

# **VIBES AWARDS 2015**



VISION IN BUSINESS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT OF SCOTLAND

## **CIRCULAR ECONOMY AWARD GUIDANCE NOTES**



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**- 01  
THE  
COMPETITION**

1. “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Bruntland Report definition) i.e. takes consideration of social, economic and environmental issues

The VIBES (Vision in Business for the Environment of Scotland) Awards aim to raise awareness of environmental and sustainable development<sup>1</sup> issues within businesses in Scotland.

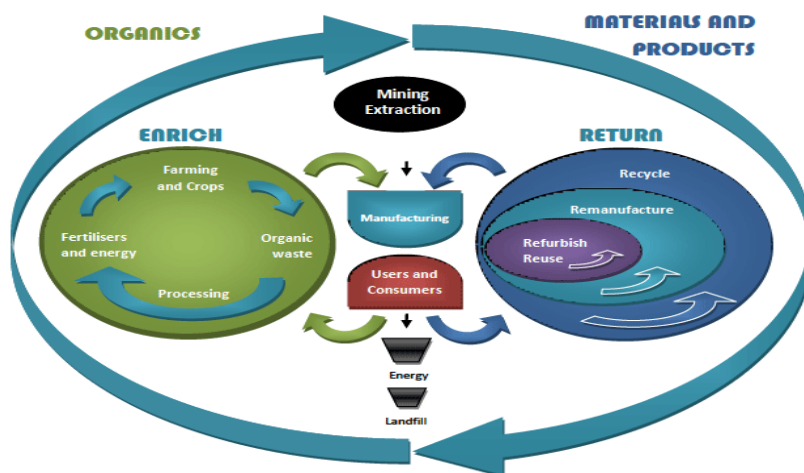
The competition emphasises that best environmental practice is not only good for business, the economy and competitiveness, but that it also benefits the surroundings in which we work, live and relax. VIBES rewards those who have addressed sustainable development issues in the work place and encourages others to follow their examples.

**The Circular Economy Award** recognises businesses that can demonstrate a circular approach to material use and business function.

This category is aimed at businesses that can demonstrate how their product or services address the principles of the Circular Economy, which should include one or more of the following elements:

- Circular product design and innovation
- Product re-use, repair and remanufacturing
- Innovative business models
- Materials substitution
- Effective supply chain and cross-sectoral collaboration
- Re-use of waste, heat and energy.

A Circular Economy approach ensures that materials are retained within productive use, in a high value state, for as long as possible. It focuses on reshaping business and economic systems so that waste is ‘designed out’ of how we live. This approach is illustrated below.



VIBES is also delighted to be partnering again with WaterAid for **The Ripple Effect Challenge**. This is a fundraising effort designed specifically for businesses – of all sizes and sectors – that have the drive to help tackle issues facing the wider world. This is the perfect opportunity to show off entrepreneurial flair while supporting a worthwhile cause.

The challenge is to get together as a team and fundraise in the most innovative way possible. Teams can comprise of departments or groups within companies or businesses as a whole. The winner will be selected by a panel consisting of members from VIBES and WaterAid and announced at the prestigious VIBES Awards Ceremony in November.

**- 02  
WHO CAN  
APPLY?**

VIBES Awards are open to any<sup>2</sup> Scottish based business that contributes to the sustainable development of Scotland in some way.

All businesses have some impact on the environment, either directly or indirectly, that can be reduced whilst also improving their performance

If you have taken an effective approach to environmental improvement and sustainable development, either across the whole of your business or by focussing on only one of your activities, you could be eligible for a VIBES Award.

If your company has previously applied for or won a VIBES award, it is important that you can demonstrate continuous or additional improvement from the time of previous application.

<sup>2</sup>. Current partners and sponsors of the VIBES Awards are not eligible to enter.

**- 03**  
**HOW TO**  
**APPLY**

Application forms can be downloaded from [www.vibes.org.uk](http://www.vibes.org.uk), completed electronically and submitted via e-mail to [vibes@sepa.org.uk](mailto:vibes@sepa.org.uk).

**We encourage email entries**, though you may prefer to complete forms manually. Please endeavour to write as clearly as possible and send paper copies to the address at the back of this document.

Should you reach the list of finalists, our judges will visit your site. This must be based in Scotland. If you are a business with multiple sites, note that each application form must be site specific. Businesses with more than one site are welcome to make more than one site based application.

Each application should focus on actions and achievements over the past three years if possible.

**- 04**  
**APPLICATION**  
**FORM**

The application form is designed to draw out information particular to this award category and to enable the judging panel to assess your application. Those applications scoring highest in the assessment will be recognised as a finalist

Please note we are limiting the finalists to a **maximum of 5** per category.

Limit the information in each criteria to **250** words (or as detailed in the application form):

- Be concise
- Use bullet points where possible
- Provide any relevant quantitative data to enable an objective assessment to be made, e.g. the amount of a raw material, energy or packaging saved
- Where possible you should demonstrate the related economic benefit of your actions, e.g. the monetary value of the raw material, energy or packaging saved.
- Sometimes a graph is better than text.

Please ensure that you answer all sections marked ‘\*’ on the application form.

Make sure that the answers for each criterion are discrete and complete in themselves. The use of annexes (**maximum 3 allowed, with a total size below 1MB**) is intended for supporting information that cannot be put into the textual answer. This may apply particularly to photographs but not to details of performance. Summary data should be provided in the text, with more detailed information provided in the annex if you think this is necessary. Please note that judges may not have time to review your annexes during the initial assessment stage.

The above points are reiterated in Section 10 Good Practice Summary.

**- 05  
PART 1(a)  
COMPANY  
DETAILS**

This section asks information about the site or premises you are putting forward for the awards.

**N.B. The address you provide should be for the site or premises you would like the judges to visit. If the site contact is not based at this location, please provide an alternative correspondence address.**


Any business with 10 employees or less entering this award (and the other award categories) will also be considered for the best micro business award. No separate application is required.

The application form requires a description of the **main business activities** taking place at the site. This should state the focus of your business activity, the services or products you provide and your principal markets. Be clear and concise. This summary is limited to **100** words.

**- 05  
PART 1(b)  
COMPANY  
DETAILS**

These awards act as a participating feeder scheme for the European Business Awards for the Environment. All winners have the option of going forward to be assessed as potential UK entries to these awards. Please indicate your interest in doing so.

Please note where you heard about the VIBES Awards.



**- 06  
PART 2  
JUDGING  
CRITERIA**

**The Circular Economy Award** recognises businesses that can demonstrate a circular approach to material use and business function. A Circular Economy approach ensures that materials are retained within productive use, in a high value state, for as long as possible. It focuses on reshaping business and economic systems so that waste is 'designed out' of how we live.

The main body of the application form is divided into an executive summary and six criteria. These six criteria should expand on the information provided in the executive summary.

You are encouraged to complete all criteria, if possible, though it may be that some criteria are not relevant to your entry. Please be concise and limit the information provided in each criterion to a maximum of **250** words (or as detailed on the application form).

The criteria are listed below:

- Commitment
- Innovation
- Environmental Benefit
- Social Benefit
- Economic Benefit
- Replication Potential

Use the following guidance notes to help complete your application form.

If you would like further advice and support with your application, please email [vibes@sepa.org.uk](mailto:vibes@sepa.org.uk).

**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

An **executive summary** is required. This summary represents your chance to grab the judge's attention and stand out – make sure it is a clear, strong message that conveys what you have done and engages the reader. Make it clear why you think you should win this award – what is unique to you?

This summary is looking for:

- Why you are applying for this award
- An outline of what you have achieved
- Innovations, originality and inspiration for change
- How do you think your approach exemplifies a Circular Economy approach
- This could also include your experiences with implementation of the product/service, the barriers, benefits and lessons learnt.

Please provide information on any novel approaches or practices that your business has taken to promote sustainable business practices to your staff and/or customers/suppliers. For example, you may be able to demonstrate how your business goes above and beyond standard practice.

	<p>Information should also be included on one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How your efforts will assist Scotland in becoming more resource efficient</li> <li>• How your practice helps to address the aims of the Circular Economy and Scotland’s transition to a low carbon economy</li> <li>• How your approach encourages the use of alternative methods to reduce reliance on raw materials</li> <li>• How you monitor and respond to environmental impacts</li> </ul> <p>This summary is limited to <b>500</b> words.</p>
<p><b>Commitment</b> <i>Senior management must be clearly committed to the development and marketing of the product or service. The importance in the context of the organisations overall strategy must be clear.</i></p>	<p>This section will be evaluated on the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of the organisation’s broader commitment to sustainable development, e.g. an established company environmental policy, details of an environmental management system (EMS)</li> <li>• A demonstration that the commitment exists within your organisation to reducing environmental impacts through a Circular Economy approach</li> <li>• Evidence of the importance of the principles of Circular Economy within your organisation’s overall operations</li> <li>• A demonstration of a wider commitment to the Circular Economy throughout your supply chain.</li> <li>• A demonstration of future plans for continuous improvement in both the product/service and market penetration.</li> </ul> <p>In this section, by way of supporting evidence, you may wish to mention one or more of the following: established policies that acknowledge the role of the Circular Economy in your business; awareness within senior management of the drivers behind the Circular Economy; training for staff in an effort to raise awareness of waste and other environmental impacts; or efforts to engage with your supply chain to minimise waste.</p> <p>The Environmental management system could be any of the following; sector scheme e.g. GTBS, Green ticks; ISO14001, BS8555; company specific scheme.</p>
<p><b>Innovation</b> <i>Innovation in the product or service must bring improvements in environmental performance over comparable alternatives and promote more eco-efficient design and production</i></p>	<p>This section will be evaluated on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A summary of the circumstances leading to the development/ implementation of the product/service/business model and how these approaches meet the aims of the Circular Economy.</li> <li>• Details of the specific innovative elements that distinguish your efforts from what was being undertaken previously or other products/services already on the market</li> <li>• Evidence that your products/services perform at least as well as comparable alternatives and meet relevant safety standards</li> </ul> <p>This section is looking for evidence of how the business has been <b>innovative</b> in implementing/developing the product/service/business model through a Circular Economy approach to ensure the maximum value of the product is maintained.</p>



The innovation does not have to be a large investment in an expensive technology. It could just be a novel approach to, for example: product design; production processes in order to re-use waste, heat, energy, water; product re-use, repair and remanufacture; innovative business models to promote lease or hire over ownership of products; effective supply chain and cross-sectoral collaboration to reduce waste and/or use of raw materials.

**Environmental Benefit**

*Clear and quantifiable analysis must demonstrate the reduced environmental impacts over the complete life-cycle of the service or product (for example through life cycle assessment).*

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- Details of targets and/or KPIs in relation to environmental monitoring/improvements and who has responsibility for these.
- Quantitative evidence of how you are achieving environmental improvements.
- Information on how monitoring data is used to inform and improve your products/services
- Evidence of positive impacts you may have had on local biodiversity
- A demonstration of environmental benefits over the lifecycle of your product/service in the following areas:
  - Energy, material and water inputs
  - Waste generation
  - Emissions to air, water and land

The lifecycle of the product includes how value is added and how this is kept circulating within the economy.

How you measure environmental improvements could include the following:

- Evidence of reductions in consumption of resources, i.e. materials, packaging, water, energy
- Steps towards more sustainable resource use, e.g. renewable electricity or re-use of materials including waste, heat and energy
- Evidence of design changes to encourage and enhance re-use/recycling of your product
- Evidence of a shift from an ownership model to a lease model
- Efforts to increase awareness of the impacts of your products/services on the wider environment

Applicants will receive a higher score if they can provide quantitative evidence of their reduced impact(s). Where possible, associated carbon savings should be included to indicate your contribution towards Scotland’s Climate Change targets (see below).

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/climatechange/meetingemissionstargets>

**Please provide environmental data for 3 years, if possible, and be sure to include the correct units.**

**Social Benefit**

<p><i>The service/product should meet the needs of consumers, staff, and communities and bring wider social benefits.</i></p>	<p>This section will be evaluated on the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An outline of the consumer needs met by the product/service</li> <li>• Evidence of wider social benefits that can be expected to arise from the product/service,</li> <li>• Information on how benefits – and scope for future improvements – are communicated within the company and externally should also be included</li> </ul> <p>Examples of social benefits may include: creation of local employment opportunities; securing staff’s long-term employment; improvements in working conditions or quality of life; improved working, leisure or health related benefits or conditions; positive impacts on the local community or on a global level; and financial benefits of any cost savings that have been redirected to benefit staff or end users.</p>
<p><b>Economic Benefit</b> <i>Using quantitative data, demonstrate that the product/service/business model is, or will be, economically viable.</i></p>	<p>This section will be evaluated on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative data that demonstrates the product/service’s economic viability</li> <li>• A description/quantification of any wider economic benefits that have resulted from the service/product/business model.</li> <li>• Evidence that the product will have an economic benefit to users, including its payback period</li> <li>• If the product/service has yet to reach market, provide strong evidence that it will be viable when it does so.</li> <li>• How maximum value of the product is maintained.</li> </ul> <p>Details in this section might include: sales performance data or credible projected sales with an estimate of the potential market size; and evidence of long and short term economic benefits for the company, staff and/or end users.</p> <p>You might also provide evidence that your environmental commitment has opened up new markets, helped to win contracts, helped to keep customers/develop customer relations, or helped avoid any negative financial implications, such as legislative issues or unnecessary investment in treatment works by reducing effluent etc.</p> <p><b>Please ensure that economic benefit data provided relates specifically to the environmental benefit data provided in the section above.</b></p> <p><b>Please provide data for three years, if possible.</b></p>
<p><b>Sharing Best Practice</b> <i>There must be clear potential for good practice and innovation to be replicated</i></p>	<p>Please provide details of your efforts to <b>share best practice</b> with suppliers, consumers and/or other producers.</p> <p>This section will be evaluated on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that the organisation has actively sought to replicate or promote</li> </ul>

*elsewhere.*

its achievements elsewhere, for example through seminars, social media, business network groups and case studies, or as a minimum has considered the potential for replication within the business itself.

There must be clear potential for wider adoption of your Circular Economy approach and a willingness to promote this knowledge and expertise with other organisations within and outwith Scotland as appropriate.



**- 07  
NEXT  
STEPS**


All the forms we receive will be assessed, and those which show a high level of commitment and have reached the appropriate standard will be added to the list of finalists.

If you are placed on the list of finalists you will then receive a judge's site visit. This gives you the opportunity to provide more details of your achievements and allows the judges to more accurately assess your application.

**The VIBES Awards is all about recognising and promoting good practice and it is therefore incumbent on the organisers to ensure all finalists are compliant with any relevant environmental regulations. This will be done by making contact with local SEPA offices to assess the status of applicants.**

The judge's site visits take place during September or October. The visit allows the judges to meet the employees at the site/premises responsible for improving environmental performance and sustainable development and should be used to back up and expand on your application. The visit will take no longer than 3 hours.

Finalists will be chosen from each size category and a final judging panel comprising David Sigsworth (SEPA Chairman), TBC (Chair of Scottish Water) and Lorne Crerar (Chair of Highlands and Islands Enterprise) will then select the winner for each of the size categories. These will be announced at the awards ceremony in November 2015.



**- 08  
KEY  
DATES**

**7<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

Entries open

**13<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

Closing date for applications

**28/29<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

Judging Finalist panel meet

**September/October 2015**

Judging site visits

**4<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Judging award panel meet

**26<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Winners awarded at annual ceremony



**09**  
**FURTHER**  
**INFORMATION**

We hope that these guidance notes are of some help in the completion of your application form.

Please note that by entering VIBES you agree to share the information you provide with the partner organisations. The partner organisations are:

Energy Saving Trust  
Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Scottish Environment Protection Agency  
Scottish Enterprise  
Scottish Water  
Scottish Government  
Zero Waste Scotland  
2020 Climate Group

The Awards are supported by;  
CBI Scotland  
Institute of Directors  
Bright Green Business

We may ask the partner organisations for additional information. This information will only be used to help assess your suitability as a VIBES winner.

If you're successful with your entry we will prepare a case study to highlight the areas of your business that particularly impressed the judges. Once you have approved the content of the case study it will be used to promote good practice more widely.

Further advice, support and assistance with the application form are available from the VIBES Awards Co-ordinator [vibes@sepa.org.uk](mailto:vibes@sepa.org.uk)

You can get support and assistance from a number of the partner organisations to further improve the environmental performance and sustainable development of your business.

Sources of help will be highlighted in the feedback on your entry. You can also find out how each of the partners might be able to help you now by contacting the VIBES Co-ordinator or looking at the competition website ([www.vibes.org.uk](http://www.vibes.org.uk)).

To submit your completed application save this word document using your company as the file name (if saving as PDF please also provide a word version of the application form). Then electronically submit this to us at the email address below.

Completed forms must be submitted no later than  
**1700 hours on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015.**

- Good luck from the whole team!

## Contact us:

Telephone :- 01896 754797

Address :- Scottish Environment Protection Agency  
VIBES Awards  
Burnbrae  
Mossilee Road  
Galashiels  
TD1 1NF

e-mail: [Vibes@sepa.org.uk](mailto:Vibes@sepa.org.uk)

Website: [www.vibes.org.uk](http://www.vibes.org.uk)



### 10. GOOD PRACTICE SUMMARY

- The Executive Summary of your entry is of vital importance – make sure this is clear, concise and engaging.
- Check all spelling and punctuation
- Tailor the information you have to the questions
- Do not use annexes as an alternative to writing an answer in the space provided. Ensure all relevant information is contained within the text of your answer
- If using technical jargon please explain this clearly for the judges, particularly when using acronyms,
- Make sure your entry addresses each of the criteria directly, avoid repetition.
- Quantification in tables, graphs and other pictorial diagrams can often be more powerful than an extensive written description.
- The commercial benefit of the entry needs to be clearly shown