AI CREATOR AWARD 2026

SPONSORSHIP GUIDE

International AI Creator Award 2026

An international open call in ten fields and seven languages, to find the people who create with generative AI and put them on a stage

Period	Entries from 11 Sep 2026 | Final close 15 Oct 2026 (AoE)
Ceremony	Fri 20 November 2026, 15:50–16:50, INTER BEE IGNITION stage IG-205
Venue	Makuhari Messe (during INTER BEE 2026 × DCEXPO, 18–20 November)
Scale	10 fields · 7 languages · under the patronage of DCAJ
Public vote	26 Oct 2026–15 Nov 2026 · free and open to anyone · one vote in each of the ten fields
Organiser	AICU Inc. (Delaware) / operated by AICU Japan K.K.

Download the PDF

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Supported by

DCAJ dhu OpenAI IIElevenLabsGrants

ABOUT

What the award is

An international award with an open call in ten fields for work made with generative AI. Entries and votes are accepted in seven languages (Japanese, English, French, Korean, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese); the first round is free and open to anyone.

The final round is voted with a comment and a written critique, published together with the result — so every winning work carries a record of why it was chosen.

It is run by AICU, a creative media company for the generative-AI era, with a monthly magazine, books, a column series and a weekly newsletter that reach creators directly. The ceremony takes place on the INTER BEE IGNITION stage at Makuhari Messe.

The ten fields

Service
Generative AI services and products

Independent Film
Independent and personal productions, short film, video

Music, MV & Dance
Music, music video, dance, virtual idol

Publishing
Books, magazines, zines, digital publishing

Event / XR
Film festivals, events, trade shows, metaverse

Commercial Film
Film, streaming and series work made for release

Character, Manga & Webtoon
Character design, manga, webtoon

Advertising, PV & Broadcast
Advertising, PV, broadcast, social video, influencer work

Game, Tool & App
Games, creative tools, apps

Open
Scientific and technical research; work that fits none of the other nine fields

HIGHLIGHTS

The award and AICU in numbers

10
fields
film, character, music, publishing, game, XR and more

7
languages
entry, voting and site (JA EN FR KO ZH ES PT)

75
works entered (30 Sep)
from 47 people across 7 countries and regions; 30 in the five days after the 25 Sep release

1,000
participants expected
entrants, voters and judges

10,000
vote target
one vote per field per person

34,072
INTER BEE 2025 visitors
1,079 exhibitors · the ceremony venue

920,000+
AICU page views / year
2025, +54% year on year

28
issues of AICU Magazine
monthly, 150+ full-colour pages

5
books published on AI
with column series and editorial supervision at SB Creative, Impress and others

PUBLICATIONS

Our vision: to create people who create, in the age of generative AI

A daily blog at note.com/aicu, the monthly AICU Magazine (150 full-colour pages an issue), books on AI, a column series in Impress Mado-no-Mori, and the weekly newsletter Weekly AICU. **Each one is a route that reaches the people who make things.**

OVERVIEW

Overview

Name	International AI Creator Award 2026
Organiser	AICU Inc. (Delaware); operated by AICU Japan K.K.
Supported by	AI Film Festival Japan 2026 (In cooperation with); TapNow (Bronze Partner); ElevenLabs Grants (Technology partner); Windows Forest (Media partner); OpenAI (Technology partner); Digital Content Association of Japan (DCAJ) (Supported by); Digital Hollywood University (Supported by)
Period	August–November 2026. Entries open 11 Sep 2026; final deadline 15 Oct 2026 (AoE); nominees 16 Oct 2026; public vote 26 Oct 2026–15 Nov 2026
Ceremony	Fri 20 November 2026, 15:50–16:50, INTER BEE IGNITION stage IG-205, Makuhari Messe. Winners' reception alongside
Eligibility	Work made with generative AI in ten fields. Any country, age or affiliation. Published at a URL that opens without a login
Judging	Screening → first round (free public vote, 3–10 finalists per field) → final round (votes with comment and critique)
Fees	Entry USD 10 per work; Award Supporter USD 10 per year. First-round voting is free
Website	https://aicu.ai/award/2026/ (seven languages)

AUDIENCE

Who enters, who votes, who it reaches

Who enters

- Creators in ten fields: film, character, music, publishing, game, XR and more
- Individuals, studios, students and in-house teams
- Japanese-speaking creators plus the EN / FR / KO / ZH / ES / PT communities
- Published work, entered by URL (must open without a login)

Who votes

- First round: free and open to anyone; one vote per field, all ten fields
- From high-school students to audiences outside Japan
- Final round: community judges taking part as Award Supporters
- One person, one vote per field, cast with a written critique

Where it reaches

- AICU Magazine (monthly, 150+ pages), books, the Mado-no-Mori column, a weekly newsletter
- The official site (seven languages) and the winners' archive
- INTER BEE 2026 × DCEXPO at Makuhari Messe (34,072 visitors in 2025)
- The ceremony stage and the winners' reception

WHY SPONSOR

Three things a sponsor receives

01

Real contact with makers

Through recommendations and the reception you meet creators whose work has passed screening — as hires, users, collaborators.

02

A name on the record

Your logo on the official site (seven languages), in the ceremony materials and in AICU Magazine — kept in the archive after 2026 at no cost.

03

The Makuhari Messe week

The ceremony runs during INTER BEE 2026 × DCEXPO. If you exhibit or attend, your name is on the stage in the same week.

PLANS

Sponsorship plans

Three plans. Bronze is free for supporting companies and Silver is free for public institutions, in exchange for a logo placement, if you commit by 5 Oct 2026. In-kind and technology sponsors
to yen billing).

	Free for supporting companies, commi **Bronze Partner**	Free for public institutions, committed **Silver Partner**	With a named award **Gold Partner**
Fee	690 USD	2,300 USD	6,900 USD
For	Companies, communities, schools, labs, media	Companies and organisations	Companies and organisations
Logo on the official site (7 languages)	✓	✓	✓
Logo in ceremony materials and AICU Magazine	✓	✓	✓
Recommendations (with entry-fee waiver codes)	1	10	50
Winners' reception seats	1	3	5
Company-named award, presented by you on stage	—	—	✓
Sponsor kit (ready-to-use texts, award logo)	✓	✓	✓
Yen billing with a qualified invoice / bank transfer	✓	✓	✓
Kept in the archive after 2026	✓	✓	✓

PLAN 01

Bronze Partner

690 USD excl. tax

Free for supporting companies with a commitment in principle by 5 October 2026, in exchange for a logo placement.

For

- You want your name on the record and a close view of what AI creators are doing
- Communities, meetups, schools, labs and media that already gather creators
- You want one seat at the winners' reception
- You want to start at an amount that is easy to approve

What we ask

- Agreement with the purpose of the award
- Agreement to the Code of Conduct
- Telling your community about the award, so that the people in it can enter

Benefits

Logo on the official site (7 languages)	✓
Logo in ceremony materials and AICU Magazine	✓
Recommendations (with entry-fee waiver codes)	1
Winners' reception seats	1
Company-named award, presented by you on stage	—
Sponsor kit (ready-to-use texts, award logo)	✓
Yen billing with a qualified invoice / bank transfer	✓
Kept in the archive after 2026	✓

PLAN 02

Silver Partner

2,300 USD excl. tax

Free for public institutions with a commitment in principle by 5 October 2026, in exchange for a logo placement.

For

- Organisations (communities, schools, labs, media) with a commitment in principle by 5 Oct 2026 — free, in exchange for a logo placement
- You want ten recommendations to send your community's work into the ten fields
- You want to bring a team (up to three) to the reception for hiring or partnership
- You want to combine it with in-kind or technology sponsorship (API credits, equipment, venues)
- You exhibit or attend INTER BEE and want your name there in the same week

Benefits

Logo on the official site (7 languages)	✓
Logo in ceremony materials and AICU Magazine	✓
Recommendations (with entry-fee waiver codes)	10
Winners' reception seats	3
Company-named award, presented by you on stage	—
Sponsor kit (ready-to-use texts, award logo)	✓
Yen billing with a qualified invoice / bank transfer	✓

> Ten recommendations because there are ten fields: one community can fill a single field, or spread one work across each. What we ask of organisations joining free is that you tell your community the award exists.

PLAN 03

Gold Partner

6,900 USD excl. tax

For

- You want a company-named award, and to invite its winner onto your own stage
- You want direct contact with winning creators for hiring, users and showcase work
- You want to be on the record as a company serious about creative AI

Benefits

Logo on the official site (7 languages)	✓
Logo in ceremony materials and AICU Magazine	✓
Recommendations (with entry-fee waiver codes)	50
Winners' reception seats	5
Company-named award, presented by you on stage	✓
Sponsor kit (ready-to-use texts, award logo)	✓
Yen billing with a qualified invoice / bank transfer	✓

> The name, field and prize of the sponsored award are agreed with the office. You present it on the ceremony stage, and your name stays on the award record and in the winners' archive.

OPTIONS

In-kind and technology sponsorship (combinable with any plan)

Money is one form. Sponsorship that brings what creators actually need is valued and treated as the equivalent plan. OpenAI and ElevenLabs Grants take part as technology partners.

Creative tools, API credits, compute

Allocated to entrants and winners — the fuel for their next work

Venues for screenings, exhibitions and events

Screenings and exhibitions of winning work, related events

Reach

Telling your audience the award exists, so the makers among them can enter

Equipment, translation, education, editorial

Ceremony equipment, translation for seven languages, education for entrants, coverage

Prizes

Products, licences or credits for winners (works well with a named award)

Reception sponsorship

Catering or venue costs, with a moment to address the reception

BENEFIT DETAILS

Benefits in detail

Recommendations

Put works by creators connected to you in front of the award office. Each recommended work receives an entry-fee waiver code (USD 10 per work), is reviewed by the office and considered for nomination, and the recommendation stays on the work's record — a way to bring the makers around you into the light.

Logo placement

The partner section of the official site (seven languages), the ceremony screen and handouts, and AICU Magazine. Published after agreement and payment are confirmed (or after a free tier is confirmed), and kept in the archive after 2026. Clicks are measured through a short URL that forwards to the destination you specify.

Winners' reception

After the ceremony: winners, nominees, judges and partners in one room. Seats per plan (1 / 3 / 5). The most concentrated time to talk with makers directly.

Company-named award (Gold)

A sponsored award in your company's name. Name, field and prize are agreed with the office; you present it on the ceremony stage, and your name stays on the record and in the archive.

Sponsor kit

As soon as sponsorship is confirmed you receive ready-to-use texts (JA/EN) for internal reports, press releases, your site and social media, plus the award logo. No prior approval needed.

Logo specifications

A horizontal mark on white is preferred (it ends up in print). SVG, or PNG at 2x the placed size (transparent or white background); AI/EPS accepted. Tell us any isolation rule. Deadline 15 Oct 2026.

SCHEDULE

Schedule

11 Sep 2026	Entries open
5 Oct 2026	● Silver early free tier deadline (organisations)
24 Sep 2026	First entry deadline
15 Oct 2026	Final entry deadline (AoE)
5 Oct 2026	● Sponsorship application deadline
15 Oct 2026	● Logo submission deadline / late entries close
16 Oct 2026–26 Oct 2026	Nominees announced
26 Oct 2026	Public vote opens
15 Nov 2026	Public vote closes
18 Nov 2026–20 Nov 2026	● Ceremony, screening and reception (20 Nov 15:50, IG-205, Makuhari Messe)
21 Nov 2026	Winners' archive opens

● Sponsor deadlines

HOW TO APPLY

How to apply

1

Get in touch

Use the form (organisation, contact name and email only) or write to award@aicu.ai. A meeting is not required.

2

Confirmation

The office confirms plan, credited name, logo and billing details, and can prepare a proposal tailored to you.

3

Application and payment

Yen: a qualified invoice from AICU Japan K.K., paid by bank transfer. USD: paid to AICU Inc. through AICU Checkout. Deadline 5 Oct 2026.

4

Placement and kit

After payment is confirmed we publish your logo and send the sponsor kit. Logo deadline 15 Oct 2026. Ceremony 20 November.

5

How to reach us

Enquiry https://aicu.ai/award/q/

Email award@aicu.ai

Partnership guide (general) https://aicu.ai/award/2026/sponsor-guide/

FAQ

Frequently asked questions

Q. How do we use our recommendations?

Tell us the works by creators connected to you and we send entry-fee waiver codes. Every recommended work is reviewed by the office and considered for nomination, and the recommendation stays on the work's record.

Q. Can we pay by invoice?

Yes. Yen billing is issued by AICU Japan K.K. as a qualified invoice, paid by bank transfer (10% consumption tax applies). USD billing is sold by AICU Inc. and paid through AICU Checkout.

Q. How many people can attend the ceremony and reception?

Reception seats are per plan (1 / 3 / 5). The ceremony is on a stage inside INTER BEE, so visitor registration with INTER BEE is required to enter the venue.

Q. Can a company outside Japan sponsor?

Yes. The site, entries and voting run in seven languages, and USD payments are received by AICU Inc. (Delaware).

Q. When is our logo published?

After agreement and payment are confirmed; for the free early Silver tier, once the application is confirmed. Please do not announce before we publish.

Q. Is the award run for profit?

No. Sponsorship and fees cover running costs; any surplus carries into the next edition and creator support. The archive business after the event (pay-per-view, screenings) is accounted for separately.

Q. Can we sponsor in kind?

Yes. API credits, equipment, venues, translation and reach are valued and treated as the equivalent plan, and can be combined with a paid plan.

Q. Can we change plan after applying?

Yes, up to the application deadline (5 Oct 2026) — just ask.

TERMS

Terms of sponsorship

1. Logos and credited names are published after agreement and payment are confirmed; free tiers after the application is confirmed.
2. Screening and voting apply the same standard to every entry, including recommended works. Partners do not take part in the vote.
3. We ask for agreement with the purpose of the award and with the Code of Conduct.
4. The ceremony date, venue and stage slot follow the decisions of the INTER BEE / DCEXPO organisers and may change for reasons on their side.
5. Please submit logos by the deadline (15 Oct 2026); late submissions may not make it into print.
6. Amounts exclude tax. AICU Japan K.K. applies 10% consumption tax to yen billing. Refunds and governing law follow the Terms of Sale (https://aicu.ai/award/legal/).
7. This document reflects the situation as of 30 September 2026. The latest information is at https://aicu.ai/award/2026/for-partners/.

VISION

Making the people who make

Generative AI does not exist only for the companies that build it. However strong a technology is, it becomes culture only when people use it, are surprised by it, work around its limits, and turn it into something worth showing.

This award exists to find those people and put them on a stage. From next year, the creators who won will join the judging — which is why we would rather call it an academy than a prize.

We ask companies, institutions, schools and communities to build that stage with us.

Akihiko SHIRAI — CEO, AICU Inc. / Representative Director, AICU Japan K.K.

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