VIBES AWARDS 2015



VISION IN BUSINESS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT OF SCOTLAND

CO-OPERATION AWARD GUIDANCE NOTES



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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 development1 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 Co-operation Award is for businesses working in partnership with other organisations in the public, private or voluntary sector for environmental and financial gain. Please note that the application must come from a business.

For the purposes of this award, coordination is defined as the process of two or more organisations working together to achieve shared goals. Arrangements can be either formal or informal.

The Co-operation Award recognises organisations with the strategic vision to recognise that working in partnership can improve their overall contribution to sustainable development. The coordination should be effectively planned and adequately resourced to achieve its stated goals. 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
- Improving working conditions.

A successful application will be able to show how working in partnership achieves:

- Improved environmental performance, e.g. through resource efficiency, staff and supply chain engagement etc.
- Associated economic and social benefits such as providing local employment opportunities and engaging with local schools, colleges, charities etc.

The environmental, economic, social and ethical aspects of sustainability should be clearly integrated into the overall mission statement of the partnership and into the individual policies of the partner organisations.

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?

² Current partners and sponsors of the VIBES Awards are not eligible to enter. The VIBES Co-operation Award is open to any² Scottish-based businesses working in partnership with one or more organisations – including businesses, public sector, charities and community groups – in order to contribute to the sustainable development of Scotland.

If you have taken an effective approach to environmental improvement and sustainable development, through coordination with one or more other organisations, you could be eligible for a VIBES Award.

The partnership should nominate one organisation (this must be a business) to submit an entry on their behalf. They will act as the first point of contact for communications regarding the application.

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

- 03 HOW TO APPLY

Forms can be downloaded as a Word document from www.vibes.org.uk, completed electronically and submitted via e-mail to vibes@sepa.org.uk,

We encourage online or 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 the form.

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.

Where possible, each application should focus on actions and achievements over the past three years.

- 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 finalists.

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 for information about the business site or premises in Scotland, and for information regarding the partners that you are putting forward for the awards.

The partner completing the application should refer to itself as "lead partner".

Please provide for each partner:

- the address
- the nature of the organisation, e.g. business, public sector, charity, community group
- number of employees
- main business activities
- services or products provided as individual organisations

If the lead business entering this award has 10 employees or less, they will also be considered for the best micro business award. No separate application is required.

The application form requires a description of the **main coordination activities** taking place between the partners. This should state the focus of the activity and the ways the partners are involved. 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 Co-operation Award is for businesses working in partnership with another organisation or organisations in the public, private or voluntary sector for environmental and financial gain.

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 but it is acknowledge that some criteria may not be relevant to your entry. Please be concise and limit the information provided in each criteria to a maximum of **250** words (or as detailed on the application form).

The criteria are listed below;

- Commitment
- Planning and Resource Allocation
- Environmental Benefit
- Economic Benefit
- Social Benefit
- Best Practice

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

For further advice and support with your application, please email vibes@sepa.org.uk.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An **executive summary** is required. This summary represents your chance to grab the judges' 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 your partnership?

This summary is looking for:

- Why you are applying for this award
- An outline of how and why the partnership was formed
- The objectives of the partnership
- The outcomes and benefits of the partnership.

The partnership could be innovative within your sector or the site may have developed a practice that is innovative for the organisations within the partnership and has potential to be rolled out to others. Judges are looking for you to demonstrate that you have thought 'outside the box.' This summary is limited to **500** words.

COMMITMENT

The principles of the partnership must be

The members of the partnership must show clear **commitment** to the use of/establishment of the partnership.

consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- The objectives of the coordination arrangement and how these contribute to sustainable development
- An overall summary and copies of corporate mission statements, policies, codes of conduct etc., demonstrating the level of commitment in the organisation to working in partnership and achieving excellence in environmental (and social/ethical) performance
- How this partnership is supported by senior management and staff in each of the organisations
- The importance of the coordination arrangement with regards to the overall strategy for each of the partners
- Evidence of ways in which the partnership achieves benefits more efficiently and effectively than if the partners had worked alone, e.g. has the coordination led to synergies and helped avoid duplication of effort and cost?
- Demonstration of future plans for the partnership and how this can provide continuous improvement throughout the organisations involved.

PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The coordination must be thoroughly planned and must allocate sufficient human and financial resources from all parties to enable it to work effectively towards its objectives.

A coordination arrangement must be mutually beneficial, with effective planning and resource allocation.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- Evidence of plans and resources made available by all parties to enable the partnership to achieve its objectives
- Evidence that this resourcing is mutually beneficial and transparent in its benefits to each of the partners.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT

There must be a demonstration that coordination brings continuous environmental improvement and results in improvement against the partnerships stated objectives, as demonstrated by regular monitoring and reporting.

The **Environmental Benefit** section will be evaluated on evidence of how environmental impacts have been minimised through, for example:

- Reduced consumption of resources (materials, packaging, water, energy)
- Moving towards more sustainable resource use (renewable electricity, re-use of materials)
- Considering the impacts of products / services on the wider environment (end of life, recycling)
- Reduction in the environmental impacts from transporting resources on and off site and from employees commuting to and from work (cleaner, more efficient vehicles, car sharing, encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking)
- Improving biodiversity

You should consider how the partnership impacts on the environment

both locally and globally (air, water, noise, etc.) and how you have managed and reduced these impacts.

Applicants will receive a higher score if they can provide quantified 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, if possible, and be sure to include the correct units where applicable.

Where possible, please provide data from the past three years.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

The coordination between organisations should meet the needs of consumers, staff and communities, and bring wider social benefits.

This **social benefit** section will be evaluated on the following:

- What consumer needs are met by the partnership.
- What wider social benefits have arisen from coordination between the organisations
- Information on how benefits are communicated within the partnership and externally should also be included

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 team building projects e.g. tree planting, gardens etc; related benefits or conditions; positive impacts on the local community or on a global level; financial benefits of any cost savings that have been redirected to benefit staff or end users.

ECONOMIC BENFIT

Proof must be provided to demonstrate that the partnership is economically viable and benefits are distributed in a fair and transparent way.

This **economic benefit** section will be evaluated on the following

- How the partnership has, or intends to, produce financial savings that would not have occurred if the parties involved had worked independently
- Clear, detailed and quantitative evidence of the economic benefits of the partnership
- How the benefits are distributed among those involved in a way that is transparent and fair to all partners.

Also consider any wider economic benefits that have resulted from your partnership, e.g. has your environmental commitment opened up new markets; helped to win contracts; helped to keep customers/develop customer relations; allowed you to avoid any negative financial implications, such as legal costs.

Please include both short and long term savings.

Please ensure that economic benefit data provided relates specifically to the environmental benefit data provided in the previous section.

Please provide data for three years if possible.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE

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

Please provide details of your efforts to **share best practice** and how these link into your future plans.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

 Steps that have been taken to apply the innovative aspects of the coordination to other situations and partners, e.g. through involvement in business networks, dissemination at conferences, through social media

There must be clear potential for wider adoption of good practice and any innovative aspects of the partnership, and willingness to share this knowledge and expertise both within your own organisations (i.e. across sites) and with other organisations. This may be through seminars, business network groups, social media or case studies.



- 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. The visit should be used to support and expand on your application and should ordinarily take no longer than 3 hours.

A final judging panel comprising of David Sigsworth (SEPA Chairman), TBC (Scottish Water Chair) and Lorne Crerar (HIE Chairman) will select the winner of the Co-operation Award. This will be announced at the awards ceremony in November 2015.

- 08 **KEY DATES**

7th May 2015 Entries open

13th July 2015 Closing date for applications

28-29th July 2015 Judging Finalist panel meet

September-October 2015 Judging site visits

4th November 2015 Judging award panel meet

26th November 2015 Winners awarded at annual ceremony



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 FSB

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

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).

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). Then electronically submit this to us at the email address below.

Completed forms must be submitted no later than 1700 hours on Monday 13th 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 Website: www.vibes.org.uk

- 10 GOOD PRACTICE SUMMARY

- The Executive Summary of your entry is of vital importance make this 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