

VIBES AWARDS 2015



VISION IN BUSINESS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT OF SCOTLAND

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCT OR SERVICE 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 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 Environmental Product or Service Award recognises businesses that have developed, or are developing, a product or service that brings environmental and business benefits. This category highlights the ability of products and services to promote sustainable consumption, reduce environmental impacts and create new business opportunities.

Entrants should have considered the entire environmental lifecycle of their product or service, i.e. material extraction, production, distribution, use and disposal.

The product or service may be a new or modified design, or the innovative application of an existing one, that promotes more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. Entrants’ product or service may have already been developed and in the marketplace, or it may still be in the development stage.

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.

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WHO CAN
APPLY?**

² Current partners and sponsors of the VIBES Awards are not eligible to enter.

VIBES Awards are open to any² Scottish based business that contributes to the sustainable development of Scotland with the use of their products/services directly in Scotland.

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

If you have developed a product or service that enables you or your customers to take an effective approach to environmental improvement and sustainable development, 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 your previous application.



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HOW TO
APPLY**

Application forms can be downloaded as Word documents from www.vibes.org.uk, completed electronically and submitted via e-mail to vibes@sepa.org.uk.

We encourage email entries, though you may prefer to complete forms manually. Please endeavour to write as clearly as possible before sending hard 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.



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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.

The information in each criteria is limited 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 the Good Practice Summary in Section 10.

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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.

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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.

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PART 2
JUDGING
CRITERIA**

The Environmental Product or Service Award is for an exceptional organisation with the vision to develop and implement a new product or service that makes an outstanding contribution to sustainable development.

The main body of the application form is divided into an executive summary and six criteria. The 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 and if this is the case please explain why this isn't relevant. 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
- Innovation
- Environmental Benefit
- Social Benefit
- Economic 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.

 <p>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</p>	<p>An executive summary is required. This summary is your chance to grab the judges' attention and stand out – make sure it is direct, exciting and engages the reader. Make sure it is clear why you think you should win this award. What is unique to you?</p> <p>This summary is looking for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your reasons for applying for this award • An outline of what you have achieved • Innovations, originality and inspiration for change • Motivations and circumstances leading to the product or service's development • Evidence that you have considered the product or service's entire lifecycle, i.e. material extraction, production, distribution, use and disposal • If the product is still in development, proof that there is a market for it • This section might also include your experiences with implementation of the product/service, the barriers, benefits and lessons learnt. <p>Please place an emphasis on why your product or service is innovative. Also provide information on any novel approaches or practices that your business has taken to promote sustainable business 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> <p>This summary is limited to 500 words.</p>
<p>INNOVATION <i>Innovation in the product or service must bring improvements in environmental performance over comparable alternatives and showcase more eco-efficient production.</i></p>	<p>This section will be evaluated on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the circumstances leading to the development/implementation of the product/service • Details of the specific innovative elements that distinguish it from what was being undertaken previously or other products/services already on the market • Evidence that the product/service performs better than or as well as a comparable alternative and meets relevant safety standards – what monitoring and evaluation has been undertaken on the innovation • Evidence of any innovation support mechanisms accessed, if applicable, e.g. specialist support, grant support, innovation vouchers via Knowledge Transfer Networks, or advice on intellectual assets and protection. <p>This criterion is looking for evidence of the specific innovative elements that distinguish the product/service from its predecessors or others already on the market.</p> <p>It would be useful to provide information on the research that has been undertaken to verify that this product/service is indeed 'cutting-edge'.</p>
<p>COMMITMENT <i>Senior management must be clearly</i></p>	<p>This section will be evaluated on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the organisation's broader commitment to sustainable development, e.g. an established company environmental policy, details of

committed to the development and marketing of the product or service. The product or service and environmental responsibility must figure as significant elements within the business's overall operations.

- an environmental management system (EMS).
- A demonstration that the development of the product/service is part of a long term business strategy
- A demonstration that commitment exists within your organisation to adopting the new product/service with a clear sales and marketing strategy
- Evidence of the product/service's importance within your organisation's overall operations
- A demonstration of future plans for continuous improvement in both the product/service and in terms of market penetration.

Your application must demonstrate your organisation's **commitment** to improving environmental performance 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.

Where a product or service is still in development, please provide details of the stage reached and the next steps required to market the product/service. Try to include proof that there is market potential for the product/service. Please identify your organisation's commitment to getting the product/service to market.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT

Clear and quantifiable data must demonstrate the reduced environmental impact over the complete life-cycle of the service or product, i.e. taking into account procurement, production, distribution and disposal.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- Quantitative evidence of how your product or service achieves environmental benefits locally and/or globally
- Information on how monitoring data is used to inform and improve the product/service from an environmental standpoint
- A demonstration of environmental benefits over the lifecycle of your product/service, focusing on the following areas:
 - Efficient energy, water and material inputs
 - Waste reduction
 - Minimised emissions to air, water and land

Your product or service's lifecycle includes material extraction, manufacture, distribution, use and disposal.

The product/service must make use of design, material, methods, technologies, approaches or intervention packages that are in some way innovative and lead to more sustainable patterns of production or consumption. For example, does the product/service help reduce water or raw material use; does it succeed in reducing energy consumption; does it cut down on waste production; or does it make use of recycled materials?

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 where applicable.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Using quantitative data, demonstrate that the new product/service is, or will be, economically viable.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- Quantitative data that demonstrates the product/service’s economic viability
- A description/quantification of any wider economic benefits that have resulted from the service/product
- Evidence that the product will have an economic benefit to users, including its payback period
- If the product/service has yet to reach market, provide strong evidence that it will be viable when it does so.

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.

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.

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

Please provide data for three years, if possible.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

The product/service should meet the needs of consumers, staff, and communities and bring wider social benefits.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- A demonstration of the consumer needs that are met by the product/service
- Evidence of wider social benefits that can be expected to arise from the product/service
- Information on how benefits are communicated within the company and externally should also be included, e.g. is follow up advice and guidance or education and awareness training provided to users of the product?

Examples of social benefits might 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; positive impacts, such as charitable contributions to the local community or to global causes; or quantifiable benefits to the supply chain.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE

There must be clear potential for good practice and innovation to be replicated elsewhere, and a willingness to encourage replication.

Please provide details of any efforts to **share best practice** with suppliers, consumers and/or other producers.

This section will be evaluated on the following:

- Evidence that the organisation has actively sought to replicate or promote its achievements elsewhere - for example through seminars, business network groups or case studies - or as a minimum has considered the potential for further replication within the business itself

There should be clear potential for wider adoption of the service/product and a willingness to promote this knowledge and expertise with other groups within and outwith Scotland as appropriate.

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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.

Finalists will be chosen from each 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 categories. These will be announced at the awards ceremony in November 2015.

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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

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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
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 13th July 2015.

- Good luck from the whole team!

**CONTACT
US**

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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 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.