

## CTO Digital Excellence Awards 2026

# Applicant Submission Guide

How to prepare, review, and submit an award entry

<b>Document type</b>	User Guide
<b>Audience</b>	Applicants and submitting organisations
<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Date</b>	09 June 2026
<b>Distribution</b>	For CTO distribution

*This guide is intended for operational use and training. It explains the expected process, roles, and user actions for the CTO Digital Excellence Awards platform.*

## 1. Purpose of this guide

This guide explains how applicants should prepare and submit an entry for the CTO Digital Excellence Awards 2026 using the online submission experience. It is designed to help applicants submit complete, accurate, and evidence-based entries.

## 2. What applicants will use

- Assistant-guided preparation panel: helps structure answers before final submission.
- Structured submission form: used for final review, declarations, uploads, links, and submission.
- Submission confirmation: displays a reference code after the entry has been submitted successfully.

## 3. Before starting

Prepare the following information and material before opening the submission form:

- Submitting organisation name, contact person, contact email, role, and country.
- Confirmation that the submitting organisation is eligible to enter the Awards.
- Initiative title, background, objectives, implementation approach, and implementation timeline.
- Evidence of impact, such as KPIs, beneficiary reach, outcomes, policy impact, institutional impact, or sustainability indicators.
- A short abstract of the initiative, limited to 250 words where requested.
- A one-minute video link, where required by the Awards process.
- Signed endorsement from the Head of Organisation or authorised official.
- Supporting material, such as reports, photographs, infographics, testimonials, and relevant links.

## 4. Award categories

Select the category that best represents the primary purpose and impact of the initiative. If an initiative could fit more than one category, choose the strongest primary category for that entry.

Category	Purpose
Universal Access & Service Excellence Award	Recognises initiatives that improve digital inclusion and access to ICT services for underserved or marginalised communities.
Digital Policy & Regulatory Excellence Award	Recognises digital policies, regulatory reforms, or governance frameworks that improve market efficiency, competition, investment, or digital leadership.
Cybersecurity Excellence Award	Recognises initiatives that strengthen digital resilience, cybersecurity capacity, awareness, or national cyber frameworks.
21st Century Government / E-Government Initiatives Award	Recognises digital public service initiatives that improve service delivery, transparency, citizen engagement, identity systems, or electronic payment platforms.
Digital Applications & Innovation Award	Recognises innovative digital solutions, platforms, or emerging technologies that address developmental, societal, or sectoral challenges.

## 5. Step-by-step submission process

Step	Action
Open the submission portal	Open the official CTO Digital Excellence Awards submission portal from the CTO website or from the link provided by the CTO Awards team.
Start in the assistant-guided preparation panel	Use the guided panel to prepare the content of the submission before completing the final form. The panel helps sequence the information so the final entry is easier to review.
Confirm eligibility and submission context	Confirm organisation details, role details, eligibility, and the domain or context for the initiative. Accuracy at this stage reduces follow-up and rework.
Select the award category	Choose the category that best matches the initiative outcome and impact.
Complete the required summaries	Provide clear summaries for the problem or opportunity, the solution approach, impact and measurable outcomes, innovation, sustainability, scalability, governance, and implementation effectiveness.
Add supporting materials	Upload or link supporting material using the rules in this guide. Check file names, versions, and permissions before submission.
Complete declaration and endorsement	Confirm that the information is accurate, approved by the organisation where required, and compliant with intellectual property and copyright requirements.
Review and submit	Review all fields before submission. Once submitted, the entry should be treated as the official version unless the CTO Awards team advises otherwise.
Save the reference code	After successful submission, record the reference code displayed by the portal. The expected format is DEA-YYYYMMDD-XXXXXX. Use this reference code for follow-up queries.

## 6. Supporting material rules

- Main entry document must be submitted as a PDF.
- Main entry document maximum size: 10 MB.
- Supporting document maximum size: 5 MB per file.
- Videos must be supplied as links. Do not upload video files directly.
- Preferred video links include YouTube, Vimeo, or another accessible platform approved by the submitting organisation.
- Ensure external links can be opened by the CTO Awards team and judges during review.
- Use clear file names that include the organisation name, initiative name, and document type where practical.

### Good submission checklist

- The initiative is operational, implemented, or able to show measurable results.
- The selected category is the best fit for the initiative.
- The entry includes evidence, not only descriptive claims.
- The endorsement is signed by the correct official.
- All supporting links and files are accessible and named clearly.
- The reference code is saved after submission.

## 7. Important boundaries

- The assistant-guided preparation panel helps applicants structure content. It does not judge, score, rank, shortlist, or recommend winners.
- Applicants remain responsible for the accuracy, completeness, permissions, and approvals related to the submitted material.
- Judging decisions are made by the appointed judging panel according to the agreed evaluation criteria.
- Applicants should not share confidential information unless they are authorised to do so by the submitting organisation.

## 8. Getting help

For submission process questions, contact the CTO Awards team using the official contact details published with the Awards information. Include the submission reference code where one has already been issued.