

Organisation Award – Criteria

These criteria outline how we evaluate organisational award nominees across each category.

Innovation

x1.5 weighting

We celebrate initiatives that embody rangatiratanga through leadership, fresh thinking, and creativity. The nominated initiative must show clear innovation and demonstrate improvement or efficiency compared with what has come before.

When responding to this criterion, consider:

- What makes the initiative innovative.
- How it differs from previous approaches.
- Whether it is entirely new, adapted from another industry, or a new take on an existing recreation approach.
- What stage of the development cycle it is in — operating, proven (and how), or other (please describe).

Community engagement

x1.5 weighting

We honour programmes and projects that demonstrate whanaungatanga by involving communities in meaningful ways — from consultation to co-design and ongoing participation. This criterion looks at the depth of community involvement, not just user numbers.

When responding to this criterion, consider:

- Whether consultation occurred and how it was carried out.
- How you identified who to engage with and what their feedback was.
- Whether the initiative has mana whenua or iwi partnerships, how they were formed, and how they are working.
- Whether the initiative uses a co-governance model, how it is intended to function, and how well it is working.
- How the community remains involved beyond general use of the initiative.

Excellence

x1.5 weighting

We recognise excellence as more than technical achievement. Excellence reflects manaakitanga, where initiatives uplift the mana of participants and set a benchmark for others. The nominated initiative must show overall excellence, industry leadership, and potential to serve as a case study for others.

When responding to this criterion, consider:

- How the initiative demonstrates excellence and leadership.
- Whether it could be scaled for larger or smaller communities.
- What sets it apart from similar initiatives.
- What the industry can learn from it.
- Any awards or accolades it has received within or outside the recreation sector.

Achievement

x1.5 weighting

We value initiatives that deliver on their promises, show measurable benefits, and contribute to te whai oranga — the active pursuit of wellbeing across diverse communities. Outline the initiative's goals, outputs, and expected results, and explain how well these have been achieved. Usage data, user feedback, and outcomes are key.

When responding to this criterion, consider:

- How the initiative aligns with strategic documents (e.g., Long-term Plans, Facility Strategies).
- The goals or KPIs, and—if not too early—how well these have been achieved.
- How success has been, or will be, measured.
- How objective the results are.
- How the initiative considers diversity within the community.
- How satisfied users are.

Efficiency and effectiveness

We acknowledge tauutuutu — reciprocity — in how resources are managed. Efficiency and effectiveness are shown when initiatives achieve strong community outcomes with integrity and transparency, ensuring resources are used wisely for collective benefit. Budget information will be treated in confidence and used only for judging.

When responding to this criterion, consider:

- Whether financial information is clear and concise.
- Whether the budget balances and an explanation for any discrepancies
- Whether any facts or figures are missing.
- Whether you can calculate a cost per user (net or gross) or identify the percentage of your overall budget used.
- Whether data is used consistently and how it is measured.
- Whether the initiative achieves more with less.

Sustainability

We commend initiatives that contribute to a climate-resilient and sustainable industry. We look for projects that strengthen long-term resilience and enhance the wellbeing of people, place, and the natural environment. Environmental sustainability must be addressed, with financial, cultural, and social sustainability included where relevant.

When responding to this criterion, consider:

- How the initiative contributes to a low-carbon future.
- Whether resources were sourced locally and whether procurement considered environmental and social outcomes.
- Whether climate change impacts were considered (waste, natural resource use, water, and energy).
- Whether the surrounding natural environment benefits.
- Whether ongoing funding is confirmed.
- Whether future revenue will meet expected operating and replacement costs, i.e. whole of life costs
- How the initiative reflects the local cultural landscape.
- Whether communities of interest or volunteers have committed to ongoing involvement.
- How the initiative contributes to community resilience.

- Whether it provides positive impacts for local neighbourhoods or communities.
- Whether the initiative is sustainable in the medium to long term.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion

We value initiatives that embrace Kotahitanga, uniting people through inclusive practice. This criterion considers how the initiative ensures inclusion for all members of the community and honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

When responding to this criterion, consider:

- Whether mana whenua was engaged in the design process.
- What actions were taken to encourage participation from Māori.
- The demographics of the local community.
- If the initiative targets a specific group, explain why and how this has been embedded.
- How the initiative includes disabled people, or those with mobility challenges.