

Prowinter Award 2026 – Regulations

Premise

Now in its fourth edition, Prowinter Award represents a consolidated evolution of the project designed to **enhance innovation, quality and commercial concreteness in the winter sports sector**. Born with a focus on skis and ski boots, since 2025 it has been extended to the winter outdoor segment, in parallel with the transformation of the Prowinter fair. The 2026 edition confirms and strengthens this development:

- increasing the number and variety of nominated products;
- expanding and updating product categories;
- refining participation criteria and evaluation methods.

The primary objective is to offer the market a fair and authoritative competition, capable of rewarding the most deserving products and promoting a culture oriented towards quality, innovation and environmental responsibility.

Recipients

Prowinter Award **is aimed at companies producing equipment, clothing and accessories for skiing and winter outdoor activities**, which stand out for:

- quality of materials and manufacturing;
- technological and functional innovation;
- design consistent with usage needs and market trends;
- commercial potential in the specialized retail channel;
- environmental responsibility in the choice of materials, production processes and logistics.

The award is also aimed at distribution operators, offering them an objective and qualified tool to guide purchasing decisions for the 2026/2027 season.

The competition categories are structured as follows (details in the “Categories” section):

Ski sector: introduction of Top Performance, Mid Performance and Allmountain distinctions for alpine skis and boots; confirmation of categories dedicated to ski touring (Skitouring);

Winter outdoor sector: footwear, divided into Winter Active (moderate activities) and Winter Expert (intense activities); technical clothing, with a focus on shell jackets and mountaineering pants.

Objectives

Within each category, the jury – composed of experts with technical, commercial and design skills – will select products that clearly and measurably express:

- a real element of innovation or evolution;
- tangible benefits for the user or for commercial positioning;
- effective market attractiveness, in terms of sales potential and relevance for specialized retail;
- a concrete and verifiable sensitivity to environmental issues.



The **purposes of Prowinter Award** are:

- To reward companies that propose innovative, consistent and distinctive solutions;
- To support retail with a professional and credible guide for selecting high value-added products.

Prowinter Award therefore acts as an active observatory on industry trends and as a reference point for all operators seeking reliability, performance and vision in winter product offerings.

The Award at Stake

The winners of Prowinter Award 2026 will receive an **exclusive visibility package**, designed to enhance the result achieved and amplify its communication impact across multiple channels.

The award includes:

- Inclusion in a **dedicated press release** distributed to trade media
- **Editorial article** on Prowinter's official website
- **Newsletter** launch to the fair's qualified contacts
- Customized **posts and stories** about the winners on official social channels
- **Highlight video produced ad hoc** and provided to the company for social and web sharing
- **Digital promo kit** for independent communication of the recognition (logos, badges, claims, ready-to-use graphics)
- **Inclusion in the special Award** feature in collaboration with the MagNet group magazines
- **Display** unit to showcase the winning product at your stand

In addition, **winners commit to visually enhancing the recognition received at their exhibition stands during Prowinter**, by adequately displaying the award to make it visible to visitors and operators.

The trade fair's organizing office will provide personalized support in identifying the most effective and consistent ways to integrate the recognition into the stand, so that it becomes a true distinctive element of communication and reputation.

Required Documentation

To participate in Prowinter Award 2026, **the following mandatory documentation** must be submitted in Italian (or English). The material must be sent by filling out the dedicated online form available on the official Prowinter website or through the downloadable PDF form.

Documents and materials required for the application:

- **Application form**, completed in all its parts.
- Up to **5 product photographs** (in high resolution, JPG or PNG format).
- **Graphic sketches or design concepts** (optional but strongly recommended).
- **Complete technical sheet** of the product, also including the indication of the recommended retail price range. This sheet will be used to generate the QR code displayed next to the product during the fair.

- **Descriptive text on the innovation** introduced by the product (between 1,000 and 2,000 characters including spaces).
- Text on the **Unique Selling Proposition (USP)**: what is the unique feature of the product that distinguishes it on the market and constitutes the core of its commercial strategy? (max 1,000 characters including spaces).
- **Inspirational text on design**: what was the source of inspiration or the concept behind the design of the nominated product? (max 1,000 characters including spaces).
- **Completion of the form dedicated to the environmental responsibility of the product**: compilation of the questions relating to the topic by the company's ESG manager.

Subsequent phases and physical samples:

All nominated products in each category must be accompanied by a final physical sample (not a "prototype"), to be sent by courier or delivered by hand no later than January 9, 2026 to the Bolzano exhibition center, for the purpose of in-person evaluation. Logistical details will be shared by the Prowinter Team during the application process.

The collegial jury session in person (second + third round) will take place on Saturday, January 10, 2026, to allow physical inspection and evaluation of all products.

All nominated, finalist and winning products will be exhibited at the Prowinter fair, which will be held from January 11 to 13, 2026.

Structure and Management of Prowinter Award 2026

Composition and Presidency of the Jury for "SKI" categories

- **Guido Bottazzo** – Specialized designer and professor of industrial design
- **Elio Bottero** – Entrepreneur in large-scale sports distribution, including online
- **Kurt Ladstätter** – Entrepreneur in quality technical sports rental
- **Francesca Martinelli** – Former athlete and ski mountaineering champion
- **Alessandro Monti** – Entrepreneur in large-scale sports retail
- **Petra Trocker Volgger** – Former Italian national cross-country and biathlon athlete, retailer and rental operator (expert juror for the evaluation of the Special Prize "Cross-Country Skiing")

Rotation of the Ski Jury presidency: for the 2026 edition the presidency is assigned to **Alessandro Monti**.

Composition and Presidency of the "OUTDOOR" Jury

- **Guido Bonvicini** – Mountain Guide (College of Mountain Guides of Lombardy)
- **Fabio Deon** – Founder and head of a design and development studio for technical and safety footwear
- **Patrick Stuflesser** – Mid-Mountain Guide and International Mountain Leader (UIMLA)

- **Giovanni Viganò** – Vice President of the “Independent Sports Shops” network, owner of Sherpa Mountain Shop
- **Massimo Zuin** – Category Manager specialized in the technical outdoor sector

Rotation of the Outdoor Jury presidency: for the 2026 edition the presidency is assigned to **Fabio Deon**.

Product Categories 2026

The **SKI segment** includes all categories relating to alpine skis and boots and ski touring, the historical core of the winter market and cornerstone of the Prowinter offering.

SKIS

1. **Alpine Skis - Top Performance**

High-performance ski + binding system intended for expert and demanding skiers, designed to offer precision, responsiveness and maximum stability at sustained speeds.

This category includes **high-end models**, with different geometries, intended for on-piste use (race carve, piste performance) and aimed at **expert skiers, professionals and industry technicians**. They use superior-level materials, advanced constructions and fall within a premium price range. Race category models are excluded. “**Master**” **models are included** provided they are presented with their dedicated binding (not just the ski plate).

In the overall evaluation of the ski + binding system, the score will be calculated considering the **ski with a weight of 60% and the binding with a weight of 40%**. A bonus of 1 point may be added, related to significant safety or innovation elements connected to the binding (identified during the 2nd round of in-person evaluations), which increases the final overall score.

2. **Allmountain Skis**

Versatile ski + binding systems designed to tackle the entire mountain, with priority performance on piste and suitability for light off-piste.

Equipment characterized by intermediate geometries and **waist widths between 78 and 95 mm** (tolerance +/- 1 mm). They are intended for **intermediate-advanced and expert skiers** looking for a single product for all conditions, from hard snow to variable snow, with good maneuverability and ease of handling. Bonus of 1 point “binding technology”, as for the Top Performance category.

NOTE: in both cases, the evaluation will consider the quality and consistency of the ski + binding system (nominations for ski only will not be admitted).

3. **Ski Touring Skis (Freetouring)**

Skis specifically designed for modern ski touring, with **waist width between 85 mm and 105 mm** (tolerance +/- 1 mm), designed to ensure a good compromise between uphill lightness, downhill control, performance and fun.

Only **models accompanied by their corresponding skins** are admitted, necessary for the jury to assess compatibility, attachment system and ease of use. Over 105 mm waist width, the ski will be excluded as belonging to the Freeride category.

BOOTS

4. Alpine Skis - Boots Top Performance

High-performance boots intended for expert and demanding skiers, designed to offer precision, responsiveness and comfort in high-level technical actions.

This category includes high-end models intended for on-piste use (race carve, piste performance) for experts or professionals and industry technicians.

Flex: 120; last: 100 mm (mid volume/low volume); no pin; no ski&walk. Made with superior-level materials, advanced constructions and a premium price target.

5. Alpine Skis - Boots Mid Performance

Versatile boots designed to accompany the skier in all desired actions, with balanced performance between groomed slopes, irregular slopes and light off-piste.

Intended for an **intermediate-advanced audience**, they offer comfort, precision and adaptability, thanks to a shell and construction capable of handling different snow conditions, while maintaining good power transmission, easy entry and walkability. Ideal for those looking for a single boot for multiple contexts of use.

Flex 90 – 120; last: 100 mm (mid volume/high volume); no pin; yes ski&walk; yes GripWalk.

6. Ski Touring Boots (Freetouring)

Boots specifically for modern ski touring (not race), designed to guarantee the best compromise between uphill lightness, walking comfort, control and downhill performance.

They must offer **an effective cuff mobility system**, compatibility with pin or tech bindings (ISO 9523 standard), and a construction that ensures precision and safety in skiing even on technical terrain. Intended for **intermediate-advanced skiers** who practice autonomous ascents and descents in uncontrolled mountain environments.

GENERAL NOTE: Carry-overs penalized; carry-over products (identical to those of the previous season) already nominated in previous Award editions will not be admitted, even in different categories.

SPECIAL PRIZE 2026 – Cross-Country Skiing

Special prize awarded annually to a winter category selected for its technical, historical or commercial relevance.

For the 2026 edition, the recognition is dedicated to **classic technique cross-country skiing**, a fundamental discipline in the panorama of international skiing and an integral part of its history.

The prize will be awarded to a **Top Performance amateur classic technique ski**, i.e., a model designed for passionate and advanced skiers, seeking high performance, glide, stability and precision, while not belonging to the pure competitive range. The ideal product combines accessible technical features,

innovative construction and usability, representing the best balance between performance and non-competitive use.

The **Outdoor segment** is dedicated to technical footwear and clothing designed for winter outdoor activities such as trekking, hiking and mountaineering. The selected categories reflect the needs of comfort, versatility and performance in cold and mixed environments.

FOOTWEAR

1. Winter Active

Comfortable and versatile shoes designed **for active users seeking ease of use**, protection and adaptability in winter environments. Suitable for medium-intensity and duration activities (daily), such as light hikes on groomed snow, walks in mid-altitude environments and urban use in cold conditions.

Expected technical features:

- Low or mid cut (ankle-level protection)
- Waterproof/breathable membrane
- Thermal protection designed for mid-altitude activity and cold but not severe conditions
- Non-slip sole suitable for use on uneven and potentially snowy terrain

2. Winter Expert

Technical shoes designed for **expert and demanding users**, ideal for demanding winter hiking (even multi-day), use with snowshoes and alpine mountaineering (not extreme).

Expected technical features:

- High cut (above the ankle)
- Water-repellent/breathable membrane
- High thermal protection, for high altitudes and intense cold
- Compatibility with semi-automatic and automatic crampons
- Non-slip sole for grip on snowy and rugged terrain

GENERAL NOTE: Carry-overs penalized; carry-over products (identical to those of the previous season) already nominated in previous Award editions will not be admitted, even in different categories.

CLOTHING

3. Technical Shell Jacket

Outer garment designed to provide protection from wind, rain and snow, without sacrificing breathability and freedom of movement. Intended for dynamic outdoor activities such as trekking, mountaineering and technical outings.

Expected technical features:

- Waterproof/breathable membrane (measurable parameters: waterproofing and breathability, with appropriate tests)
- Heat-taped seams
- Integrated hood compatible with helmet
- No insulation (shell layer)

4. **Technical Mountaineering Pants**

Pants designed to accompany the user in activities such as mountaineering, intensive hiking and snowshoeing, ensuring protection, mobility and thermal comfort.

Expected technical features:

- Robust and breathable materials
- Waterproofing and breathability
- Abrasion resistance
- Presence of gaiters
- Ergonomic fit

Evaluation Criteria

For product evaluation, the following criteria grid and related percentage weighting will be applied both to “ski” and “outdoor” products:

- **Innovation (25%)**
Key factor to differentiate products on the market, improving performance, technicality and user experience. It means effective, tangible, demonstrable innovation.
- **Marketability (20%)**
Important for retailers and rental operators; considers the product’s commercial appeal, price positioning and clarity of the offer. An intrinsic product requirement, not linked to brand value/fame.
- **Technologies (20%)**
Essential requirement to support innovation, with attention and verification of the concrete application of the technical solutions presented.
- **Design (15%)**
Evaluation of the balance between function, ergonomics and aesthetics, with attention to consistency with intended use and expressive clarity of the project.
- **Storytelling (10%)**
Evaluation of the product’s ability to communicate a distinctive identity through naming, packaging, storytelling and consistency between marketing and technical values.
- **Environmental Responsibility (10%)**
Evaluation of the content expressed by each nominated product in terms of responsible production action, understood as the use of recycled or recyclable materials, low-impact

production processes, durability, repairability, sustainable packaging and transparency on relevant environmental certifications (e.g. ISO, FSC, Bluesign, etc.). The evaluation focuses exclusively on the product presented and not on the entire company, brand or production chain.

Important

To ensure consistency and authority in evaluation, Fiera Bolzano has engaged the professional consultancy of **ESG expert Mario Pinoli** (Greenwich Srl – <https://greenwichsrl.it/mario-pinoli>), tasked – in collaboration with the juries – with defining the guidelines for completing the technical sheet by candidate companies and supporting the juries in evaluating applications that include environmental responsibility content.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of products by the jury will be structured into **three distinct rounds**, with the aim of ensuring thorough, objective and shared analysis.

First round – digital evaluation

Each juror will individually and remotely express their evaluations, based on the digital materials provided by the candidate companies (technical sheets, photos, videos, statements, technical documentation). Products will be evaluated according to the official criteria identified by the regulations, assigning a score from 1 to 10 for each criterion. At the end of the round, each juror will communicate their evaluations to the organizing office, which will not disclose the results.

Second round – in-person evaluation (Saturday 10/1/26 – morning)

During a collegial in-person session, jurors will physically inspect the products and further develop the evaluations expressed in the first round. In this phase, each juror will be able to modify their evaluations and communicate the definitive version of their judgment to the office. At the end of the second round, the office will compile the updated overall scores, formalizing the shortlist of the three finalists for each product category, who will access the final round.

Third round – final discussion and proclamation (Saturday 10/1/26 – afternoon)

During the final session, jurors will collegially discuss the three finalist nominations for each category, examining strengths, critical elements and product potential. At the end of the discussion, a nominal vote will be held, which will determine the podium for each category. **The winners will be officially proclaimed at the end of this session and announced during the opening ceremony of the Prowinter Fair on January 11, 2026, in the Award Area.**

Feedback and Final Considerations

1. **Evaluation report**

To meet the need for transparency and enhancement of the work carried out, the juries will prepare for winners and finalists (on the podium) a complete and personalized report, which will include:

- the jury's motivations read during the ceremony;
- a summary analysis of the product's strengths;
- indications on positioning within its category.

2. **Compilation of applications**

It is strongly recommended that the preparation of application materials be entrusted to experienced and competent figures, particularly product managers or product technicians. This avoids approximate or generic data and allows the jury to carry out more in-depth and meaningful evaluations. This recommendation, together with other useful suggestions, will be included in a **"Guidelines for Companies"** document that will be provided to each nominated brand.

3. **Management of incomplete applications**

To ensure the quality of the process, a preliminary review will be carried out by the organizing office. Incomplete applications, missing mandatory materials or non-compliant may be suspended or excluded until the necessary material is correctly submitted.

4. **Enhancement of the award**

Winning companies commit to visibly displaying the trophy and the Prowinter Award logo within their fair stands. The Prowinter team will provide guidelines and customized materials, including a pre-assembled display, to ensure a professional and consistent presentation of the recognition.

The official Prowinter Award logo will also be shared, together with a Promo Kit containing various digital materials that can be used by winning and finalist companies in their promotional activities.

Application Timeline

By mid-June

Kick-off call to share the updated criteria and evaluation methods discussed in previous meetings. Discussion and collection of any amendments.

By the end of
August

Final drafting of the regulations and related application material;

1st October

Official opening of applications:

- Direct communication to companies
- Communication through the Fair's communication channels

1st december

Closing of applications;

By 10th of
December

Sharing of the nominated products with the juries, with confidentiality agreement. Start of 'Round 1' evaluation with the objective of assessing all nominated products and assigning an initial score to each product;

December

Prowinter online press conference ITA + DE – general overview of the companies nominated for the Award and application trends.

By 2nd of
January

Closing of 'Round 1' **individual pre-evaluation**. Drafting of provisional rankings in preparation for the in-person meeting. The results of this first phase, unlike in previous editions, will not be shared with the finalist companies.

By Friday, 9th
January

Hand delivery or shipment of a sample of **each nominated product**, for the purpose of the in-person evaluation and subsequent exhibition in the Prowinter Award area at the Fair (mandatory for evaluation and participation in the Award); *logistical details will be shared during the application phase.*

Saturday, 10th
January

Meeting of the juries:

1. Physical evaluation of **all nominated products** and identification of the finalists;
2. Starting from the short list, identification of the winning product in each category.

Sunday
11th January

Opening ceremony: **announcement of the winners of the 4th Prowinter Award** and official opening of the product exhibition. Mention of the finalists and winners of each category