



GRAF REGULATORY EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2026

AWARDS GUIDE

Recognising Excellence Across Africa's Gaming Ecosystem

1. INTRODUCTION

The Gaming Regulators Africa Forum (GRAF) is proud to introduce the inaugural GRAF Regulatory Excellence Awards.

The Awards have been established to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievements, innovation, leadership and collaboration within Africa's gaming ecosystem.

The Awards seek to acknowledge the individuals, organisations and initiatives that contribute to the advancement of effective regulation, responsible gambling, industry development, innovation and cooperation across the African continent.

The Awards will be presented during the GRAF Gala Dinner and Regulatory Excellence Awards Ceremony to be held as part of the GRAF 2026 Conference in Mozambique.

2. ABOUT THE AWARDS

The GRAF Regulatory Excellence Awards aim to:

- Recognise excellence across Africa's gaming ecosystem;
- Promote innovation and continuous improvement;
- Encourage responsible gambling and player protection initiatives;
- Celebrate leadership and collaboration;
- Showcase impactful programmes and initiatives;
- Strengthen cooperation amongst stakeholders across the continent.

The Awards are open to eligible regulators, operators, organisations, initiatives and individuals operating within the African gaming sector.

3. PHILOSOPHY OF THE AWARDS

The GRAF Regulatory Excellence Awards celebrate the individuals, organisations and initiatives that are shaping a safe, responsible, innovative and sustainable gaming sector across Africa.

The Awards recognise that excellence within the African gaming ecosystem is achieved through the collective efforts of regulators, operators, industry stakeholders, responsible gambling organisations, researchers and leaders who contribute to the advancement of the sector.

Through these Awards, GRAF seeks to promote excellence, inspire innovation, encourage responsible gambling, strengthen regulatory cooperation and celebrate meaningful contributions that positively impact the African gaming landscape.

4. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following eligibility requirements apply to all award categories unless otherwise stated:

- The nominee must operate within, or have a demonstrable impact on, the African gaming sector;
- The nominee must be able to provide sufficient information to support the nomination;
- The nominee must be in good standing and compliant with applicable laws, regulations and licensing requirements within the relevant jurisdiction;
- GRAF reserves the right to verify information submitted as part of the nomination process;
- GRAF reserves the right to request additional information or supporting documentation where necessary; and
- GRAF reserves the right not to present an award in any category should the judging panel determine that no nomination meets the required standard of excellence.

5. ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

Achievements, programmes, initiatives or contributions submitted for consideration should have been implemented, undertaken, completed or have demonstrated significant impact **during the twenty-four (24) months preceding the nomination closing date.**

The eligibility period does not apply to the Leadership Excellence Award and Emerging Leader Award, which recognise an individual's broader contribution, leadership and achievements within the African gaming ecosystem.

6. AWARD CATEGORIES

Please refer to **ANNEXURE A** for the Award Categories and Submission Guidelines.

7. NOMINATION PROCESS

Nominations may be submitted by:

- Individuals;
- Organisations;
- Regulatory authorities;
- Industry stakeholders; and
- Self-nominations.

The Awards Committee may, at its discretion, identify and invite nominations where exceptional achievements have been identified.

Following the closure of nominations, the Awards Committee will review all nominations received to confirm eligibility and develop a shortlist for each award category.

Shortlisting will be based on the information contained in the nomination and the extent to which the nominee demonstrates achievement, impact and alignment with the objectives of the relevant award category.

The purpose of the shortlisting process is not to determine the winner, but to identify nominations that demonstrate sufficient merit for consideration by the independent judging panel.

The Awards Committee may request clarification or additional information where necessary to assist with the shortlisting process.

Where a nomination is submitted by a third party, GRAF may engage directly with the nominee for purposes of confirming participation in the Awards process and obtaining supporting information.

Shortlisted nominees will be invited to submit supporting documentation and evidence relevant to the applicable award category and assessment criteria.

Shortlisted nominations and supporting documentation will thereafter be submitted to the independent judging panel for final evaluation and scoring.

8. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

At the nomination stage, nominators will be required to submit the prescribed nomination form and supporting motivation.

Following the shortlisting process, shortlisted nominees may be requested to submit:

- Supporting evidence and documentation;
- Policies, reports and publications;
- Case studies;
- Research findings;
- Testimonials;
- Statistics and performance information; and
- Any other information relevant to the applicable award category.

Supporting documentation should demonstrate the impact, effectiveness and significance of the achievements, initiatives or contributions being considered.

9. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Judges may consider the following overarching criteria:

- Impact;
- Leadership;
- Innovation;
- Sustainability;
- Collaboration;
- Effectiveness;
- Measurable outcomes; and
- Contribution to the African gaming sector.

Specific criteria may vary by award category.

10. JUDGING PRINCIPLES

The Awards will be assessed in accordance with the following principles:

Independence

Judges will evaluate nominations independently and objectively.

Fairness

All nominations will be assessed against the applicable criteria.

Integrity

The Awards process will be conducted ethically and transparently.

Confidentiality

Information submitted during the nomination process will be treated confidentially.

Conflict of Interest

Judges will be required to declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

11. JUDGING PANEL

An independent panel of judges will be appointed by GRAF.

The judging panel will comprise respected professionals with relevant expertise and experience.

The names and profiles of the judges will be announced separately by GRAF.

Judges will evaluate shortlisted nominations independently and in accordance with the approved assessment criteria.

The results of the Awards will be determined based on the aggregate scores awarded by the judging panel.

The decision of the judging panel shall be final.

12. KEY DATES

Nominations Open:

Friday, 3 July 2026

Nominations Close:

Friday, 31 July 2026 at 18:00 (SAST).

Late submissions will not be considered.

Finalists Announced:

Monday, 31 August 2026

Awards Ceremony:

GRAF Gala Dinner and Regulatory Excellence Awards

Mozambique

Thursday, 17 September 2026

13. AWARDS PROCESS OVERVIEW

The GRAF Regulatory Excellence Awards will be administered in the following stages:

- **Nominations Open**
- **Nominations Close**
- **Eligibility Review and Shortlisting by the Awards Committee**
- **Supporting Documentation Requested from shortlisted nominees (where applicable)**
- **Independent Evaluation and Scoring by the Judging Panel**
- **Finalists Announced**
- **Winners Announced at the GRAF Gala Dinner and Regulatory Excellence Awards Ceremony**

Governance

The Awards Committee is responsible for administering the awards process, including verifying eligibility and preparing the shortlist.

The independent Judging Panel is responsible for evaluating shortlisted nominations and selecting the winners in each award category.

14. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Can I nominate myself or my organisation?**
 - Yes. Self-nominations are permitted.
- **Can I nominate another organisation or individual?**
 - Yes.
- **How are finalists selected?**
 - The Awards Committee will review nominations to confirm eligibility and develop a shortlist for each award category.
 - Shortlisted nominees will be invited to submit supporting evidence before being submitted to the independent judging panel for final evaluation.
- **Who submits supporting evidence?**
 - Where a nomination is shortlisted, GRAF may request supporting information directly from the nominee.
 - Where a third party submits a nomination, the nominee may be contacted directly to confirm participation and provide supporting documentation.
- **Can a nominee decline participation?**
 - Yes. A nominee may decline participation in the Awards process at any stage before final judging.
- **Can supporting documentation be submitted?**
 - Yes. Supporting evidence is encouraged where available and may be requested from shortlisted nominees.

- **Can the judges request additional information?**

- Yes.

- **Are nominations confidential?**

- Yes. Information submitted as part of the nomination process will be treated confidentially.

15. CONTACT DETAILS

For enquiries relating to the GRAF Regulatory Excellence Awards, please contact:

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GRAF REGULATORY EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2026

AWARD CATEGORIES AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. REGULATORY EXCELLENCE AWARD

Description

The Regulatory Excellence Award recognises a **regulatory authority** that has demonstrated outstanding leadership, governance, innovation and effectiveness in the regulation of gaming activities within its jurisdiction.

Submission Considerations

Judges may consider:

- Regulatory leadership and effectiveness
- Governance and accountability
- Punter protection initiatives
- Regulatory innovation
- Stakeholder engagement
- Measurable impact achieved

Required Submission

Provide examples of initiatives, programmes or achievements implemented during the past two years and explain the impact achieved.

2. RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING EXCELLENCE AWARD – REGULATOR

Description

Recognises a **regulator** that has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to promoting responsible gambling and protecting vulnerable persons.

Submission Considerations

Judges may consider:

- Responsible gambling strategies
- Public awareness campaigns
- Research initiatives
- Policy development
- Harm minimisation measures
- Measurable outcomes

3. RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING EXCELLENCE AWARD – OPERATOR

Description

Recognises an **operator** that has demonstrated leadership in implementing responsible gambling measures and player protection initiatives.

Submission Considerations

Judges may consider:

- Responsible gambling tools
- Player protection measures
- Staff training
- Self-exclusion programmes
- Punter education initiatives
- Measurable outcomes

4. RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING EXCELLENCE AWARD – ORGANISATION / INITIATIVE

Description

Recognises a **non-regulatory organisation, institution or initiative** that has made a meaningful contribution towards responsible gambling and harm minimisation.

Eligible organisations include:

- NGOs
- Responsible gambling foundations
- Research institutions
- Treatment providers
- Community organisations

Submission Considerations

Judges may consider:

- Community impact
- Research contributions
- Education initiatives
- Treatment and support services
- Public awareness campaigns
- Measurable outcomes

5. REGULATORY INNOVATION AWARD

Description

Recognises innovative **solutions, programmes or technologies** that have strengthened gaming regulation, compliance, punter protection or operational effectiveness.

Submission Considerations

Judges may consider:

- Originality
- Innovation
- Scalability
- Effectiveness
- Adoption and implementation
- Demonstrable impact

6. AFRICAN REGULATORY COOPERATION AWARD

Description

Recognises **initiatives** that have strengthened cooperation, collaboration and knowledge sharing between regulators, institutions or jurisdictions across Africa.

Submission Considerations

Judges may consider:

- Cross-border collaboration
- Capacity building
- Information sharing
- Joint initiatives
- Regional impact
- Sustainability

7. INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Description

Recognises an **operator, supplier, association or organisation** that has made an outstanding contribution towards the development of a safe, sustainable and responsible gaming sector in Africa.

Submission Considerations

Judges may consider:

- Industry leadership
- Contribution to responsible gambling
- Capacity building
- Research and thought leadership
- Stakeholder engagement
- Contribution to the advancement of the sector

8. LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD

Description

Recognises an **individual** who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and made a significant contribution to gaming regulation or the advancement of the African gaming sector.

Submission Considerations

Judges may consider:

- Leadership achievements
- Industry influence
- Professional reputation
- Mentorship
- Contribution to the sector
- Lasting impact

9. EMERGING LEADER AWARD

Description

Recognises an **individual** who has demonstrated exceptional promise, leadership and impact early in their career.

Submission Considerations

Judges may consider:

- Leadership potential
- Professional achievements
- Innovation
- Commitment to the sector
- Contribution to organisational success
- Future potential