



NaaS Excellence Awards Submission Guide

Overview

The Mplify 2026 NaaS Excellence Awards celebrate the industry's most innovative and impactful achievements in shaping the global Network-as-a-Service (NaaS) ecosystem.

These awards recognize standout contributions advancing AI-ready networking, automated NaaS solutions, service orchestration, secure networking, ecosystem collaboration, and standards-based interoperability.

Open to the global industry, including service providers, technology providers, cloud providers, data center operators, interconnection providers (IXCs), and system integrators, the awards welcome entries from both Mplify members and non-members.

Mplify defines NaaS as the combination of on-demand connectivity, application assurance, cybersecurity, and multi-cloud networking delivered within a standards-based, automated ecosystem. NaaS solutions exhibit a core set of attributes including on-demand, observable, manageable, programmable, flexible, modular, and secure, and operate within a common service, automation, and cybersecurity framework that emphasizes standardized, certified services and LSO APIs wherever possible.

Key Dates

Awards Open: 28 April 2026

Submission Deadline: 26 June 2026

Finalists Announced: 25 August 2026

Winners Announced: NaaS Excellence Awards Gala, 23 September 2026

2026 Award Categories & Descriptions

The 2026 NaaS Excellence Awards recognize leadership across service providers, technology providers, infrastructure providers, ecosystem collaborations, and individual industry leadership.

Service Providers, Data Centers, and IXC's

NaaS for AI Leadership

Recognizes a provider demonstrating leadership in delivering AI-ready network infrastructure, including high-performance connectivity, data center interconnection, and automated, on-demand service delivery supporting AI workloads.

NaaS for AI Vision (Global / Regional)

Recognizes the most forward-looking strategy and architecture for AI-ready infrastructure, including ecosystem development and emerging service models.

NaaS Service Provider of the Year (Global / Regional)

Recognizes leadership in delivering scalable NaaS through strong ecosystem partnerships, API-driven automation, and commercial execution across multi-provider environments.

NaaS for Enterprise Implementation

Recognizes service providers delivering NaaS solutions to enterprise customers with measurable business and technical outcomes, including automation, performance, scalability, and seamless connectivity across multi-provider environments. Up to three awards may be given, reflecting outstanding implementations across different industry verticals.

Interconnection Infrastructure Leadership

Recognizes an organization enabling high-performance interconnection and seamless connectivity across service providers, data centers, IXC's, and cloud platforms, supporting scalable, AI-ready infrastructure.

Inter-Provider Automation Leadership

Recognizes excellence in API-driven automation of buyer-seller business and operational interactions using standardized LSO APIs across partners.

NaaS Service Innovation

Recognizes an organization demonstrating innovation in the delivery of Network-as-a-Service (NaaS), including new service models, on-demand and usage-based offerings, and integrated multi-provider solutions. Innovations should deliver measurable business and operational value to customers, such as improved agility, performance, scalability, and simplified service consumption across distributed environments.

Carrier Ethernet Service Innovation (Global / Regional)

Recognizes innovation in Carrier Ethernet services that enhance performance, scalability, and service delivery across enterprise and wholesale environments, including the use of Mplify-certified services to ensure interoperability, consistency, and trusted interconnection. Awards may highlight advancements in high-capacity connectivity, service automation, and support for data-intensive and AI-driven workloads.

Secure NaaS Leadership

Recognizes a provider demonstrating leadership in delivering secure NaaS capabilities, including Zero Trust architectures, SASE integration, and protection of data and connectivity across multi-provider environments, supporting enterprise and AI-driven workloads.

Technology Solution Providers

LSO Solution Provider of the Year

Recognizes overall leadership in enabling LSO-based automation across transaction models, APIs, payloads, and multi-provider ecosystems, including production deployments and scalable ecosystem integration.

AI-Driven Orchestration Platform

Recognizes platforms enabling AI-driven coordination and automation of network services through orchestration layers, supporting real-time decision-making and dynamic service delivery.

Multi-Party Lifecycle Coordination Platform

Recognizes platforms enabling orchestration and coordination across multiple providers, domains, and lifecycle stages, including ordering, provisioning, and assurance, spanning fixed, mobile, satellite, data center, and interconnection (IXC) environments.

Carrier Ethernet Technology

Recognizes leadership and innovation in technologies and implementations that enable Mplify Certified Carrier Ethernet services. Emphasizes standards-based, performance-assured connectivity, with a focus on solutions that deliver deterministic, scalable, and interoperable infrastructure for multi-provider and AI-ready environments.

AI Network Infrastructure Innovation

Recognizes innovation in AI-optimized network infrastructure across any technology domain, including optical, Carrier Ethernet, IP, and software-defined architectures. Focuses on AI-driven networking, automation, and high-performance connectivity that enable distributed AI workloads across multi-domain environments.

NaaS Technology Innovation

Recognizes organizations demonstrating innovation in technologies that enable NaaS, including platforms, automation frameworks, infrastructure, and secure connectivity solutions that enhance

programmability, interoperability, performance, and scalability. The award may recognize solutions delivered in collaboration across multiple ecosystem participants.

Secure NaaS Solution

Recognizes a technology provider delivering secure NaaS solutions, including Zero Trust architectures, SASE or SSE capabilities, and identity- and policy-driven protection of data, users, and connectivity across distributed, multi-provider environments supporting enterprise and AI-driven workloads.

Open to All

NaaS Ecosystem Collaboration

Recognizes an organization building and leveraging strong ecosystem partnerships to deliver integrated, multi-provider NaaS solutions, including coordinated service delivery across service providers, data centers, IXCs, cloud platforms, and enterprise customers.

Professional Awards

Industry Executive of the Year

Recognizes the industry executive who has exhibited exceptional leadership, strategy, execution, and collaboration in driving industry transformation toward NaaS across an ecosystem of automated networks.

Michael Howard Industry Impact Award

Recognizes an outstanding individual who has made a demonstrably positive impact in building community, sharing knowledge, encouraging collaboration, and helping create a stronger industry ecosystem.

Nan Chen Vanguard Award

Recognizes a pioneering individual whose trailblazing leadership has made a profound impact on the industry and inspired others to embrace bold innovation.

Entry Requirements

Each submission must address the three core areas below. Submissions should be no more than 750 words in total. Be concise, highlight tangible results whenever possible, and use supporting

visuals where helpful. Vision-focused and early-stage initiatives are welcome, provided submissions clearly articulate expected impact and supporting rationale.

Entrants are strongly encouraged to include at least one concrete indicator of impact. Examples include measurable metrics, customer or partner validation, deployment scale, adoption milestones, operational improvements, customer quotes, or partner endorsements. Flexible proof points are welcomed, particularly for early-stage innovations.

Global and Regional Award Eligibility

Global Awards: Service providers must offer the service across two or more major regions (Asia Pacific, Latin America, North America, Europe, Middle East/Africa).

Regional Awards: Service providers should compete in the region where their headquarters is based or where the majority of their revenue is generated.

Submission Criteria

Each submission should address the following areas as part of the entry response:

1. Strategic Relevance & Innovation

Describe the business or technical challenge or opportunity, the goals of your initiative, and how the solution aligns with customer needs, industry direction, and real-world deployment priorities. Highlight the degree of innovation and differentiation relative to existing approaches or incremental improvements.

2. Impact & Evidence

Highlight measurable outcomes, including improvements in operations, customer experience, service performance, scalability, revenue impact, market reach, or deployment success. Include supporting proof points where possible.

3. Ecosystem Integration & Standards Alignment

Describe how your solution leverages Mplify standards, APIs, certifications, or frameworks, including LSO APIs where applicable, to enable automation, interoperability, coordinated service delivery, or improved performance. If applicable, highlight the use of additional recognized industry frameworks (e.g., TM Forum, CAMARA, GSMA, ETSI).

Supporting Materials (Optional)

Entrants may upload up to five slides (PowerPoint or PDF) containing visuals such as solution diagrams, KPIs, deployment architecture, customer testimonials, or before-and-after comparisons (maximum five pages total).

Judging Criteria

Judges will evaluate entries using the following criteria:

1. Strategic Relevance & Innovation

How clearly does the submission define the problem or opportunity and its strategic importance? Is the initiative aligned with customer needs, industry direction, and real-world deployment priorities?

2. Impact & Evidence

How strong and credible are the outcomes achieved? Are improvements demonstrated through measurable results, customer validation, deployment scale, operational impact, or other concrete indicators of success?

3. Ecosystem Integration & Standards

How effectively does the solution leverage industry standards, APIs, certifications, multi-party collaboration, or Mplify frameworks (e.g., LSO APIs) to enable interoperability, automation, or coordinated service delivery?

What Judges Look For

1. Be clear and concise. Focus on key achievements and measurable outcomes.
2. Include proof points. Customer validation, KPIs, adoption milestones, or deployment metrics strengthen submissions.
3. Avoid excessive marketing language. Judges value substance and specificity.
4. Tell a compelling story. Clearly connect the challenge, solution, and impact.
5. Highlight interoperability, automation, ecosystem coordination, and standards alignment where relevant.
6. Demonstrate real-world execution. Production deployments and customer adoption are highly valued.

Submitting an Entry

All entries must be submitted through the online awards portal.

Once submitted, entrants will receive a confirmation email.

Questions about the awards or submission process may be directed to the awards team.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can enter the NaaS Excellence Awards? The awards are open to service providers, technology providers, cloud providers, data center operators, IXC's, system integrators, and ecosystem partners worldwide, whether or not they are Mplify members.

Can companies submit multiple entries? Yes. Organizations may submit entries in multiple categories. Each entry should be tailored to the specific category and requirements.

Can the same project be entered into more than one category? Yes, provided the submission is customized to align with the intent of each category.

Does the submission need to demonstrate use of Mplify standards?

Use of Mplify standards, APIs, certifications, or frameworks is strongly encouraged. Judges will look favorably on submissions demonstrating interoperability, automation, standards alignment, or ecosystem coordination enabled through industry frameworks such as LSO APIs.

Will finalists and winners receive promotion? Yes. Finalists and winners will be promoted through Mplify announcements, social media, industry outreach, and recognition at the NaaS Excellence Awards Gala.

Who are the judges? Entries will be reviewed by an independent panel of industry analysts, experts, and Mplify leadership.

What file types are accepted for supporting materials? PowerPoint, PDF, and web links are accepted.

When will finalists and winners be announced? Finalists will be announced on 25 August 2026. Winners will be announced at the NaaS Excellence Awards Gala on 23 September 2026.

More Questions? For questions regarding categories, eligibility, or the submission process, contact the awards team at awards@mplify.net.