

Innovation Award – Guidance Notes

Innovation Award Information

The Innovation Award is for companies developing new ways to benefit Greater London communities, whether by utilising their unique position to address an often overlooked social issue, by challenging the way we think about an entrenched issue, or by finding new ways to achieve impact on an issue, for example, through technology. The Award is for those that understand the benefits of innovation - both as an important driver for long-term social impact and for engaging their workforce. Business of all sizes, including SMEs, should apply (environmental initiatives are not eligible).

Eligibility

- One or more of the following should be true of the initiative entered in this category:
 - Your initiative changes the way in which social impact is achieved in your chosen area/issue e.g. through technology.
 - Your initiative challenges others, people or organisations, to think and act in new ways about your chosen social area/issue.
 - Your initiative addresses a social issue rarely addressed by businesses.
- This award is open to applications from private sector businesses and public bodies having an impact in Greater London. Businesses and public bodies may use the application form to make an application for their own organisation or to nominate a third-party business or public body. Charities, schools, community groups and social enterprises are not eligible to apply in this category but may nominate a business or public body.
- The Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards recognise and celebrate organisations going **beyond their core business product** or service to have a social impact. Applications will be disqualified if the initiative described is judged to form part or an extension of the organisation's core commercial and/or delivery activities, e.g. a local authority providing a statutory service to the community or a business whose purpose is to broker employee volunteering.
- Public bodies must be able to demonstrate that their project is outside of their normal business mandate.
- The same initiative cannot be submitted in more than one category. All partners involved in the same initiative must decide which category it best fits into and submit one application to that category only.
- If your initiative was shortlisted in 2018 you can apply again with the same initiative (or another) in any category, however the judges will be looking for ways in which your initiative has developed over the past year and you should make this clear in your application.
- If your initiative won an Award in (2018), it should not be entered in any category for the three years following receiving the Award. For example, any initiative that won in 2018 should not be entered again until 2022. When submitting in following years the initiative should have had substantial changes made to it since winning the Award. You may apply with a different initiative to this year's Dragon Awards.

Your Initiative

The initiative described in your application must benefit Greater London communities. Your initiative can benefit beyond Greater London, but it would be outside of scope. Wider activity would not be counted in your application, so should only be referenced to give wider context for your work.

We are interested in how your organisation is addressing a social issue by using your influence and resources to benefit Greater London communities e.g. residents, charities, schools, community organisations, small businesses and social enterprises, etc.

If your initiative is part of a wider programme with other organisations, you should focus on the impact your business has made specifically rather than the programme as a whole.

Where two or more organisations are working in partnership on the same initiative, only one application should be submitted. Please make it clear if you are making a joint application.

Applications are encouraged from organisations that work with a number of different community partners, and from organisations that have chosen one partner to invest significant time and resources into.

Examples of Innovation Award Initiatives (this list is not exhaustive):

- Programmes can include work such as using technology to scale a response to a problem.
- Running programmes to support staff or people in the wider community who might be dealing with a social issue rarely addressed by businesses.
- Influencing other businesses in your supply chains to think in new ways about a social issue by making research available to others and sharing learning so other businesses can benefit from it and replicate it.

What are the Judges Looking for?

Depending on your initiative, not all of the below may apply but a majority of these indicators should be in place:

- Support from senior management and/or progress reported to senior manager(s).
- The social impact activities have relevance to your core business activities and stakeholders.
- A strategy exists to demonstrate your purpose and how you will achieve it.
- Qualitative and/or quantitative measurements to track progress are in place and demonstrate impact.
- A strong, long-term commitment to social impact and, if relevant, one or more community organisations.
- The activity is linked to staff learning and development.
- Evidence that the initiative has had a positive impact on your business, e.g. improving company culture or making organisational practices more inclusive.

Judges' Tips

- Don't assume knowledge – ask someone who doesn't know the initiative to tell you where the gaps are.
- Inspire us – show how you have responded to a real need, leveraged your capabilities to respond to that need, and made an impact.
- Talk about the future – we want to know what happens next, how will the impact be sustained.

Previous Winners

Please follow the link to see video's of previous winners in the Innovation Award category.

[Winners videos](#)

Completing the Application

Company Details - Section 1 (Not scored)

Guidance for this section can be found within the online application form itself. If you have any further questions, please get in touch with us at DragonAwards@cityoflondon.gov.uk.

Your Initiative - Section 2 (Scored)

The Awards' judges will only be able to take into account the information you supply in your application in the scored questions. With a tight word count, it is important to make every word count.

To do well you must be able to demonstrate substantial impact. Generally, if your programme has been running for less than one year you may not have sufficient data.

- Each question will be scored on a scale from 0 – 10.
- If a question is left unanswered, zero points will be awarded.
- Please be aware of the weighting for each question.

Question 1. How and why was this initiative chosen?

This question will count for 20% of your total score. [300 words maximum]

To score highly in this question, please try to include information regarding as many of the below points as possible:

- How the need was identified.
- Your aims and objectives for the initiative.
- How these link to your business objectives.
- Your innovation and why it is important/necessary.

Question 2. What difference has this initiative made to your business, your beneficiaries and wider society (qualitative and quantitative)?

This question will count for 20% of your total score. [450 words maximum]

The judges will be looking for the impact of your initiative and the benefits to your community partners, beneficiaries, your business, staff and any others relevant e.g. other businesses impacted as a result. Where possible, this should include how much progress has been made since the initiative started i.e. Where you started and where you are now. Please focus your answer on the impact made.

Further information about measuring impact can be found [here](#).

Please feel free to use bullet points. Companies unable to complete Question 2 in quantitative business terms (e.g. staff retention rates increased by x %) should explain why they do not have quantitative evidence and instead supply anecdotal evidence.

Judges will evaluate overall impact relative to inputs (i.e. how much resource is dedicated to the project), so smaller companies will not be disadvantaged.

You **MUST** include evidence of the impact on your business and your community partner at a minimum. To score highly in this question, try to include quantitative and qualitative evidence of impact on as many of the following as possible:

- Impact on people and society (e.g. change in people's behaviour, skills, wellbeing, life circumstances, increased opportunities, increased employment opportunities).
- Impact on community organisations (e.g. change in services or reach, change in systems and processes, change in public profile, change in staff, culture or volunteers).
- Business impact on employees (e.g. change in staff skills, well-being, behaviours).
- Business impact on the organisation (e.g. change in staff loyalty, retention or productivity, recruitment practices or diversity, change in reputation, brand awareness, commercial outcomes, change in operations, culture).
- Impact on relevant others (e.g. change in behaviour of other businesses, piloting a new approach for the sector, encouraging other businesses to get involved).

Qualitative evidence of impact

- Short case studies from community beneficiaries.
- Quotes from employee volunteers.
- Quotes from business or community leadership, such as CEOs.

Quantitative evidence of impact

- Statistics that demonstrate improvements for the community, such as the percentage of people in the project who reported improved skills or the percentage increase in procurement spend going to social enterprises who in turn have a social impact.

- Statistics that demonstrate improvements for the community partner, e.g. money saved from a new IT system brought in on the advice of employee volunteers or increased visibility through a business campaigning on an issue to audiences not normally reached by the community organisation.
- Statistics that demonstrate improvements for the business, e.g. the percentage of employee volunteers who reported an increase in their communication skills as a result of volunteering or a shift in company policy to become London Living Wage accredited with details of increased staff engagement and improved external reputation as a result.

Question 3. How is your initiative distinctive or fundamentally different from other approaches?

This question will count for 40% of your total score. [800 words maximum]

This is your opportunity to tell the judges why your initiative is eligible for the Innovation Award category. They will be looking for evidence of the following when scoring this question:

- What is different and innovative about the initiative.
- How your initiative changes the way in which impact is achieved in your chosen area/issue AND/OR.
- How your initiative addresses a social issue rarely addressed by businesses.
- What, if any, gaps in other existing interventions your initiative fills.
- What about your approach makes it more successful than others.
- What you are most proud of.

Question 4. What plans do you have for the future?

This question will count for 20% of your total score. [300 words maximum]

The judges will be looking for evidence of a sustainable programme. Please consider the following when answering this question:

- How you are using monitoring and evaluation.
- How you have resolved any challenges so far and any improvements you plan to make.
- Any plans to scale the initiative.
- If the initiative will be used to inform future decision making.
- If you will influence others to adopt your innovative approach.