



IFLA Section Environment, Sustainability and Libraries

IFLA Green Library Award Evaluation Criteria



IFLA GREEN LIBRARY AWARD

September 2025

IFLA Green Library Award is divided into two categories: The *Best Green Library / Grand-Scale Project* and the *Best Green Library Project*. Applicants should address one of these categories, but the final category allocation is made by the Award Committee which prechecks all submissions.

The Award Committee will select the longlist submissions to be reviewed by an international Reviewing Committee. Accepted submissions should be complete and include sufficient information to be evaluated. The Award Committee will also ensure diverse representation among the finalists, i.e., that there is geographical balance across different continents and that different kinds of libraries and projects are represented. This is in accordance with general IFLA policy. (For example, if there are several projects from one city or country, it would be advisable to submit them in different years.)

Note:

Previous winners and finalists of the IFLA Green Library Award are not eligible for nomination in the year immediately following their win. In general, renomination always requires that new initiatives and results can be demonstrated.

All submissions should include the following information (not evaluated):

- Name of the library, country, and classification
- Yearly budget of the library
- Budget used for the project
- Average number of users reached: the impact of the project (approximate)
- Abstract and central material in English, although the full submission text may be in any of the [official IFLA languages](#). (Note that the evaluation may nevertheless in English, and the original materials will not be translated by ENSULIB).
- Self-evaluation form
- Permission for publication
- A two-slide presentation (if accepted to the short list)
- Press photo with copyright credit

The prize is awarded in two categories:

Category 1: Best Green Library/Grand-Scale Project

A **Green Library** is a library that meets the requirements for *green and sustainable libraries* as comprehensively as possible. This includes new library buildings and large-scale renovations, as well as new library service concepts and significant projects which are implemented on a grand scale and for the long-term. To be successful in this category, environmental and sustainable work should involve the whole library, or several aspects of sustainability. The library should have worked to decrease its carbon footprint and offer green library resources and services. The work must be substantially complete or have been completed within the last 12 months, and visual or measurable results must be available. The size or budget of the library is not a deciding factor – the focus is on the pervasiveness of the environmental work and social engagement (for example: a new library building and new, innovative library services).

Category 2: Best Green Library Project

A **Green Library Project** is an environmental and sustainable library project that is limited in scope, time, and budget. The project may be specific to one or more areas of library operations, but it should be significant in advancing environmental and sustainable goals, at least locally. To be successful in this category the environmental project must have been completed within the last 12 months or be ongoing, and some visual or measurable results should be available. The size of the project's budget is not a deciding factor – the focus is on the environmental work done in the project (for example: a children's environmental education project, or students' zero waste project in a campus library).

A **special recognition** may be given to a library or a project that was carried out with minimal resources but has a large impact. Innovativeness, locality, and environmentally wise design are further criteria.

General criteria

Note that reviewers will pay attention to the following points. While these are mainly qualitative in nature, please consider them while preparing your submission. Even if the project is focused on a clear target group (like children), it is also advisable to report broader environmental actions taken by the library (like decreased energy consumption).

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- 1. Quality of the submission:** How clear and complete is the submission? Does it include all relevant information? Does it include storytelling elements?
 - 2. The scope of sustainability:** How well does the submission address the environmental, economic, and social aspects of sustainability? The submission should include a short report of the sustainability work done, and the results of that work (even if those results are limited). Reviewers will also seek general information about how sustainability is embedded generally within library operations. This information can be detailed in the self-evaluation form but it is advisable to mention it also in the main submission.
 - 3. The significance of the environmental work done:** What is the value and impact of the work done (locally, nationally, or globally)? What is the overall quality of the work? Are the results lasting?
 - 4. Innovativeness:** Is there anything new or creative in the submission locally, nationally, or globally?

5. **Sensible, clever design:** are there any easy, affordable, and sustainable solutions to local problems or ideas that have come from the community. Is the design environmentally wise, or just technologically based?
6. **Communication, community engagement, and marketing:** How well is the environmental work communicated to a broader audience during and after the project? Has the community or target group had the opportunity to participate the environmental work?

The **Best Green Library/Grand-Scale Project** submission is required to fulfill all (or most of) the criteria below.

The **Best Green Library Project** submission is required to fulfill criteria from at least one of the areas below.

Physical sustainability

7. **The building and carbon footprint:** Most of the emissions come from library buildings. Have these emissions been decreased: energy efficiency, waste management, acquisitions, logistics, heating and cooling, location (including accessibility by foot, bike, public transport)?
8. **Sustainable operational routines:** Are green office routines in use? These include recycling and sorting of paper and waste, decreasing energy consumption by switching off lights and computers, and reuse of materials such as discarded books.

Economic sustainability

9. **Reduced consumption:** Is consumption restrained? How?
10. **New economy:** Is the library's adoption of the circular and sharing economy advanced, and has it been made accessible to the community? Does the library promote the adoption of the sharing and circular economy by offering shared spaces and devices?

Qualitative and social sustainability

11. **Carbon handprint:** How much can users decrease their own carbon footprint by using library collections, services, shared rooms, or devices? Does the library make it easier for users to reduce their consumption? Do users have an awareness of how their library does this? Libraries increase their carbon handprint by providing users with services that help to reduce their consumption. Does the library enable and encourage low consumption lifestyle (more than libraries usually would)?
12. **Green library services: Reliable information and education.** Does the library offer easy access to reliable and up-to-date environmental information? Does the library fight misinformation and fake news? Does the library provide environmental education or lead environmental information retrieval projects?
13. **Social sustainability:** Does the library actively promote social sustainability and UN Sustainable Development Goals? Are good education, literacy, community engagement, cross cultural diversity, social inclusion, and overall participation evident? Does the library work actively with clients to reduce inequality?

Environmental management

14. **Environmental management:** Has the library set deliberate environmental goals, principles, or policy to decrease its own negative impact on environment? Is this environmental policy, commitment and the results of environmental work communicated to a broader audience?

15. Commitment to general environmental goals and programmes: Has the library committed to environmental certificates, programmes, or agreements? Does the library work fulfil the UN SDGs – if so which ones and how?