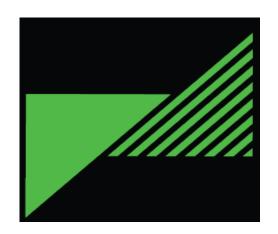
VIBES AWARDS 2015



VISION IN BUSINESS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT OF SCOTLAND

MANAGEMENT AWARD GUIDANCE NOTES



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- 01 THE COMPETITION

"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 **Management Award** recognises businesses with the strategic vision and management systems that enable them to continuously improve their contribution to Scotland's sustainable development.

A business with a successful application will be able to demonstrate management systems that:

- Have improved environmental performance through resource efficiency, staff and supply chain engagement etc.
- Have achieved associated economic and social benefits, such as providing local employment opportunities, engagement with local schools, colleges, charities etc.

The environmental, economic, social and ethical aspects of sustainability must be clearly integrated into the organisation's overall mission and all of its policies. There must be evidence of 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.

The business's management systems do not need to be formally certified by an accredited scheme; a system designed specifically for the organisation or for a sector, e.g. the Green Tourism Scheme, can be just as effective, particularly for smaller organisations.

A key feature of the management system should be a willingness to include all stakeholders in the process. Good communications and discussions should generate feedback that can be used, where practical, to help shape decisions. The organisation must show that it is leading the field and setting an example that others will be inspired to follow.

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 any² Scottish based business that contributes to the sustainable development of Scotland.

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

Current partners and sponsors of the VIBES Awards are not eligible to enter.

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 or services, you could be eligible for a VIBES Award.

Applicants for this award are placed in categories according to the size of the parent company. There are two awards:

- Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME): <250 employees
- Large: > 250 employees.

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.



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 email entries, although 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.

- 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.

The overall size of the group, not the candidate site, will determine the size category in which you are placed. As outlined above, there are two main size categories:

Businesses with more than 250 employees (Large) Businesses with less than 250 employees (SME)

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.



The Management Award is for an exceptional business with the strategic vision and management systems that enable it to continuously improve its contribution to sustainable development – benefiting both the environment and the economic growth of the company.

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 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 (unless otherwise instructed by the application form).

The criteria are listed below;

- Commitment
- Integration
- Achievements in Sustainable Development
- Accountability
- Employee involvement
- 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 you?

This summary is looking for:

- Why you are applying for this award.
- An outline of what you have done.
- What you have achieved.
- Innovations, originality and inspiration for change.

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, e.g. sustainable procurement policies.

Your practice could be innovative within your sector or your site may have developed a practice that is innovative for the parent company and has the potential to be rolled out across all sites within the group. Judges are looking for you to demonstrate that you have thought 'outside the box.' This summary is limited to **500** words.

COMMITMENT

The corporate mission and policy statements (including any environmental policies) must be consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- Evidence of corporate mission statements, policies, codes of conduct etc. demonstrating the organisation's commitment to achieving excellence in environmental (and social/ethical) performance.
- Evidence of how this commitment is supported by senior management and staff throughout the organisation.
- Provide details to demonstrate that the your environmental policy has been incorporated into your staff development, procurement procedures, overall company policy and/or marketing strategy.
- Demonstration of future plans for continuous improvement.

Your application must demonstrate your organisation's **commitment** to environmental sustainability and reducing environmental impacts. Your behaviour should also serve to promote more sustainable patterns of production or consumption.

The Environmental management system could be any of the following; sector scheme e.g. GTBS, Green ticks; ISO14001, BS8555; company specific scheme.

INTEGRATION

The identification of clear objectives and targets for environmental and social improvement alongside financial performance targets demonstrates the integration of sustainability within the overall business.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- Identification of your targets and/or KPIs in relation to environmental monitoring/improvement, include information on who has overall responsibility for the targets and how you measure progress towards meeting them.
- Information to demonstrate how improvements are communicated within the company and externally.
- Explain how this information is used to inform and improve business decisions.

Please provide all relevant details regarding the **integration** of sustainability into your overall business practices.

A business operating in a sustainable manner will routinely monitor its consumption of resources, emissions to land, air and water and overall impacts on the environment (negative and positive). They should then report on this information internally and externally and use it to inform their business decisions.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

There must be a demonstration that continuous performance improvement results in environmental,

This Section covers Environmental, Economic and Social benefit will be evaluated on the following;

- Detailed evidence to demonstrate continuous improvement in the organisations performance against key environmental targets to minimise environmental impacts.
- Details of the economic benefit resulting from this continuous improvement.
- Details of the social benefits achieved by your company.

economic and social benefit against the organisation's stated objectives, as demonstrated by regular monitoring and reporting.

Environmental Benefit.

Details of how you have demonstrated continuous improvement and minimised your environmental impacts could include;

- through reduced consumption of resources (materials, packaging, water, energy)
- moving towards more sustainable resource use (renewable electricity, re-use of materials)
- considering the impacts of your products / services on the wider environment (end of life, recycling)
- reductions in the environmental impacts from transporting resources on and off site and from employees commuting to and from work; perhaps you have introduced cleaner, more efficient vehicles, car sharing, or encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking.
- Improving biodiversity.

You should try to consider how your business impacts on the environment both locally and globally (air, water, noise, etc.), and how you have managed to reduce these impacts. This could include contributing to local biodiversity, enhancing the exterior of premises to attract wildlife, or becoming involved with or instigating international projects to improve biodiversity.

Please provide environmental data over a 3 year period if possible, and be sure to include the correct units where applicable. Data calculated per unit of output – e.g. hotel bed nights, covers served or metres of cable produced – would be most valuable.

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/meetingemissionstarge ts

Economic Benefit

Details of the economic benefits you have realised from your activities in relation to the environment could include cost savings you have realised through reduced raw materials use, improved waste management practices, installing energy and water efficiency technologies, reduced transport fuel, reduced operating costs etc.

If you have you generated additional income streams through environmental/sustainable activities, e.g. selling waste products, winning contracts through environmental credentials, this should also be included.

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

Social Benefit

Details on social benefit may include local employment opportunities created; long-term employment of staff secured; improvement of working conditions or quality of life; evidence of improved working, leisure or health related conditions; team building projects, e.g. tree planting, gardening etc.; positive

impacts, such as charitable contributions to the local community or to global causes; or quantifiable benefits to the supply chain.

ACCOUNTABILITY & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

There must be regular dialogue with stakeholders (employees, suppliers, customers, local community, nongovernmental organisations, etc.) that has a significant impact on management's decision-making.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- Details of how you promote your environmental commitments and targets to stakeholders and how you deal with specific issues.
- Mechanisms in place for ensuring stakeholders' views are taken into account.
- Details of efforts to influence others, e.g. stakeholders, customers, suppliers to adopt sustainable practices.

Examples of how stakeholder feedback is taken into account may include changing your practices as a result of feedback from a customer/supplier or from feedback from the local community?

Specific issues relating to your operations may include transport, noise, odour etc. that could impact on the local community. How is dialogue managed? How are these issues resolved?

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Employees must be closely involved in all aspects of environmental management, understand the company ethos and how this applies to them.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- Evidence that employees at all levels are involved in environmental management
- A summary of efforts to raise employees' awareness of your environmental policies, e.g. through green teams, staff training, and employee suggestion schemes
- Evidence that channels of communication between all levels of personnel are open and frequently used
- Examples of any ongoing programmes to improve employees' working conditions, including management and career development and how these take into account the sustainable objectives of the organisation

A business that has a solely top-down approach to environmental protection or sustainable development is unlikely to achieve many long-term benefits. As well as commitment from senior management, it is important to look at how other staff members are able to get involved in implementing and improving the company's environmental standing. It is also important that staff understand the company's ethos as it applies to them, and that they have the necessary skills to recognise problems and potential improvements.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE

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

This section will be evaluated on the following:

 Evidence of steps that have been taken to share good management practice for sustainable development throughout your organisation and with other organisations

There must be clear potential for wider adoption of good practice and any innovative aspects of your initiatives, and a willingness to share this knowledge and expertise both within your own organisation (i.e. across

conferences)

sites) and with other organisations. e.g. through social media and case studies, involvement in business networks, dissemination at conferences.



- 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 judges' site visits will 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.

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**

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 in Edinburgh



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 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**th **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: <u>Vibes@sepa.org.uk</u> Website: <u>www.vibes.org.uk</u>

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 value of the entry needs to be clearly shown.