

WINNERS' HANDBOOK

UNICORN AWARDS 2026

7 - 8 September 2026, Ljubljana, Slovenia



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IMPORTANT DATES

REGISTRATION	DEADLINE: 17 July 2026
SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS	DEADLINE: 24 July 2026
FINALISTS' ANNOUNCEMENT	10 August 2026
LIVE PITCHING & FINAL VOTING	7 September 2026
WINNERS' ANNOUNCEMENT	8 September 2026

WHY THE UNICORN AWARDS?



Who better to ask about the competition's mission than its founder? Gorazd Čad, the founder of the Unicorn Awards, sees the competition as a movement building a legacy: *"What started as a competition has grown into a movement. With the Unicorn Awards, we're not just celebrating excellence—we're building a legacy that inspires and educates."*

1. THE FOUNDATION

The Unicorn Awards rank among the most important annual competitions in the European meetings and events industry.

The project's founder, **Gorazd Čad**, identified a significant market gap. A gap that global awards of a similar type weren't addressing. Back then, there was no platform dedicated to showcasing the creative, brave, and ingenious event organisers from the region. Since its inception, the Unicorn Awards have grown into Europe's benchmark for the best events. To show the world that we can compete on the highest level. This was confirmed by the award winners, who went on to compete and receive recognition in other international competitions.

Joining the event every year are event managers, creative heads, marketing experts, event organisers, providers of meeting services, representatives from companies, agencies, associations, and everyone else co-crafting the events, advertising and marketing landscape. The competition also offers ample opportunities to listen to keynote speakers who have successfully transformed their events and are recognised as the pioneers of our new reality.

2. THE FORMAT AND TIMELINE

80/20

The evaluation of registered events follows a unique 80:20 model. The winner is selected based on a weighted average calculated after the live pitching and voting has ended. 80% of the votes come from the jury and 20% from the audience, who vote for their favorite project based on live presentations from the finalists. This method has proven to be the most effective, objective, as well as engaging way to select the best of the best.



[Complete registration](#)

[Jury members](#)



3. THE RULES

1. Projects that were carried out from **1 January 2025** until **17 July 2026** are eligible to register for the award.
2. Projects that competed for the award last year are not eligible to enter.
3. Each project can be entered into one or more categories. See entry fees for applying in additional categories in point 3.4.

Winners will only be announced in categories with 3 or more competing projects.

4. Your participation in the competition can not be cancelled or removed. When your submission is finalised, you agree that a representative from your company will attend the live pitching in person, and in the case of winning, attend the award ceremony. An entry is considered finalised once the registration form is completed, the entry fee has been paid, and all materials have been submitted.

3.1 ENTRY PROCESS

All applicants pay the fee via [our website](#). The deadline for registration is **17 July 2026**.

After the payment, you can submit your project via the [AwardForce platform for the Unicorn Awards](#), where you will be able to enter details about your event, upload photos, videos and additional material used to prepare your presentation for the jury and public. All texts and descriptions should be submitted in English. Materials in the following specifications are obligatory:

1. Text descriptions

up to 1000 characters for each segment

1. Event description and key objectives
2. Key challenges
3. Creativity
4. Innovation
5. Execution
6. Measurable results
7. Communication
8. The use of sustainable practices

2. Video - main project presentation

max. 2-minutes, max. 200MB in mp4 format and as a Youtube link

It is recommended to have a voice-over playing over the video in order to make the content clearer to the jury. Please add subtitles if the speaking voice is not in English or the voice is not clear. Using copyrighted music is not allowed. We recommend structuring the video as follows:

1. THE OBJECTIVE - start with the why
2. THE CHALLENGE - what did you try to do?
3. THE SOLUTION - how did you do it?
4. THE RESULTS - what was the impact on the world?

3. Video - trailer

max. 20 seconds, in mp4 format

In case you are the winner, we will play a 20-second trailer of your project before you come on stage to receive the trophy. This can be a shorter version of the main video or a new video.

4. Photos

up to 4 photos in jpg format, (min. 1024x683px)

Photos tell more than a 1000 words. Be creative and take us behind the scenes of the event as well.

Projects failing to deliver the obligatory materials by the required date will not be able to enter the competition. No deadline extensions will be allowed and no replacement or additional media will be accepted after an entry has been finalised.

3.2 THE JURY EVALUATION

Once you submit all of your materials, they will be sent to our expert jury for evaluation. The jury consists of **27 members** who participate and vote equally in evaluating the submitted entries. The jury shall review and evaluate all submitted projects in a fair, impartial, and transparent manner.

Starting with the 2025 edition, the Unicorn Awards is hosted on the Creative Force Platform. This intuitive system is designed to make submitting, reviewing, and judging entries easier, faster, and more transparent than ever.

The jury work shall take place in three interconnected phases:

PHASE 1 - PRELIMINARY SELECTION OF FINALISTS

Projects are scored on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest) according to the following 12 criteria:

CT1: Creativity

Assessment of the originality and uniqueness of the concept and its alignment with the target group.

Key question: Does the event introduce fresh and original approaches that open new horizons in event organisation?

CT2: Relevance

The degree to which the event meets the needs of the target group, including measurable achievements and participant involvement.

Key question: Does the event effectively address the needs of its target group with measurable outcomes and active involvement?

CT3: Innovation

Evaluation of innovative approaches in event organisation, content, programme design, and technical support, including regionally new practices.

Key question: Does the event demonstrate meaningful innovation in design, content, or technical execution?

CT4: Execution

Professionalism and effectiveness in project management, human resources, partnerships, and logistical delivery.

Key question: Was the event delivered professionally, with effective management, and with flawless logistics?

CT5: Results

Achievement of the project's stated objectives relative to the resources invested, including assessment of Return on Investment (ROI) and added value.

Key question: Did the event achieve its stated objectives and deliver tangible value relative to the resources invested?

CT6: Event communication

Contribution of the event to the client's long-term communication and marketing strategy, as well as the positioning of the organiser.

Key question: Did the event strengthen long-term communication, marketing impact, and brand positioning?

CT7: Sustainability

Integration of sustainable principles and actual implementation of concrete sustainability measures.

Key question: Were sustainability principles effectively implemented with measurable impact?

CT8: Legacy

Long-term impact, benefits, and broader social influence of the event.

Key question: Did the event leave a lasting positive legacy with long-term social, cultural, or industry impact?

CT9: Overall impression

A holistic assessment of the event's originality, creativity, and added value.

Key question: What is the jury's overall impression of the event's distinctiveness and quality?

CT10: Use of technology

Assessment of the application of new technologies, digital tools, and hybrid approaches in shaping the participant experience.

Key question: Did the event use technology innovatively and effectively to enhance the participant experience?

CT11: Participant experience & engagement

Evaluation of the overall journey and emotional impact for participants.

Key question: Did the event create an engaging, inclusive, and memorable experience for participants?

CT12: Risk management & resilience

Assessment of how the event anticipates and manages risks (safety, unforeseen circumstances, crisis communication) and ensures resilience in challenging conditions.

Key question: Was the event well-prepared to manage risks and demonstrate resilience under challenging conditions?

A predetermined number of top-ranked projects shall advance to the finalist stage. The Jury President, in consultation with the Jury Secretary, verifies the integrity and correctness of the scoring process before the announcement of finalists.

In the event of a tie affecting the selection of finalists, the Jury President may request a reevaluation or exercise the **Golden Vote** (in the event of a tie, the Jury President shall have the right to a decisive vote).

Each criterion carries equal weight. Scores are aggregated automatically by the evaluation platform to generate the overall project ranking.

The minimum threshold score for becoming a finalist in 2026 is 6.01. The threshold for subsequent years is set annually at the jury meeting.

The jury members evaluate the projects according to the following scale:

Final mark:

- **9.1 - 10.00:** Outstanding project
- **8.1 - 9.0:** Excellent project
- **7.1 - 8.0:** Very good project
- **6.1 - 7.0:** Good project
- **5.1 - 6.00:** Average project (meets minimum criteria)
- **Less than 5.00:** The project does not qualify for the finale

PHASE 2 - IN-PERSON JURY WORK

The in-person evaluation of submitted events follows the 80:20 model, ensuring both expert assessment and audience participation. The final winner is determined based on an average score calculated after live pitching and voting have concluded:

- 80% of the final score comes from the jury;
- 20% of the final score comes from the audience, who vote for their favourite project after the live presentations.

IMPORTANT: To qualify for the audience award, each project must receive at least 25% of the votes from all participants present (for example, if there are 120 participants, this means at least 30 votes). Only entries that reach this threshold will be considered in the final ranking.

PHASE 3 - SELECTION OF THE WINNERS

After the second phase concludes, the jury will convene for an official meeting to determine the winners. The jury conducts the process in several stages to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency with the competition rules.

The jury selects the projects that are true game-changers, meaning that the jury's decision also serves as a clear message to participants about the trends and future directions of the industry.

The jury reserves the right to present additional awards to projects competing in special categories if a justified reason exists. Furthermore, the jury may also decide not to grant an award to any project. Awards may be withheld if the jury determines that the quality of the projects is significantly lower compared to other categories.

3.3 LIVE PITCHING

Each finalist will have 2-minutes to present their event to members of the jury and the public audience. To promote creativity and give the finalists freedom to express their ideas, the 2 minutes can be used in any way they prefer.

After the 2-minute pitch, each member of the jury reserves the right to pose questions to the presenter. The presenter will have an additional 5 minutes to answer.

The live pitching will be taking place on **7 September 2026** from 10:00 to 15:30. The exact time slot will be communicated by the organiser and will be based on the category you will compete in.

Finalists, send us all the materials you will use for the live presentation.

If you are the finalist, all the pitching materials should be sent to anja.kese@toleranca.eu, no later than **30 August 2026**. Finalists who fail to send the pitching material by the required date will not be able to use it on the day of the event.

IMPORTANT:

Finalists, who will not present their projects in-person, live in Ljubljana, are not eligible to receive points from the audience (20% of the final score).

3.4 ENTRY FEES

STANDARD FEE
EVENT CREATOR PACK
360 €
 / PROJECT

STANDARD FEE
ADDITIONAL CATEGORY
175 €
 / CATEGORY

The events industry knows numerous competitions that reward the best events, including Bea World Festival, Eventex, and others. Yet, none is quite like the Unicorn Awards. Thanks to a transparent decision-making process in which all jury votes are equal, the competing events are assessed objectively and fairly. In addition, all finalists have the opportunity to exchange knowledge with fellow event organisers, seasoned Unicorn Hunters, and creative thinkers at Conventa Crossover, the annual festival of events hosted in Ljubljana.

If you believe your event exceeded the confines of a dull meeting and deserves to be crowned a “unicorn”, this competition is the right fit for you.

[Register your event](#)

4. THE CATEGORIES

Winners will be announced in the following **MAIN CATEGORIES**:

1. **B2B EVENTS** Corporate

Corporate events, intended for business clients, most commonly of a closed format. These events could be anything from product launches, business conferences, trade shows, networking events, exhibitions, and more.

2. **B2C EVENTS** Consumer

Events intended for the general public. The end consumer is at the heart of the content of these events, and the primary goal is to provide a positive experience for them. Examples include festivals, etc.

3. **B2E EVENTS** Employee

Internal events intended for employees of a company/organisation, most often organised in the form of a training, celebration, anniversary, kick-off, or teambuilding event.

4. **CROSSOVER EVENTS**

Open to events demonstrating original ideas, intended for both the corporate and consumer target audiences. This includes charity events, pop-ups and more.

5. **BEST SLOVENIAN EVENT**

The leading Slovenian event will be chosen among the competing Slovenian finalists.

SPECIAL AWARDS

Winners in these categories are selected by an independent jury. These awards recognise outstanding achievements that go beyond the main and subcategories.

SA1: **GRAND Prix Award**

SA2: **AUDIENCE Award**

SA3: **Best EVENT AGENCY**

SA4: **Best in CREATIVITY**

SA5: **Best in CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

SA6: **Best USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

SA7: **Best IN COMMUNITY BUILDING AND ENGAGEMENT**

SA8: **Best SUSTAINABLE EVENT / PLANET POSITIVE EVENT AWARD**

SA9: **Best IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION**

SA10: **RISING STAR AWARD**

SA11: **Best LOW BUDGET/COST-EFFECTIVE EVENT (budget under €60,000)**

SA12: **Best EVENT FORMAT INNOVATION**

Final decision: The final decision is based on jury deliberation and voting. While the number of points assigned to projects is considered as one of the criteria, the ultimate decision rests with the jury.

SUB-CATEGORIES

Once you choose the main category for your event. You can define the sub-category from the list. One sub-category is included in the entry fee. If you would like to select more than one sub-category, an additional fee applies.

NOTE: Winners in subcategories will be selected only if more than 3 projects compete in that subcategory.

SC 1: Conference, congress, convention

A large-scale meeting organised by a company or association to present innovation, share knowledge, and exchange ideas on a specific topic.

SC2: Trade show/exhibition

A tradeshow or exhibition is an event aimed at companies of a specific industry to showcase and demonstrate their latest products and services to their target audience. These events are usually closed to the public.

SC3: Product or service launch

The core goal of these events is to boost awareness about a new product or service. They can be aimed at a corporate audience or the end consumer.

SC4: Ceremony

Events organised to mark important milestones, commemorate significant cultural events, or honour individuals or groups.

SC5: Press event

The goal of these events is to present a novelty to an invited group of journalists, most often through a press conference.

SC6: Festival

Multi-day events that provide insight into achievements in particular professional or entertainment fields.

SC7: Sports event

Sports events organised by individual sports associations or private companies, mainly featuring amateur participants and the wider public.

SC8: Cultural/music event

Musical entertainment events such as concerts, musicals, music festivals, and public cultural events that evolve around different artistic fields and require complex preparation and organisation.

SC9: Roadshow

Roadshows are a series of events or presentations organised in different locations to promote a particular product, service, or company.

SC10: Internal training/educational event

Educating and training employees in individual companies is intended to promote the development of human resources.

SC11: Teambuilding event

Events designed to increase motivation and promote cooperation in a team or company often include employees participating in a joint activity, task or programme.

SC12: Internal celebration

A private event designed for employees of a company/organisation, e.g. anniversaries, kick-offs, Christmas parties, etc.

SC13: Pop-up event

A temporary and spontaneous event that "pops up" in a specific location for a limited time period with the aim of promoting a brand or product.

SC14: Brand activation

The goal of a brand activation is to build an emotional connection between the brand and the customer by immersing them in a unique experience.

SC15: CSR/Non-profit event

CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and non-profit events are organised by companies or organisations to fulfil their social responsibility.

SC16: Guerilla marketing event

An event that uses unconventional and creative tactics to promote a product or service, often characterised by its surprise factor, high level of creativity, and ability to generate buzz and attention from the public.

SC17: Incentive/reward trip

An incentive trip is a company-sponsored, reward-based travel program designed to motivate employees or partners to reach specific business goals.

SC18: Luxury/lifestyle event

An exclusive, high-end gathering designed to showcase premium brands, unique experiences, and a sophisticated way of life to affluent consumers.

SC19: Public institution/government event

An event based on strict agendas and usually following diplomatic protocols.

SC20: Grand show/spectacle ceremony

These events include the Olympic Games, world championships, and other major competitions.

5. THE JURY

All submitted entries will be evaluated by a jury of international experts in event organisation. The jury consists of **26 members** who participate and have equal votes in evaluating the submitted entries. Every member of the jury makes their decision individually on the basis of their expert knowledge, reputation and authority. The jury reserves the right to move/remove events to different categories if they believe the project does not fit in that category.



JURY PRESIDENT

Ángeles Moreno Vallejo

Jack Morton Iberia
Spain

EVENT EXPERTS



Jens Mayer

Jack Morton
Germany



Gerd de Bruycker

NimbleX
Belgium



Vesna Vlašič

McCann
Bosnia and Herzegovina



Mary Kirillova

BEIC
Estonia



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SoolNua
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Inese Lukaševska

LUKA AGENCY
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INTERNATIONAL MEDIA



Jose Garcia-Aguarod

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Spain



Rui Ochoa

Eventpoint
Portugal



Alexandros Makris

Magna Events
Greece



Stefan Kozak

Creative Pro Group
Slovakia

PAST WINNERS

CLIENT REPRESENTATIVES - ASSOCIATIONS



Ruth Ann Felismino

CGIAR
Philippines

CLIENT REPRESENTATIVES - CORPORATIONS



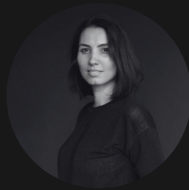
Zsuzsanna Nagy

Trivium Packaging
Hungary



Imre Diosi

Michelin
France



Fanny Favre

Apollo Tyres
Netherlands



Martin Hampf

Škoda Auto
Czech Republic



Christian Hubner

Volkswagen
Germany



Justyna Lachowicz

L'OREAL
Poland



Aleš Petejan

Mastercard
Slovenia



Irena Oven

NLB banka
Slovenia



Christoffer Sapienza

DNB Bank
Norway



Tereza Vrankova

Orlen Unipetrol
Poland

Why an expert jury?

To find unicorns, these elusive animals in the wild, we had to scour the events industry to find the leading minds who have seen the unicorns with their own eyes. These Unicorn Hunters are experts in their respective fields, including event organising, advertising, the corporate world, marketing, and media.

PAYMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The entry fee can be paid by credit card directly on the website, or via a pro-forma invoice issued by the organiser. You can select the preferred way of payment in the registration form. The entry fee should be paid by **30 April 2026** (early fee) or **17 July 2026** (regular fee). A submission is considered finalised only after the entry fee has been successfully paid. Please write to natalija@toleranca.eu in case of any technical problems connected to the processing of payments.

All payments and invoices are handled by Toleranca marketing d.o.o. in accordance with their terms and conditions, which can be found [here](#). Payments not gone through due to reasons not attributable to Toleranca marketing will not be reimbursed.

THE WINNERS OF THE AWARD

Which events are considered a benchmark for the events industry?

The archive of our past winners is a trove of creative knowledge, excellence in execution, and going beyond the clients' script. Peruse the collection of winners from past editions of our event.

[PAST WINNERS](#)



unicorn awards

by CONVENTA

Make your trailblazing event an event unicorn!

[Enter the competition](#)

Get in touch

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