

KNAUF

KNAUF ARCHITECTURE AWARDS 2026

COMPETITION BRIEF

An award for built work
across the world.

Five categories.
One jury. Tbilisi,
8 October 2026.

Organized by
KNAUF Gips Tbilisi.

Build on us.





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01 INTRODUCTION



For almost a century, Knauf has helped shape construction practice around the world. From plasterboard systems developed in the early 20th century to the global standardization of dry construction, acoustic systems and fire resistant assemblies, Knauf materials have become an integral part of the professional language of contemporary architecture.

Yet material is only the surface of architecture. A building gains meaning through the idea and intention behind it, an intention that responds to topography, climate, context, history and human needs. It is precisely the discovery and presentation of this kind of thinking

that the Knauf Architectural Competition seeks to support, while also creating a space for dialogue among architects.

The aim of our international competition is to connect architects across borders. It serves as a meeting point where participants' work from different countries can be seen by international peers, where local architectural solutions become part of a broader professional discussion, and where young architects are given the opportunity to engage with the regional standards, approaches and perspectives developed by their colleagues.



Architecture on a Slope

This year, the competition is being held in Georgia. The organiser is introducing an additional nomination dedicated to a challenging characteristic of this region: designing on sloping terrain.

In Georgia, and across the Caucasus as a whole, the landscape rarely appears as a neutral backdrop. It determines architectural form itself. In this context, the solution is not to level the terrain, but to study it and work in harmony with it. It is precisely from this approach that an architecture emerges which becomes inseparable from the ground on which it stands, so that the section of the building and the section of the land are read as one unified drawing.

This idea is not new. The tradition of architecture integrated with its environment spans

many centuries, from the 6th century Jvari Monastery, which stands on a mountain summit at the confluence of the Mtkvari and Aragvi rivers in such a way that its mass continues the geometry of the landscape, to the former Georgian Ministry of Highways building, designed in 1975 by Giorgi Chakhava and Zurab Jalaghania, where horizontal volumes are arranged on a steep slope so that the architecture is perceived not as opposing the terrain, but as an extension of it.

Between these two examples, separated by fourteen centuries, there exists a continuous tradition: working in accordance with topography rather than against it. This nomination, dedicated to projects realised on challenging terrain, is our attempt to carry that tradition forward into contemporary practice.





Beyond the Award

This competition is not intended solely to identify the winners. In October, an exhibition will open, bringing the final projects together in one space and becoming a place for discussion and exchange for architects, students and the wider public.

The venue will be selected in line with this purpose: accessible, adapted for professional gatherings, and ready to host round tables, public discussions and student visits throughout the month.

The works submitted to the competition will not lose their relevance after the winners are announced. The projects, the issues they raise, and the strategies they propose will become part of the region's ongoing professional dialogue and working process.

02 NOMINATIONS

There are five nominations. A project may be submitted in more than one category if it fully meets the criteria of each of them. The application must clearly indicate the category or categories for which it is being submitted.

01 Best Project on Complicated Terrain

Architecture that enters into a direct dialogue with topography. We are looking for projects in which a slope, ridge, rock formation or other challenging terrain is understood not as a barrier to be overcome, but as a defining force of form, spatial section and architectural experience.

Evaluation Focus

- Section as the primary design tool
- Structural and geotechnical resolution
- Integration with landscape – not erasure of it
- Spatial sequence generated by the slope itself
- Construction logic appropriate to site access constraints



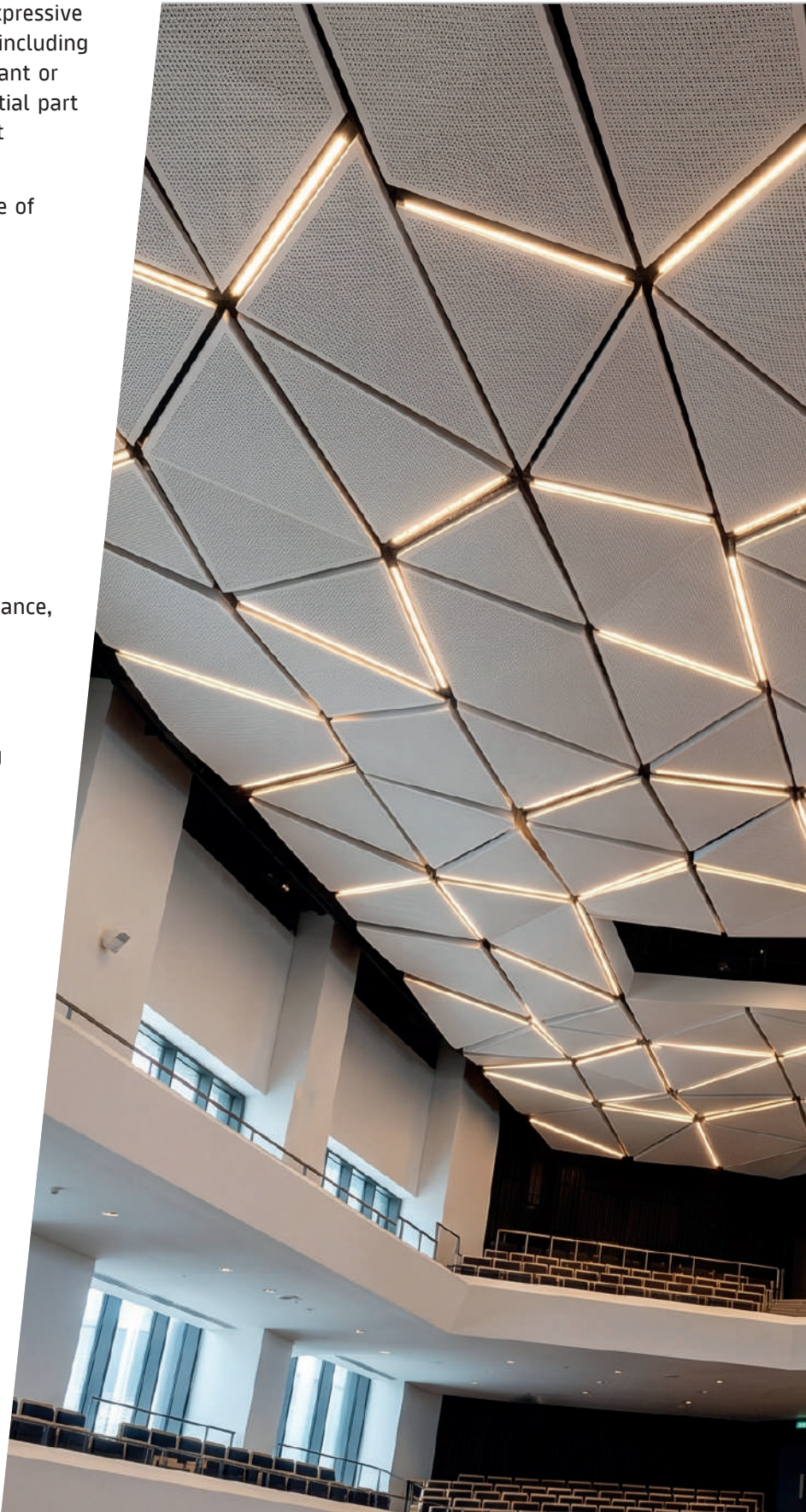
02 *BEST USE OF KNAUF MATERIALS*

Projects that demonstrate the thoughtful, expressive or technically refined use of Knauf systems, including dry construction, plaster, acoustic, fire resistant or fa ade products. Their use must be an essential part of the project; surface treatment alone is not sufficient.

We are looking for works in which the choice of system itself helps shape the architecture.

Evaluation Focus

- Relevance of the selection system to the architectural concept
- Quality of detailing and execution
- Acoustic, thermal or fire-resistant performance, where relevant
- Innovative approaches to application and installation
- Completeness of documentation, including identification of the products used



03 BEST STUDENT DIPLOMA PROJECT

An officially submitted diploma or final project by a student of an accredited school of architecture, presented and assessed between 2020 and 2025. The project does not need to be built; this category is intended for academic work that has been formally submitted and evaluated.

Evaluation Focus

- Conceptual originality and rigor of position
- Quality of architectural development from concept to drawing
- Engagement with a real or conceptual program
- Presentation: drawings, text
- Evidence of independent thought



04 BEST PUBLIC BUILDING

Buildings that serve public life – through cultural, civic, educational, transport, healthcare, or community functions. We evaluate how the project creates a public

experience – its accessibility, use, and relationship to the city or village of which it forms a part.

Evaluation Focus

- Urban or contextual contribution
- Quality of public space – interior and exterior thresholds
- Programmatic clarity and flexibility
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Performance in use (post-occupancy evidence welcomed)



05 BEST ADAPTIVE REUSE PROJECT

Projects that give an existing building or structure, whether historic, industrial, vernacular or contemporary, a new function. We are interested in the relationship between old and new: how the existing structure is read, what is preserved, what is transformed, and how these decisions are expressed through architecture.

Evaluation Focus

- Understanding of the existing structure, including its history, materiality and condition
- Architectural strategy: contrast, continuity or hybrid approaches
- Quality of structural and material interventions
- The cultural and ecological value of preserving the existing building in relation to the alternative of demolition
- The visibility of the coexistence of old and new in the completed project



03 *ELIGIBILITY*

WHO MAY SUBMIT

Registered architects, architectural practices, and, for the student diploma category, students or recent graduates from accredited schools of architecture.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Projects may be built in any country. They may be submitted by an architect or architectural practice regardless of whether they are based in the same country as the project, provided they hold authorship of the work.

PROJECT WINDOW

Built projects must have been completed and put into operation or granted equivalent status between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2025. For the student diploma category, diploma projects must have been officially submitted and approved within the same period.

KNAUF MATERIALS

The use of Knauf materials is mandatory in the Best Use of Knauf Materials category. Their use is not required in the other categories. If Knauf systems have been used, please specify this in the technical description.

EXCLUSIONS

- Members of the jury, their immediate family, and their offices may not submit.
- Knauf staff may not submit.
- Speculative or unbuilt projects are not eligible (except in the Student Diploma category).
- Projects with unresolved legal disputes regarding authorship.

04 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each entry must include the following materials, packaged as a single ZIP archive.

01 PROJECT BOARDS

- Two A1 boards, portrait orientation, PDF format, 150–300 dpi.
- Boards must contain plans, sections, elevations, key details, photographs, and concept text.
- Author and office identification may be included there is no anonymous review.

02 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- PDF, 1 to 3 pages, in English. A Georgian translation is welcome but not mandatory. It should include the concept, site analysis, programme solution, and technical solutions.
- For the Knauf category, a full description of the Knauf systems used is required, including references to the relevant products.

03 TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

- PDF set: site plan, all floor plans, two sections minimum, elevations, one wall section.
- Scale bars and north arrow required.

04 ENTRY FORM

- Register on the website and complete the application form.
- The application must indicate the author or authors, the architectural practice, the project location, the completion date, and the selected category or categories

05 FORMAT & DELIVERY

- A ZIP archive named with the project title and the lead author. Maximum size 200 MB. It must be uploaded to the competition website. Confirmation of receipt will be provided within a maximum of 48 hours.

06 ENTRY FEE

- Participation is free of charge.



05 EVALUATION

THREE-STAGE PROCESS

Stage 1 Compliance review

Submissions are reviewed for completeness, eligibility, and compliance with the project window. Entries that do not meet the requirements are excluded prior to jury review.

Stage 2 Shortlisting

First jury meeting. Each juror reviews all submissions individually, after which the jury convenes to select three finalists per category.

Stage 3 Final selection

Second jury meeting after finalist presentations. First, second, and third prizes selected per category. Decisions are reached by deliberation; in case of deadlock the chair holds a casting vote.

GENERAL CRITERIA

Applied across all categories.

- Contextual response, addressing the location, climate, culture, and history
- Technical solutions, including construction, detailing, and execution
- Originality of the approach, highlighting what the project offers that makes it unique
- Quality of documentation, including the clarity and coherence of the presentation
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CATEGORY-SPECIFIC CRITERIA

See category descriptions in Section 2. Category-specific criteria carry equal weight to general criteria during scoring.

06 JURY

The jury is composed of seven members representing architectural practice and academia. The jury chair is selected from among the members at the first meeting.



07 **TIMELINE**

2026

22 June	Official announcement and opening of submissions
June–August	Open Q&A period Questions should be sent by email info@arch-competition.ge
31 August	Q&A period closes; submission deadline Projects must be uploaded via the website arch-competition.ge
7 September	Compliance review
11 September	First jury meeting
18 September	Second jury meeting first, second, third prizes selected per category
7 October	Exhibition opening of all finalist projects in Tbilisi
8 October	Award ceremony winners announced publicly
October–November	Exhibition runs for one month, with associated discussion programme for students and professionals

08 PRIZES

Each category awards three prizes – first, second, and third place – consisting of a cash award accompanied by a Knauf Architecture Awards 2026 certificate.

FIRST PRIZE

5000 GEL

I place

SECOND PRIZE

1000 GEL

II place

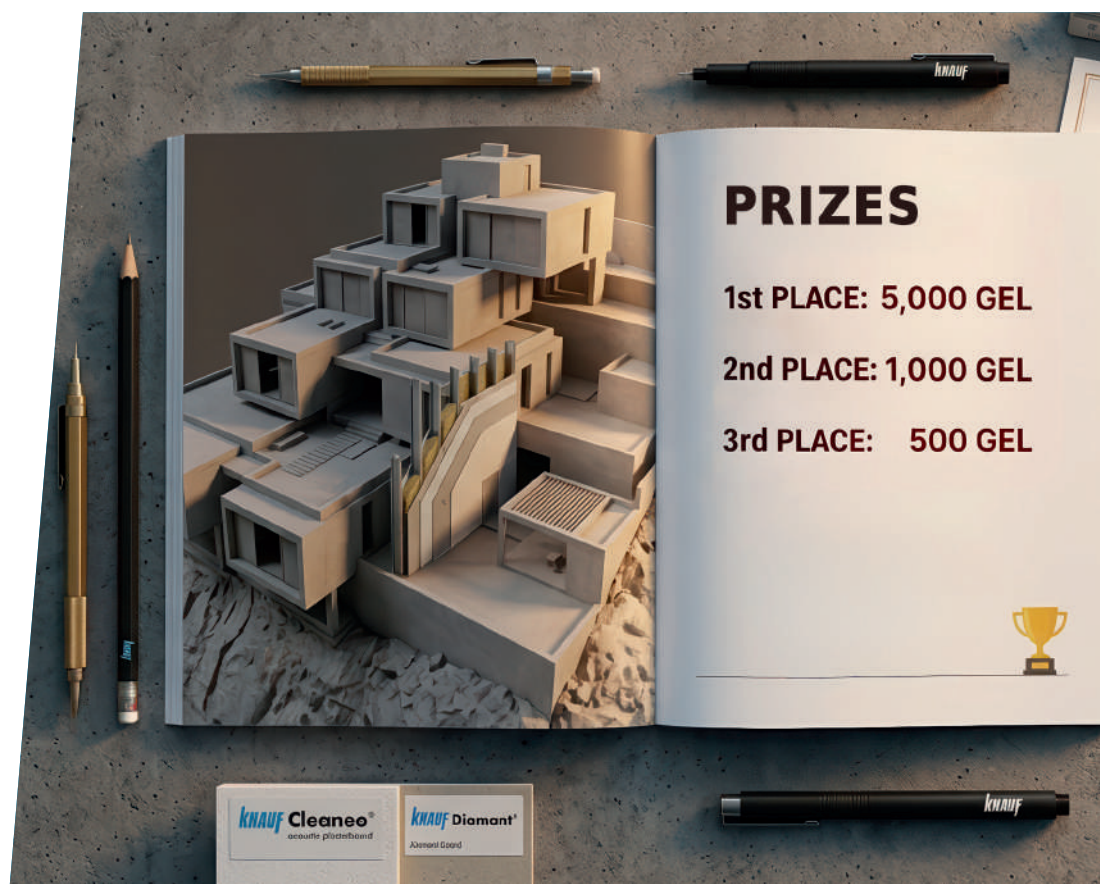
THIRD PRIZE

500 GEL

III place

ADDITIONAL FOR ALL FINALISTS

- The selected works will be published in the exhibition catalogue in both print and online editions.
- They will also be included in the public exhibition in Tbilisi in October 2026.
- Participants will be involved in the post exhibition discussion programme, including round tables and student visits during the exhibition period.
- The competition will be covered in regional and international architectural media.



09 RIGHTS & TERMS

Authorship

Authorship of all submitted projects remains with the original architect or architectural practice. Submission to the competition does not imply any transfer of copyright.

Use of materials

By submitting, participants grant Knauf a nonexclusive, royalty free license to use the submitted materials for the purposes of the exhibition, catalogue, press, discussion program, and competition archive, with credit given to the author and photographer. Any commercial use beyond communications related to the competition is not permitted without a separate agreement.

Conflict of interest

Jury members must refrain from reviewing or evaluating any projects in relation to which they have a direct or indirect conflict of interest, for example former colleagues, students, family members, or business partners. Any such request must be recorded in the minutes of the jury meeting.

CHANGES TO THIS BRIEF

Knauf Gips Tbilisi reserves the right to clarify or correct this brief through the Q&A process. Substantive changes – to deadlines, categories, or prizes – will be communicated directly to all registered entrants and published on the competition website.

DISPUTES

Decisions of the jury are final. Procedural disputes regarding eligibility or technical compliance may be raised in writing to the organizers within seven days of notification.

CONTACT & SUBMISSIONS

ORGANIZER

KNAUF Gips Tbilisi

17 Kiziki Street

0182 Tbilisi, Georgia

Projects must be uploaded at

www.arch-competition.ge

Q&A – QUESTIONS DURING THE OPEN PERIOD

info@arch-competition.ge

All questions are answered publicly on the competition website to ensure equal access for all entrants.



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