

AIPM AI Project of the Year

An award for responsible AI applied inside delivered project work

Prepared for the founders' forum: Ricardo Vargas and Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez. The AIPM Ambassadors' collective recommendation.

Responsible AI

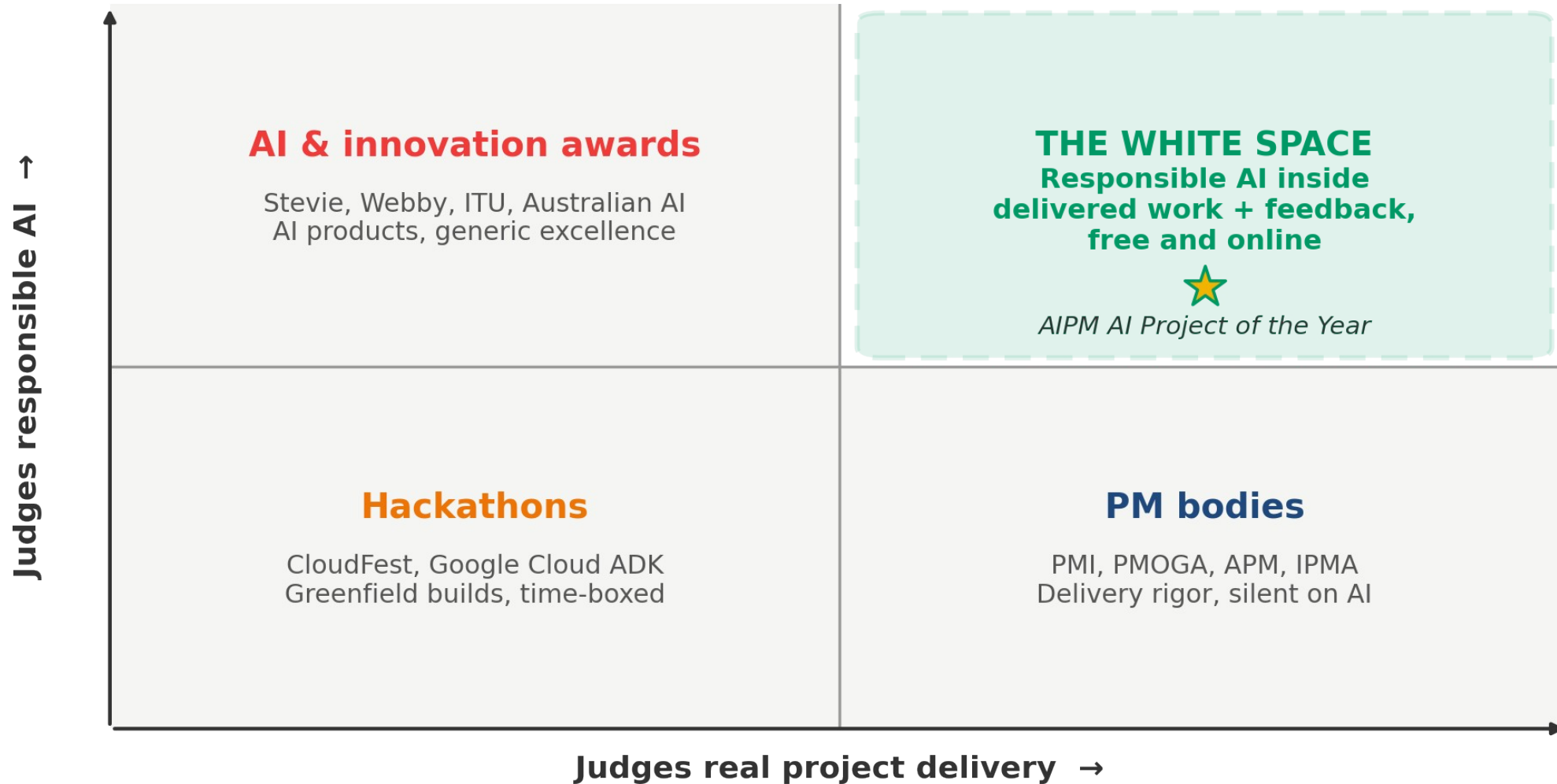
Built-in feedback

Free and online

One overall winner and two special recognitions, judged regional to global, launching October to December 2026.

The White Space No One Owns

We benchmarked 25 award programs across four lenses. The center is empty.



Why Now: The Window Is Open, and Closing

The wedge is real but time-limited; category framings get copied.

1

Framing proven

The Australian AI Awards already run Responsible AI and Agentic AI categories.

2

Still unowned

No one combines those with project-delivery rigor and a feedback loop.

3

The window narrows

Each quarter a PM body could add AI, or an AI award could add delivery.

4

First-mover

Launching in 2026 claims the ground first; the benchmark's own read.

The benchmark's read

Launch before competitors

The founders' instinct matches what the 25-program field shows.

The cost of waiting

The wedge narrows

Every quarter lets a rival bolt on the missing half.

The Defense: Four Guardrails Keep It Credible

How the award avoids reading as a PMI copy or a credential mill.

1

Original

Borrow mechanics, never PMI's branding, naming, or visual identity.

2

Non-commercial

Free end to end: no entry fee, and no paywalled proof of winning.

3

Practice-grounded

Recognize real AI in delivered projects, not ideas, models, or tools.

4

Community-first

The feedback report and case-study pipeline are central, not optional.

Why it stays original

Not a PMI copy

Borrow open nomination, video, a published rubric; never PMI's identity.

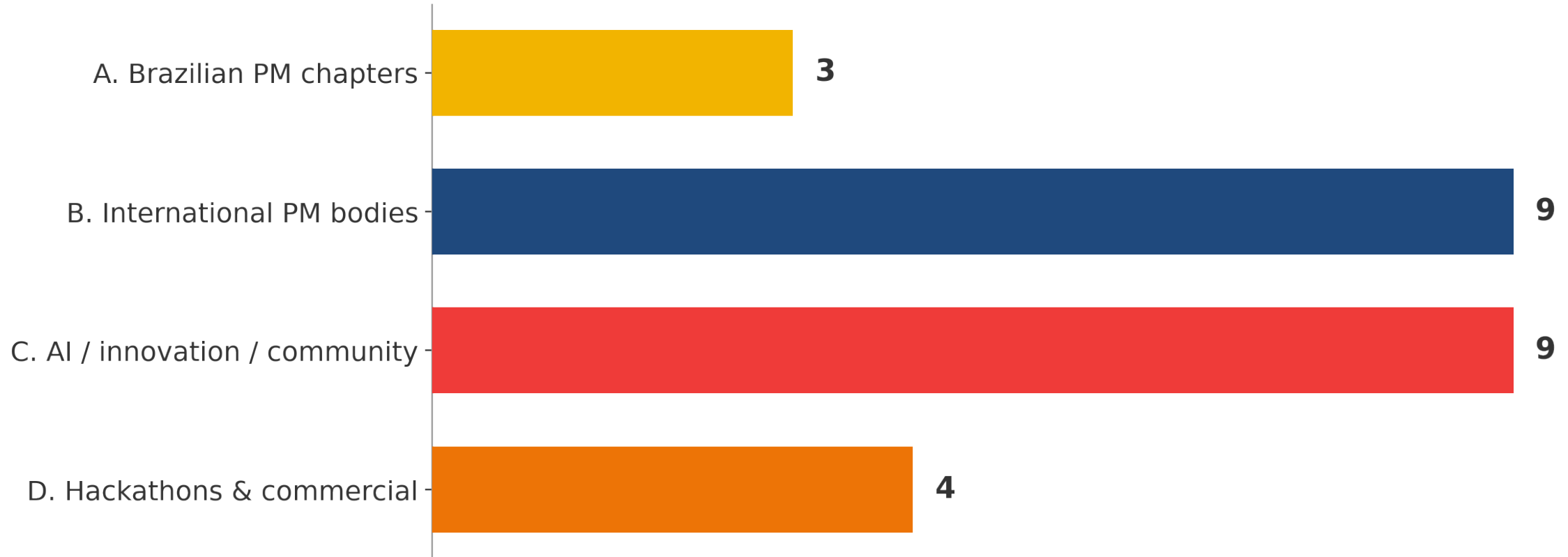
Why it stays credible

Not a credential mill

The proof of winning is never sold; feedback builds real capability.

The Field in Brief: 25 Programs, Four Lenses

Only IPMA returns a written feedback report, and it is paid and on-site. Full benchmark + matrix: [add Google Drive link.](#)



25 programs benchmarked · none combine responsible AI-in-delivery with capability-building feedback, free and online

The Ask: Two Decisions

Ratify the design, and greenlight the October to December 2026 run.

1

Ratify the design

Confirm the nine design decisions in the agenda.

2

Greenlight the run

July pre-announce, August launch, judging through December, online ceremony.

3

Four items need your call

Sponsorship, Community Choice vote, the window, the person-level award.

How the recommendation is framed

Collective recommendation

Nothing decided until the forum decides

Owner: Community & Growth

The AIPM Ambassadors bring this recommendation; the founders' forum decides.

The Award at a Glance

One overall winner and two special recognitions, on a single funnel and a single rubric.

1

AI Project of the Year

The overall winner, chosen from the global finalists.

2

Excellence in Responsible AI

A special recognition the jury designates from the finalist pool.

3

Excellence in Agentic AI

A special recognition, only where an entry uses agentic AI.

What every entrant gets

Global from day one

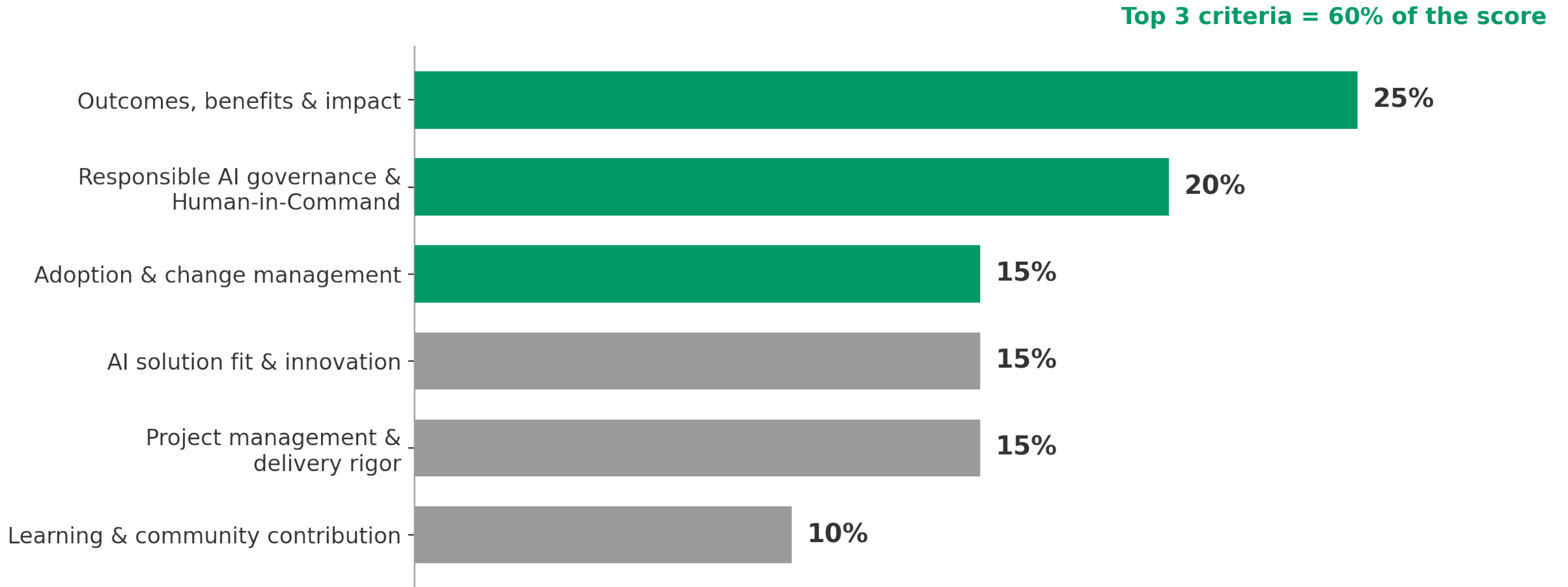
Free end to end

Feedback to every finalist

The specials add zero submission burden; Farhad's full five-category split is deferred to edition 2.

The Rubric: Six Weighted Criteria, Published Up Front

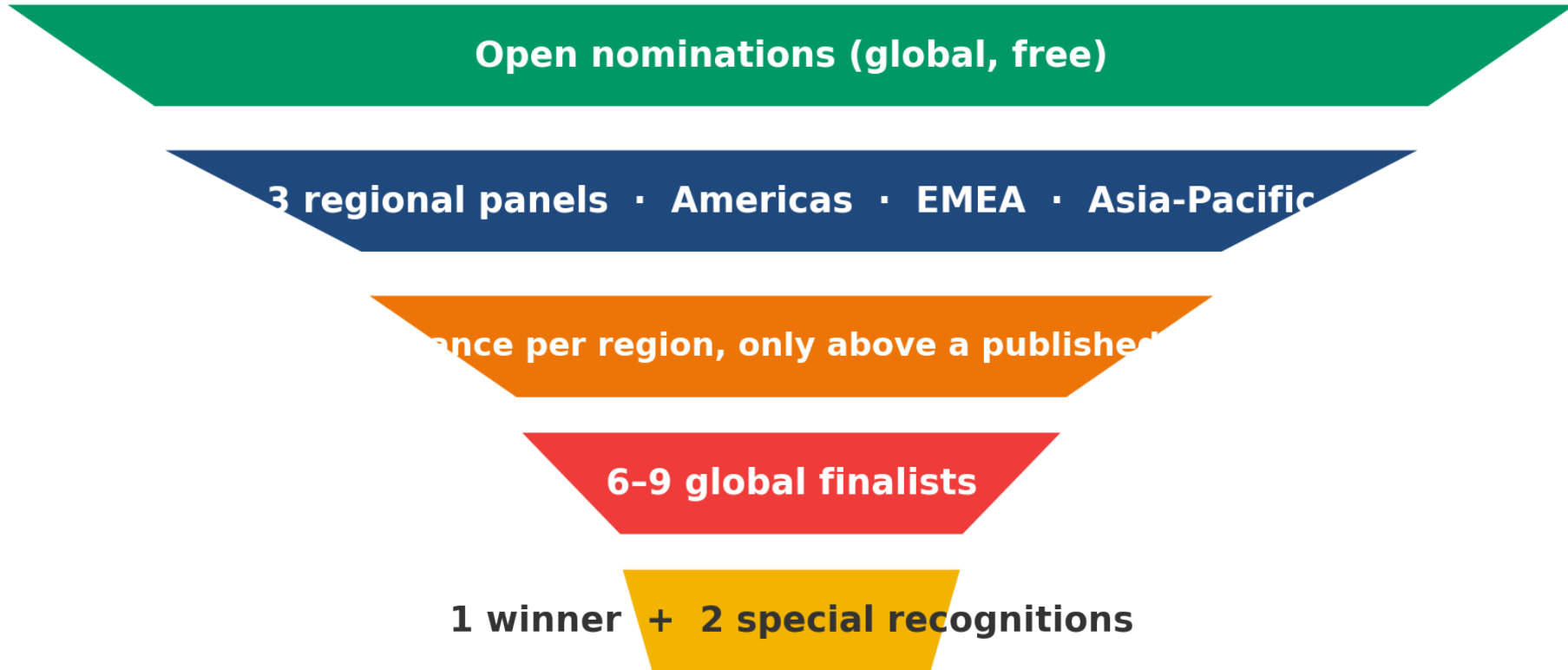
Reward durable change and real adoption over model novelty. Publishing the weights out-transparents PMI.



Weights published before the call opens · reward durable change and real adoption over model novelty

How It Is Judged: Regional to Global

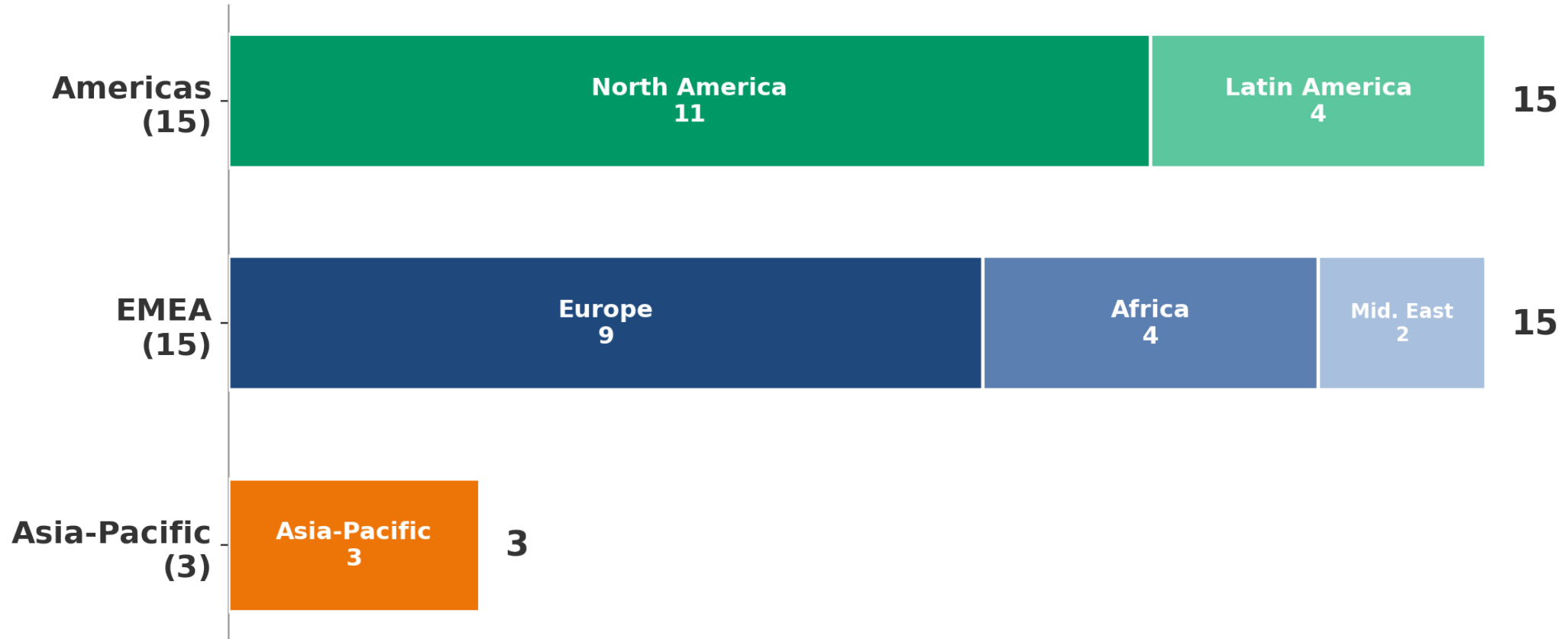
Ambassadors are the judging engine; entries advance only above a published cut-off, so a thin field never forces weak entries forward.



Tier 1 (regional, October) → Tier 2 (global, November-December)

Three Macro-Regions for Edition 1

Americas and EMEA balanced at 15 each; Asia-Pacific bolstered by external criterion-jurors. The full split is the edition-2 growth path.



33 ambassadors · 19 countries · 5 continents Americas and EMEA balanced; Asia-Pacific bolstered by external criterion-jurors

Jury and Integrity: Credibility by Design

Each panel is mixed (not all-academic) and about seven, within the founders' 5-to-10 range.

- 1** Conflict of interest: auto-decline plus disclose-and-recuse (no juror judges their own entry or employer).
- 2** Anti-AI-ghostwriting rule: a human-authored requirement, and a credibility signal for an AI award.
- 3** No contact with judges during the judging window.
- 4** Calibrate before scoring, so a 9 out of 10 means the same across regions.
- 5** A published sponsorship-does-not-influence-judging firewall, if any sponsor is taken.

All zero-cost, and each one beats a benchmarked award on credibility.

The Differentiator: Free, and Every Finalist Learns

A combination no benchmarked award offers.

1

Free end to end

Entry, judging, the credential, and the proof of winning, all free.

2

Feedback for every finalist

Criteria-anchored strengths and improvement areas (the IPMA lever).

3

A learning process

Not a trophy hand-off: it keeps AIPM from reading as a PMI copy or a credential mill.

The recognition package

Credly badge

**Story-of-Success
publication**

Live online ceremony

Once the published rubric exists, the feedback report is cheap to produce.

The Business Case: One Award, Year-Round Content

Every edition yields six to nine vetted case studies feeding the repository and the webinar cadence (about six a year).



Cost: Near-Zero for Year One

The entire year-one machine is built from assets AIPM already owns; the only real input is volunteer time.

Submission & judging platform	<i>form + video + scoring sheet</i>	\$0
Recognition badge	<i>reuse existing Credly designs</i>	\$0
Certificate, logo, mark	<i>bundled into the free win</i>	\$0
Jury	<i>volunteer panel of ~7</i>	\$0
Online ceremony	<i>existing webinar infrastructure</i>	\$0
Feedback reports	<i>produced against the published rubric</i>	Time only
Cash prize	<i>none (optional non-cash in-kind)</i>	\$0
Award Force SaaS	<i>deferred to a scale edition</i>	\$0

Year-one cash cost ≈ \$0 (the only real input is volunteer time)

Risks and Mitigations

The most plausible failure mode for a free, first-of-its-kind award is a thin first field.

- 1 **Scope creep: one award plus two jury-designated specials; the five-category split is deferred to edition 2.**
- 2 **Continuity neglect: commit up front to publishing each year's winner, jury, and rubric.**
- 3 **Pay-to-win perception: free end to end, no cash; sponsor-to-charity if sponsors are taken.**
- 4 **Jury conflict of interest: published auto-decline plus disclose-and-recuse, and calibration.**
- 5 **Thin first field: ambassador and founder reach; a cut-off so weak entries never advance; three regions stay staffable.**

Looking like a PMI copy or an AI-ghostwritten entry is handled by the four guardrails and a human-authored rule.

The Decision Agenda: Nine Decisions to Ratify

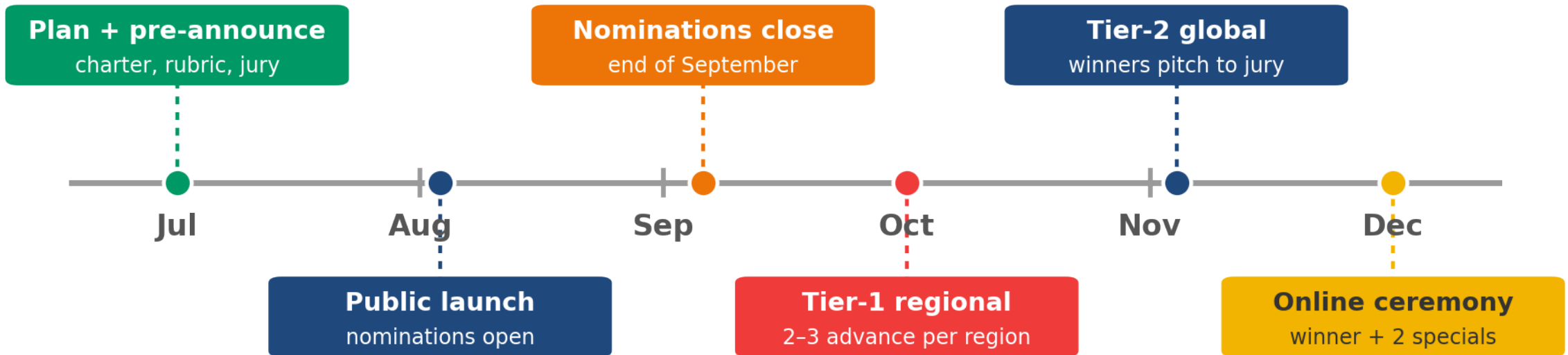
Every row is the ambassadors' recommendation; the highlighted four most need the founders' call. Full table: add Google Drive link.

#	Decision	Ambassadors' recommendation	Status
1	Categories	1 overall + 2 special recognitions (single funnel)	Recommended
2	Eligibility & window	Beyond PoC; 18-month window; global; consent	Flagged
3	Nomination model	Self / open-peer; Lead Nominator; draft-then-final	Recommended
4	Jury & COI	Mixed panel ~7; calibrate; auto-decline + recuse	Recommended
5	Community vote	Jury-only main; optional Community Choice	Needs sign-off
6	Scoring rubric	6 weighted criteria, 1-10, weights published	Recommended
7	Platform	Form + video + scoring sheet (SaaS = scale)	Recommended
8	Recognition & sponsorship	Free end-to-end; no cash; owner-funded yr 1	Needs sign-off
9	Geographic structure	Regional→global; 3 macro-regions; cut-off	Recommended

Highlighted rows + the person-level "AI Project Manager of the Year" are the four items that most need the founders' call.

The Calendar: July to December 2026

A pre-announcement opens the window warm; the first ceremony is online in December.



Fits the founders' window: launch before competitors, execute in 2026, first ceremony online

The wedge is real, and it will not stay unowned. Ratify the design and launch in 2026: the AIPM Ambassadors' collective recommendation, for the founders to decide.