



European Business Awards for the Environment

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

HANDBOOK

Contents

1.	OVERVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS AWARDS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT	3
	a. Aims and Political Context	3
	b. Presentation of the Awards and Categories	4
2.	WHO CAN APPLY FOR A EUROPEAN BUSINESS AWARD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?	6
3.	FILLING IN AND SUBMITTING THE ENTRY FORM	7
	a. Entry Forms	7
	b. Procedure	8
4.	THE EBAE STEERING COMMITTEE	8
	a. Role and Functions	8
5.	THE JURY PANEL	8
6.	AWARD CRITERIA	8
7.	THE EBAE CEREMONY	13
8.	THE EBAE SECRETARIAT	14
	a. Role and Functions	14
9.	ANNEXES	14
	List of National Coordinators	15

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 – EBEAFI 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 EU major policy initiatives. It provides a response to changing societal challenges, in particular environmental and climate urgencies by promoting green entrepreneurs and green solutions. Those solutions will be vital in implementing the European Green Deal, one of 6 priorities of the next European Commission. Supported by investments in green technologies, sustainable solutions and new businesses, the Green Deal can be a new EU growth strategy.

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 five categories, which highlight the innovative aspects of businesses:

1. Management
2. Product and Services

3. Process
4. Developing Country Cooperation
5. Business & Biodiversity

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), and one for each of the other categories.

The text below gives an overview of each Award. Further detail is given in the Award criteria section of the Handbook.

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 credibility.

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 summarised in the table below:

Company size	Employees	Turnover	or	Balance sheet total	Award sub category
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 ¹ 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.

¹ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

The list of developing countries given in the United Nation's *World Economic Situation and Prospects* (WESP)² 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.

Category 5: Business and Biodiversity

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

A strong contribution can be ensured by organisations 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.

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 a national competition are eligible to apply* for the European Business Awards for the Environment., applicants must enter via their National Coordinator, direct entries are not possible³.

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) ⁴ "bodies governed by public law". These are not

² See page 135 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

³ In 2020, in recognition of the fact that several countries do not have a national competition for developing country cooperation, other ways to identify entrants at a national level will be explored

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014L0024&from=EN>

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 2016 would only be eligible to compete again in the same category in 2022.

- 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.
- **In the Business and Biodiversity 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 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 five 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

Category 5: Business and Biodiversity Award

Each entry form is composed of (maximum 5 pages):

Part 1 – Introduction in which the company briefly presents itself.

Part 2 – Application form including: a) summary, b) application.

Each entry form must be completed in English, and supporting documentation provided as evidence for any award criteria must be submitted in English. An additional piece of supporting documentation can be provided, which may be a video, brochure or similar. 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

Firstly, National Coordinators will register eligible companies onto the EBAE platform and give basic details of the company. Companies will be emailed to invite them to submit their entry electronically on the EBAE platform. They may not send their entry forms directly to the EBAE Secretariat. The submission deadline will be communicated separately by the EBAE Secretariat for each new cycle.

During the application phase, the National Coordinator can review the entry form and assist the company, if necessary, However, it must be noted that both the National Coordinators and companies cannot be reviewing/amending the entry at exactly the same time. 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 evaluation.

4. THE EBAE STEERING COMMITTEE

a. Role and functions

The EBAE Steering Committee is made up of representatives of DG Environment, National Coordinators, some of whom may be jury members. 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 agree 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 give applicants an overview of what the judges are looking for and facilitate the evaluation work of the jury panel. The judging criteria are explained below, and vary

from one category to another. The final criteria for each year's competition will be in the application form for each category.

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:** Is biodiversity protection included in the business policy and/or strategy and how? Describe mechanisms integrated within your organisation to assess and/or value and account for the impacts and dependencies on biodiversity (or at least natural capital) thorough assessment of the environmental, economic, social and ethical aspects of sustainability will include an assessment of an organisation's impact on biodiversity.

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:** The company should be clearly committed to the development and marketing of the product or service, and should 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:** Is biodiversity protection included in the business policy and/or strategy and how? Describe mechanisms integrated within your organisation to assess and/or value and account for the impacts and dependencies on biodiversity (or at least natural capital) thorough assessment of the environmental, economic, social and ethical aspects of sustainability will include an assessment of an organisation's impact on biodiversity.

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 any of the following which are relevant: energy, water and raw material consumption, waste, emissions to air, water and soil; 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:** The company should be clearly committed to adopting the new process, and should show its importance with regard to 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:** Is biodiversity protection included in the business policy and/or strategy and how? Describe mechanisms integrated within your organisation to assess and/or value and account for the impacts and dependencies on biodiversity (or at least natural capital) thorough assessment of the environmental, economic, social and ethical aspects of sustainability will include an assessment of an organisation's impact on biodiversity.

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 fairly 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 should achieve better results than if the partners had worked alone, e.g. reducing costs or duplication of effort.
- **Replication potential:** There should be a potential for applying the business cooperation to other markets, sectors, partners or geographical areas.

- **Biodiversity:** Does your business address biodiversity at a management level? Is biodiversity protection included in your business policy and/or strategy and how?

Category 5: Business and Biodiversity

Entries can be from companies in the environmental technology sector eg which develop and sell environmental technology to solve pressures on biodiversity, as well as companies from other economic sectors that include biodiversity in the company's management and realise measures to reduce the impact of their business on biodiversity.

- **Environmental benefit** - the product/process/service or management strategy should reduce the pressure on biodiversity, it may also help protect ecosystems, habitats, species or genetic diversity. The company should outline the relevance to the protection of ecosystem/habitat/species or genetic biodiversity and/or relevance to alleviate a relevant pressure on biodiversity.
- **Impact and Measurability** – Detail on measurement of the impact and measurable results should be provided, showing how biodiversity is protected and improved at a local level and beyond.
- **Future sustainability and management** – for companies from the environmental technology sector, sustainability of the product/process/service should be demonstrated in terms of financing and support in the market place. For companies where biodiversity is an important aspect of company management, the company must demonstrate the sustainability of their actions and the commitment of the organisation.
- **Stakeholder sensitisation and engagement** – biodiversity should be recognised within the whole value chain eg in procurement, relations with stakeholders and in awareness raising with consumers/customers

Far reaching strategy – the company should provide information on how biodiversity is seen as a “value added” strategy for the company, for example whether the company goes for a no net loss or even net gain of biodiversity, applies special instruments like the National Capital Valuation, supports a “Payment for Ecosystems Services” scheme or has some other approach.

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, 14 November 2018, Vienna, Austria © 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 five entry forms, one for each of the Awards: Management, Product & Services, Process, Developing Country Cooperation, Business and Biodiversity.

Each entry form is composed of:

- **Part 1 – Introduction** in which the company provides administrative information.
- **Part 2 – Application form** including: a) summary, b) application.

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 January 2020 from your National Coordinator or from the EBAE Secretariat - ebae@loweurope.eu

List of National Coordinators

Country	Organisation	Title	First name	Surname	Email
Austria	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management	Ms	Susanne	Berger	Susanne.Berger@bmnt.gv.at
Belgium	Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FEB)	Ms	Vanessa	Biebel	vb@vbo-feb.be
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum	Ms	Gabriela	Marinova	gaby.marinova@bbf.bg
Croatia	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Mrs	Branka	Pivčević Novak	branka.pivcevicnovak@mzoe.hr
Denmark	Ingeniørforening en i Danmark, IDA	Ms	Charlotte	Faber	cf@ida.dk
Estonia	Estonian Ministry of the Environment	Ms	Kadri	Koemets	kadri.koemets@envir.ee
Finland	Finnish Environmental Industries (YTP)	Mr	Otto	Lehtipuu	otto.lehtipuu@ytp.fi
France	Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'énergie et de la mer	Mr	Jean-Paul	Ventère	jean-paul.ventere@developpement-durable.gouv.fr
Germany	Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie BDI e.V. Abteilung Umwelt, Technik und Nachhaltigkeit	Mr	Franz-Josef	von Kempis	v.Kempis@bdi.eu
Greece	Hellenic Association of Environmental Protection Companies - Pasepp	Mr	Antonis	Papadakis	apapadakis@arvisolar.gr
Hungary	Hungarian Association of Environmental Enterprises (KSZGYSZ)	Mr	Csaba	Marko	kszgyysz@kszgyysz.hu
Ireland	Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)	Mr	Neil	Walker	neil.walker@ibec.ie

Luxembourg	Fedil – Business Federation Luxembourg	Mr	Jean-Marc	Zahlen	jean-marc.zahlen@fedil.lu
Malta	Cleaner Technology Centre - University Campus	Mr	Anton	Pizzuto	anton.pizzuto@gmail.com
Netherlands (The)	Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment - Directorate-General for Environmental Protection - Directorate for Climate Change and Air Quality	Mr	Andre	Rodenburg	andre.rodenburg@minienw.nl
Portugal	Portuguese Environment Agency	Ms	Isabel	Lico	isabel.lico@ambiente.pt
Slovakia	Association of Industrial Ecology in Slovakia (ASPEK)	Mr	Michal	Fabus	ebae@aspek.sk
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