

MOUNTAIN PROTECTION AWARD

2025 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

This document summarizes the process, as well as all criteria for eligibility, to submit a project for the UIAA Mountain Protection Award (MPA) and be in the running to become the winners of this edition's prizes.

This year, two prizes are at stake:

- **the Overall Winner:** receiving EUR 8,000* prize money, communication amplification through UIAA partners, a certificate of recognition, a trophy, an invitation and paid trip to the dedicated award ceremony, the MPA winner logo as well as international communication on all UIAA platforms.
- **the Best New Initiative:** receiving EUR 2,000 prize money, a certificate of recognition, the MPA Best New Initiative logo, international communication on all UIAA platforms and most importantly benefitting from an expert review and advice to further develop the concept and support its implementation.

*subject to change depending on additional signed partnerships

1. WHO CAN APPLY?

Any project rooted in mountain sports with a focus on environmental sustainability and climate change is eligible to apply for the UIAA Mountain Protection Award.

An applicant can be an individual or a group who identifies as one of the following:

- An association and/or alpine club (member of the UIAA)
- A not-for-profit/non-governmental organisation or volunteer community group
- A for-profit business (e.g. tour operators, expedition agencies, etc.)

Each applicant can only submit one (1) project per edition.

1.1 NEW APPLICANTS

New applicants must meet the general eligibility profile as stated above.

1.2 PREVIOUS APPLICANTS

Previous applicants must also meet the general eligibility profile as stated above, and are welcome to re-apply with either:

- An entirely new project; or
- A project that was previously submitted as a 'new idea or concept' and that is now a project under implementation;
- A project that was previously submitted as being 'ongoing project', and that has since achieved a proven track-record with significant results.

Previous prize winners of the Mountain Protection Award cannot re-apply with the same project.

2. PROJECTS

Any project rooted in mountain sports with a focus on sustainability and climate change is eligible to

apply for the UIAA Mountain Protection Award.

Thus, an individual project should focus on such areas as climate change adaptation and/or mitigation, conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems, sustainable resource consumption and management, sustainable waste management and disposal, or protection of the environment through culture, local traditions and education.

Projects must be rooted in mountain sports such as hiking, climbing, bouldering, mountaineering, sky running, canyoning, etc.

Furthermore, projects are assessed according to their stage of development. A project can fall under one of the following stages:

- A new project idea or concept;
- An ongoing project (under implementation);
- A finished project realised in the current or past calendar year.

2.1 NEW IDEA OR IMPLEMENTED PROJECT?

All projects, regardless of their development stage, will be reviewed and evaluated by the assessment team and are eligible to be considered for promotion and display on the UIAA MPA platform. Projects that are implemented and on-going or finished in the current or past calendar year are eligible to compete for the MPA main prize. Projects that are either at the idea or proof of concept stage are eligible to compete for the Best New Initiative prize.

All projects accepted into the program receive valuable feedback and advice from experts in the field. However, the application process is slightly different for each category, so applicants will need to decide whether their project should be considered under Best New Initiative or the MPA main prize category. The following examples can help applicants decide which category their project fits into:

<p>MPA main prize category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project has been completed in the past calendar year or is ongoing. - Project has a fully formed budget that has been put into practice at least once. - Project applicants need to have a recent evaluation or reflection of an actual project successes and challenges. 	<p>Best New Initiative prize category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project is at the idea stage or possibly has undergone a proof-of-concept trial. - Project has a proposed budget or one that is only partially determined. - Project applicants are planning for project evaluation, or have undertaken only a partial evaluation.
<p>Examples of MPA main prize category projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-Managed Climbing Parks, Asociación 7a Escalada (Peru) - Save Lake Belis, Romanian Alpine Club (Romania) - Pamir Horse Adventure (Tajikistan) 	<p>Examples of MPA main prize category projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Bins Project, Zero Waste Mont Blanc (France) - Save Rinjani, Federation of Indonesian Climbing Activity (Indonesia) - Repurposing Windfarm Blades, Clare Local Development Company (Ireland)

If there is uncertainty about which category is appropriate for a given project, applicants are encouraged to contact mountainprotection@theuiaa.org with any questions.

3. REFERENCE LETTERS

Reference letters play an important role in the application and assessment processes.

A letter of support from the UIAA member association in the country(ies) where the project is implemented, must be submitted with the application. If the applying organisation is a UIAA member, a letter of support from its president must be submitted.

To further enhance the application, letters of recommendation from local climbing and mountaineering associations/clubs, environmental associations, NGOs, governing bodies, and/or other important stakeholders are especially encouraged. As sound financial practices are a key element assessors will be looking for, ideally, at least one recommendation letter should specifically mention the organisation's role of financial oversight over the project at hand.

4. ASSESSMENT

4.1 ASSESSMENT TEAM

The assessment team consists of UIAA Mountain Protection Commission delegates and external experts. Each project is reviewed by up to **three members** of the assessment team: **one or two** UIAA Mountain Protection Commission **delegates** (Assessor A and C) and **one** external expert (Assessor B).

4.2 PROCESS

First, each submitted application is checked by the UIAA Office for completeness. Incomplete applications will not be processed for review. Validated projects are then forwarded to the assessment team for review.

Each project is reviewed and scored by at least two members of the assessment team, as defined above, for each of the following criteria:

- is rooted in climbing, mountaineering or outdoor sport (yes/no)
- clearly demonstrates and follows a vision and states project goals (score)
- clearly outlines expected outcomes and follows an implementation plan (score)
- contributes to climate change action and environmental sustainability through a focus on conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems, sustainable resource consumption and management, sustainable waste management and disposal, climate change adaptation and/or mitigation or protection of the environment through culture, local traditions and education. (score)
- clearly outlines human and financial resources, including in-kind contributions, source of funding and allocation (score)
- provides verifiable supporting evidence of project implementation (except for a project considered under 'new idea / initiative or concept', which supplies information on expected project implementation timeline, resources, and budget) and referees (score)
- clearly states what expectations are in terms of UIAA MPA community activation and what the project team is able to contribute to (excellent/medium/insufficient)

Scores for each individual category can vary from zero (0) to five (5). The criteria scale marking is as follows:

- 0 = no evidence of involvement/effort
- 1 = not sufficient information or enough details to make a judgement
- 2 = sufficient information provided, but only partially meets the criteria

- 3 = good information provided and generally meets the criteria
- 4 = very good information and details provided and fully meets the criteria
- 5 = excellent work/involvement/effort provided

An overall score for the project is calculated by taking the average score of the assessors (i.e. total scores of Assessor A + total scores of Assessor B + total scores of Assessor C) / 3 = overall project score)

This combined score given to each project highlights its overall performance and can vary from zero (0) to twenty-five (25).

Each project is assessed by at least two members of the assessment team. If the two assessors' scores differ by more than three points in a given category (e.g. Assessor A scores category (a) with a 1, while Assessor B scores category (a) with a 5 → difference of 5 - 1 = 4) a third assessor, part of the assessment team, will be brought in to evaluate the full project. The average score of all three assessors will give the overall score for the given project.

In a last step, assessors will provide feedback to projects based on three areas:

- 1) project impact and community engagement follow-up;
- 2) financial viability; and
- 3) project excellence.

This shall especially serve and provide value for applicants in understanding how an initiative is contributing to mountain protection and what areas, if any, could further be improved and how.

5. RECOGNITION AND PRIZE

All projects that are complete, eligible, and have a minimum score of ten (10) points receive the right to use the UIAA MPA logo in black. Only the 10-15 highest scoring projects will be showcased on the UIAA website, and a shortlist of 5 projects announced in the lead-up to the award ceremony. The decision about the showcase and shortlist lays with the UIAA Mountain Protection Commission MPA working group.

All reviewed projects are ranked according to the overall score given, providing the basis for allocating acknowledgement and prize eligibility. The UIAA Mountain Protection Commission convenes in a final review, taking into account recommendations and comments by the assessment team and decides on the following:

- MPA Overall Winner
- MPA Best New Initiative

The UIAA Mountain Protection Commission, via its President, notifies the assessment team as well as the UIAA President and the MPA partners of its final decision.

The *overall winner* is announced confidentially at the UIAA General Assembly, and publicly at the UIAA Mountain Protection Award Ceremony and receives a cash prize of EUR 8,000, a UIAA MPA trophy, the right to use the UIAA MPA winner logo, a certificate of recognition and will be featured in a dedicated UIAA news article. Exclusive communication of the winning project will be coordinated with UIAA partners and amplified through their worldwide channels. The winner will be asked to write and share a progress report within the next year and a final report upon completion of the project and submit this to the UIAA Mountain Protection Commission.

The highest-scoring project under the “new idea or concept” category is deemed the year’s *UIAA MPA Best New Initiative* and is announced and presented at the UIAA General Assembly. It

receives EUR 2,000, the right to use a dedicated UIAA MPA Best New Initiative logo, a certificate of recognition and will be featured in a dedicated UIAA news article.

6. TIMELINE 2025

01 March	Online Application Portal opens https://www.theuiaa.org/mountain-protection-award/
15 May	Online Applications Portal closes at midnight (CEST)
7 July	Review by UIAA MPA assessment team concludes
June-August	Showcase of 10 projects on UIAA platforms
4 July	Shortlist of 5 projects announced on UIAA platforms
End of July	Winners of 2025 UIAA Mountain Protection Award categories (winner, best initiative) contacted
25 October	Announcement of 2025 Best New Initiative at UIAA General Assembly
11 December	Award Ceremony & Announcement of 2025 UIAA MPA Winner

7. COMMUNITY BUILDING

With a significant alumni group of participants and awards winners since the award inception in 2013, there exists global community of experience and exposure. From 2025 the MPA will function on a two-year cycle with one year being an adjudication and award year; with the alternate year having a focus on community building and associated knowledge sharing.

Community building will be achieved through information exchange via channels such as newsletters, information exchanges virtually and in identified regions. A portion of the main sponsorship budget is allocated to support these initiatives and outcomes.

Participation in the community engagement opportunities is not compulsory, but strongly encouraged due to the opportunity to refine, improve and grow existing initiatives through global exchange.