



CALL FOR ENTRIES

RULE BOOK 2025/2026

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GENERAL INFORMATION

This document sets out the official rules for entering the 2nd FEDHASA Hospitality Awards 2025. By submitting an entry, nominators and nominees agree to be bound by these rules.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

The 2nd FEDHASA Hospitality Awards 2025 celebrate excellence across South Africa's hospitality sector. We invite entries from hotels, restaurants, venues, suppliers, and hospitality professionals whose work demonstrates leadership, operational excellence, innovation, sustainability, and outstanding guest experiences.

- **Who may enter:** Individuals, teams, and organisations operating in South Africa's hospitality industry (including properties that are part of international groups but are physically based in South Africa). See detailed eligibility in the General Rules section.
- **Minimum finalists per category:** The Organiser aims to shortlist **at least three (3) nominees per category**. Where entry volumes or quality are insufficient, the Organiser may merge categories, move entries, or decide not to confer an award.
- **How to enter:** Submit via the online portal (see HOW TO SUBMIT NOMINATIONS). Self-nominations and third-party nominations are both permitted.

ABOUT THE FEDHASA HOSPITALITY AWARDS

The FEDHASA Hospitality Awards recognise and reward outstanding contributions to South Africa's hospitality industry. The Awards champion leadership, teamwork, innovation, sustainability, positive social impact, and consistently excellent guest experiences.

CONTACT FOR QUERIES

Awards Secretariat

Contact Person: Promise Motshele

Email: awards@awardsfedhasa.co.za

Telephone: +27 79 980 8386

Office hours: Monday–Friday, 09:00–17:00 (SAST).

WHEN AND WHERE ARE THE AWARDS PRESENTED?

- **Awards Ceremony Date:** 15 April 2026
- **Venue:** Cape Town

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

Eligibility Period	1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025
Entries	9 September 2025 – 30 January 2026
Vetting	2 – 6 February 2026
Judging	9 – 18 February 2026
Nominee Announcement	12 March 2026
Awards Ceremony Event	15 April 2026

*All dates subject to change

GENERAL RULES

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

To ensure fairness and verifiability, the **Eligibility Period** for achievements, initiatives, and measurable results is **1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025**.

- Work or roles that **began earlier** are eligible, **provided the significant achievements, outcomes, or impact occurred within the Eligibility Period**.
- Where appropriate, supporting data may include trailing indicators recorded up to the entry closing date (30 January 2026) to evidence outcomes achieved within the period.

ENTRY TYPE

- **Individual awards** recognise a named person employed within the hospitality sector in South Africa during the Eligibility Period.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ENTRIES

Entries must satisfy all of the following:

- **Geography:** Work undertaken **in South Africa** or by South Africa-based teams serving South African operations.
- **Sector:** Hotels, lodges, resorts, guest houses, B&Bs, restaurants, cafés, bars, conference/banqueting venues, attraction venues with hospitality services, and hospitality suppliers are eligible where relevant to category.
- **Employment/Contracting:** Nominees must have been **employed or contracted** by the submitting organisation (or self-employed in South Africa) **during the Eligibility Period**.
- **Compliance:** Entrants must be **in good standing** with applicable South African laws and regulations (e.g., labour, tax, health & safety, liquor licensing where applicable, food safety, environmental compliance). The Organiser may request evidence.
- **Conduct:** Entrants must uphold professional conduct; proven misconduct may result in disqualification.
- **Membership:** FEDHASA membership is **not required** for entry, but members are welcome.

NUMBER OF ENTRIES & CATEGORY LIMITS

- An organisation may submit **multiple entries** across categories.
- The **same person** may be entered in **more than one category only** if the narrative and evidence are tailored to each category's criteria. The Organiser may reassign entries to a more suitable category.

VETTING & VERIFICATION

- The Organiser may conduct **due diligence**, including reference checks, policy compliance checks, and, where appropriate, **site visits** or remote interviews.

- Entrants must provide **truthful, accurate** information. Fabrication, plagiarism, infringement of IP, or misrepresentation will result in disqualification and may bar future participation.

JUDGING

See Page 11 for the full judging process.

Key principles:

- Independent, qualified judges score against **published criteria**.
- Judges assess **evidence of measurable results**, not just intent.
- The Organiser may **shortlist 3 nominees** per category, subject to entry quality/volume.
- **Decisions are final**. No correspondence will be entered into except on procedural grounds at the Organiser's discretion.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Judges must declare any **actual or perceived conflict** (e.g., current/ recent employment, close family, or paid consulting relationships in the past 12 months) with an entry.
- A conflicted judge will **recuse** from scoring/discussion of that entry; a replacement judge may be appointed where practicable.

PRIZES

- Each category winner will receive: **a trophy (statuette), an official certificate**
- Prizes are **non-transferable**; no cash alternative to trophies/certificates.

CATEGORY VIABILITY

- If a category receives **fewer than three qualifying entries** or the judging panel deems the standard insufficient, the Organiser may **not confer a winner**, merge categories, or convert entries to Special Commendations.

FEES

- An **entry fee of R295 excluding VAT per entry** applies for the 2025 Awards.
- Upon submission of an entry, the entrant will first receive a confirmation email, followed by an invoice issued to them.
- Payment must be made via **bank transfer**, and **proof of payment (POP)** must be submitted to the Secretariat.
- The entry fee must be settled **before the official entry closing date (30 January 2026, 17:00)**.
- **Entries without proof of payment received by the deadline will not be considered.**

PUBLICITY, IP & DATA

- By entering, entrants grant FEDHASA a **non-exclusive, royalty-free licence** to use submitted materials (names, logos, images, videos, excerpts) for awards administration, publicity, ceremony, and post-event reporting.
- Entrants warrant they have the **right to share** submitted materials and that those materials do not infringe third-party rights.
- Personal data will be processed for awards administration and judging in accordance with applicable data protection laws. Unless otherwise required, data will be retained until **31 May 2026** for audit and reporting, then securely deleted or archived in anonymised form.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Any attempt to improperly influence judges or the process will result in disqualification.
- Entrants agree to uphold professional and respectful behaviour throughout.

CHANGES & FORCE MAJEURE

- The Organiser reserves the right to **amend** these rules, dates, or categories, or to **cancel/postpone** the awards due to circumstances beyond its control, with notice on the entry portal.

HOW TO SUBMIT NOMINATIONS

Step-by-Step

1. Visit the **Entry Portal** (<https://fedhasahospitalityawards.awardstage.com/>)
2. Create an **organisation/individual profile**
3. Choose your **category** and complete the **Entry Form**
4. Upload required materials (see Section REQUIRED ENTRY FORM CONTENTS)
5. Review and **submit** before **30 January 2026 – 17:00**
6. You will receive an **automated confirmation** by email with your entry ID
7. You will receive an invoice and proof to be submitted before 30 January 2026, 17:00

WHAT NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED ON AN ENTRY FORM, PER CATEGORY?

○ ENTRANT DETAILS

The following information is considered Essential Entry Information. It is REQUIRED for each entry unless specified:

- Entrant (Nominee) contact name, job title, phone, email
- Business Details for Invoicing purposes
- Employer name, property/brand, location
- Category entered

- Confirmation of compliance (see ELIGIBILITY FOR ENTRIES)
 - Consent to rules and publicity
- **SUBMISSION VIDEO UPLOAD**
 - Format: **.mp4, 1080p**, max **200 MB**
 - Content: Bring the story to life—key achievements, guest impact, innovation, results, team. Avoid confidential financials; use percentages/indexes where needed.
 - Rights: Confirm you hold rights/permissions for any music/images shown.
 - **PHOTOGRAPH UPLOAD**
 - **Headshot:** JPG/PNG, minimum 3000px on the longest side, 300dpi.
 - **Context Images (optional):** Up to 5 JPG/PNG images that illustrate your work (before/after, onsite shots, dashboards, etc.).
 - **ENTRANT BIOGRAPHY UPLOAD**
For individuals / Organisations Profile (for teams/properties)
 - **Bio:** 100–150 words covering role, tenure, responsibilities, notable achievements.
 - **Org Profile:** 150–250 words including property type, size, market segment, unique selling points.
 - **Metrics summary (optional):** key KPIs (guest satisfaction indicators, audit scores, operational metrics) for the Eligibility Period.
 - **SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**
PDF, max 10 pages in total.
 - Audits/inspections summaries, testimonials, training programs, SOPs, press coverage, case studies, community/ESG reports.
 - File format: **single PDF**, max **15 MB**.
 - **LETTERS OF SUPPORT (OPTIONAL)**
 - Up to **two (2)** letters (max 1 page each) from senior leaders, peers, partners, or guests.
 - **DECLARATIONS**
 - Truthful information, rights to materials, consent to rules & privacy, conflict disclosures.

HOW TO SUBMIT NOMINATIONS

- You may **edit** your submission until the closing deadline. After 17:00 on 30 January 2026, entries are locked.

ACCESSIBILITY

- If you require **reasonable accommodations** (e.g., language support, accessibility), contact the Secretariat at least **5 working days** before the deadline.

JUDGING PROCESS & SCORING

PROCESS OVERVIEW

- **Eligibility & Vetting Check** (by Organiser & ExCo)
- **Stage 1: Pre-Screening** (2+ judges independently score entries to create a longlist)
- **Stage 2: Panel Review** (full panel scores and discusses; may request interviews/demos between **09–18 February 2026**)
- **Shortlist:** 3 nominees per category announced **12 March 2026**
- **Final Deliberation:** Panel selects **Winner**

TIES

- In the event of a **tie**, the Chair will call a further discussion and, if needed, a re-score on the tied entries, focusing on “Evidence of Outcomes/Impact.”

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Judges and administrators treat non-public entry materials as **confidential** and use them only for judging. Publicity uses will rely on materials and excerpts approved via the portal.

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

- **Clear objectives** aligned to the category.
- **Evidence:** data, audits, testimonials, before/after, case studies.
- **Impact** on guests, teams, operations, community, and environment.
- **Sustainability & inclusivity** integrated into delivery.
- **Storytelling quality:** concise, compelling, well-structured submissions.

DISQUALIFICATION & WITHDRAWAL

- Entries that are late, incomplete, ineligible, or in breach of these rules may be disqualified.
- The Organiser may withdraw a nomination if new information emerges that materially affects eligibility or the integrity of the awards.

PROCEDURAL QUERIES & APPEALS

- Procedural queries about submission or portal issues should be directed to the Secretariat **before the deadline**.
- Appeals are limited to **procedural errors** (not scoring disagreements) and must be lodged **within 4 working days** of nominees announcement. The Organiser's decision is final.

ACCEPTANCE OF RULES

- Submitting an entry via the portal constitutes acceptance of these rules by the entrant and, where applicable, the nominee's employer/organisation.

AWARDS

CATEGORIES

DESCRIPTION & CRITERIA

All weights sum to 100% per category

1. COMMERCIAL EXCELLENCE

A. SALES & MARKETING PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

For individuals who deliver outstanding results through sales growth, market development, and innovative marketing strategies.

Judging Criteria:

- Revenue growth & client acquisition – 30%
- Creativity & impact of marketing campaigns – 25%
- Brand visibility & reputation – 20%
- Contribution to overall business success – 25%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Portfolio of sales or marketing campaigns (max 5 pages)
- Evidence of revenue growth or market share increase (reports, KPIs)
- Testimonials from clients/partners (max 3)
- Links or visuals of marketing campaigns (digital/print)

B. REVENUE & DISTRIBUTION MANAGER OF THE YEAR

For professionals who optimise pricing, distribution channels, and forecasting to maximise business profitability.

Judging Criteria:

- Revenue optimisation & yield strategies – 35%
- Effective distribution management – 25%
- Forecasting & data analysis – 25%
- Contribution to profitability – 15%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Case study demonstrating revenue optimisation
- Evidence of forecasting accuracy or improved KPIs
- Reports on distribution channel performance
- Endorsements from senior management or clients (max 2)

C. HOSPITALITY CONSULTANT OF THE YEAR

For consultants or advisors who provide strategic solutions and add measurable value to hospitality businesses.

Judging Criteria:

- Strategic insight & innovation – 35%
- Results achieved for clients – 30%
- Thought leadership & industry contribution – 20%
- Client testimonials/feedback – 15%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Summary of consultancy projects delivered (max 3 pages)
- Evidence of measurable client results (financial, operational, reputational)
- Testimonials from clients (max 3)
- Evidence of thought leadership (articles, speaking engagements, etc.)

2. OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**A. GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR**

Recognising visionary leaders who inspire teams and ensure operational excellence.

Judging Criteria:

- Leadership & people development – 30%
- Operational performance – 25%
- Guest satisfaction & reputation – 20%
- Innovation & adaptability – 15%
- Community & sustainability – 10%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Letter of motivation (max 2 pages)
- Guest satisfaction scores or review summaries
- Operational performance reports (occupancy, RevPAR, GOP)
- Evidence of staff development initiatives
- Examples of community or sustainability initiatives

B. FRONT OFFICE MANAGER OF THE YEAR

For professionals who manage the first point of guest interaction with efficiency and excellence.

Judging Criteria:

- Guest service delivery – 35%
- Team training & leadership – 25%
- Innovation in guest interaction – 20%
- Operational effectiveness – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Portfolio of guest experience initiatives (max 3 pages)
- Evidence of guest feedback (surveys, reviews)
- Team training/development programme examples
- Operational reports demonstrating efficiency

C. CONCIERGE OF THE YEAR

Celebrating concierges who go above and beyond to create memorable guest experiences.

Judging Criteria:

- Guest feedback & satisfaction – 40%
- Innovation in service delivery – 25%
- Industry networking & partnerships – 20%
- Professionalism & standards – 15%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Guest testimonials or letters (max 3)
- Examples of unique/innovative service provided
- Evidence of partnerships or collaborations
- Professional certifications or awards (if any)

D. EXECUTIVE HOUSEKEEPER OF THE YEAR

Recognising leaders who uphold the highest standards of cleanliness and guest comfort.

Judging Criteria:

- Cleanliness & quality standard – 35%
- Efficiency & staff training – 25%
- Innovation in sustainability/hygiene – 20%
- Guest/staff feedback – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Housekeeping SOPs or innovations implemented
- Guest satisfaction reports
- Training programme details
- Evidence of sustainability practices in housekeeping

E. MAINTENANCE & FACILITIES MANAGER OF THE YEAR

For professionals who ensure properties are safe, efficient, and sustainable.

Judging Criteria:

- Facility upkeep & safety compliance – 35%
- Energy efficiency & sustainability – 25%
- Crisis/problem management – 20%
- Innovation in facilities management – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Maintenance logs or reports
- Evidence of sustainability or efficiency initiatives
- Case study of crisis/problem handled successfully
- Health & safety compliance certificates

3. FOOD & BEVERAGE EXCELLENCE

A. CHEF OF THE YEAR

Honouring chefs who display culinary mastery, creativity, and leadership.

Judging Criteria:

- Culinary creativity & innovation – 35%
- Food quality & consistency – 25%
- Kitchen leadership & management – 20%
- Industry reputation & awards – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Chef's portfolio (menu samples, photos of dishes, press clippings)
- Evidence of innovation (new concepts, sustainability in sourcing)
- Endorsements from peers or diners (max 3)
- Awards, reviews, or recognitions (if applicable)

B. MEETINGS & EVENT MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Recognising professionals who deliver exceptional conferences, meetings, and events that enhance guest experience and drive revenue.

Judging Criteria:

- Event execution & client satisfaction – 35%
- Operational efficiency & budget management – 25%
- Innovation in event design & delivery – 20%
- Team leadership & collaboration – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Case study of meetings/events delivered (max 3 pages)
- Client testimonials (max 3)
- Evidence of operational efficiency/budget management
- Examples of innovative event concepts delivered

C. FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Recognising managers who deliver strong operational and financial performance.

Judging Criteria:

- Operational excellence & compliance – 30%
- Guest service quality – 25%
- Team leadership – 20%
- Menu/service innovation – 25%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Operational performance reports
- Guest satisfaction data
- Staff training/development initiatives
- Evidence of menu/service innovations

D. RESTAURANT MANAGER OF THE YEAR

For leaders who create outstanding guest dining experiences.

Judging Criteria:

- Guest experience & service – 30%
- Operational excellence – 25%
- Staff development – 20%
- Menu/service innovation – 15%
- Sustainability & community impact – 10%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Guest feedback/reviews
- Operational performance metrics
- Evidence of staff development/training
- Examples of menu/service innovation
- Sustainability/community initiatives

E. BEVERAGE PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR (SOMMELIER/MIXOLOGIST)

Celebrating experts in wine, cocktails, and beverage service.

Judging Criteria:

- Beverage knowledge & expertise – 35%
- Guest engagement & education – 25%
- Contribution to menu & revenue – 20%
- Creativity & innovation – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Portfolio of beverage creations or wine lists
- Guest or industry testimonials
- Evidence of revenue contribution from beverage programmes
- Examples of innovative beverage concepts

4. INNOVATION & IMPACT

A. FINANCE PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Recognising financial leaders who ensure profitability and compliance.

Judging Criteria:

- Accuracy & compliance – 40%
- Strategic impact & forecasting – 25%
- Contribution to profitability – 20%
- Innovation in financial management – 15%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Financial reports showing improvements
- Examples of strategic forecasting
- Evidence of profitability contributions
- Case studies of financial process innovations

B. TALENT MANAGER OF THE YEAR

For HR leaders building strong, inclusive, and skilled workforces.

Judging Criteria:

- Recruitment & retention – 30%
- Staff development & training – 30%
- DEI & culture building – 20%
- Organisational impact – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Recruitment/retention success metrics
- Examples of staff training programmes
- DEI initiatives implemented
- Evidence of overall impact on workforce or organisation

C. DIGITAL INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Recognising professionals who transform hospitality through technology and digital solutions.

Judging Criteria:

- Innovation & implementation – 35%
- Guest experience & operational impact – 30%
- ROI & measurable results – 20%
- Industry influence – 15%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Case study of technology/innovation implemented (max 3 pages)
- Evidence of impact on operations/guest experience (KPIs, reports)
- Testimonials from team or stakeholders (max 2)
- Screenshots or visuals of technology solution (if applicable)

D. SUSTAINABILITY & ESG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

For professionals who champion sustainable practices and community impact.

Judging Criteria:

- Sustainability initiatives implemented – 35%
- ESG reporting & accountability – 25%
- Innovation in green practices – 20%
- Community & industry contribution – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Evidence of sustainability initiatives (case studies, reports)
- ESG reports or audits
- Examples of innovative green practices
- Community engagement case studies

E. SPA & WELLNESS MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Recognising managers creating exceptional wellness experiences.

Judging Criteria:

- Guest satisfaction – 35%
- Innovation in wellness offerings – 25%
- Team leadership – 20%
- Business performance – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Guest satisfaction surveys/testimonials
- Portfolio of wellness offerings/innovations
- Evidence of staff training and leadership
- Business performance reports (revenue, growth, etc.)

F. RISING STAR (UNDER 30 – ANY FUNCTION)

For young professionals who show exceptional promise and achievement.

Judging Criteria:

- Innovation & creativity – 30%
- Excellence in role – 25%
- Leadership potential – 25%
- Contribution to team/organisation – 20%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- CV (max 2 pages)
- Letter of motivation from nominee or manager
- Evidence of projects/initiatives led
- Testimonials (max 2) on leadership potential

5. SPECIAL RECOGNITION

A. TRAILBLAZER AWARD

For individuals who have transformed and inspired the hospitality industry through vision and leadership.

Judging Criteria:

- Industry transformation & innovation – 40%
- Long-term impact & legacy – 30%
- Leadership & inspiration – 20%
- Advocacy & influence – 10%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Comprehensive CV/biography (max 3 pages)
- Portfolio of industry contributions (press, projects, innovations)
- Letters of endorsement (max 3)
- Evidence of long-term impact (awards, initiatives led, recognitions)

B. LEADER OF THE YEAR

For outstanding leaders who embody vision, mentorship, and influence.

Judging Criteria:

- Vision & strategic leadership – 35%
- Change management – 25%
- Mentorship & people development – 25%
- Industry influence – 15%

Entry Supporting Documents:

- Leadership statement or portfolio (max 3 pages)
- Case study of change/transformation led
- Evidence of mentorship and staff development
- Endorsements or testimonials from peers/teams (max 3)

APPENDIX A

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

- ☐ COMPLETED ENTRY FORM
- ☐ SUBMISSION VIDEO (2-3 min, mp4, ≤200 MB)
- ☐ ENTRANT (NOMINEE) HEADSHOT PHOTO
- ☐ ENTRANT (NOMINEE) BIOGRAPHY
- ☐ SUPPORTING EVIDENCE PDF (≤10 pages, ≤15 MB)
- ☐ OPTIONAL LETTERS OF SUPPORT (MAX 2)
- ☐ DECLARATIONS (TRUSTFULNESS, RIGHTS, CONFLICTS)

APPENDIX B

DEFINITIONS

- **Guest Satisfaction Data:** Aggregated review scores, CSAT, NPS, internal QA, mystery audits.
- **Operational KPIs:** May include occupancy, ADR/RevPAR (for hotels), turn time, COGS, waste, hygiene audits (for restaurants), downtime/uptime, safety incidents (for facilities), etc.
- **Sustainability Outcomes:** Demonstrable reductions in energy, water, waste, emissions; community upliftment; supplier diversity.