



# **European Business Awards for the Environment**

**A pan-European award scheme  
organised by the  
Directorate-General for the Environment,  
European Commission**

**HANDBOOK**

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# 1. OVERVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS AWARDS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

## a. Aims and political context

The European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE) aim to reward businesses which successfully combine innovation and economic viability with the protection of the environment.

The Awards highlight eco-innovative practices, processes and products from all sectors of business in the EU and candidate/acceding countries, which make a contribution to the transition to a circular economy, by reducing the environmental impact of our production and consumption, thereby enhancing nature's resilience to environmental pressures and achieving a more efficient and responsible use of natural resources.

The Awards is an essential part of the European Commission's toolbox for promoting circular economy, eco-innovation and participation in green markets among European companies.

Protecting the environment and making the transition to a circular economy can significantly strengthen business competitiveness and also the wider economic competitiveness of Europe. Companies' and our economies' fate will be decided by how we face challenges like resource scarcity, how we learn to use material and energy efficiently, and by our ability to produce smarter goods that can be re-used, repaired and recycled.

On this basis, European environmental policy wants to harness but also to further encourage the excellence and commitment of companies that lead them towards creating environmentally friendly products, processes, services, technologies and business models.

EBAE therefore promote outstanding economic and environmental performances from the business world, the innovation capacity of entrepreneurs and the effective use of instruments for the provision of reliable and comparable information such as EMAS, EU Environmental Technology Verification (ETV) and the European Ecolabel.

### *An Award adapted to today's economic challenges*

The European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE) (formerly known as the European Better Environment Awards for Industry – EBIAFI and the European Awards for the Environment) were launched in 1987 to reward technological developments that help create a sustainable society.

Since then the EBAE continue to adapt to the evolving policy context and to support the implementation of the following major policy initiatives.

In 2010 the Commission adopted the Europe 2020<sup>1</sup> strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The connected flagship initiatives like the 'Innovation Union'<sup>2</sup> 'Resource-

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<sup>1</sup> COM\_(2010) 2020: Communication from the Commission "Europe 2020: a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth".

<sup>2</sup> COM\_(2010) 546: Communication from the Commission: "Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative: Innovation Union".

Efficient Europe<sup>3</sup> and the 'Circular Economy Strategy'<sup>4</sup> ensure that innovative ideas will create growth and jobs while contributing to a transition towards a green economy.

The Eco-innovation Action Plan<sup>5</sup> – which was adopted in 2011 in the context of the Innovation Union – is a tool to identify and implement measures for the deployment of key environmental technologies and eco-innovative business practices, to enhance coordination and cooperation between the EU and Member States and to generate awareness of the potential of innovative solutions.

The 2015 EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy established a programme of action with measures covering the whole cycle: from production and consumption to waste management and the market for secondary raw materials. The circular economy will boost the EU's competitiveness by protecting businesses against scarcity of resources and volatile prices, helping to create new business opportunities and innovative, more efficient ways of producing and consuming.

## **b. Presentation of the Awards and Categories**

**Every two years, the European Commission rewards and recognises companies that demonstrate their commitment to putting environmental protection and sustainable development into action as part of their business model.**

The European Business Awards for the Environment are based on the following four categories, which highlight the innovative aspects of businesses:

1. Management
2. Product and Services
3. Process
4. Developing Country Cooperation

Since 2016 there are a total of six Awards – two within the Management category (one for micro & small entities and one for medium & large entities), one for each of the other categories and an Award for Business and Biodiversity, given to a business selected from companies applying for any of the four listed categories that proves a significant contribution to biodiversity.

### *Category 1: Management*

The Management Awards are for a successful **organisation (or group of organisations)**, with the strategic vision and **management scheme** that enable it to continuously improve its **environmental performances**.

To reach this objective efficiently the environmental management scheme should be driven by the key principles of strategic integration, performance improvement, transparency and

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<sup>3</sup> COM\_(2011) 21: Communication from the Commission: "A resource-efficient Europe – Flagship Initiative under the Europe 2020 Strategy".

<sup>4</sup> COM(2015) 614 final Communication from the Commission: "Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy".

<sup>5</sup> COM\_(2011) 899: Communication from the Commission: Innovation for a sustainable Future –The Eco-innovation Action-Plan" (ECO-AP)

credibility. These key principles are fully described in the Award criteria section which provides all the criteria to fulfil for the Management category.

In all these regards, the organisation must show that it is leading the field and setting an example for others to follow.

**The implementation of premium management schemes such as EMAS**, (the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, recognised as a reference tool to drive continuous environmental performances improvements), **is considered one option that contributes to this leading status.**

The challenges faced by businesses are different depending on their size. For this reason, two sub-categories have been created to reward both micro & small entities and medium & large entities. Eligibility to the two sub-categories is established according to the Annex of the Commission Recommendation (2003/361/EC), art 2, concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. It is summarized in the table below:

<b>Company size</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Turnover</b>	or	<b>Balance sheet total</b>	<b>Award sub category</b>
Large	> 250	> € 50 m		> € 43 m	Medium & Large entities
Medium	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m	Medium & Large entities
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 10 m	Micro & Small entities
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m		≤ € 2 m	Micro & Small entities

### *Category 2: Products and Services*

This Award is for the successful **placing on the market of a new product or service** that makes an outstanding **contribution to environmental protection and sustainability.**

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 and/or contributes to a sustainable circular economy. The product or service must meet the needs of consumers, while making more efficient use of natural resources and/or minimising the use of hazardous substances, 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 ideally contribute to equitable social progress.

Applications for this Award should represent the ‘cutting edge’ of sustainable product and service development, setting an example for others to follow. Recognition by an **EU eco-label or equivalent product certification is considered one option that contributes to this status.**

### *Category 3: Process*

This Award is for the successful application of an innovative solution in the area of process and production methods that protects the environment and facilitates sustainability.

A new production solution may involve the application of entirely new processes or techniques, or the innovative application of existing ones. In either case, the solution adopted should make a positive contribution to the environment while also contributing to the economic and social aspects of sustainable development. The new process is expected to increase resource efficiency and reduce life-cycle environmental impacts by using materials and energy in a more efficient way, by minimising the use of hazardous substances, or by reducing emissions and waste.

#### *Category 4: Developing Country Cooperation*

This Award is for an international cooperation involving at least one private entity from the European Union, and another from the private, public, non-governmental or academic sector in an emerging or developing country.

The cooperation must be a business relationship which makes a significant contribution to three aspects of sustainable development (environmental protection, economic development, and social development), in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals <sup>6</sup> by transferring or sharing an innovation. This can be a product, service, process, or a management system with a significant contribution in the field of the environment.

The cooperation should be part of a commercially viable business operation, be planned effectively and be adequately resourced to achieve its stated objectives.

The list of developing countries given in the United Nation's *World Economic Situation and Prospects* (WESP)<sup>7</sup> should be used as a reference point for indicating which countries are eligible. The EBAE secretariat can be contacted if any further clarification is needed.

#### *Business and Biodiversity Award*

The Business and Biodiversity Award is for a successful business model, management scheme, product and service or international cooperation, which makes a significant contribution to halting biodiversity loss and supporting natural ecosystems.

The recipient of the Business and Biodiversity Award will be selected from companies entering one of the four main categories. Companies should indicate on their category entry form if they also wish to be entered for the Business and Biodiversity Award.

The contribution can be ensured by companies that address biodiversity at a management level or where the positive impact of the management scheme, product, service or international cooperation on biodiversity is seen as a relevant added value.

Applications for business and biodiversity should have the potential to lead to a more sustainable use of natural resources, showing how companies can contribute to the protection of biodiversity and the alleviation of relevant pressures on natural ecosystems.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<sup>7</sup> See page 134 of the Statistical Annex of the *World Economic Situation and Prospects*  
[http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp\\_current/2012country\\_class.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_current/2012country_class.pdf)

## 2. WHO CAN APPLY FOR A EUROPEAN BUSINESS AWARD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

The European Business Awards for the Environment are open to companies officially registered in one of the 28 Member States as well as in acceding and candidate countries.

The EBAE are underpinned by a series of national environmental award schemes held in the **28 Member States** and in EU **acceding and candidate countries**. These are known as EBAE countries.

**Only winners, runners-up and companies specially commended in national competition(s) are eligible to apply for the European Business Awards for the Environment.** Direct entries are not possible. Applicants must first have entered one of the national award schemes.

**Each country can put forward a maximum of 12 entries with a maximum of 4 entries in each category of the European Business Awards for the Environment. From 2016 there are two sub-categories under the Management Category. Each country can put forward a maximum of 4 entries under either of the two Management sub-categories, providing there are a maximum of 4 entries under the Management Category as a whole.**

Each country is responsible for organising its own national scheme.

### *Participation of public enterprises and NGOs*

The only way public enterprises or NGOs or other non-business entities can participate in the scheme is via a partnership with a business. In such a case, the business entity should be the one applying / officially submitting the application form in its own name. National authorities can establish different rules for their own national schemes.

To establish if an entity classifies as public or private, the EBAE refers to the definition of the Directive 2014/24/EU, Art 2 Definitions 1 (4) <sup>8</sup> “bodies governed by public law”. These are not considered companies and therefore can only apply to the EBAE if a business entity cooperates with them and officially submits the application form in its own name.”

Each applicant is allowed to enter in several categories.

A company must have been nominated in its own country to be eligible to the EBAE.

### **Rules applying to previous EBAE winners wishing to re-submit their entries:**

- In the **Management Category** – Companies having won an EBAE Award in this category will need to wait two consecutive Award rounds before being allowed to reapply.

*For example, the Management Category Award Winner in 2012 would only be eligible to compete again in the same category in 2018.*

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<sup>8</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014L0024&from=EN>

- In the **Product and Services Category** – Companies are able to apply to each round of the EBAE on the condition that the product being put forward for competition is entirely new.
- In the **Process Category** – Companies are able to apply to each round of the EBAE on the condition that the process being put forward for competition is entirely new.
- In the **Developing Country Cooperation Category** – Previous winners are only eligible for this Award if an entirely new project is entered. This excludes the replication of the same project at a different level or geographical location.
- **Business and Biodiversity** – Previous winners are only eligible for this Award if an entirely new project is entered. This excludes the replication of the same project at a different geographical location.

### **3. FILLING IN AND SUBMITTING THE ENTRY FORM**

#### **a. Entry Forms**

Applications must be submitted by companies on an official entry form via the **online registration and evaluation Platform**.

The platform allows National Coordinators to monitor and interact with companies in their country, and allows jury members to evaluate the entry forms. It is secure and will not keep the companies' data once the EBAE cycle is completed.

There are four different entry forms, one for each of the Award categories listed below:

**Category 1:** Management Award

**Category 2:** Product and Services Award

**Category 3:** Process Award

**Category 4:** Developing Country Cooperation Award

To be eligible for the Business and Biodiversity Award, companies should indicate on their main category entry form that they wish to be considered.

Each entry form must be completed in English, and supporting documentation provided as evidence for any award criteria must be submitted in English. A maximum of 2 pieces of supporting information can be submitted. However, all information relevant to the application should be entered in the application form. It cannot be expected that jurors will read the supporting documentation to ensure that a question in the application form has been addressed.



**Each entry form lists a series of questions corresponding to the award criteria.** It is necessary to respond to each question on the entry form, and to provide all documentation requested. Entry forms containing unanswered questions may be rejected by the EBAE Secretariat.

#### **b. Procedure**

Companies may not send their entry forms directly to the EBAE Secretariat.

The entry forms should be submitted electronically through the online registration and evaluation platform. The submission deadline will be communicated separately by the EBAE Secretariat for each new cycle.

After a company submits an application the entry form is made available to the relevant National Coordinator, who then has the opportunity to review, to send back the application for further input by the company (if needed), or to approve it.

National Coordinators are responsible for the final approval of all national companies' applications. Once an entry form is approved by a National Coordinator, it is officially registered for the EBAE cycle. The electronic entry allows for a limited number of characters which the Platform will enforce as the applicant prepares their application online. Guidance will be given online as to the number of characters used as the entry is being prepared. The online platform will allow the upload of a maximum of 2 supporting documents.

### **4. THE EBAE STEERING COMMITTEE**

#### **a. Role and functions**

The EBAE Steering Committee is made up of representatives of DG Environment and the National Coordinators.

The EBAE Steering Committee is responsible for the overall supervision of the management of the Awards and the implementation of work plans. The Steering Committee arranges the selection process and organises the biennial EBAE Awards ceremony.

### **5. THE JURY PANEL**

The entries are assessed by an independent panel of experts nominated by the National Coordinators and Commission; the jury panel prepare a shortlist and one winner for each Award.

Jury members should be representatives of or experts from industry, governmental, and non-governmental bodies, the media and academia who are interested and involved in implementing environmental practices in the business sector.

## 6. AWARD CRITERIA

The EBAE Steering Committee has drawn up some general and specific criteria for each Award category. These criteria will not only facilitate the evaluation work of the jury panel, but will also give applicants a better idea of what the judges are looking for. The judging criteria are explained below, and vary from one category to another.

### Category 1: Management

- **Strategic integration:** The environmental, economic, social and ethical aspects of sustainability must be clearly integrated into the overall mission, the policies and the business model of the organisation. There must be a clear aim to integrate into the business model the objective of reducing the environmental impacts of the organisation's activities, together with mechanisms, including targets and indicators, for monitoring and reporting performance.
- **Performance improvement:** The entry must be for a specific management practice, scheme, initiative or project, which is clearly defined and exemplary in itself, going beyond standard practice. The entry should demonstrate how this approach is innovative in the company, sector or country. The project or initiative must be substantially complete at the time of entry. Tangible results must be available that demonstrate sustainability leadership in the sector and the financial viability of the practice, scheme, project or initiative. The environmental management objective should be to evaluate and improve the environmental performance of the organisation with a commitment to continue reducing its environmental impact.
- **Transparency:** Organizations should report and provide publicly available information on their environmental performance. This should be achieved towards the public, through the publication of an environmental report (for example the EMAS environmental statement), and within the organisation, through the active involvement of employees in the implementation of the scheme.
- **Credibility:** Credibility and reliability of the environmental management scheme must be assured by external and independent environmental verifiers. This includes both the actions taken by an organisation to continuously improve its environmental performance, as well as the organisation's disclosure of information to the public through an environmental report.
- **Accountability:** There must be regular and systematic dialogue with stakeholders (employees, suppliers, customers, non-governmental organisations, etc.) with feedback of the results into management decision-making.
- **Employee involvement:** Employees must be closely involved in all aspects of environmental management and should actively contribute to the implementation of the environmental improvements.
- **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).

- **Biodiversity:** Does your business address biodiversity at a management level? Is biodiversity protection included in your business policy and/or strategy and how?
- Any thorough assessment of the environmental, economic, social and ethical aspects of sustainability will include an assessment of an organisation's impact on biodiversity. If the project or initiative is taking specific action to protect and improve biodiversity, you may also wish to enter for a Business and Biodiversity Award in addition to a Management Award.

## Category 2: Product and Services

- **Innovation:** Substantial innovation in the product or service must bring improvements in environmental performance over comparable alternatives, whilst at least maintaining functional performance.
- **Environmental benefit:** Clear and quantified analysis must demonstrate increased resource efficiency and reduced environmental impact over the complete life-cycle of the product or service (eg. through Life Cycle Analysis LCA or the European Ecolabel or a label of an equivalent nature).
- **Social benefit:** The product or service must meet the needs of consumers and bring wider social benefits (e.g. by providing decent working conditions, safeguarding consumer health, improving quality of life, etc.).
- **Economic benefit:** Proof must be given that the new product or service is economically viable (e.g. through sales performance data or credible sales projections).
- **Commitment:** Senior management must be clearly committed to the development and marketing of the product or service, and must show 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 a willingness to share this knowledge and expertise with other organisations.
- **Biodiversity:** Does your business address biodiversity at a management level? Is biodiversity protection included in your business policy and/or strategy and how?

## Category 3: Process

- **Innovation:** The process introduced must include specific innovative elements that enable more eco-efficient production (e.g. by increasing resource efficiency, or reducing waste and emissions).
- **Environmental benefit:** The environmental benefits of the new process must be clear and quantified in terms of: energy, water and material consumption, waste, air emissions, CO2 and land use reduction;

- **Social benefit:** Adoption of the new process must have either neutral or positive social impacts (e.g. employment opportunities, working conditions, or effects on local communities).
- **Economic benefit:** Proof must be given that the new process is economically viable (e.g. with reference to capital and operating costs).
- **Commitment:** Senior management must be clearly committed to adopting the new process, and must show its importance in the context of the organisation's overall operations.
- **Replication potential:** There must be clear potential for wider adoption of the innovative process, and a willingness to share this knowledge and expertise with other organisations.
- **Biodiversity:** Does your business address biodiversity at a management level? Is biodiversity protection included in your business policy and/or strategy and how?

#### **Category 4: Developing Country Cooperation**

From 2018 the evaluators are asked to review entries against the wider context of the UN Sustainable Development goals with particular focus on:

- **Sustainable development:** The cooperation must be guided by a **business relationship** and a clear statement of shared objectives demonstrating how it expects to contribute to economic, social and environmental progress in a developing or emerging country.
- **Environmental benefit and/or improved performance:** the project should have a relevant focus on improving environmental performance and/or increasing capacity building in the field of the environment.
- **Planning and resource allocation:** The cooperation must be thoroughly planned and must be allocated sufficient human and financial resources to enable it to work effectively towards its objectives.
- **Equity:** The benefits must be evenly distributed among those involved, and the cooperation must be managed in a way that is fair and transparent to all partners.
- **Synergy:** The business cooperation must result in efforts and costs avoidance,
- **Replication potential:** There must be potential for applying the innovative cooperation to other markets and partners.
- **Biodiversity:** Does your business address biodiversity at a management level? Is biodiversity protection included in your business policy and/or strategy and how?

## **Business and Biodiversity Award**

The proposals in each of the four categories that ask to be put forward for the Business and Biodiversity Award will be assessed by the jury against these additional criteria (also indicated on each form):

- **Relevance of the project to the protection of ecosystem/habitat/species or genetic biodiversity and/or relevance of the project to alleviate a relevant pressure on biodiversity.**
- **Impact of the project on biodiversity at a local, national, European or broader context.** (E.g. what is the geographical area covered? Is it a constituent of an ecological corridor? Does the action involve others in the company or beyond? Does it develop and/or use green infrastructure and/or ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation? Does it create benefits for species, water, soil, land-use, resource use?)
- **How sustainable is the protection of biodiversity.** (E.g. is biodiversity an added value for your company? Is sustainable financing in place? How is awareness raised with other actors, your value chain and within your company?)

## 7. THE EBAE CEREMONY

The EBAE ceremony where the EBAE Awards are presented takes place every two years.



European Business Awards for the Environment Awards Ceremony, 27 October 2016, Tallinn, Estonia © European Commission.

## 8. THE EBAE SECRETARIAT

The Commission and Steering Committee are supported by the EBAE secretariat.

### a. Role and functions

To carry out this role the key tasks of the EBAE Secretariat are:

- To provide secretariat support to implementation of the EBAE award scheme.
- To manage the award selection procedure.
- To update and implement the promotional strategy.
- To co-ordinate preparations for the EBAE Awards Ceremony.

## 9. ANNEXES

### a. Entry forms

There are four entry forms, one for each of the following categories: Management, Product & Services, Process, Developing Country Cooperation.

Each form includes a specific question asking if the applicant wishes to be considered for the Business & Biodiversity Award.

Each entry form is composed of:

- **Part 1 – Introduction** in which the company provides administrative information (one to two pages maximum).
- **Part 2 – Application form** including: a) summary (one page maximum), b) application (three pages maximum).

The entry forms are available electronically and are to be filled in online. This procedure will ease the application process, avoid data loss and ensure the equal treatment of all entries.

Application Forms will be available in February 2018.

## b. List of National Coordinators (February 2018)

Country	Organisation	Title	First name	Surname	Email
<b>Austria</b>	Federal Ministry of Sustainability & Tourism	Mr	Armin	Pecher	<a href="mailto:Armin.pecher@bmnt.gv.at">Armin.pecher@bmnt.gv.at</a>
<b>Belgium</b>	Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FEB)	Ms	Vanessa	Biebel	<a href="mailto:vb@vbo-feb.be">vb@vbo-feb.be</a>
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<b>Czech Republic</b>					
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<b>Finland</b>	Finnish Environmental Industries (YTP)	Ms	Riikka	Kinnunen	<a href="mailto:riikka.kinnunen@ytpliitto.fi">riikka.kinnunen@ytpliitto.fi</a>
<b>France</b>	Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'énergie et de la mer	Mr	Jean-Paul	Ventère	<a href="mailto:jean-paul.ventere@developpement-durable.gouv.fr">jean-paul.ventere@developpement-durable.gouv.fr</a> <a href="mailto:jpventere@gmail.com">jpventere@gmail.com</a>
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<b>Greece</b>	Hellenic Association of Environmental Protection Companies - Pasepp	Mr	Antonis	Papadakis	<a href="mailto:apapadakis@arvisolar.gr">apapadakis@arvisolar.gr</a>
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<b>Ireland</b>	Irish Business and Employers Confederation(IBEC)	Mr	Neil	Walker	<a href="mailto:Neil.Walker@ibec.ie">Neil.Walker@ibec.ie</a>
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<b>Latvia</b>					
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<b>Poland</b>					
<b>Portugal</b>	Portuguese Environment Agency	Ms	Isabel	Lico	<a href="mailto:isabel.lico@apambiente.pt">isabel.lico@apambiente.pt</a>
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		Mr	Borut	Hocevar	<a href="mailto:borut.hocevar@finance.si">borut.hocevar@finance.si</a>
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		Ms	Victoria	Perez	<a href="mailto:vperez@fundacion-biodiversidad.es">vperez@fundacion-biodiversidad.es</a>
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<b>UK</b>	IMS Consulting	Mr	Graham	Sprigg	<a href="mailto:graham.sprigg@imsplc.com">graham.sprigg@imsplc.com</a> <a href="mailto:kim.barton@imsplc.com">kim.barton@imsplc.com</a>