

2026 Gwangju _ Asia International Architecture Competition

Competition Guidelines

Theme: Participatory Architecture | www.gwangjuproject.kr

The 2026 Gwangju _ Asia International Architecture Competition is organized under the theme "Participation + Architecture," re-examining the role of users — not professionals — as the primary agents of space. Through architectural proposals grounded in participation, empathy, and everyday life, the competition aims to explore user-centered spatial strategies. It serves as a platform for spatial inquiry that emphasizes process over outcome, and structure over form, welcoming diverse and innovative architectural approaches.

1. Theme

Theme | Participatory Architecture

The world today is passing through an era of deepening conflict and division. Wars and geopolitical tensions, economic rivalry between nations, and extreme polarization within societies are fundamentally shaking the foundations of cities and communities. In this context, architecture goes beyond being a technique for constructing physical environments — it becomes a public practice that asks how people can live together.

The Gwangju _ Asia International Architecture Competition has continuously explored these concerns. "Human Rights Architecture" highlighted human dignity and spatial rights. "Democratic Architecture" questioned how cities and public spaces can enable civic participation and communal life. This year's theme, "Participatory Architecture," extends this trajectory by exploring how architecture can generate new urban possibilities through active human engagement.

Participatory architecture does not refer to a completed, finished product. Rather, it envisions architecture as process — one in which multiple actors intervene throughout the entire course of how a space is formed, used, and transformed.

Architecture is no longer completed solely by the designer's intention. It is continuously expanded and reinterpreted through the experiences of users and communities. In this sense, architecture operates not as a fixed object, but as an open platform that organizes the relationships between people and the city — and further acts as a social mediator connecting people with people, the city with nature, and the past with the future.

This competition asks how architecture can present new social imagination. We look not for designs that repeat existing forms, but for architectural proposals that expand the possibilities of the city and its spaces through people's participation:

- How can the city open itself to more people?
- How can architecture become a living space through the participation of its users?
- How can the values of community be embodied in space within our everyday lives?

The 2026 Gwangju _ Asia International Architecture Competition awaits creative and practical architectural proposals that address these questions. We hope that architects from diverse cultural and urban backgrounds will exchange ideas and together discover new possibilities for the city and architecture.

2. Eligibility

- Open to individuals capable of expressing spatial ideas through architectural drawings and diagrams
 - One entry per person
 - Project site must be located within Asia
-

3. Overall Schedule

※ Early Bird Pre-Registration fee: KRW 30,000

※ Schedule and venue are subject to change.

Category	Date
Early Bird Pre-Registration	Wed, July 29 – Fri, July 31, 2026 (by 18:00)
1st Round Submission & Registration	Wed, August 12 – Fri, August 14, 2026 (by 18:00)
2nd Round: Receipt & PPT Submission	Fri, August 21 – Mon, August 24, 2026
2nd Round: Model Submission (on judging day)	Wed, August 26, 2026 — 11:00–12:00
1st Jury	Wed, August 19, 2026 at 14:00
1st Round Results Announced	Thu, August 20, 2026 at 21:00 (website)
2nd Jury	Wed, August 26, 2026 at 14:00 / Jeonil Building 245, 4F Conference Room
2nd Round Results Announced	Thu, August 27, 2026 at 14:00 (website)
Exhibition	Tue, Oct 27 – Sun, Nov 1, 2026 / ACC Complex Hall 6, Bamboo Forest Exhibition Space
Award Ceremony	Tue, October 27, 2026 at 14:00 / ACC Complex Hall 6
Symposium	Wed, August 26, 2026 / Jeonil Building 245, 4F Conference Room

4. Registration & Submission

1. Online Registration

- Apply via the official competition website: www.gwangjuproject.kr
- Download the application form, complete it, and submit.

2. Submit application documents and design files via email

- Email: gjkia2017@gmail.com
- Submission file: PIN_ProjectTitle

- Application form: PIN_Name_ProjectTitle

※ Models must be submitted on-site on the day of judging. (12:00–13:00 is lunch break — no submission accepted during this period.)

※ International participants may substitute the physical model with a 3D modeling video file.

5. Judging

Submission Requirements & Specifications

1st Round

Required Documents:

- One A0 panel (portrait orientation, JPG, 150 dpi, max 20 MB — please strictly observe the file size limit)
- Completed application form (PDF)
- Proof of registration fee payment (JPG)

Panel Content:

- Theme interpretation
- Urban context analysis
- Concept and diagrams
- Architectural drawings
- Perspectives and renderings

Selection:

- Approximately 10 finalists selected for the 2nd round (Grand Prize through Encouragement Prize) | Special Prize & Honorable Mentions

2nd Round (Prize Finalists)

Required Documents:

- Physical model: 80 × 80 cm (material free choice) — must be brought in person on judging day
- Written project description
- Presentation materials: English (Korean may be included) — A4, max 10 pages, landscape layout, PowerPoint or PDF

※ Model production is mandatory for 2nd round finalists. A model production subsidy will be provided (planned).

※ Prize-winning models may not be removed until after the exhibition.

※ International participants may submit a model video file in lieu of a physical model.

Registration Fee

Category	Fee
Standard (1st Round)	KRW 50,000 (includes file printing and exhibition panel costs)
Early Bird Pre-Registration	KRW 30,000 (payment must be made during the pre-

Category	Fee
	registration period)

※ Online payment only, to be made simultaneously with submission.

※ Exchange rates are based on the rate on the first day of the announcement.

Bank Transfer:

- Bank: Gwangju Bank
- Account Number: 1107-020-250545
- Account Name: Gwangju-Jeonnam Architects Association

※ Transfer must be made in the name of your affiliation and your name (e.g., Seoul National University Kim Sungji)

Judging Schedule

Category	Date & Details
1st Jury	Wed, August 19, 2026 at 14:00 — A0 panel review
1st Round Results Announced	Thu, August 20, 2026 at 21:00 — Posted on website (time subject to change)
2nd Jury	Wed, August 26, 2026 at 14:00 — PPT presentation review (+ panel, model)
2nd Round Results Announced	Thu, August 27, 2026 at 14:00 — Posted on website
Jury Members	To be announced on website
Jury Chair	To be announced on website

※ 2nd round participants: PPT presentation within 10 minutes + Q&A within 5 minutes.

※ International participants may attend remotely via Zoom.

※ Judging will be livestreamed on YouTube.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Round	Criteria
1st Round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validity of problem-setting and program through theme interpretation • Validity of program and design strategy • Validity of the overall proposal
2nd Round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validity of theme and program • Creativity and originality of the architectural proposal • Architectural expression and communicative power • Overall completeness (panel, model, presentation) • Oral presentation (10 min) + Q&A (5 min)

7. Awards

Award Ceremony: Tuesday, October 27, 2026 at 14:00
ACC Complex Hall 6, Bamboo Forest Exhibition Space

Award	Presenter	Number	Prize
Grand Prize	Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism	1	KRW 10,000,000
Excellence Prize	Mayor of Gwangju Metropolitan City	1	KRW 3,000,000
Merit Prize	—	4	KRW 1,000,000 each
Encouragement Prize	—	4	KRW 500,000 each
Honorable Mention	—	Multiple	Certificate

※ Applicable taxes (withholding tax) are the responsibility of the recipient.

8. Inquiries

1) Registration & Submission

- Website: www.gwangjuproject.kr
- Email: gjkia2017@gmail.com

※ A dual submission system is in place as a precaution against missed submissions.

※ Submission is only considered complete once you receive a confirmation email to your registered address.

2) Q&A

- Refer to the Notices and Q&A section on the website.
 - Email inquiries: gjkia2017@gmail.com
-

9. Copyright

- Copyright of all submitted works remains with the entrant.
 - The organizers may exhibit and publish submissions, and may request supplementary materials when necessary.
-

10. Exhibition & Publication

- Awarded and selected works will be exhibited at the 2026 Gwangju Architecture and Urban Culture Festival & the 2026 Gwangju _ Asia International Architecture Competition (competition website).
 - Awarded and selected works will be published in a catalog.
-

11. Additional Notes

- One submission per person; registration and entry fees are non-refundable.
- Works that do not comply with the specified format and regulations will be excluded from judging.
- Major violations — including false information on applications, non-compliance with submission specifications, previously awarded works, and plagiarism — may result in disqualification even after an award has been granted, following deliberation by the jury committee.
- All inquiries must be made through the Notice/Q&A section of the competition website within the designated inquiry period.
- Any unavoidable changes to the competition schedule or other details will be posted on the website; registered participants are responsible for checking the website regularly.
- Official website announcements take precedence over these guidelines.