

FAQ: ULI Asia-Pacific Awards for Excellence 2026

Understanding Excellence

1. What makes the ULI Awards for Excellence different from other industry awards?

The ULI Awards for Excellence evaluate projects and programmes across the **entire development lifecycle**—from planning and delivery to operation, impact, and long-term value—rather than focusing primarily on design or completion. They are **Asia Pacific-wide**, assess both **projects and programmes**, and prioritise **replicability, market acceptance, and community impact** as learning exemplars for the region.

2. Which aspects—such as innovation, community impact, sustainability, or market acceptance—are most often not explained clearly enough in submissions?

Submissions most often under-explain the **process, outcomes**, and especially **long-term impact**, with too much emphasis placed on what was built rather than *how* it was delivered, *why* it was innovative, and *what measurable change* it created for communities, economies, or quality of life.

3. Even for strong projects, where do submissions most commonly fall short?

Strong projects frequently fall short in **financial disclosure, market acceptance evidence**, and **clear articulation of impact**, particularly when financials are omitted, adaptation challenges are not explained, or success claims are not supported by data.

4. What types of evidence—metrics, data, images, or narratives—most strengthen a submission, and why do juries value them?

Jurors value **clear metrics and data**—such as financial performance, employment figures, carbon savings, resale rates, foot traffic, or investment enquiries—supported by **spatial plans, operational data, and grounded narratives**, because they demonstrate credibility, learning value, and real-world performance beyond marketing imagery.

5. How have smaller or lower-budget projects successfully competed with large, high-profile developments?

Smaller projects succeed by demonstrating **high innovation, bottom-up collaboration, and outsized community impact**, often overcoming significant constraints and showing how modest interventions can be **replicated within similar socio-economic contexts**, regardless of scale, budget or location.

6. What does a strong project story look like to a jury, especially when explaining innovation in a local context?

A strong project story is **clear, honest, and evidence-based**, explaining the local context, challenges faced, decisions made, and lessons learned, while showing vulnerability and adaptability rather than rhetoric—allowing jurors to understand *why the solution mattered there and how others might apply it elsewhere*.

Market Acceptance & Financials

7. How do juries assess the balance between commercial performance and social or environmental impact in private-sector projects?

Jurors assess projects through a **triple-bottom-line lens**, where commercial success must coexist with positive environmental and social outcomes; financially successful projects that degrade environmental or social capital are unlikely to be assessed favourably.

8. What signals show that a project is both commercially sound and capable of being replicated elsewhere?

Key signals include **market acceptance indicators** (resale rates, occupancy, foot traffic), **transparent financial logic or subsidies, longitudinal performance data**, and evidence that approaches are already being shared, adopted, or planned in other locations.

Jury Process & Decision-Making

9. How do site visits or virtual tours influence the jury's decision-making? What can entrants do to make these visits most effective?

Site visits are critical because they allow jurors to **experience the project in use**, speak directly with users, and assess how well it has settled into its community; entrants should prioritise authenticity, user interaction, and flexibility rather than scripted presentations, with virtual tours used where travel is not feasible.

Getting Started

10. What advice do jurors offer to teams preparing their submission now, particularly those targeting the Regular deadline?

Teams should use the submission process as a **learning exercise**, take time to gather robust data and evidence, clarify what they are most proud of, and focus on **impact, replicability, and lessons learned**, rather than polishing rhetoric or visuals alone.