



**STANDARDS OF PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE
REQUIRED FOR RSA ACCREDITATION OF ENVIRONMENT
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AWARDS**

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION





1 INTRODUCTION

This publication sets out the minimum standards of practice and performance against which applications by award schemes for RSA accreditation will be assessed.

RSA Accreditation for environment and sustainable development award schemes grew out of the RSA Awards Forum work on guidance for good practice in running awards. The Forum exists to promote and improve Awards for the Environment and Sustainable Development, within the meaning of the United Nations Brundtland Commission Report 'Our Common Future' (1987) namely 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' Such Awards may cover a wide range of themes; clean or new energy, environment, sustainability or sustainable development, low carbon, resource efficiency and waste minimisation, water efficiency, environmental management, green issues and any other terminology which exists or develops and which touches on or covers the concept of sustainable development. These are set out more fully in the Forum's publication "A guide to good practice". For further information about the RSA please see www.rsa.org.uk

RSA Accreditation for environment and sustainable development award schemes was established in 2001 and continues to evolve. The criteria have been distilled from consideration of the arrangements, and experiences gained, from a large number of award schemes. They have been developed and edited by many people associated with the RSA and Government, who have been sponsors, organisers and entrants, with first hand knowledge of schemes. It has also had input from those wishing to stimulate and achieve higher standards of environmental performance and sustainable development.

RSA Accreditation provides a quality standard for such schemes to give potential entrants the confidence that the awards they are considering entering are worthwhile and meaningful. Accredited schemes are exemplars of good practice and act as feeder schemes for UK entrants to EBAE. The RSA is the only body recognised by the UK Government to accredit environmental and sustainable development award schemes.





2 THE SCHEME OBJECTIVES

The aims of the award scheme must be set out clearly and published by the organisers as a basis for guiding potential entrants. The Scheme objectives must be consistent with the Brundtland definition **‘development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’**

All schemes will focus on innovative aspects of technology, management or adoption of an existing technology in a new application. An award scheme may focus on a particular environmental aspect of sustainable development, however, it is desirable, but not essential for there to be due regard for all the other elements of sustainable development in determining the scheme objectives.



3 THE ORGANISERS

The people and organisations responsible for running an award scheme must be transparent to all concerned. It is then possible to take a view as to whether they are likely to have the experience and resources to manage an effective and worthwhile scheme. Previous experience in business, particularly relating to change management, public relations and to media promotion is likely to be advantageous. However it is important for organisers to make clear any business affiliations or vested interests they have and to ensure that such relationships do not have an influence on the selection of award winners.

In this regard it is desirable for the organisers to indicate their motivations for running an award scheme. These may reasonably include one or more of the following:

- a** To stimulate the adoption of good environmental practice and sustainable development by individuals and private and public organisations
- b** To stimulate innovation in science and technology
- c** To help promote examples of outstanding and innovative technology and practice to a wider audience
- d** To reward private and public organisations engaged in outstanding and innovative environmental practice
- e** To raise the public profile of the need for improving environmental practice
- f** To engage commerce and industry in sustainable development as a means of delivering better business

- g** To engage public sector bodies and individuals in sustainable development as a means of improving quality of life and the local environment
- h** To encourage sustainable development as a means of delivering better service
- i** To create and run a high quality, prestigious and viable awards scheme
- j** To make money for commercial organisers
- k** To fulfil the organisers' own objectives (the organiser will need to determine these clearly at the outset) in developing and managing the award scheme)



4 THE SPONSORS

The sponsors of an award scheme must be made clear. Provided this requirement is met there is no restriction on those who may sponsor an award.

The sponsors motivations for giving support to an award may include one or more of the following:

- a** To portray the sponsor's desire to support sustainable development
- b** To contribute to the sustainable development of society generally
- c** To stimulate innovation in science and technology related the sponsor's area of business
- d** To gain visibility for the sponsors name or product/service brands
- e** To deliver competitive advantage
- f** To develop a positive image for the sponsor, possibly where there have been negative associations in the past
- g** To encourage staff, customers and/or suppliers to feel well-disposed to the organisation





5 THE ENTRY CRITERIA

Award schemes must set out clearly the following minimum entry conditions;

- a** the geographical area from which entrants may apply
- b** the types of individuals and organisations which are eligible; conditions of entry which may apply to multinational organisations
- c** any requirements for entrants to have received awards previously
- d** any constraints on entrants with relationships to organisers and sponsors entries from sponsor and organiser organisations should not normally be accepted
- e** any requirements from the organisers for additional information and for access to the applicants premises for the purposes for a jury visit
- f** any conditions on publicity relating to entry or winning



6 THE ENTRY PROCESS

There must be clear and simple means of entry application including where possible:

On-line applications, clear indications of minimum and maximum information acceptable and required, prescribed formatting (including word counts etc.), clear deadlines for entry date and judging decision dates, a clear statement of how the entry will be handled (including confidentiality) from entry date, entry fees and when payable.





7 THE JUDGING CRITERIA

The judging criteria must be related to the entry conditions and to the stated objectives of the award scheme. The criteria must be clearly and openly stated so that entrants know how they will be judged.

- A** At a general level the judging criteria must, where appropriate to the terms of the award, cover the following aspects:
- a** quality of submission/application
 - b** degree of originality/innovation
 - c** the current relevance of the entry to society
 - d** evidence of substantive/measurable beneficial impacts (environmental, financial & social)
 - e** involvement of relevant stakeholders (i.e. Managers, staff, customers and general public)
 - f** component of continual improvement & sustainable approach
 - g** possibility of replication and wider application
- B** At a specific level the judging criteria should cover the criteria specific to the particular award objectives, as determined by the organisers and sponsors. It is suggested that the awards criteria reflect the aspects of the sustainable development objectives defined by Brundtland as set out in 2 above.

The weighting placed on each of the elements in the judging may not necessarily be equal.



8 THE JURY

A jury to assess the scheme entries and to select the winners must be composed of persons with a recognised reputation in subjects pertinent to the aims of the scheme. It must include persons with a range of specialities. A jury must be composed in such a way that the views of no one person can predominate. In particular it is important that the jury cannot be influenced overall by one juror, especially one representing a sponsor or an organiser. Jurors must be required to declare their affiliations and to abstain from commenting, otherwise than to provide impartial factual information, or judging entries from their affiliated organisations. What is required is an independent and balanced panel of sceptical but well informed jurors.

Where possible jurors should be chosen and named before the closing date for entries, and at the latest must be announced publicly before judging commences. Particular care is needed if jurors, who are affiliated, in some way, with sponsors or organisers are used.

The jury must be clearly advised of the aims of the scheme, the criteria to be used for the assessment of the entries, and be provided with a systematic scheme for the assessment process.

The scheme documents must include a statement to the effect that the jury's decision is final and that the jury has been advised that if it is of the opinion that no entry is worthy of an award, then no award will be made.



9 THE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

The organisers should, possibly in conjunction with potential jurors, prepare a formalised assessment procedure which is transparent to entrants and presented to the jury. The procedure will take account of the criteria for the specific award and of the more general criteria associated with sustainable development and the entry conditions laid out for the award.



10 THE AWARDS

The organisers must provide a statement to potential entrants of the nature of the awards the winners will receive. They must also publish any conditions, such as access by media interests to the organisation and to their spokespersons required of winners.



11 CELEBRATION OF THE AWARDS

The organisers must publish details of the type of event which will be organised to celebrate the presentation of awards together with details of the involvement expected of winning organisations.

If there is an awards ceremony to announce winners then it is valuable to provide details to the audience and to the media of the achievements of the winners.



12 PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

The organisers must prepare a publicity campaign both to attract entrants and to celebrate the selection of winners. This should include the type of promotion which the winners can expect after the presentation of awards.



13 INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Awards themselves must develop and innovate. They must keep pace with or precede advances in Sustainable Development if they are to succeed in recognising and celebrating true excellence in innovation in the environment and sustainable development.



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