



Globe of Honour 2024

Chief Adjudicator's Report

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In 2024, 10 submissions were received for the Globe of Honour awards and 9 (90%) of these were adjudged to have reached the pass standard.

There is no quota of Globes to be awarded and nor will there be in future years. If every applicant meets the minimum criteria, every applicant will be awarded a Globe of Honour.

General Comments

A maximum of 60 marks are available for the written aspect of the Globe of Honour application. Applicants must score a minimum of 45 marks to remain eligible with a minimum of two individual responses being scored within the top mark band (11-15 marks). Submissions become ineligible for a Globe of Honour should any individual responses be scored within the lower mark band (0-5 marks).

With the pass standard set high (45 out of 60), it is important to score well on each question. One or two weak answers will put the pass standard out of reach. As in previous years, the highest-scoring applicants answered all aspects of each question and adhered closely to the marking scheme, and it was evident that the advice to read the prior year's Chief Adjudicators Report had been taken. This allowed them to give a much more complete answer and so access the top mark band for each question. Notwithstanding this improvement applicants are again reminded to read the Chief Adjudicator's Report from the previous year prior to completing the application as this report provides helpful insight, comments, and direction on what is required when completing the application; the webinar hosted earlier this year and available online is another helpful guide. While not wanting to be overly critical, the Chief Adjudicator believes it is important to again emphasise that greater care should be taken when completing these applications. The Globe of Honour honors excellence in environmental management, and when applicants fail to fully address the questions or provide incomplete answers, it suggests a lack of respect for this scheme. This, in turn, is detrimental to the environmental management profession.

Applicants are again reminded that the mark scheme is made available to applicants for reference when completing their application; this mark scheme should be considered throughout the application process. The Chief Adjudicator is of the belief that these documents are often neglected by some of the lower-scoring applicants - something which needlessly risks their achievement of the award, **this was especially evident this year as the marking scheme called for a number of examples in each question only the highest scoring applicants actioned this.**

The highest-scoring applicants adhered to the requirement that responses to each question must not exceed 750 words (i.e., 3,000 words overall per submission) and provided clear, succinct, and well-structured answers supported with examples where required.

I am pleased to report that there were a large number of high quality, well written and well-structured submissions again this year. It was obvious that a considerable amount of preparation, thought, time and effort had been put into these submissions for which the applicants concerned are to be commended, the use of examples to support the answer and illustrate the point was evident this year and the adjudicating team commented on how helpful this was and that it provided for a more complete and engaging answer.

Main Business Activities

Whilst marks are not awarded for this section, it is important that applicants clearly describe the main business activities, the personnel involved and the most significant environmental risks and issues. Indeed, this section underpins the whole application as it helps to put the rest of the submission into context and provides the adjudicator with a valuable insight into the organisation, its operation and risk profile. Most applicants this year provided a comprehensive summary of the main business activities, employee profile, key risks, and operational aspects. However, some did not adequately set out the most significant environmental risks or issues.

Q1: With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Environmental Sustainability Audit:

Explain, using examples, how you intend to use life-cycling thinking to enhance your Environmental Sustainability performance?

Implementing life-cycle thinking (LCT) allows organisations to take a holistic view of their products and processes, leading to improved environmental sustainability performance. By assessing and addressing impacts at every stage of a product's life, companies can reduce their ecological footprint, meet regulatory requirements, and respond to growing consumer demand for sustainable practices. LCT is an approach that considers the environmental impacts of a product or service throughout its entire life cycle—from raw material extraction through production, use, and disposal. By applying LCT, organisations can identify opportunities to enhance their environmental sustainability performance; only the highest scoring applicants demonstrated that they understood this and could practically apply it.

Applicants provided a range of examples as to how they do/plan to implement this approach effectively – these included discussion(s) around raw material selection for example the use of sustainable materials such as reclaimed wood or bamboo instead of traditional hardwood in furniture manufacturing as this reduces the impact of deforestation and minimises the carbon footprint associated with sourcing new materials.

The highest scoring applicants made reference to eco-design and energy efficiency during production and discussed both assembly and disassembly along with methods of manufacture i.e. use of renewable energy.

Applicants generally discussed transportation impact, product use and end of life management which demonstrated an understanding of LCT and their role therein.

High scoring applicants explored consumer education, collaboration with suppliers and ongoing innovation and research.

Reference to the Five Star Environmental Sustainability audit was clear and consistent in the main.

Q2: With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Environmental Sustainability Audit:

Describe how your Five Star Environmental Sustainability audit(s) have helped you enhance your ESG performance at all levels of your organisation.

Sustainability audits are comprehensive evaluations of an organisation's practices and impacts regarding environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors. Conducting these audits can significantly enhance ESG performance across all levels of an organisation lead to improvements. Furthermore, sustainability audits are vital tools for organisations aiming to enhance their ESG performance as by identifying strengths and weaknesses, fostering stakeholder engagement, and driving continuous improvement, these audits help organisations align their operations with sustainability principles, ultimately leading to better environmental, social, and governance outcomes.

Examples given, with a clear line of sight back to the Five Star Environmental Sustainability audit included identifying areas for improvement, enhancing regulatory compliance and engaging employees. Higher scoring applicants made reference, with examples, to improving supply chain sustainability, stakeholder engagement (especially shareholders) and improvements in data and reporting.

I would have like to see more reference to driving Innovation as audits often uncover opportunities for innovative practices that reduce environmental impact. For instance, a manufacturing company might find ways to repurpose waste materials, creating new products and reducing overall waste. I would also like to see more reference to setting benchmarks and goals as audits provide a baseline measurement of current ESG performance, enabling organisations to set realistic and measurable sustainability goals. For instance, a company may aim to reduce water usage by 20% over the next five years based on audit findings.

Organisational resilience is an area that interfaces with sustainability, and I would encourage applicants to consider how sustainability audits can be used to identify risks related to climate change and other ESG factors. Identifying these can help organisations to develop strategies to mitigate these risks. For instance, a company may invest in more resilient infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events, ensuring long-term operational continuity.

Finally, I would encourage applicants to think about how their work can help to foster a culture of sustainability - regular sustainability audits can help embed a culture of sustainability within the organisation. For example, the findings can be used to develop training programs, instilling sustainable practices in employees' daily operations, that they can also take home.

Q3: Reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Environmental Sustainability Audit is NOT required to answer this question:

Using examples, describe how your organisation contribute to the biodiversity crisis and what measures would your organisation further undertake to help address this critical global issue.

By understanding how its operations contribute to the biodiversity crisis, an organisation can take proactive measures to mitigate its impact and promote sustainability. Implementing these measures not only helps address the critical global issue of biodiversity loss but can also enhance the organisation's reputation, compliance, and (as mentioned in the previous question) overall resilience. Organisations can contribute to the biodiversity crisis through various activities, such as habitat destruction, pollution, and resource overexploitation. Below are some of the examples given as to how an organisation might contribute to this crisis and what measures it could implement to mitigate its impact:

Habitat destruction: an organisation might clear large areas of land for new developments, disrupting local ecosystems and displacing native species. This can lead to the loss of biodiversity in the area; habitat loss is one of the leading causes of species extinction, as many organisms depend on specific habitats for survival.

Pollution: an organisation could release pollutants into nearby water bodies during production processes, harming aquatic life and degrading water quality; pollution can result in the death of organisms, disrupt reproductive cycles, and diminish overall biodiversity in affected ecosystems.

Overexploitation of resources: an organisation company may engage in unsustainable fishing practices, such as overfishing certain species without regard for their reproductive rates; overfishing can lead to population declines, disrupting marine ecosystems and threatening species with extinction.

Higher scoring applicants also made reference to invasive species, broader climate change and the role of leadership in keeping sustainability discussions a priority.

Examples include how an organisation might inadvertently introduce non-native species to new areas through its practices, such as planting invasive crops that outcompete local flora and how invasive species can outcompete, prey on, or bring diseases to native species, significantly reducing biodiversity. Also, how in terms of climate change a fossil fuel company might contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, leading to climate change that alters habitats and threatens species with shifting climate zones; leading to habitat loss, altered migration patterns, and increased extinction rates.

In terms of action taken to address the biodiversity impact, applicants discussed how implementing sustainable practices helped to minimise habitat destruction and support local ecosystems. Also, how pollution reduction would improve water quality and support the health of aquatic ecosystems.

Highest scoring applicants discussed sustainable resource management and how this supported the overall health of ecosystems. They also discussed factors such as investing in renewable energy, restoration and regeneration projects and engaging in conservation partnerships.

I would encourage applicants to consider further how employee engagement, training and awareness could play a role. Specifically how the provision of training programs for employees on biodiversity conservation and sustainable practices could lead to increased awareness and engagement among employees how this is another route to fostering a culture of sustainability within an organisation.

Q4: With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Environmental Sustainability Audit:

Demonstrate how your organisation has planned the journey to a NET-ZERO future and what methods the organisation uses and will use to achieve this.

Planning a journey to a net-zero future involves a strategic approach that encompasses emissions reduction, resource management, and stakeholder engagement. Organisations should effectively plan and implement their net-zero strategy, along with methods to achieve this ambitious goal. By strategically planning their journey to net-zero, organisations can significantly contribute to global efforts to combat climate change while also reaping the benefits of improved efficiency, cost savings, and enhanced reputation. Employing a combination of targeted actions and stakeholder engagement ensures that the organisation remains accountable and on track toward achieving its net-zero goals.

Organisations shared a range of approaches to plan a journey to net-zero – the consistent starting point being to assess current emissions. Applicants shared how they conducted a comprehensive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory to identify current emissions sources, including Scope 1 (direct), Scope 2 (indirect energy-related), and Scope 3 (other indirect emissions) categories; this assessment provided a baseline for understanding the organisation’s carbon footprint and helps prioritise reduction efforts. Examples of how this was done in house and via external consultants was shared.

Applicants shared how they set clear and, in some examples, “Science-Based Targets” and how establishing targets that align with global climate goals, such as the Paris Agreement, helped to define short-term and long-term targets for emissions reduction – leading to a roadmap for progress that enabled the organisation to track improvements over time via a comprehensive action plan. The highest scoring applicants discussed how they created a detailed action plan that outlined specific initiatives, timelines, and responsibilities for achieving net-zero goals. They went on to discuss how this plan was used to address all operational areas, including energy use, transportation, waste, and supply chain. This structured approach ensures that all aspects of the organisation are aligned with the net-zero objective, and I would encourage applicants to adopt this as a best practice.

Applicants went on to discuss stakeholder engagement, with the highest scoring applicants covering employees, suppliers, customers, and investors in the planning process to build support and encourage collaboration on sustainability initiatives – recognising that engaged stakeholders are more likely to contribute positively to the organisation’s net-zero journey and adopt sustainable practices.

Finally, most applicants discussed monitoring and reporting on progress and how implementing a monitoring system to track emissions reductions and other sustainability metrics regularly was essential. Higher scoring applicants made reference to annual reporting and third-party verification to support transparency and accountability.

Methods to achieve net-zero included energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy adoption, sustainable transportation, waste reduction and circular economy thinking.

Carbon Offsetting and investment in carbon offset projects, such as reforestation or renewable energy projects, to compensate for unavoidable emissions were touched on and there was a general understanding that offsetting can help balance out emissions while contributing to sustainable development initiatives.

I would like to see more discussion on sustainable supply chain management and exploration and reference to how suppliers are engaged with to adopt sustainable practices, conduct life-cycle assessments, and promote the use of low-carbon materials and processes; enhancing supply chain sustainability reduces the overall carbon footprint of products and services.

Highest scoring applicants discussed research and innovation and how investment in research and development as a means to explore new technologies and practices for reducing emissions and enhancing sustainability was essential as innovative solutions can lead to breakthrough improvements in efficiency and sustainability – which is positive for organisations and society overall.