The SOPA 2027 Awards

"The Society of Publishers in Asia 2027 Awards for Editorial Excellence"

亞洲出版業協會
「2027 年度卓越新聞獎」

SOPA 2027 AWARDS RULES & ENTRY FEES

I. INTRODUCTION

The Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) is seeking nominations for quality journalism in English, Chinese and Bahasa Indonesia from across the Asia-Pacific region for its 29th annual SOPA Awards for Editorial Excellence. The Awards are a tribute to editorial excellence in print, digital, audio and visual reporting of impact and importance in the region. Entries can be in English, Chinese or, for the Indonesian news reporting category, in Bahasa Indonesia. They must have been published in the calendar year 2026.

II. NOTE TO ENTRANTS

Please read the following rules and requirements carefully, including the FAQs, which together set out the rules, eligibility, requirements and guidelines for entering the SOPA 2027 Awards. Entries that do not follow the guidelines may be disqualified. In particular, note that—with the exception of the SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism and the SOPA Award for Young Journalist—entries that contain **multiple** articles or photographs **must show a unifying theme of coverage**, **which must be described in the accompanying nomination letter**. **The nomination letter is a critical part of each entry; it is an opportunity for you to explain to judges why the entry should win. You can use it to describe the circumstances behind the reporting for the entry, the topic's importance, the impact of the article(s), and so on. The letter should also explain how the entry helps fulfill the publication's editorial objectives. Please note in the nomination letter if artificial intelligence (AI) tools played a major role in researching, reporting or writing and explain how they contributed to the strength of the coverage.**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: If an entry has an "anchor" story, the nomination letter should identify it clearly. If the entry is selected as a Finalist, SOPA will use the identified anchor story as the embedded work in the Finalist's entry title.

Please refer to the FAQs at www.sopawards.com for further clarification.

III. ENTRY DEADLINE

February 25, 2027 (Thursday). All entries must be submitted by this date. The online submission system will be closed at **3pm** on that date (**Hong Kong time**).

IV. ELIGIBILITY

1. Only English-language and Chinese-language print and online publications, and news agencies distributed widely in the Asia-Pacific region, may enter. Entries in Bahasa are only accepted for the Bahasa Indonesia News Reporting award. Magazines must be issued at least four times a year. Newspapers must be published at least once a week. Online publications must be updated on average at least once a week. An online publication may be an independent website or part of a print or broadcast operation. Audio submissions can be a one-time series or regular podcasts.

   Awards are divided into three groups: Global (English language), Regional/Local (English language) and Chinese language. The SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism, the Young Journalists Award, the Excellence in Magazine Design, and the Excellence in Bahasa Indonesia News Reporting are the exceptions.

   Global (English language): Publications with original news coverage of an international nature and marketed to a worldwide audience. Some examples include: *The New York Times*, *CNN International*, *The Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *Bloomberg*.

   Regional/Local (English language): Regional or local media publications that are published in English. These include major English-language media outlets in each country or territory, as well as smaller, regional or specialist publications.

   Chinese language: Publications in Chinese that are local, regional or global in focus.

   Bahasa Indonesia: Publications in Bahasa Indonesia that are local, regional or global in focus.

   Note: Online publications that are affiliated with, or part of, a print publication should enter in the same group as their affiliated print publications. Independent online publications in English should enter in Regional/Local (English language).

   The SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism, The SOPA Award for Young Journalist, as well as the Excellence in Magazine Design award will each be combined across all three groups. (For record-keeping purposes, the system will still ask for the appropriate group.)

2. Online publications, news agencies and trade publications may enter in all reporting, writing and photography award categories. In-house newsletters, self-publishing platforms, public-relations publications, and other promotional materials are **NOT eligible to enter.**

3. Entries must have been published during the calendar year 2026.

4. Entries must have been published originally by the entering publication.

5. Entries **must have a substantial emphasis on the Asia Pacific and reflect journalism conducted (or mostly conducted) in the Asia-Pacific region**. For the purposes of the Awards, the **Asia-Pacific region is defined to include Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics in addition to the Indian subcontinent, North Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Islands**. **Please note:** Iraq, Iran and the Middle East are **not** included in this definition.

6. Entries may be the work of one journalist or multiple journalists and must be entered in the language in which they were originally published. **Each entry may be nominated into two categories at most**.

7. All names and bylines in the entry should be accurate at the time of submission. Any subsequent changes to entry details will incur a change fee of HK$800. **The maximum number of bylines allowed for each submission is 10**.

8. Entries must be submitted by a legally authorized representative of the publication. Freelance journalists may submit entries on their own behalf only if they obtain explicit permission from their supervising editor at the relevant publication and must include the editor's name and contact details in the entry submission form.

9. Entries that comprise more than a single article, photograph or audio episode must demonstrate a clear theme of coverage, and that theme should be clearly articulated in the nomination letter.

10. Artificial Intelligence (AI)-assisted work may be eligible for the SOPA Awards as long as the journalist or editorial team has retained substantive editorial responsibility for the work. AI may be used, for example, to assist with research and data analysis, provided that the journalist or editor independently verifies the information and remains responsible for the accuracy, originality and integrity of the final work. An article or other journalistic work that has been substantially or entirely generated and written by AI, without substantive reporting, writing and editorial responsibility by the journalist or editorial team, is not eligible. Entrants must not submit AI-generated material as original journalistic work. The use of AI does not relieve the entrant of responsibility for checking facts, sources, quotations, attribution, copyright and plagiarism.

11. Photographic entries must not have been manipulated or altered, apart from standard cropping and editing. AI-generated images and AI-generated or AI-manipulated photographic content are not eligible.

12. Any challenge to the fairness or accuracy of an entry as well as the publication's response to the challenge, including published corrections and clarifications, must be included in the nomination letter.

V. AWARD CATEGORIES

Categories open to all print and digital publications:

1. **Excellence in Reporting on Women's Issues (卓越女性議題報道獎)**
   Honoring original coverage of women in Asia, in politics, economics, society or other realms. The common thread should be an exploration of the lives of women and the challenges they face. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

2. **Excellence in Journalistic Innovation (卓越新聞報道創新獎)**
   Honoring works that use new or emerging digital tools to deliver news content in an innovative manner and/or encourages audience engagement with the news. This category accepts URLs of work(s) only. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

3. **Excellence in Audio Reporting (卓越音頻報道獎)**
   Honoring outstanding audio journalism that illustrates significant political, economic, social or cultural issues. Entries can consist of one single episode OR a series of up to three episodes running for no more than three hours in total. **Maximum of 1 item per entry.**

4. **Excellence in Video Reporting (卓越視頻報道獎)**
   Honoring works that demonstrate excellence in short-form video news reports. Entries should not

exceed 20 minutes in length. Virtual reality and 360-degree video are eligible to enter. **Maximum of 1 item per entry.**

5. **Excellence in Human Rights Reporting (卓越人權報道獎)**
   Honoring works that demonstrate high standards of reporting on a human-rights topic of significance. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

6. **Excellence in Feature Writing (卓越專題特寫獎)**
   Honoring works that demonstrate high standards of reporting and writing to describe an idea, event, trend or personality, or explain a topic of significance. **Maximum of 1 article per entry.**

7. **Excellence in Technology Reporting (卓越科技報道獎)**
   Honoring outstanding reporting on technology that illustrates its impact on political, economic, business or social issues. The stories should demonstrate how technology has fundamentally defined a significant news story and informed the reporting. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

8. **Excellence in Magazine Design (卓越雜誌設計獎)**
   Honoring the magazine that demonstrates high standards in visual presentation. This category is open only to magazines. **Publications may nominate only ONE entry in this category.** The award will be given out across all three groups (Global, Regional/Local and Chinese groups). **Maximum of 1 magazine (whole issue) per entry.**

9. **Excellence in Arts and Culture Reporting (卓越藝術及文化報道獎）**
   Honoring works that demonstrate high standards of reporting and writing in fine arts and cultural topics, including food and travel. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

10. **Excellence in Bahasa Indonesia News Reporting (亞洲出版業協會印尼語新聞報道獎）**
    A single award for stories with demonstrable impact that set the domestic agenda in politics, business or social/cultural affairs. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

11. **Excellence in Explanatory Reporting (卓越解釋性報道獎)**
    Honoring works that demonstrate high standards of reporting, writing and in-depth analysis to explain a topic of significance. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

12. **Excellence in Business Reporting (卓越經濟報道獎)**
    Honoring works that demonstrate high standards of reporting on a business topic of significance. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

13. **Excellence in Infographics (卓越數據圖像獎)**
    Honoring entries that demonstrate high standards in presenting information in graphical form. Entries can be PDF files or URL of work(s). **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

14. **Excellence in Reporting Breaking News (卓越突發新聞獎)**
    Honoring works that demonstrate high standards of reporting breaking news under deadline pressure. Work that covers developing and/or unexpected events – such as natural disasters, political unrest, sudden government policy changes and regulatory actions, and unfolding economic events – should be entered into this category. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry (**Live blogs/live-update pages are eligible, subject to the Live Blogs / Live Updates provisions in Section VI)**.**

15. **Excellence in Opinion Writing (卓越評論獎)**
    Honoring the opinion piece(s) or editorial(s) that best advance(s) discussion and debate on a topic of significance. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

16. **Excellence in Reporting on the Environment (卓越環境報道獎)**
    Honoring works that demonstrate high standards of reporting on an environmental topic of significance. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

17. **Excellence in Photography (卓越攝影獎)**
    Honoring works that demonstrate high standards of feature photography. (Note: entries must have been taken by or exclusively for the publication concerned) **Maximum of 5 photos per entry.**

18. **Excellence in Sports Journalism (卓越體育新聞獎) – NEW!**

Honoring outstanding reporting that explains, investigates or illuminates important sports themes and subjects in the Asia-Pacific region. Eligible entries may highlight organized sport at any level, provided that the work reflects substantial reporting effort conducted in the Asia-Pacific region, or features competitors from the region. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

19. **Excellence in Sports Photography (卓越體育攝影獎) – NEW!**

Honoring powerful and defining images and photo essays that show outstanding timing, composition and visual storytelling in covering Asia-Pacific athletes or sporting events. Eligible entries may highlight organized sport at any level, provided that the work reflects coverage of events in the Asia-Pacific region, or features competitors from the region. The nomination letter should explain the context of the images, the significance of the moment(s) captured, and editorial intent. (Note: entries must have been taken by or exclusively for the publication concerned). **Maximum of 5 photos per entry.**

20. **The Scoop Award (獨家新聞獎)**

Honoring the exclusive story that has a significant impact and is widely followed by competing news media. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

21. **Carlos Tejada Award for Excellence in Investigative Reporting (Carlos Tejada 卓越調查報道獎)**

Honoring the publication that advances the public interest on a topic of significance by exposing wrongdoing or corruption, uncovering malfeasance or, in some other way, holding the powerful to account. In addition to original reporting, submissions may include articles, photographs and graphics. **Maximum of 3 articles per entry.**

22. **SOPA Award for Young Journalist (亞洲出版業協會最佳新人記者大獎)**

Honoring an outstanding journalist under 30 years old who has shown exceptional talent and commitment in their coverage. **Maximum of five articles per entry, can be mixed medium (video, print, and/or photos.)** The award will be given to one journalist across the Global, Regional/Local, and Chinese groups.

Journalists who turn 30 in the year of submission are eligible. At least three out of five articles must be the work of one journalist only.

The entry must be accompanied by a personal letter from the journalist describing their work and supported by a letter from a commissioning or supervising editor. The personal letter should not exceed 800 words in length.

23. **SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism (亞洲出版業協會公共服務新聞大獎)**

The SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism recognizes outstanding journalistic work in print, photography, video, audio or online media that represents an exemplary contribution to public service in the Asia-Pacific region.

Entries can consist of a single piece or up to a maximum of five works of journalism. Examples can comprise a single piece of written work or a series of written and multimedia works.

There will be only one SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism award given out across all three groups. **Publications may nominate only ONE entry in this category**. Submissions can take the form of PDF files or URLs of work(s).

VI. RULES FOR SUBMISSION

1. **Each publication** may submit a maximum of **TWO entries** per **category** except in the following categories: SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism, SOPA Award for Young Journalist, and Excellence in Magazine Design. In those categories, each publication may submit only ONE entry.

2. **Each entry** may include a maximum of **THREE pieces of work** except in Excellence in Feature Writing, which is limited to ONE article per entry; Excellence in Photography, which is limited to FIVE photographs; Excellence in Video Reporting, which is limited to ONE video per entry; Excellence in Audio Reporting, which is limited to ONE single episode OR ONE series of up to three episodes, totalling under three hours, and Excellence in Magazine Design, which is limited to ONE edition of a magazine only.

Live Blogs / Live Updates

Live blog entries should represent a continuous span of coverage, selected by the submitting organization from anywhere within the blog's run. Entrants should identify the start and end timestamps of the selected span.

Entries will be assessed on original reporting, accuracy and transparency about sourcing and corrections, speed and clarity in establishing what is known, usefulness to a reader joining at any point, and consistency of quality throughout the span.

3. At least one piece in each entry must be a written article except in:

Excellence in Photography, Excellence in Infographics, Excellence in Video Reporting, Excellence in Audio Reporting, Excellence in Journalistic Innovation, and Excellence in Sports Photography.

4. Each entry must include the following:
(a) The nominated work(s), (each piece of work submitted in one PDF file or up to three URLs)
(b) Completed online entry form
(c) Completed online nomination letter

(For entries that make it to the Finalists List, SOPA will embed one of the entries' work/article in the finalist's entry title. Entrants are encouraged to mention / highlight their "anchor" story in the nomination letter.)

NOTE: SOPA will only accept electronic submissions for convenience, security and cost reasons. All entries must be submitted through the SOPA 2027 Awards website www.sopawards.com (https://sopawards.awardsplatform.com)
Entries by email or mail will not be accepted.

5. All categories require a minimum number of five entries. If fewer than five entries are received, SOPA will cancel the category, or merge entries across the Global, Regional, and/or Chinese groups. The decision is at the sole discretion of the SOPA Editorial Committee.

6. For the **Chinese-language** Group, entry forms must be in Chinese and English. The **nomination letter must be in Chinese**. Headlines and names/titles of entries and journalists' names must be in Chinese followed by their English translation.

7. For the **Bahasa Indonesia News Reporting** category, entry forms must be both in Bahasa and in English. The **nomination letter must be in Bahasa**. Headlines and names/titles of entries and journalists' name(s) must be in Bahasa followed by their English translation.

8. The nomination letter must explain why the entry deserves consideration for the category entered, the publication's editorial objectives and how the entry helped fulfill those objectives. It may also provide additional information about the entry to assist the judges in placing the entry in context. Entries with multiple articles or photographs must explain the unifying theme of coverage addressed in the submission. For the Scoop Award, the letter must specifically explain why the story is a scoop or exclusive to the publication. Entries will be judged against how well they fulfill the objectives described in the nomination letter. The nomination letter should not exceed 600 words, or in the case of Chinese-language entries, 600 characters.

9. **Entries submitted as URLs should ensure the URL is live and active from February to the end of June 2027**. Each URL is counted as one piece of work. The work should have been first published during the calendar year 2026. The URLs may be listed in the nomination portion of the entry form. Entries hosted on websites requiring passwords must provide a single username and password to be used by the judges. **Additionally, entrants that make it to the Finalists' List should make their URLs accessible to the public free of charge until the end of June 2027.**

10. Entries in the Photography, Magazine Design and Sports Photography categories should be submitted in **published PDF** form rather than original photos. The issue/photos entered should have the relevant pages or photographs clearly marked. Photo essays will need to clearly indicate which photographs are being entered. Entries that are not clearly marked will be disqualified.

11. SOPA reserves the right to publish the entries. Accordingly, you grant SOPA a non-exclusive, irrevocable, worldwide, and royalty-free license to use, reproduce, distribute, and display your entry in connection with the SOPA Awards. You further agree to release and hold harmless SOPA and its officers, directors, and employees from and against any claim or cause of action arising out of your participation in the Awards.

12. **NO REFUNDS** will be made once entries have been submitted. Please read the Rules and FAQ before submitting payment.

VII. INTERPRETATION

Any questions as to the interpretation of these and all other rules will be decided by the SOPA Editorial Committee. In case of discrepancies between the English, Chinese and Bahasa versions of the rules, the English version will prevail. No award shall be made in a category if there are insufficient entries of merit. Decisions are final.

VIII. ENTRY FEES & PAYMENT METHODS

Global (English language)	Publications with original news coverage of an international nature and marketed to a worldwide audience. Some examples include: *The New York Times*, *CNN International*, *The Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *Bloomberg*.
Regional/Local (English language)	Publications that are regional or local in both audience and news coverage. Some examples include: *The Australian*, *Rappler*, *Hong Kong Free Press*.
Chinese language	Publications in Chinese that are local, regional or global in focus.
Bahasa Indonesia	Publications in Bahasa Indonesia language.

Cost per entry	Global	Regional/Local	Chinese-language	Bahasa-language
Non-members	HK$1,800	HK$1,300	HK$1,300	HK$1,200
SOPA members*	HK$1,600	HK$1,100	HK$1,100	HK$900

* SOPA members enjoy a discount on all entry fees. Please request the SOPA membership discount code via email to mail@sopasia.com latest **by noon on Feb 25, 2027**.

1. Subsidy for small media companies: In line with its mission to support editorial excellence, SOPA will again subsidize **first-time entrants AND small media companies**. Any media outlet that **participates in the awards for the first time or** any **media outlet with a maximum of 20 full-time staff in total, of which at least 50% are full-time editorial staff**, can apply for this subsidy (please see the FAQs for more information). Each first-time entrant or small media outlet can

claim the subsidy **for up to <u>two</u> entries**, paying only HKD$200 (US$25) for each entry. There is a cap on the subsidy so please apply early. You do not need to be a SOPA member. Once your nomination letters and entries are ready, email us at sopawards@sopasia.com with the Entries' unique reference code and we will be in touch! **Please DO NOT PAY until you hear from us.**

2. Payment methods:

   Payment for entry submissions will be accepted online only.
   We accept payment by VISA, Mastercard and American Express via PayPal. You also have the option to make payment with your own PayPal account.

   No refunds will be offered.

3. Enquiries relating to the Editorial Awards submissions may be sent to:

   SOPA Awards Administration Panel

   Email: sopawards@sopasia.com