

# 2026 ULI Asia Pacific Awards for Excellence

## Submission Guidelines

The Urban Land Institute invites the submission of projects to the 2026 ULI Asia Pacific Awards for Excellence from 7 January on the online form hosted [here](#). For any comments or questions regarding submissions not covered in these instructions, please e-mail: [asiapacificawards@uli.org](mailto:asiapacificawards@uli.org).

***Please note the submission form must be completed in English even if the questions on the form are set out in another language.***



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## Introduction

Since 1979, ULI Awards for Excellence programme has honoured outstanding development projects in both the private and public sectors. The competition is widely recognised as one of the development community's most prestigious awards programmes and serves as the centrepiece of ULI's efforts to identify and promote best practice in all types of real estate development. Awards recognise the full development of a project – planning, construction, economic viability, management, and community impact, as well as design.

After various iterations, the Awards for Excellence programme is today aligned into three separate regional awards programmes. Each has its own jury, applying consistent global criteria based around specific project typologies. The three programmes are based in:

- The US and Canada;
- Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA);
- The Asia Pacific (APAC). The APAC competition was launched in 2019.

## Eligibility to Enter the ULI Asia Pacific Awards for Excellence

Submissions are open to all, not just ULI members.

Projects entered in the Asia Pacific Awards for Excellence must be located in the Asia Pacific region. The Asia Pacific region is defined to include East Asia (but not Russia), Japan, Southeast Asia, South Asia (including Pakistan) and Oceania.

Development projects and programmes that meet the following requirements are eligible to submit for an Asia Pacific Award for Excellence.

## Evaluation Criteria

Projects must:

- Be financially viable and operationally stabilised; for public sector/nonprofit this means demonstrating a reasonable and responsible use of financial resources.
- Be substantially complete (however, they need not be newly constructed).

Contestants should note that for projects to be considered ‘stabilised’, they will usually need to show a financial track record **and therefore to have been in operation for at least one year and preferably longer** (See below under Market Acceptance and Financials for more on this issue). That said, the jury recognises there will be cases, especially in publically-sponsored projects, where profitability is not a primary goal, and the project’s financial performance is therefore less important and possibly irrelevant. In addition, the jury recognises that innovative projects that create new models in the industry may also be award-worthy even with a relatively short track record.

Projects with multiple phases may submit complete phases of the project. “Substantially complete” means a single-phase project must be finished, occupied, and in operation; for multiple-phase projects, at least the first phase must be finished, occupied, and in operation.

Projects are assessed by the jury on the extent to which they:

- Are distinctive and innovative, standing out from others in their category.
- Demonstrate leadership through excellence in all areas—architecture, design, planning, construction, amenities, economics, and management, etc..
- Have meaningful impact on the surrounding community from financial, land use, social, and development perspectives.
- Have replicable components that can be adapted elsewhere in other communities.
- Showcase sustainability and resiliency strategies.
- Are able to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Show how their projects embody characteristics that promote ULI values.
- Demonstrate relevance to the current and future needs of the community in which they are located and have a positive impact in those communities. In this context, successful projects are often not about a single building or even an entire development. If the project is conceived (possibly on a master planning basis) as a means to create or enhance a wider neighbourhood, it is eligible for an award on that basis.

Awards are not reserved only for large, expensive developments. In fact, some of the most remarkable and deserving projects the jury sees are those executed on a tight budget and to a relatively small scale. If the project embodies the qualities set out in these guidelines, the jury will assess it on equal terms no matter the size of the investment or the prominence of its sponsor.

## Typologies

Submissions require participants to select a typology for their project. Typologies help the jury better understand the project and assist the administration of the programme. It is important to note, however, that the jury does not grant awards for each typology.

Awards are granted on the basis of the jury's assessment of each project on its own merits. Typology is not a relevant consideration. This means that the same project cannot be entered twice in different typologies.

Typologies include:

- Commercial: Hotel
- Commercial: Leisure and Entertainment
- Commercial: Office
- Commercial: Retail
- Commercial: Industrial and Logistics
- Mixed-Use
- Residential (including apartments, affordable housing, senior housing, student housing)
- Planned Communities
- Education, including schools and universities
- Civic/Public, including libraries, courthouses, hospitals, etc.
- Programme/Initiative
- Open Space

## Legacy Award

In addition to awards for excellence, the jury may also grant the Legacy Award to a development or programme that:

- Meets all eligibility requirements listed above
- Has established new concepts or standards that others have emulated
- Is of national or international renown
- Has been complete for a minimum of 25 years.

Applicants for a Legacy Award must identify on their submission form the reasons why they consider their project meets the above criteria.

The Legacy Award is not conceived primarily for historic preservation projects, although such projects may win the award. Single-building projects may be submitted, but projects that aspire to long-term placemaking and that aim to benefit the entirety of the local community are ideally suited.

Legacy Award submissions do not require the prior authorisation of the developer or owner. However, the submitter must have standing with the project or programme. ULI reserves the right to determine independently which organisation is eligible to win the Legacy Award.

The submitter must designate the project or programme as a Legacy Award candidate in the submission form for it to receive this special consideration. By submitting the entry as a Legacy Award candidate, the jury will only evaluate it for this award, and not as part of the overall Asia Pacific Awards for Excellence. Please evaluate carefully whether the project is best suited for this distinction. Visit <https://americas.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/ULI-GAE-Heritage-Award-Winners.pdf> to review past Legacy Award winners (known as 'Heritage' awards in that list).

The jury only designates the Legacy Award with a unanimous vote.

## Market Acceptance and Financials

One of the criteria used by the jury is the extent to which projects have achieved broad market acceptance and financial success. An understanding of their financial performance is therefore a key component for the jury to consider. For public or nonprofit projects for which commercial success is not a primary goal, projects should indicate how they support broader goals or effort and demonstrate a reasonable use of financial resources.

To demonstrate how your entry has been broadly accepted in the market, you may use any indicators that are standard for your product in your market, such as percentage of units sold or leased, percentage of square footage leased, utilisation rates, average daily rates, visitor data, return on investment (ROI), increase in market valuation (based on independent appraisal), occupancy rate (compared to market), stimulation of economic growth in the community, etc. The submission may include additional financial information, such as proformas, accounting statements, etc. If relevant, identify anchor/key tenants.

The financial information required by the jury need not be extensive but should be sufficient for it to assess the project's basic level of commercial performance.

Contestants should be aware that the jury will not grant awards to projects that do not disclose financial information.

## Confidentiality

Unless otherwise noted, ULI and the jury will keep financial information disclosed by the submitter confidential. ULI will only describe financial information in public narratives with prior consent from the submitter.

## Authorisation

The submission form requires the project owner, developer, designated public official, or a representative responsible for the project to attest that:

- Using accepted accounting standards, the project is expected to meet expectations for return on the investor(s)' capital, when applicable;
- There are no pending concerns over the project's financial condition, debt, equity, or public agency subsidy;
- ULI may use and reproduce the information on the application form and supporting materials (including images and narratives) unless noted otherwise, and
- He/She has full power and authority to provide information included in their submission and to grant the above rights and permissions.

## Submission Process

The submission form includes a step-by-step submission process. It must be completed in English, although our Asia Pacific Awards webpage has sample Submission Forms (and also Submission Guidelines) in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. You can save the application at any time and return to it later. ULI recommends saving the form often to avoid any potential loss of data. Please allow time for uploading your submission materials.

The jury will not evaluate incomplete submissions. Once the submitter completes and sends the submission form, it cannot be modified. If you submit an application in error or would like to add/modify an aspect of the submission and the if the submission period is still open, contact [asiapacificawards@uli.org](mailto:asiapacificawards@uli.org) to request ULI reopen your application.

You will receive an email notification when ULI receives your submission form. Please contact [asiapacificawards@uli.org](mailto:asiapacificawards@uli.org) if you have attempted to file a submission but have not received a notification email.

## Multiple Submissions

The same submitter can enter several submissions into the system, although the relevant submission fee is payable for each one. The submitter must complete one submission in order to begin the next one.

## Repeat Submissions

Projects that have not won in the past may resubmit.

## Submission Materials

### Minimum submission materials

The projects and developments submitted should demonstrate an innovative approach to delivering best practice in real estate and urban development and provide an inside look at the ideas and strategies used to develop an exemplary project. We encourage submitters to think of these submission materials as the first step to creating a compelling case study of the project.

The project description (on page 1 of the submission form) should be direct and succinct. Focus on what sets your project apart from others, and most important, describe the impact—economic, social, and environmental—the space has had on its surrounding area. Be sure to provide project metrics wherever possible; concrete numbers help the jury make its decision.

In addition to the completed submission form, entrants must submit one PowerPoint presentation (**n.b.—not in .pdf format!**) in A4 landscape size at 300 pixels per inch or better. Approximately 20 slides is an ideal length.

Slides should include:

- Project Location map
- Project Site Plan
- Project within context of its surroundings
- A development timeline
- Relevant plans and other support drawing or diagrammatic/conceptual images that support the project key facts or story
- Selected imagery of the final built and operating development

Slides should **NOT** include:

- Borders, logos, numbers, or other collage elements
- Renderings, which may disqualify the entry. The focus should be on the images of the built development.

## Images

Good images in the powerpoint are critically important to sustain the application narrative and often serve to drive the conversation as the jury meets and evaluates entries. In particular:

- In general, choose images that demonstrate why the project should win an award and how it embodies ULI values.
- Do not overuse graphics. Between two and four images per slide is generally ideal.
- Use high-resolution graphics that can be displayed on a large presentation screen without pixilation.
- Show people in your images. The jury wants to see the project in its real world context. It also wants to see that it has vitality and is widely used by the public. Graphics showing empty buildings or spaces rarely win awards.
- Images should show how the project integrates with its surroundings.
- If the submission involves a building, images of both the interior and exterior should be included.
- For mixed-use developments, images should show how the various parts of the projects are integrated.
- In general, avoid using architectural drawings or renderings. These rarely add value to the jury analysis.

If text is used on the slides, the font should not be smaller than 12pt. However, because the powerpoint is intended as a visual story, most descriptive text should be included on the submission form, with text on slides kept to a minimum.

Powerpoint images are also used to create content devoted to individual projects in ULI research and editorial material. ULI typically features all winners and finalists in different types of editorial content—and may feature other applicants of note. ULI will often also use the images to make a video to present during ULI annual meetings, ceremonies, and related events. The higher the quality of the images, the better.

Applicants are required to upload a minimum of six of the most prominent images from the PowerPoint presentation as standalone, high-resolution JPEG files. This ensures ULI has immediate access to high-quality, reusable imagery of winning projects for editorial coverage and Awards marketing purposes.

Please name the PowerPoint presentation using the following protocol: [project location]\_[abbreviated project name] **Example:** China\_Dongfeng Hotel

## Additional submission materials (optional)

You may submit up to six files with relevant information. In particular, videos that show different aspects of the submitted project can be useful in providing additional information.

Other potentially useful information might include descriptive literature, news articles, blog posts, etc. Particularly useful are materials that can offer an objective, third-party perspective on your project's character and impact.

## Entry Fees

An entry fee must accompany each project submitted, fees may be waived or reduced in exceptional circumstances at ULI's discretion.

### 2026 Awards Programme Fees:

Phase	Deadline	Public / Non-profit	Private Sector
Early Bird	7 January – 3 February 2026	USD \$400 (\$200 discount)	USD \$700 (\$400 discount)
Regular	4 – 26 February 2026	USD \$500 (\$100 discount)	USD \$900 (200 discount)
Late	27 February – 13 March 2026	USD \$600	USD \$1,100

Fees can be paid by **credit card, bank transfer, or cheque.**

Credit card payments can be made directly through the online submission portal at the time of entry.

Please note:

- The applicable fee is **determined by the date the project is officially submitted online**, not by the date the application process begins.
- The above fees apply to the type of company or organisation submitting the entry, not the type of project. For example, a private company submitting a public project must pay the private-sector rate.
- For the purposes of this competition, a state-owned enterprise (SOE) is regarded as a private-sector entity. Organisations owned by the state will only be classified as public-sector bodies if they are not self-financing and/or not operated on a commercial basis.

## Recognition & Engagement Initiatives

To enhance the visibility, educational value, and enduring impact of the 2026 ULI Asia Pacific Awards for Excellence, winner engagement activities will be incorporated into the submission package after the announcement phase. This initiative extends recognition beyond the initial announcement – transforming award-winning projects into ongoing platform for learning, exchange, and inspiration across the broader ULI community.

### 1. Experiential Showcase Opportunity through ULI Local Councils

Opportunity to collaborate with ULI Local Councils and other industry associations to incorporate study tours of winning projects into upcoming conferences and events.

- Provide members with immersive, on-site learning experiences that showcase excellence in design, sustainability, and community impact.
- Encourage winning teams to share key lessons and project insights directly with members and partners at the local level, fostering cross-industry learning and collaboration.

### 2. Regional Knowledge Sharing through Webinars

- Invited as speakers at ULI quarterly regional webinars spotlighting award-winning projects, moderated by Jury members or industry leaders.
  - Feature panel discussions with representatives from the winning teams, exploring project development stories, community outcomes, and replicable best practices.
  - Build a regional narrative around innovation, resilience, and leadership in real estate and urban development.

### 3. Expanded marketing and Media Exposure

A coordinated communications campaign will amplify winners visibility and cross-market recognition through:

- ULI Asia Pacific’s digital platforms: Dedicated social media series, project highlight posts, and newsletter features.
- ULI Asia Pacific Thought Leadership Journal: A special digital supplement profiling 2026 winners and their transformative projects.
- UrbanLand Magazine (online): Feature stories showcasing the Asia Pacific winners to ULI’s global readership.
- ULI Asia Pacific website: A permanent “Hall of Excellence” section archiving past and present winners, with project images and case summaries.

- Optional editorial collaborations: An opportunity for a paid ULI Case Study, white paper, or other interview and project feature campaign, with additional fees and timeline subject to further discussions with the ULI Asia Pacific Thought Leadership team.

#### 4. Regional and Global Media Outreach

- Featured in official press releases distributed across ULI Asia Pacific and global networks – including UrbanLand, major industry publications, and Local Council communication channels.
- Highlighted in targeted regional media campaigns to maximise visibility and industry recognition, reinforcing the Awards as the leading benchmark for excellence in the Asia Pacific built environment

### The Jury and the Jury Process

A jury of ULI full members chooses finalists and winners. Members of the jury are recognised leaders who represent a broad geographic diversity and many areas of real estate development expertise, including finance, land planning and development, public affairs, design, and professional services. Jury members tend to rotate through a three-year service period, which guarantees a diverse and different jury each cycle with new points of view and expertise that reflect the broad diversity of ULI's membership. Jurors operate independently, applying the highest standards of evaluation and professional practice as reflected in the [code of ethics](#) of the Urban Land Institute. Jurors are not permitted to vote or comment in the judging process in relation to projects submitted by them or by firms with which they are associated.

### First Jury Meeting

After submissions have closed, each juror receives a group of submitted projects to review in advance of the first jury meeting. During this first meeting, typically over the course of two days, each juror presents to the rest of the jury his or her group of submissions for debate, evaluation, and qualification. This process usually produces between 15 to 20 finalists that advance to a second round of evaluation. ULI will notify finalists and non-finalists of their status shortly after this meeting, which will be held in the first week of April.

### Finalist Site Visits

If the jury selects your project as a finalist, during the following month one or more jurors will visit each finalist for a closer evaluation, where they meet with those responsible for the success of the project or programme. The goal is to gather a detailed understanding of all aspects of the project or programme. If circumstances prevent jurors from visiting any given project, a 'virtual' site visit will be arranged instead.

## Second Jury Meeting

In April, the jury will convene for a second and final meeting where they review each finalist project again. Jury members who visited each project start the discussion with a brief presentation that includes additional insight they obtained during their visit. After a day of deliberations, the jury then selects between eight and twelve ULI Asia Pacific Awards for Excellence winners.

ULI will notify winners and non-winners of their status shortly after this meeting. Selected winners should then assist in preparation of multimedia presentations of their projects that will be shown at the 2026 ULI Asia Pacific Summit to be held in Shanghai, China from 25 – 27 May 2026.

## Feedback from Jury

While ULI aims to provide jury feedback and comments to submissions regardless of whether they progress to the finalist stage, it cannot guarantee this given the volume of submissions.

## Feedback for ULI

At any time, ULI welcomes your feedback on the Awards for Excellence programme, including, but not limited to: the application platform, the submission process, the eligibility requirements, the evaluation criteria, awards marketing, and related recognition (trophies, Urban Land content, ceremonies, etc.).

Please email [asiapacificawards@uli.org](mailto:asiapacificawards@uli.org) to share your feedback.

