

Social Impact Award – Guidance Notes

Social Impact Award Information

The Social Impact Award is for businesses that are using their resources, expertise and influence to support local communities in Greater London to start up, grow or become more impactful.

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 business is creating social impact in Greater London through initiatives that support organisations delivering social impact to start up, grow or become more sustainable and impactful
 - Your business is reducing barriers to supply chain opportunities for organisations delivering social impact
- 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 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 2022 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 2022, it should not be entered in any category for the three years following receiving the Award. For example, any initiative that won in 2022 should not be entered again until 2026. 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 Lord Mayor'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. 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 Boosting Social Impact Award Initiatives (this list is not exhaustive):

- Reducing barriers to supply chain opportunities for organisations delivering social impact
- Working with a community organisation, social enterprise or charity to improve its long-term financial stability
- Providing in-kind or peer to peer coaching schemes, staff training, back office support
- Helping a community organisation to develop commercial services to diversify income generation
- Supporting community organisations, 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 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 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 videos of previous winners in this category.

[Winners videos](#)

This Award has evolved from the 'Boosting Social Impact Award'.

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
- 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.

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 innovative and 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 or innovative?
- 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?

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