



INFORMS Announces Six Finalists for the 2026 Franz Edelman Award; Department of Food and Public Distribution among the Honorees

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The Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) is among the six finalists for the prestigious 2026 Franz Edelman Award for its initiative, **“Anna Chakra”** an operations research (O.R.) based decision support solution that strengthens India’s Public Distribution System by optimizing state-specific logistics. Developed in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in India and the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, the initiative stands alongside other finalists including Chewy, NVIDIA, Google, Microsoft and ECCO Shoe.

Widely regarded as the “Nobel Prize of Operations Research and Analytics”, the Franz Edelman Award recognizes the world’s most impactful, high-value applications of advanced analytics. Being named among the top six global finalists positions ‘Anna Chakra’ on the international stage as a model of analytical innovation in public systems, government reform, and large-scale logistics optimization.

Launched by the Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and New & Renewable Energy, Shri Pralhad Joshi in December 2025, ‘Anna Chakra’, was developed through a strong Government–UN-Academia collaboration and it uses advanced optimization models to strengthen the movement of food grains across India. Its national deployment has generated:

- Estimated annual savings of INR 250 crore
- A 35% reduction in emissions, supporting India’s climate commitments
- Efficiency gains that benefit more than 81 Crore PDS beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable populations

Anna Chakra’s selection for the final round of the Franz Edelman Award underscores its global relevance as a scalable, data-driven model for public distribution reforms.

Earlier this month, the “Anna Chakra” project received the CDSA ORSI Excellence in Management Science and Analytics Practice Award 2026 at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad — reinforcing the national and international impact of this initiative.

“We are honoured to be recognized on these platforms,” said Shri Sanjeev Chopra, Secretary, DFPD. “The Anna Chakra model represents the power of applying scientific methods to strengthen public systems. Our partnership with WFP India and IIT Delhi has been instrumental in achieving this milestone.”

The winner of the 2026 Franz Edelman Award will be announced at the INFORMS Analytics+ Conference in National Harbor, Maryland, USA, from April 12–14, 2026.



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