

MALTA INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AWARDS 2026



GUIDE LINES



Ministry for the Economy,
Enterprise and Strategic Projects

The Commerce Department within the Ministry for the Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects is once again organising the annual Malta Intellectual Property Awards. The scope of these guidelines is to provide assistance to Applicants¹ when applying to be considered for the Malta Intellectual Property Awards 2026.

The Malta Intellectual Property Awards 2026

Through these Awards, Government is encouraging the development of innovative ideas and products which have potential and which are also unique and sustainable.

1. The Award Categories

The Malta Intellectual Property Awards 2026 will be awarded as follows:

A. Award for Creative Initiative

The cultural and creative industries are significant to innovation because they are primarily based on innovative ideas which produce a multitude of new products and services.

Creative individuals and enterprises are at the heart of cultural and creative industries through the talent, skill, entrepreneurship and intellectual property they generate spurring new jobs and businesses or helping mature industries re-tool for the future.

The Award for Creative Initiative rewards **individuals** or **enterprises** operating in the cultural and creative sectors, having an **excellent combination of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship**. The contribution can be either an established or new product, innovation of an existing process or an enhanced way of working.

For the purposes of the Malta Intellectual Property Awards, submissions in this category shall relate to artistic or audio-visual works or a combination thereof.

Artistic works include paintings, drawings, etchings, lithographs, engravings and works of sculpture.

Audio visual works include any work that consists of a series of related images which impart the impression of motion, with or without accompanying sounds, which can be made visible and when accompanied by sound, can be made audible.

Projects should be tangible, concrete and well developed into either actual or very promising products or processes. Any concepts which are essentially based on abstract ideas and intentions are not considered to fall within the scope of the Awards.

B. Award for Scientific Initiative

The Award for Scientific Initiative owes its origin to science-based research findings generated by **science students, academics** and **professionals**. The initiative could be an established or new product, a significant improvement of an existing product, an enhanced use of an existing product or a new process.

Projects should be tangible, concrete and well developed into either actual or very promising products or processes. Any concepts which are essentially based on abstract ideas and intentions are not considered to fall within the scope of the Awards.

¹ Whenever used in the guidelines, the term “applicant” refers to either an individual, or a group of individuals / team, or a company, or a group of companies, or a partnership or a joint venture.

C. Award for Technological Initiative

The Award for Technological Initiative requires the development of new and innovative, or step-change improvements, with respect to problem solving of real commercial or societal challenges. The outcome should be an innovative technological process or an existing solution that is improved radically for application in a novel situation.

Projects should be tangible, concrete and well developed into either actual or very promising products or processes. Any concepts which are essentially based on abstract ideas and intentions are not considered to fall within the scope of the Awards.

D. Award for Emerging Innovation Initiative

The Award for Emerging Innovation Initiative, is intended to encourage projects that are not created by experienced creative, scientific or professional persons, but which nonetheless are still promising and innovative.

*Eligible projects for this category must be the work of an individual or entity that is a newcomer to the field i.e. **has been operating in the field for less than five (5) years**. Projects resulting from a group of individuals or other type of entity will also be deemed eligible provided that all the members of the group are also newcomers to the field. For this award one can apply either in the 16 to 30 age bracket, or in the 31 and over age bracket.*

Projects submitted under this category must fall under one of the previous three categories of either Creative, Scientific or Technological Initiative. Applications for consideration under category D should clearly indicate on the front page of the application form that the application is being submitted as an Emerging Innovation Initiative, **by ticking the ‘Yes’ box**.

Projects should be tangible, concrete and well developed into either actual or very promising products or processes. Any concepts which are essentially based on abstract ideas and intentions are not considered to fall within the scope of the Awards.

2. The Project Selection Criteria

The selection stage is based on the amount of points gained by each project submitted on the basis of the criteria below:

2A – Criteria for the Creative Initiative Award:

The following Set of Criteria shall apply for project evaluation purposes for this Category:

- i. Knowledge (15 points)**
Knowledge, skill and talent contributing to the creative product or process.
- ii. Impact (15 points)**
The impact of the product or process on the sector, industry and society.
- iii. Intellectual Property (25 points)**

The Intellectual Property elements, including if they are being protected or if this protection is being planned.

iv. Cooperation (15 points)

The level of networking and cooperation with other creative individuals, organisations or other industries.

v. R&D (15 points)

Original or creative experimentation, design and research methods used to explore ideas or develop products or processes including conceptual and aesthetic principles adopted to develop the idea and efficiency in performance of the product or process.

vi. Plan (15 points)

Each submission has to be accompanied by a Development Plan outlining what development has taken place to date and explaining how the project can be further developed. The Plan should go into detail on how the applicant is taking the current project forward. Depending on the current stage of the project, the development plan can vary from developing the project idea into a tangible one, its commercialisation or its internationalisation. The applicant is also required to provide information and evidence as to the stage of development that the project has reached.

Information on potential or already formed collaborations with other partners and end customers should also be included.

Information should also be provided on any Intellectual Property Rights that have been protected or are in the process of obtaining protection in relation to the project being submitted.

The Development Plan should also include realistic time frames and approximate costs.

2B – Criteria for the Scientific Initiative and Technological Initiative Awards:

The following Set of Criteria shall apply for project evaluation purposes for these two (2) Categories:

i. Knowledge (15 points)

Knowledge, skill and talent contributing to the scientific or technological product or process.

ii. Impact (15 points)

The impact of the product or process on the sector, industry and society.

iii. Intellectual Property (25 points)

The Intellectual Property elements, including if they are being protected or if this protection is being planned.

iv. Inventiveness (15 points)

Applicants must indicate if the project submitted is a new concept or a variation/improvement of an existing product or process. In the case of Scientific Initiative, the research-based findings must be well defined. In the case of Technological Initiative, the technological process must be clearly explained. In both cases the applicant should state if the project constitutes an inventive step to the prior art in the field and that is not obvious to the skilled person in the field.

v. R&D (15 points)

Scientific or technological experimentation and research methods used to explore the idea or develop the product or processes including conceptual and aesthetic principles adopted to develop the idea and efficiency in performance of the product or process.

vi. Plan (15 points)

Each submission has to be accompanied by a Development Plan outlining the development that has taken place to date and explaining how the project can be further developed. The Plan should go into detail on how the applicant is taking the current project a step forward. Depending on the current stage of the project, the development plan can vary from developing the project idea into a tangible one, commercialising the product or its internationalisation. The applicant is also required to provide information and evidence as to the stage of development that the project has reached.

Information on potential or already formed collaborations with other partners and end customers should also be included.

Information should also be provided on any Intellectual Property Rights that have been protected or are in the process of obtaining protection in relation to the project being submitted.

The Development Plan should also include realistic time frames, and approximate costs.

2C – Criteria for the Emerging Innovation Initiative Award:

The selection criteria for this award will be those applicable in 2A and 2B according to the category for which the emerging innovation has applied.

3. The Application Process

All applications must be made on the respective project application form which can be downloaded from the Commerce Department website commerce.gov.mt by following the banner: **Malta Intellectual Property Awards 2026**. The application forms will be made available as from the 26th of April 2026.

All applications must be completed in full, signed, dated and submitted by email only on: ipawards@gov.mt by not later than **Friday 26th June 2026 at midnight (00:00)**. Applications received after this deadline **WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their application prior to the deadline.

4. The Eligibility Requirements

- i An applicant may submit only one project application per category for consideration.
- ii The Project being submitted must be an original piece of work attested by a Declaration of Originality as requested in the application form.
- iii The Project being submitted within the Creative, Scientific and Technological Initiative, must have been developed within the last five (5) years.
- iv Applications must be signed by an authorised signatory as the official representative in case of a group of individuals, company or partnership or joint venture or the individual in the case where the application is being submitted by one person only. Applications bearing no signature or that

of an un-authorised signatory may be rejected at evaluation stage.

- v. Applications submitted under the Emerging Innovation Initiative Award must have been developed within the last five (5) years and the applicant/s must have been operating in the relevant field for less than five (5) years. Applications must also be accompanied by a copy of an identification document belonging to the authorised signatory and the other applicants if applicable.
- vi. All Applicants must be Maltese nationals, or a group of Maltese individuals or enterprises that have their principal place of business in Malta.

Persons not eligible to participate

- i. Employees of the Commerce Department;
- ii. Foreign nationals or entities;
- iii. Members of the Selection Board and their family members*;

*For the purpose of these awards, *family members* shall mean parents, siblings, children and spouses including those in a civil union.

Prize Money

Prizes may be awarded as follows:

- Regarding the **Award for Creative Initiative**; the **Award for Scientific Initiative**; and the **Award for Technological Initiative** the winner of each category shall receive **€8,000** while the **second placed shall receive €4,000**.
- Regarding the **Emerging Innovation Initiative Award**, the winners of the subcategory for individuals aged 16 to 30 and of the subcategory for individuals aged 31 and over² shall each receive **€4,000**.

The Selection Committee reserves the right not to award any of the prizes.

WIPO Recognition

Eligible projects will also be considered for recognition by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

In order for a project to be eligible for WIPO recognition, **sufficient information must be provided as to Intellectual Property Rights, such as Patents, Designs and Trademarks** that have been obtained or are in the process of being obtained in relation to the project that has been submitted.

Project Presentation

Shortlisted applicants may be requested to explain their project to the Evaluation Committee through a fifteen-minute presentation.

² In case of a team/company application, such an application shall be considered to fall within the age classification pertaining to the eldest person within that team/company. By way of example, a team composed of two (2) persons aged 26 and 35, would be considered as pertaining to the 'aged 31 and over' category.

Additional Notes

1. The Board reserves the right to refrain from selecting any of the applications for the awards if the required level is not achieved;
2. Applicants are encouraged to include detailed diagrams/drawings/photographs which will demonstrate clearly the creativity/scientific/technological contribution of the project as well as its uniqueness;
3. The information submitted must also clearly highlight the implementation stages undertaken for the results achieved or which are expected to be achieved;
4. In the eventuality that the applicant has filed or been granted intellectual property rights (IPRs) such as a trademark, patent or design in relation to the project being submitted, then evidence of the IPRs, such as registration certificates and search results, is to be submitted with the application;
5. Applicants must include a detailed curriculum vitae (CV) as part of their application;
6. Applications are to be sent via email, to the Commerce Department, at ipawards@gov.mt. They must be type-written, signed and dated using the application form provided;
7. The pass mark is 50 (fifty) points, out of a total of 100 (hundred) points;
8. The decision of the Board is final;
9. Any queries are to be sent by email at ipawards@gov.mt indicating clearly the subject/matter/reference of the call for participation;
10. An acknowledgement will be sent via email to all applicants upon registration;
11. The closing date for submissions is **Friday 26th June 2026 at midnight (00:00)**.