



**GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING AN ENTRY FORM
FOR THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS AWARDS
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

A GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE



A THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS AWARDS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (EBAE)

INTRODUCTION	1
1 MANAGEMENT CATEGORY	2
2 PRODUCT CATEGORY	4
3 THE PROCESS CATEGORY	5
4 THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY	7

B GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING AN ENTRY FORM FOR THE EBAE

INTRODUCTION	9
5 FACTORS TO CONSIDER AS YOU COMPLETE THE ENTRY FORM	9
6 SOME COMMON FAULTS FOUND ON ENTRY FORMS	10





THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS AWARDS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (EBAE)

INTRODUCTION

The European Business Awards for the Environment are awarded by the European Commission every two years and aim to recognize and reward European companies which set an example by successfully bringing together innovation, economic viability, environmental considerations and social equity.

The scheme comprises four award categories in which companies are rewarded for management practices, products, processes and international co-operation activities which contribute to economic and social development without detriment to the environment.

To be eligible for the European Business Awards for the Environment, companies first have to win a national award from amongst the schemes which are organised in individual European Union member countries every year. This means that the companies awarded the European prize are 'the best of the best'; the most far-sighted, responsible and innovative across Europe. In the UK entries are selected from the winners of Accredited Award Schemes. Details of these can be found at **www.rsaaccreditation.org**

Participation is open to companies from all EU member states and Turkey. The submission of entries to the European awards competition is managed by national coordinating bodies. In the UK the coordinator is the Royal Society of Arts for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) on behalf of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Companies from 24 European countries participated in the 2010 round of the European Business Awards for the Environment and a total of 141 entries were received. This is the highest number of entries submitted in the 23 year history of the European Business Awards for the Environment (launched in 1987 under the name European Better Awards for Industry) and is an indication of businesses' growing interest in taking care of the environment and increased awareness of the benefits this offers.

The next round of the awards will be held in 2012. The closing date for consideration of UK entries will be the 31st October 2011.

The full details of the European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE) offered by the European Commission are set out in a Handbook most recently revised in February 2011. (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/awards/downloads/ebae_handbook_2011_final.pdf) or by contacting the Secretariat (see front cover for details).

The awards are offered in four categories. The main objectives together with the criteria for judging each category are as follows:



MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

This Award is for an exceptional organisation with **the strategic vision and management systems** that enable it to continuously improve its contribution **to sustainable development**.

Notes

- 1 The environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability must be clearly integrated into the overall mission and all of the policies of the organisation. There must be a clear objective to reduce the environmental impacts of the organisation's activities, together with targets and indicators for monitoring and reporting performance. The organisation must also have mechanisms in place for addressing issues of wider corporate social responsibility, such as community involvement, employee rights and supply chain impacts.
- 2 Management systems must be driven by the principle of stakeholder accountability, with evidence of regular and systematic dialogue at key points in the process. There must also be a commitment to certify management systems to recognised standards (EMAS, ISO 14001). In all these regards, the organisation must show that it is leading the field and setting an example that others will be inspired to follow.

AWARD CRITERIA FOR JUDGING

Commitment

Corporate mission and policy statements (including an environmental policy) must be consistent with the principles of sustainable development. This is often defined as 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This means ensuring that economic development occurs without damaging the environment or over-exploiting natural resources, and that its benefits are shared equitably in society.

Integration

Environmental and social issues must be fully integrated into mainstream business management, alongside financial performance, with clear objectives and targets for improving performance.

Performance Improvement

There must be continuous improvement in performance against the organisation's stated environmental and social objectives as demonstrated by regular monitoring and reporting.

Accountability

There must be regular and systematic dialogue with stakeholders (e.g. employees, suppliers, customers, non-governmental organisations), with feedback of the results into management decision-making.

Employee involvement

Employees must be closely involved in all aspects of environmental management and there must be capacity building in other areas of corporate social responsibility.

Replication potential

There must be clear potential for good practice and innovation to be shared with other organisations (e.g. through involvement in business networks, dissemination at conferences).



PRODUCT CATEGORY

This Award is for the development of **a new product or service** that makes an outstanding contribution **to sustainable development**.

Notes

- 1 The product or service may be a new or modified design, or the innovative application of an existing one, in a way that promotes more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. The product or service must meet the needs of consumers and improve quality of life while minimising the use of natural resources and toxic materials, and emissions of waste and pollutants over the product life-cycle (e.g. during material extraction, manufacture, distribution, use and disposal). The product or service must be economically viable and its production and consumption should contribute to equitable social progress.
- 2 Applications for this Award should represent the 'leading edge' of sustainable product and service development, setting an example that others will be inspired to follow. Where appropriate, the applicant should preferably have been awarded an EU eco-label or equivalent product certification.

AWARD CRITERIA FOR JUDGING

Innovation

Substantial innovation in the product or service must bring improvements in environmental, economic and social performance over comparable alternatives whilst at least maintaining functional performance. Entrants should take steps to ensure that their development is genuinely innovative. Searching on internet search engines easily provides details of similar developments if they exist and have been reported. Judges are quite capable, and do carry out such searches when assessing entries.

Environmental benefit

Clear and quantified analysis must demonstrate increased resource efficiency and reduced environmental impacts over the complete life-cycle of the product or service (e.g. through life cycle assessment).

Social benefit

The product or service must meet the needs of consumers and bring wider social benefits (e.g. providing decent working conditions; safeguarding consumer health; improving quality of life).

Economic benefit

Proof must be given that the new product or service is at least economically viable (e.g. through sales performance data or credible sales projections).

Commitment

The senior management must be clearly committed to the development and marketing of the product, and must give an indication of its importance with regard to the organisation's overall strategy.

Replication potential

There must be clear potential for wider adoption of the innovative aspects of the product or service, and willingness to share this knowledge and expertise with other organisations.



THE PROCESS CATEGORY

This Award is for the development and application of a **new production technology** that makes an outstanding contribution **to sustainable development**.

Notes

- 1 New production technology may involve an entirely new process or technique, or the innovative application of an existing one. In either case, the technology should make a positive contribution to the environmental aspect of sustainability while making at least a neutral, and preferably a positive, contribution to the economic and social aspects. Technology may be expected to increase resource efficiency and reduce life-cycle environmental impacts by saving materials and energy, switching from non-renewable to

renewable resources, avoiding the use of harmful substances, and reducing emissions and waste.

- 2 Applications for this Award should represent a significant advance on what is considered to be 'best available technology or techniques' under the current EU regulatory framework.

AWARD CRITERIA FOR JUDGING

Innovation

The technology must include specific innovative elements that promote more eco-efficient production (e.g. by increasing resource efficiency or reducing waste and emissions),

Environmental benefit

The environmental benefits of the new technology must be clear and quantified (e.g. through use of eco-efficiency indicators).

Social benefit

Adoption of the new technology should result in social impacts (e.g. employment opportunities; working conditions; effects on local communities) that are either neutral or positive.

Economic benefit

Proof must be given that the new technology is economically viable (e.g. with reference to capital and operating costs).

Commitment

The senior management must be clearly committed to adopting the new process or technique and must give an indication of its importance in the context of the organisation's overall operations

Replication potential.

There must be clear potential for wider adoption of the innovative aspects of the technology, and a willingness to share this knowledge and expertise with other organizations



THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY

The Award is for **an international business cooperation involving at least one private organisation from the European Union, an accession or an applicant country and another organisation(s) from the private, public, non-governmental and academic sector in a developing country or a country with an economy in transition.**

Notes

- 1 The cooperation must be a business relationship based on the principles of equity, transparency and mutual benefit, which makes a significant contribution to one or more of the three elements of sustainable development (environmental protection, economic development, financial equity and social development) by transferring or sharing knowledge or technology or a management system.
- 2 The business cooperation should be effectively planned and adequately resourced to achieve its stated objectives. These might include:
 - transfer or sharing of knowledge or technology or a management system;
 - environmental protection or enhancement;
 - improving product or service delivery;
 - community development, excluding charity projects;
 - improving working conditions.
- 3 The list of emerging and developing countries given in International Monetary Fund's (IMF) World Economic Outlook Report 2010³ can be used as a reference point for indicating which countries are eligible.
- 4 The Award is for a successful demonstration of the key role to be played by international business cooperation in the achievement of global sustainable development.

AWARD CRITERIA FOR JUDGING

Clear objectives

The partnership must be guided by a clear statement of objectives demonstrating how it expects to contribute environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainable development.

Planning and resource allocation

The partnership must be thoroughly planned and must be allocated sufficient human and financial resources to work effectively towards its objectives.

Sustainable benefit

The partnership must produce measurable and lasting benefits that are consistent with the principles of sustainable development (e.g. reduced resource consumption, improved working conditions, poverty alleviation).

Equity

The benefits must be evenly distributed among those involved, and the partnership must be managed in a way that is fair and transparent to all partners.

Synergy

Benefits must be produced more efficiently and effectively as a result of the partnership (e.g. by avoiding duplication of effort; mobilising greater expertise; building trust).

Replication potential

There must be potential for applying the innovative aspects of the partnership to other situations and partners.

THE BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY AWARD

Beginning in 2012, a new 'Business and Biodiversity' Award will also be presented to a European company with outstanding achievements in halting biodiversity loss and supporting natural ecosystems. The winner will be selected from companies applying for one of the existing categories.



GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING AN ENTRY FORM FOR THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS AWARDS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

If you wish to win an award it is worth taking the completion of the entry form very seriously. Put yourself in the place of the jury members and think how you would assess an entry and the factors that would lead you to enjoy and be impressed with an entry form. Bear in mind that you may be faced with comparing tens of entries and that each entry may be a minimum of 4 or 5 pages of text. Assume that you know nothing about an entry until you start to read the entry form. Then set about completing the form in a way which would impress you.



5 FACTORS TO CONSIDER AS YOU COMPLETE THE ENTRY FORM

Read the conditions of entry thoroughly and carefully, taking account of eligibility, deadlines and in particular the criteria on which the awards will be assessed.

Read the guidance provided with the entry form explaining the information sought and the constraints on length and type of response required. Observe the constraints and do not think that a longer answer will necessarily be appreciated.

Make sure that the response to a particular question does not repeat the same information used in answer to another question. Keep the responses succinct and to the point. Remember a lot of care has already been put into framing the questions and the judges are seeking particular information in the replies.

Make sure that answers are discrete and complete in themselves. Do not refer the judges to ancillary information in annexes (if allowed) unless there is no way

of putting the information into the textual answer. This may apply particularly to photographs but not to details of performance and specification.

A well designed application form will almost certainly ask how an entry meets each of the judging criteria and allow specified space (number of words) for the entrant to respond. Clearly set out the characteristics of your entry and wherever possible use tables, diagrams and other illustrations to condense a lot of information into a readily accessible form. Ensure that key points are highlighted and are easily obvious to the reader. Do not use text only where a diagram could convey much more than pages of text ever will.

Be particularly open about the commercial status and value of the entry and wherever possible supply sales and profit information

Always respond in plain English and avoid jargon, including acronyms, unless these are explained. Remember a juror may be familiar with a different area of expertise to that covered by your entry. The juror needs his/her hand held and lead carefully through your story. The juror needs to finish reading the entry with a very clear appreciation of the subject and the impact of your entry, as well as confidence that the story told is robust and leaves no unidentified concerns.

A juror needs to be excited and stimulated by your entry. You have a public relations task to perform with the entry form. The answers need to be interesting, truthful but not gimmicky. Tell a good story.

Take care when composing your answers to questions related to the awards criteria.



SOME COMMON FAULTS FOUND ON ENTRY FORMS

The following are some common mistakes made in completing European Award entry forms in response to requests for information on how an entry meets the criteria.

Commitment

Frequently the entrant fails to explain how the senior management of the organization, right up to Director level, makes decisions and takes responsibility for the implementation and progress of the development.=

Integration

Sustainable development is about economy, environment and social equity and entrants fail to explain how their development is fully integrated into the operation of the organization in all three respects. Environmental considerations alone are not synonymous with sustainable development Frequently the objectives and targets against a timescale for the organization are not provided and then it is not possible to know if the organization is achieving what it set out to do.

Performance

Performance is often not clearly identified in terms of time and objective measures. Graphs are very useful as a means of showing the entrant's achievements.

Accountability

Entrants forget that an organization needs to report not just to management but also to shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and the wider public. The manifold aspects of accountability are often missed giving the impression that the organization only looks inward and does not care about all stakeholders.

Employee involvement

To read some entries one would gain the impression that developments happened without any employee involvement. It is important to show how organizations and employees perform better if they are full involved and informed.

Replication potential

Often entrants fail to recognize that their development may be applicable in different organizations and in different contexts.

Innovation

It is surprising how many entrants have failed to ensure that there is no evidence to refute their opinion that their innovation is really new. It is worth using an internet search engine to check for similar developments to your entry. Frequently a similar invention has happened before in other countries. Check this out because the jurors will.

Environmental benefit

A clear and comprehensive explanation of the impacts of the development on all resources over the life cycle of the product or service is needed and often not given. Very narrow statements of environmental impact are provided.

Social benefit

This is often interpreted to be similar to economic benefit which it is not. The entrant should explain the impact on employees and customers in respect of working conditions, health and quality of life

Economic benefit

There is often a reluctance to state how financially successful a development has been and whether there are yet any market data to support the view that the development is wanted. There is a big difference between sales push and market pull.

Clear objectives

Particularly for the international cooperation award the objectives are not clear and the entrant does not indicate how both parties will benefit. In many cases the project looks like an aid programme with only one party being benefited.

Planning and resource allocation

A common fault is to omit a clear statement of the contribution to planning, resource allocation and implementation each partner has made to a co-operative venture. It is not uncommon to find that one partner does the planning and managing and then tells the other partner what to do. This is not effective cooperation and one partner may be getting a very poor deal out of the co-operation.

Sustainable benefit

Long lasting benefit needs to be demonstrated. Too many entries show benefit in the short term whilst the project is active but then there is no after effect.

Synergy

The benefits to both parties need to be demonstrated and the extra benefit from the cooperation, which would not have occurred in the absence of cooperation, has to be shown. Synergy is often not apparent on an entry.

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