

Zinnov Awards 2026 – Great Place to Innovate

The ‘Great Place to Innovate’ award celebrates organizations that have built a culture where ideas thrive, experimentation is encouraged, and innovation drives measurable business outcomes. This guide is designed to help applicants craft a compelling, authentic, and high-quality submission that stands out to the jury.

1. Strategic Intent

This section is about your organization’s ‘why’. The jury looks for clarity of vision and how innovation fits into your overall business strategy. Think about how your leadership articulates the innovation charter, how it’s embedded across teams, and what long-term goals are being pursued through these initiatives.

What to focus on:

- A clear and well-defined vision that connects to business goals
- Leadership commitment—how leaders inspire, fund, and champion innovation
- Evidence of structured programs, investments, or governance that sustain innovation momentum
- Alignment between innovation priorities and organizational growth or transformation ambitions

2. Innovation Process

This is where you showcase the ‘how’. The jury wants to see structured yet flexible processes that turn ideas into tangible outcomes. Highlight your innovation journey—from identifying opportunities, to developing prototypes, to scaling solutions that create value.

What to focus on:

- Frameworks or processes used for idea generation, validation, and execution
- Platforms or systems that enable collaboration and knowledge sharing
- Mechanisms for capturing customer or market feedback during innovation cycles
- Clear governance to ensure accountability while maintaining creative freedom

3. Enablers

Innovation doesn’t happen in isolation, it’s powered by people, culture, and the right ecosystem. This section helps the jury understand what makes your organization a fertile ground for innovation. Focus on how you create an environment where employees feel empowered to experiment and take calculated risks.

What to focus on:

- How the organization promotes a culture of openness, curiosity, and learning
- Talent initiatives that build innovation capabilities (training, mentoring, upskilling)
- Rewards and recognition programs that celebrate innovation efforts
- Tools, labs, or collaborative spaces that support ideation and prototyping
- Partnerships—with startups, academia, or ecosystem players—that amplify innovation outcomes

4. Metrics and Outcomes

Here, it's all about results. The jury looks for evidence that innovative efforts have delivered real, sustainable impact. Quantify your outcomes wherever possible, but don't shy away from highlighting qualitative success stories that capture the essence of transformation.

What to focus on:

- Number and type of innovations implemented (products, processes, patents, new models)
- Business impact—growth, efficiency, customer satisfaction, or market differentiation
- Employee participation rates in innovation programs
- Evolution of innovation maturity over time

5. The Jury Pitch (2–3 Minutes)

Your final pitch is the moment to bring your story alive. This short window is where clarity and authenticity make the difference. The best pitches combine data with storytelling, demonstrating not just what you've achieved, but why it matters.

Tips for a memorable pitch:

- Start with a strong opening—set the context and the 'why' behind your innovation journey
- Showcase one or two standout initiatives that truly reflect your culture of innovation
- Balance storytelling with impact metrics—show the difference innovation made
- End with a forward-looking message: where your innovation story is headed next

A winning submission goes beyond checkboxes—it tells a story of intent, effort, and transformation. Organizations that demonstrate a deep-rooted culture of innovation, supported by leadership, process, and outcomes, stand out as true 'Great Places to Innovate'.