

Accelerator Award – Guidance Notes and Scoring Guide

Accelerator Award Information

The Accelerator Award is for businesses that are multiplying their impact in Greater London by enabling others to succeed. It celebrates organisations that support small businesses, social enterprises and charities to start up, grow or become more sustainable and impactful, in turn creating a vibrant ecosystem that benefits people and communities across the capital. Business of all sizes, including SMEs, should apply.

Eligibility

- One or more of the following should be true of the initiative entered in this category:
 - Your business is - creating social impact in Greater London through initiatives that support SMEs, social enterprises or charities to start up, grow or become more sustainable and impactful.
 - Your business is reducing barriers to supply chain opportunities for SMEs, social enterprises or charities.
- 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 this 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 procurement opportunities for social enterprises.
- 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 2017 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.
- If your initiative won an award in (2017), it should not be entered in any category for three years following receiving the Award. For example, any initiative that won in 2017 should not be entered again until 2021. 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 people and communities in Greater London e.g. residents, charities, schools, community organisations, small businesses and social enterprises. This list is not exhaustive.

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.

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 Accelerator Award Initiatives (this list is not exhaustive):

- Reducing barriers to supply chain opportunities for SMEs, social enterprises, or charities.
- Working with a community organisation, SME or social enterprise to improve its long-term financial stability.
- Providing pro bono or peer to peer coaching schemes, staff training, back office support.
- Helping a community organisation to develop commercial services to diversify income generation.
- Supporting SMEs, social enterprises or charities to grow and create jobs.

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.
- The impact is communicated internally and externally.
- The initiative is innovative in its approach.
- 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 a video of last year's winner in this category.

[UBS](#)

This Award has evolved from the 'Future Proofing Charities Award'. Previous winners videos from this category can be found [here](#). Please be aware that the Award is no longer solely for businesses working with charities and now includes businesses working with SMEs, social enterprises and community organisations.

Completing the Application

Company Details - Section 1 (Not scored)

Your Application

Where two or more private sector business or public sector organisations are working in equal partnership on an initiative, only one joint application can be made. In this case, please give the names of all the companies involved. In the event that a joint application should win, all parties will receive awards.

If you are nominating an organisation for this Award this section should include the details of the organisation you are nominating.

Please ensure all names of community organisations and businesses are written as you would like them to appear in any written materials such as in press articles, on award trophies or certificates.

You must discuss this application with any organisations listed on the application form as well as your Chief Executive or equivalent before submitting the application.

Applicant Contact Details

If you are submitting a joint application, please only provide one set of primary contact details (indicating which organisation they are for) and one secondary contact.

All correspondence regarding your application will be directed to the primary contact listed. If the primary contact changes any time after your application has been submitted, please email us at DragonAwards@cityoflondon.gov.uk to let us know. If we are unable to get in touch with the primary contact, we will try the secondary contact.

Organisation Overview

If available/applicable, please break down your total number of employees by London, UK, global.

If available/applicable, please break down your company turnover by UK, EMEA and global.

The Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards evaluate a business' achievements relative to their size and resources; as a result, we've awarded twelve small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the last six years, averaging 2 SME winners a year. As well as the option for awarding one category winner, all categories carry the possibility for two Dragons to be awarded - one for an SME business winner and one for a larger business winner.

An SME is a business with fewer than 250 employees and less than €50 million (£44.2 million) turnover across the whole company ([full description here](#)).

Please list all relevant Twitter handles for you and your partner organisations. Please indicate who each handle is for. We may tweet you throughout the Awards process. Please do follow us and engage via [@Dragon Awards](#).

Nominating Organisation

If you are nominating an organisation, please include your details in this section. If you are applying on behalf of your own organisation, please skip these questions. You must discuss the application with the organisation you are nominating before you make the application.

Business and Initiative Overview

These questions are for the judges' reference only and are not scored. The judges will use these questions to help put the application in context for them.

Case Study – please provide us with a short case study. This will not be scored but will be used to pitch your initiative to press. This should therefore tell an engaging story in less than 300 words, which summarises why and what you have done, with a focus on what has changed as a result, within your business and in society.

Highlights in Numbers

This information will be used by the Awards team to measure the aggregated impact of each year's applicant cohort. It will also be used by the judging panels to gain a further understanding of an initiative's impact by taking into account the relative size of an organisation and resources available.

Your Initiative - Section 2 (Scored)

Please also refer to the scoring guide at the bottom of this document for a guide on what will score highly for each question in this section.

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.

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.
- Why you chose to work with any partners involved.
- Your aims and objectives for the initiative.
- How these link to your business objectives.

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

This question will count for 45% of your total score. [800 words maximum]

The judges will be looking for the impact of your initiative and the benefits to your business, employees, any beneficiary organisations (SMEs, social enterprises or charities), members of the public and wider society, 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, and how the initiative has been integrated into wider business values and practices. 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, beneficiary organisation and wider society 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. new jobs created, change in people's behaviour, skills, wellbeing, life circumstances, increased opportunities, increased employment opportunities).
- Impact on SMEs, social enterprises or 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 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 beneficiary, 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 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 different from other approaches?

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

This is your opportunity to tell the judges why your initiative stands out and why it should win the award. Please consider the following when answering this question:

- What makes your initiative different?
- Does your initiative change the way in which impact is achieved in this area?
- Does your initiative challenge others, people or organisations, to think in new ways about the issue you are addressing?
- What, if any gaps in other initiatives does your initiative fill?

- What are you most proud of?

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

Question 4 will count for 15% of your total score. [200 words maximum]:

The judges will be looking for evidence of a sustainable initiative. 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.

Scoring Guide – Accelerator Award

Please note:

- This guidance is for the Accelerator Award. Each Award category has its own Scoring Guide that can be found on the relevant category page.
- 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.

	Excellent <i>(10 points)</i>	Satisfactory <i>(5 points)</i>	Poor <i>(1 points)</i>
<p>Q.1 – How and why was this initiative chosen?</p> <p><i>20% of final score</i></p>	<p>There is strong evidence of a robust and thorough process for choosing the initiative, which addresses a proven societal and business need.</p> <p>The rationale for choosing/designing this specific initiative is compelling, with ambitious aims and objectives that are clearly defined and strategically linked to and embedded in core business objectives and values.</p>	<p>There is reasonable evidence of a process for choosing the initiative, though it is unclear how the initiative is linked to a proven business and societal need.</p> <p>The initiative has clearly defined aims and objectives, which bear some relevance to the business’s strategy and values.</p>	<p>There is no clear evidence of the process behind selecting the initiative and no rationale is provided for why the initiative was chosen.</p> <p>The aims and objectives of the initiative have not been clearly communicated and there is no indication of a link to strategic priorities or business values.</p>
<p>Q.2- What difference has this initiative made (qualitative and quantitative)?</p> <p><i>45% of final score</i></p>	<p>There is strong evidence of positive impact across the board, with the partnership having made an impressive difference to beneficiaries, wider society, employees and the business. The impact meets the project’s aims and objectives, and may go further, producing unexpected benefits.</p> <p>The evidence provided is robust and convincing; with a vast amount of quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources that illustrate lasting impact on all stakeholder groups.</p>	<p>There is reasonable evidence of positive impact on some stakeholders, with the partnership having made some difference to beneficiaries, wider society, employees and the business. There has been a satisfactory attempt at linking impact to the project aims and objectives.</p> <p>The evidence provided includes both quantitative and qualitative data but is not consistently robust i.e. the data provided for beneficiary impact is extensive, whereas the business impact is not well demonstrated by the data.</p>	<p>There is no clear evidence of the beneficiary, societal, employee or business impact. There is likely to be a focus on project outputs instead of the impact of these activities.</p>

	Additional impact has been generated through influencing or sharing best practice with others.	Some evidence may focus on outputs more than impact.	
Q.3- How is your initiative distinctive or different from other approaches? <i>20% of final score</i>	There is clear and convincing evidence that the initiative applies significant innovation in its approach and is successful as a result. This may be through tackling an entrenched social issue in a convincingly new and improved way, purposefully and ambitiously addressing an issue that is often overlooked and making some progress in it, or challenging and inspiring others to think about issues in a new way, which has led to innovation elsewhere. The initiative absolutely fills a gap in the market, and could be used as a best practice example to encourage others.	The initiative has some distinctive attributes, which are not widely seen in other initiatives. There has been an attempt to be innovative in the approach and to fill a gap in the market. However, there has been limited success in tackling an entrenched social issue in a new way, purposefully addressing an issue that is often overlooked, or challenging others to think about an issue in a new way.	The initiative has no distinct features, does not fill a gap in the market, and lacks innovation in its approach. As a result, there has been no success in tackling an entrenched social issue in a new way, purposefully addressing an issue that is often overlooked, or challenging others to think about an issue in a new way.
Q.4 – What plans do you have for the future? <i>15% of final score</i>	Future plans have been clearly defined and agreed by partners with the potential impact on all stakeholders in mind. There is a clear strategy for continuing or ending the initiative, as appropriate, and partners have a clear rationale for how they will proceed, be that by scaling or modifying the programme or by moving on from the partnership. The impact of the partnership will be sustained through knowledge sharing and by applying learning from the initiative to other relationships, as well as future decision-making within the organisation.	Information regarding future plans has been provided, but there is little evidence that the impact of these decisions on stakeholders has been taken into account. It is not clear whether the impact of the initiative will be sustained in some way. Use of monitoring and evaluation to overcome challenges and improve impact has not been communicated.	There is no evidence of any thinking about the future of the initiative and the answer provides little reassurance that any impact will be sustained or any lessons learned.