



Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize for Heritage

2026 Edition

TECHNICAL DOCUMENT

PRESENTATION OF THE PRIZE

Created in 2009 by the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC), the Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize honors exceptional projects initiated by member cities that significantly enhance, regenerate, and sustainably manage their historic centers.

The prize is awarded every two years at the OWHC World Congress. The 2026 Prize recognizes initiatives that leverage heritage as an active resource to regenerate historic city centers and enhance the quality of life of their inhabitants.

THEMATIC 2026: HABITABILITY OF HISTORIC CENTERS

For the 2026 edition, the Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize invites cities to submit structural and cross-sectoral projects for the regeneration of historic centers; that is, initiatives that act as levers for urban transformation, capable of articulating multiple dimensions of public action—housing, public space, mobility, public space, climate, economy, governance, among others—and generating dynamics that go beyond a single intervention, marking a significant change in the way the historic center is experienced, functions, and is managed.

These projects must explicitly aim to strengthen the regeneration of historic centers through strategies focused on habitability, understood as the capacity of a historic center to offer a good quality of life, placing people—and especially the inhabitants—at the center of decisions.

The projects submitted must be part of an integrated approach, considering the historic center as a living territory that is interdependent with the rest of the city. They must demonstrate concrete and lasting impacts on everyday life, based on clear objectives and verifiable results. Heritage must therefore be mobilized as an active resource in support of urban life, beyond a sectoral or isolated logic.

Candidate projects must be aligned with the principles of habitability promoted by the OWHC (see Annex 1), coherently integrating the four Strategic Axes—Requalify the Habitat, Transform Mobility, Refresh the City, and Regenerate the Urban Environment (see Annex 2)—and providing evidence that demonstrates their contributions to the quality of life in the historic center.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

- The participating city must be a member city in good standing with the OWHC.
- Each city may submit only one candidacy.
- The project submitted must have been implemented directly by the candidate city or if by another entity (public, private, or civil society), the city must have assumed leadership and/or coordination role.



- Only projects implemented or completed during the last five (5) years will be accepted; projects that are exclusively prospective or at the planning stage will not be accepted.

APPLICATION FILE

The application file must be sent electronically to the OWHC General Secretariat at secretariat@ovpm.org, **must be signed by the Mayor of the city** (by a letter or directly on the explanatory document), and **must include** the following elements:

In the email:

- **Subject:** *Name of the City* – Application Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize 2026
- **Institutional information:** name, position, and contact details of the person responsible for the city's application.

Attachments:

1. Project Explanatory Document:

WORD document, letter or A4 size, maximum five (5) pages, presenting the project nominated for the Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize, titled: *City_JPLA2026Prize_ExplanatoryDocument.docx*

Formal requirements:

- Language: French, English or Spanish.
- Format: Arial or Calibri, 11 pts.; line spacing 1.15; standard margins; page numbering.

Minimum content:

- the context and objectives of the project
- the monitoring framework defined by the city to assess the achievement of these objectives (by means of verification and, where available, indicators)
- progress and results available at the time of application, supported by these means of verification
- the actors involved and their respective roles
- the financial structure of the project, indicating the sources and diversification of funding (without mentioning amounts)

The document may include images, graphics, or maps; however, these must also be sent in the attached *Graphic Material*, in accordance with the established specifications (see below).

2. Executive Summary:

Document in WORD format, Letter or A4 size, maximum one (1) page (text only), briefly presenting the project nominated for the Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize, titled:

City_JPLA2026Prize_ExecutiveSummary.docx

This document will be used for communication purposes.

3. Graphic Material:

The file must include a compressed folder in .zip format containing a maximum of ten (10) images, graphics, or maps illustrating the project, titled:



City_JPLA2026Prize_Images.zip.

Requirements:

- JPG or PNG format.
- Quality: minimum resolution of 300 dpi.
- Size: maximum 5 MB per image; maximum 20 MB per .zip folder.
- Consecutively numbered images (e.g., *City_JPLA2026APrize_01.jpg*, etc.).
- Include a document (WORD format) that briefly explains each image (maximum 50 words per image), indicating the two main images that the OWHC may use for communication purposes.

The images may be used by the OWHC for communication and dissemination purposes related to the Prize, provided that they are free of rights or have the corresponding authorizations.

File naming convention:

The three (3) files attached to the email must be named as follows:

1. *City_JPLA2026Prize_ExplanatoryDocument.docx*
2. *City_JPLA2026Prize_ExecutiveSummary.docx*
3. *City_JPLA2026Prize_Images.zip*

Only documents expressly requested will be evaluated.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Candidacies will be evaluated by the jury based on the following criteria:

- The structuring and integrated nature of the intervention and its contribution to the regeneration of the historic center.
- Consistence with the principles of habitability promoted by the OWHC, in particular the project's ability to place inhabitants at the center of public action.
- Clarity of objectives and soundness of the monitoring framework presented (by means of verification and indicators, where applicable), as well as consistency between objectives and results.
- Ability to generate lasting urban dynamics, beyond the intervention site of the intervention, and its potential catalytic effect.
- Heritage mobilized as an active resource in support of urban life and habitability.
- Participation of local actors and governance mechanisms.
- Value as an inspiring and transferable reference for other world heritage cities.

The jury will evaluate the projects on the basis of the information provided by the candidate cities, without commenting on aesthetic or formal aspects unrelated to the stated objectives.



COMPOSITION OF THE JURY

The projects will be evaluated by an international jury¹ composed of personalities with key experience in the field, including

- a representative of the OWHC Board of Directors
- a representative of the OWHC Advisory Board
- a representative of the New Urban Project Steering Committee
- a representative of a city that has won previous editions of the Prize

The final composition of the jury will be announced in due course.

PRIZE AND MENTIONS

The mayor or official representative of the winning city will be invited as a guest of honor to the 18th OWHC World Congress, to be held in Marrakech (October 26-29, 2026). Following the jury's decision, expected in mid-August, information will be sent with the logistical and administrative details regarding their participation in the Congress.

The results will be announced at a key moment during the Congress, and the winning city will be invited to present its project. In addition, the jury may award up to two (2) honorable mentions to projects that stand out for their contribution to habitability.

After the Congress, the winning city will be sent information regarding the design and conditions for placing the Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize commemorative plaque.

OTHER GENERAL MEASURES

- The OWHC reserves the right not to award the Prize if no application meets the established criteria.
- Candidate cities authorize the OWHC to use the information and materials provided for communication, promotion, and dissemination purposes, provided that they are free of rights.
- Participation in the Prize implies full acceptance of these rules.

CALENDAR 2026

- **February 18, 2026:** Launch of the call for entries.
- **May 8, 2026:** Deadline for receipt of applications.
- **June 11, 2026:** Announcement of candidate cities and presentation of projects.
- **Summer 2026:** Evaluation of applications by the jury.
- **Mid-August:** Notification to the winning city (confidential communication).
- **October 26-29, 2026 (18th OWHC World Congress, Marrakech):** Jean-Paul-L'Allier Prize ceremony and presentation of the winning project.

¹ In the event of a tie in the final deliberation, the Secretary General of the OWHC shall act as the tie-break in order to ensure a final decision.



APPENDIX 1: PRINCIPLES OF HABITABILITY

The *principles of habitability* determine the operational dimension of the *New Urban Project*:

- **Promote heritage as a driver of innovation:** consider the adaptability of built and intangible heritage as an essential resource for imagining the urban uses and forms of tomorrow.
- **Designing the city in an integrated manner:** promoting cross-cutting projects that bring together the heritage, social, ecological, economic, and cultural dimensions included in the Strategic Axes.
- **Make the city a place to live above all else:** preserve and reinforce the residential function as the main objective of historic centers, while ensuring social and generational diversity.
- **Making public space a common good:** providing high-quality, accessible, comfortable, and inclusive public spaces that foster social ties, meet contemporary needs, and respect urban heritage.
- **Strengthen environmental sustainability:** integrate nature, manage resources sustainably, and reinforce climate adaptation.
- **Promoting participatory governance:** encouraging the active participation of residents, local stakeholders, and institutions in order to strengthen the sense of belonging and the legitimacy of decisions.
- **Stimulate an economy that benefits local life:** create economic attractions based on respect for the territory, highlight local knowledge, and create tangible benefits for the local community.

ANNEX 2: STRATEGIC AXES

Four Strategic Axes aim to make historic centers vibrant, resilient, and sustainable places. By combining heritage preservation, housing improvement, adaptation to environmental challenges, and the transformation of mobility, the city can enhance its appeal while respecting its history and its residents:

- **Requalify the habitat**

The revitalization of historic centers begins with maintaining or bringing back residents. Requalifying the habitat means restoring the residential function threatened by speculation, vacancy, or museumification. It means supporting the rehabilitation of older housing, the transmission of technical knowledge, and the maintenance of a diverse and active population.

But requalifying the habitat also means acting in the rest of the city. By consolidating the residential fabric, we promote local mobility, reduce dependence on cars, and make a "walkable" city possible. Investment in housing promotes functional diversity, stimulates neighborhood businesses, and restores meaning to public spaces. It is the cornerstone of a policy of habitability, which transforms heritage not only into a backdrop, but also into a living environment.



- **Refresh the City**

In this era of climate change, refreshing the city is a vital imperative. Introducing nature into the urban fabric, removing impervious surfaces, providing shade, and greening are all actions that regenerate the historic fabric without betraying its spirit. Trees, green courtyards, and green roofs are becoming the new monuments of a city that is adapting.

But refreshing doesn't stop at the environment: it also transforms urban uses. By creating spaces for coolness and breathing, we stimulate encounters, calm traffic, and we facilitate active mobility. Greening becomes both a social and ecological infrastructure—a link between housing, mobility, and heritage.

- **Transform Mobility**

Rethinking mobility means prioritizing people in the design of urban space. By reducing the space dedicated to private motor vehicles and encouraging active mobility—walking and cycling—along with public transportation, we promote a safer, more accessible, and more inclusive city. Public space is being reinvented: there is less motorized traffic, more places to stay, meet, and live together.

This transformation, in turn, strengthens the residential function. The quieter neighborhoods become more desirable, homes open up to safer, livelier, and traffic-calmed streets, and children can play outdoors again. By freeing up space, sustainable mobility also makes way for urban vegetation and a renewed appreciation of heritage. Each redesigned street becomes a laboratory of urbanity: a space where ecology, culture, and citizenship come together.

- **Regenerate the Urban Environment**

Regeneration goes beyond restoring buildings: it means giving the city a new collective meaning. This involves mobilizing residents, artisans, researchers, and artists to work together to invent new uses for heritage. It means considering historic fabric as a resource, a field for ecological, social, and cultural experimentation.

Regeneration connects the other three axes: it provides direction and a shared vision. It turns housing rehabilitation into a cultural act, greening into a collective project, and active mobility into a lived heritage experience. It transforms the past into a resource for facing the challenges of the present.