The applicant's voice should be clearly audible.
- The video should be of good quality and the applicant should be clearly visible.
- Videos may be recorded at home or outdoors, provided the environment and surface are safe for the performer.
- The applicant may perform in any language and any recognised or contemporary style of singing.

1.3 Entries May Be Rejected If:

- The submitted video exceeds 3 minutes.
- The audio/video quality is insufficient to clearly assess the performance.
- The performer is not reasonably visible or audible.
- The applicant does not provide the personal details/documents required in the registration form.
- The submission does not comply with the prescribed guidelines.

1.4 Recognition:

Exciting prizes, memento, certificates and opportunities for further engagement, exposure and development.

2. SABAL Visual Artist – Painting Competition

2.1 Eligibility:

- The applicant should be a citizen of India.

- The applicant must have a valid disability certificate issued by the competent authority under the RPwD Act, 2016.
- Individuals of all ages and genders are encouraged to apply.
- All types of disabilities recognised under the RPwD Act are eligible, except Intellectual Disability, for which the SABAL Exceptional Performer category is available.

2.2 Submission Guidelines:

- Only one painting will be considered per applicant.
- An image of the artwork must be submitted through the SABAL Application.
- Artwork dimensions should be between 10" × 16" and 12" × 18" (L × B).
- The image of the artwork should not exceed 3 MB and must be submitted in JPEG/PNG format.
- A video of the applicant creating the artwork must also be submitted. The video should not exceed 90 seconds.
- Applicants are advised to upload the video through a private/unlisted YouTube link, wherever required by the application process.
- The artwork must be fresh, original and created by the applicant.
- The artwork must not be a replica/copy of an artwork previously submitted by the applicant to another competition.

2.3 Artwork May Be Rejected If:

- The application procedure or submission guidelines are not followed.
- The artwork is found to be copied, replicated, or plagiarised.
- The required image/video is not submitted.
- The submitted artwork does not meet the prescribed specifications.

By submitting the artwork, the applicant confirms that it is their original work and accepts responsibility for any dispute concerning its originality.

2.4 Recognition:

Exciting prizes, memento, certificate and opportunities for further engagement, exposure and development.

3. SABAL Dancer – Dance Competition

3.1 Eligibility:

- The applicant should be a citizen of India.
- The applicant must have a valid disability certificate issued by the competent authority under the RPwD Act, 2016.
- Individuals of all ages and genders are encouraged to apply.
- All dance forms and styles are accepted.

- All types of disabilities recognised under the RPwD Act are eligible, except Intellectual Disability, for which the SABAL Exceptional Performer category is available.

3.2 Submission Guidelines:

- Submit a dance video through the SABAL Application.
- The video should be of good quality, with a minimum recommended resolution of 480p.
- The applicant's face and movements should be clearly visible.
- Videos may be filmed at home or outdoors, provided the environment and surface are safe for the performer.
- The dance video must not exceed 3 minutes / 180 seconds.

3.3 Videos May Be Rejected If:

- The video exceeds 3 minutes.
- The performer is not clearly visible.
- The movements cannot be adequately assessed.
- The video has been recorded in an unsafe environment or on an unsafe surface.
- The participant does not provide the personal details/documents required in the registration form.

3.4 Recognition:

Exciting prizes, memento, certificate and opportunities for further engagement, exposure and development.

4. SABAL Exceptional Performer – Inclusive Arts

The SABAL Exceptional Performer category provides an inclusive platform exclusively for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PwIDs) to showcase their creativity, talent, skills, and imagination through diverse art forms.

4.1 Eligibility:

- The applicant should be a citizen of India.
- The applicant must be a Person with Intellectual Disability as recognised under the RPwD Act, 2016.
- The applicant must possess a valid disability certificate issued by the competent authority.
- Individuals of all ages and genders are encouraged to apply.

4.2 Performance Categories

An applicant may apply in one of the following categories:

i. Painting / Drawing / Sketching
ii. Dancing
iii. Singing
iv. Musical Instrument – Instrumental
v. Musical Instrument with Singing
vi. Mimicry
vii. Acting
viii. Poetry Recitation
ix. Story Recitation
x. Any Other Creative/Performing Art

4.3 Submission Guidelines:

- The applicant must submit a maximum 3-minute / 180-second audio/video through the SABAL Application.
- The applicant must be clearly audible and/or visible, as applicable to the chosen category.
- The submission should enable the jury to fairly assess the applicant's talent and performance.

4.4 Recognition:

Exciting prizes, memento, certificate and opportunities for further engagement, exposure and development.

5. SABAL Wordsmith – Poetry & Essay

The SABAL Wordsmith category celebrates the power of written expression and provides a platform for Persons with Disabilities to share their ideas, experiences, imagination and perspectives through poetry and essays.

5.1 Eligibility:

- The applicant should be a citizen of India.
- The applicant must have a valid disability certificate issued by the competent authority under the RPwD Act, 2016.
- Individuals of all ages and genders are encouraged to apply.

5.2 Submission Guidelines:

- Register through the SABAL Application.
- Essay: 1,500–3,000 words.
- Poem: No prescribed word limit.
- The submitted poem/essay must be an original composition.
- Format: Times New Roman, Size 12-, 1.5-, or 2.0-line spacing, justified text.

- File format: PDF or Word document.
- The document must be submitted through the prescribed SABAL submission process/email: tsf.sabal@tatasteelfoundation.org

5.3 Entries May Be Rejected If:

- The submission exceeds the prescribed word limit, where applicable.
- The document is copied or plagiarised.
- The submitted work is not an original composition.
- The applicant does not provide the required registration details.

5.4 Recognition:

Exciting prizes, memento, certificate and opportunities for further engagement, exposure and development.

6. SABAL Musical Maestro – Instrumental Music

The SABAL Musical Maestro category celebrates Persons with Disabilities who demonstrate musical talent and skill through instrumental performance.

6.1 Eligibility:

- The applicant should be a citizen of India.
- The applicant must have a valid disability certificate issued by the competent authority under the RPwD Act, 2016.
- All types of musical instruments are permitted.
- Individuals of all ages and genders are encouraged to apply.
- All types of disabilities recognised under the RPwD Act are eligible, except Intellectual Disability, for which the SABAL Exceptional Performer category is available.

6.2 Submission Guidelines:

- Submit a video of the musical performance through the SABAL Application.
- A minimum video resolution of 480p is recommended.
- The musical performance should be clearly audible.
- The performer should be clearly visible.
- Videos may be filmed at home or outdoors, provided the environment and surface are safe.
- The video must not exceed 3 minutes / 180 seconds.

6.3 Videos May Be Rejected If:

- The video exceeds 3 minutes.
- The performer is not clearly visible.

- The musical performance is not clearly audible.
- The participant does not provide the required personal details/documents.

6.4 Recognition:

Exciting prizes, memento, certificate and opportunities for further engagement, exposure and development.

7. SABAL Band – Musical Ensemble

The SABAL Band category celebrates musical ensembles that demonstrate collective talent, collaboration, and inclusion.

7.1 Eligibility:

- Minimum 5 and maximum 10 members in the band.
- At least 50% of the band members must be Persons with Disabilities.
- All performing artists must be Persons with Disabilities.
- All band members must be citizens of India.
- All musical genres are accepted.

7.2 Submission Guidelines:

- Submit a video through the SABAL Application.
- The video must not exceed 4 minutes.
- All performing members should be clearly visible.
- The submission should be made by the designated Band Manager.
- All official communication regarding the submission and award will be made with the designated Band Manager.

7.3 Videos May Be Rejected If:

- The video exceeds 4 minutes.
- The performers are not clearly visible.
- The musical performance cannot be adequately assessed.
- The required details of the band/members are not submitted.

7.4 Recognition:

Exciting prizes, certificate, and memento.

B. SABAL AWARDS FOR SPIRIT OF RESILIENCE

The SABAL Awards for Spirit of Resilience recognise individuals whose journeys demonstrate courage, perseverance, leadership, and meaningful contribution to society.

The awards seek to challenge the stereotypical understanding of disability as a liability and recognise both Persons with Disabilities who have created positive change and persons without disabilities who have contributed meaningfully towards building a more dignified and inclusive society.

B.1 SABAL Change Maker

The SABAL Change Maker recognises Persons with Disabilities who have demonstrated resilience and made a meaningful contribution to society, creating positive and lasting change in their communities or beyond.

This award may also be conferred posthumously.

Eligibility:

- Person with Disability as recognised under the RPwD Act, 2016, with a valid disability certificate.
- Citizen of India.
- Open to all ages and genders.

Submission Guidelines:

- Details of the nominee must be submitted in the prescribed format through the SABAL Application.
- Supporting documents/evidence may be submitted wherever applicable.
- The completed nomination/documentation must be submitted through the prescribed SABAL submission process/email: tsf.sabal@tatasteelfoundation.org

B.2 SABAL Role Model

The SABAL Role Model recognises Persons with Disabilities who have demonstrated exceptional resilience in their life journey and overcome significant barriers to pursue and achieve their goals.

Eligibility:

- Person with Disability as recognised under the RPwD Act, 2016, with a valid disability certificate.
- Citizen of India.
- Open to all ages and genders.

Submission Guidelines:

- Details of the nominee must be submitted in the prescribed format through the SABAL Application.
- Supporting documents/evidence may be submitted wherever applicable.
- The completed nomination/documentation must be submitted through the prescribed SABAL submission process/email: tsf.sabal@tatasteelfoundation.org

B.3 SABAL Saathi

The SABAL Saathi is an open category that recognises individuals who have demonstrated sustained dedication and commitment towards advancing the rights, dignity, inclusion and welfare of Persons with Disabilities.

The nominee/applicant may or may not be a Person with Disability.

Submission Guidelines:

- Details of the nominee must be submitted in the prescribed format through the SABAL Application.
- Supporting documents/evidence may be submitted wherever applicable.
- The completed nomination/documentation must be submitted through the prescribed SABAL submission process/email: tsf.sabal@tatasteelfoundation.org

Recognition:

Memento, certificate and opportunities for further engagement, exposure and development.

C. SABAL AWARD FOR RURAL INNOVATION & DESIGN THINKING

The SABAL Award for Rural Innovation & Design Thinking celebrates innovation and the quest for excellence by recognising viable solutions that enable Persons with Disabilities living in rural areas to lead more independent, dignified and inclusive lives.

The category is open to individuals, organisations, social entrepreneurs, innovators, designers and teams who are developing solutions to address everyday challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities in rural communities.

Solutions may be:

- Technical or non-technical
- Digital or non-digital
- Low-cost or resource-efficient
- Individually or collaboratively developed
- Locally/indigenously developed
- Replicable and scalable

C.1 Eligibility:

- This is an open category. The applicant/nominee may or may not be a Person with Disability.
- The innovation should demonstrate relevance to the needs and challenges of Persons with Disabilities, particularly those living in rural areas.

C.2 Evaluation Parameters

Submissions may be evaluated on the basis of:

- Innovation and originality
- Relevance to the needs of Persons with Disabilities
- Accessibility and user-centred design
- Affordability and feasibility
- Demonstrated or potential social impact
- Scalability and replicability
- Sustainability
- Potential to enable greater independence and dignity

C.3 Submission Guidelines

- Details must be submitted in the prescribed format through the SABAL Application.
- Applicants may be required to submit supporting documents, photographs, videos, prototypes, case studies or other evidence demonstrating the innovation and its impact.
- The completed submission/documentation must be submitted through the prescribed SABAL submission process/email: tsf.sabal@tatasteelfoundation.org

Recognition:

Exciting prizes, memento, certificate and opportunities for further engagement, exposure and development.

D. GENERAL EVALUATION PARAMETERS:

Depending on the category, entries may be evaluated on relevant parameters including:

- **Creative & Performing Arts**
    - Creativity and originality
    - Technical skill and execution
    - Expression and presentation
    - Overall impact

- **Spirit of Resilience**

- Demonstrated resilience and perseverance
- Nature and extent of contribution
- Positive social/community impact
- Sustainability and continuity of work
- Ability to inspire or influence others

- **Rural Innovation & Design Thinking**

- Innovation and originality
- User-centredness and accessibility
- Feasibility and affordability
- Social impact
- Scalability and replicability
- Sustainability

The final evaluation criteria and process may vary according to the nature of each award category.

E. GENERAL SUBMISSION & ACCESSIBILITY PROVISIONS

Accessibility Support:

- Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation or assistance to complete the registration or submission process may contact the SABAL Helpline.
- SABAL will endeavour to provide reasonable support, wherever feasible, to facilitate equitable participation.
- Applicants requiring Indian Sign Language (ISL) assistance may contact the dedicated ISL assistance number provided below.

Applicants Below 18 Years:

- Applicants below 18 years of age may participate. Applications involving minors must be submitted with the consent/approval of a parent or legal guardian, wherever required.

Originality:

By submitting an entry, the applicant/nominee confirms that the submitted work, performance, innovation, or information is original and does not knowingly infringe the intellectual property or other rights of any third party.

F. PREVIOUS WINNERS:

Applicants who have secured a Top 3 position in a particular category in an earlier edition of the SABAL Awards will not be eligible to apply again in the same category.

However, they may apply for other categories for which they meet the eligibility requirements.

G. TERMS & CONDITIONS:

i. Team SABAL reserves the right to reject an application or nomination at any stage if the submission is found to be incomplete, inaccurate, ineligible, unsuitable or not in accordance with the prescribed guidelines.
ii. The final decision regarding the winners will rest with Team SABAL and the designated jury, in accordance with the evaluation process of the competition.
iii. The decision of the jury will be final and binding.
iv. By registering for the competition, the applicant/nominee confirms acceptance of the terms and conditions of the SABAL Awards.
v. Applicants/nominees consent to SABAL using submitted photographs, videos, artwork, performances, stories, names and related content for legitimate promotional, communication and awareness-building purposes, with due credit wherever applicable.
vi. Submission of an entry does not, by itself, transfer ownership of the applicant's original artwork, writing, performance or innovation to SABAL, except where otherwise expressly agreed in writing.
vii. SABAL reserves the right to use submitted content for non-commercial promotional and communication purposes related to SABAL and its initiatives.
viii. SABAL reserves the right to modify, defer or cancel any category or award process, where circumstances require.
ix. Any false information, misrepresentation, plagiarism or violation of the submission guidelines may result in disqualification.

H. CONTACT:

- **Email**: tsf.sabal@tatasteelfoundation.org

- **General Information Helpline:** 809249938
- **ISL Assistance**: 8076852861

- **Helpline Timings**: 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Last Date for Submission:

5 November 2026 | 11:59 PM IST

Team SABAL
Tata Steel Foundation