



## IR Society Best Practice Awards - FAQs

### What are the IR Society Awards?

The annual awards have run for nearly 2 decades and are a celebration of companies that wish to demonstrate their commitment to leading investor communications. This important Society initiative is regularly reviewed by the Best Practice Committee and represents an integral part of the Society's mandate to promote best practice in IR.

### What are the benefits and why should I enter?

The business environment is challenging, recognition is scarce, time is short and entering our awards is an opportunity to demonstrate what a major difference each one of us can make to the companies we represent:

- Evidence excellence – to win or to be shortlisted, shows that you have reached the very highest standard, as judged by leading experts
- Raise your profile – with your peers, internal and external stakeholders, strengthening your corporate reputation
- Make your company proud - it's a great recognition for all the hard work, commitment and dedication that goes in every day
- Reflect on your work – the process of entering the awards often helps one to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation's communications strategies and provides a springboard of ideas on what to focus on for the future
- Incentive to improve - the competitive nature of the Awards provides an opportunity to challenge the internal 'status quo'

### How many different awards are there?

There are up to 5 *Self-entry* Award categories:

- Most effective overall communication of company investment proposition
- Best communications of ESG
- Most effective use of digital communications
- Best IR relating to a corporate transaction
- Best annual report

There are up to 4 *Voted* Award categories with input from Extel Surveys, an Institutional Investor company:

- Best newcomer to IR (individual)
- Best investor relations officer (individual)
- Best overall company IR (company)
- Best investor engagement (Buy-side firm)

### **Who can enter?**

The awards are open to all companies under 5 main categories for the Self-entry Awards, including: FTSE 100; FTSE 250; Small cap & AIM; and International. These companies must be quoted on a recognised stock exchange.

### **How do I enter and how long does it take?**

Companies/agencies can enter as many awards as they wish. Just complete the online self-entry form and download the relevant guidance notes for each award you wish to enter. This year you can submit your entry forms and written entry statement directly online along with any additional supporting information and payment. All in all, your submission, including the written entry statement should take no more than a few hours to complete. Any other hard copy materials, such as annual reports, to support your entry should be sent to Laura Hayter at the IR Society by post. written entry statement should take you

### **What is the difference between the Self-entry awards and the Voted Awards?**

The Self-entry Awards require a company and or its agency to submit an entry on the prescribed entry form provided by the IR Society. This information can all be found online under the IR Society website: [www.irsociety.org.uk](http://www.irsociety.org.uk)

The Voted Awards, run in partnership with Extel Surveys, generally address a large buy- and sell-side audience who vote for the nominations under each category. Nominations can be submitted by a company and or anyone else in line with the same timetable as the Self-entry awards. Once nominations close, Extel Surveys undertake a voting process that results in a short list of the top nominees for the Voted Awards. If you are nominated, it makes sense to let your buy- and sell-side contacts know given they may wish to vote for you/your company!

### **When do the award entries open for 2019?**

The 2019 Best Practice Awards, both Self-entry Awards and nominations for the Voted Awards, will be launched on 21 March 2019.

### **What is the deadline for award entries?**

The 2019 Best Practice Awards entries and nominations will close on 30 June 2019.

### **When will the short lists and winners be announced?**

The short lists for both the self-entry and voted awards will be announced in October, at least a month before the IR Society Annual Awards dinner, on **19 November**, when the winners are announced.

### **If my company is international, but listed on the UK Stock Exchange, which category should I enter for?**

If your company is listed on the FTSE 100 or FTSE 250 index or AIM or any other UK index, then it will be entered under the relevant category for UK listed companies. If the company is not listed in the UK, then it will be entered in the international category (wherever the company is based).

## **What does the judging process entail? Who are the judges?**

Entries for the Self-entry Awards are scored against criteria based on the Society's guidelines for best practice in investor communications, which can be found [here](#). The scoring of entries is completed on both a qualitative (50%) and quantitative (50%) basis.

The qualitative element is a supporting entry statement of up to 600 words and gives the company an opportunity to share their approach to the award and to highlight what works for them and their audience. Potentially, this should be an important opportunity to differentiate your company and investor communications for your target audience.

For the quantitative element, judges will consider a set of criteria for assessment. There are different judging criteria for each of the Self-entry Award categories, guidance notes for which can be found [online here](#).

We also receive expert input from independent third parties, including Alliance Manchester Business School, Edinburgh University Business School and Lancaster Management School, for example, who assess the entries. Short lists are submitted to a panel of judges drawn from users of annual reports and accounts – you can view highlights from the 2018 judging panel [here](#).

In 2018, the judging panel included industry professionals, academics, professional bodies, regulators and other interested parties who make up our IR community. We aim to add to the panel each year and a full list appears on the IR Society website.

## **What if my company's annual report isn't published until after the deadline – am I eligible to enter?**

All entries need to have been published before the entry deadline of 30 June 2019. Any entries for *Best Annual Report*, *Best Communication of ESG*, and *Most Effective Overall Communication of Company Investment Proposition* should be accompanied by one printed copy of the relevant annual report and any other supporting documentation by 30 June 2019. If you have delivered a digital-first report, you may also enter this for consideration – please highlight the URL for judges to consider. You can still enter even if your company's report is inaccessible online. However, to assist with the judging process, please indicate in your entry the pages or sections of your annual report, website or investor presentations where key information is covered/ can be found, and you can specify the date when the report will go live, including, within reason, if this occurs after 30 June 2019.

## **Are there any new awards this year?**

Through the work of the Best Practice committee we continually review and adapt our awards criteria in line with best practice. This year we have further refined our ESG award, now named 'Best communication of ESG', adapted from our previous prize 'Most effective integration of ESG', which greater reflects the rapidly evolving environment in investor engagement on environmental, social and governmental issues. Importantly, evidence of governance and overall stewardship is becoming a key factor to investors. Business is expected to adopt a more thoughtful approach to a wider societal purpose, and we wish to see this addressed. We believe that a real opportunity exists for companies to be proactive in setting out their long-term strategies against a defined reporting framework and ESG issues when engaging with the investment community and we encourage companies to move in this direction.

To reflect changing market conditions, we have also adapted our 'Best IPO IR communications' award, and which is now called 'Best IR relating to a corporate transaction.' For this award we are

looking for evidence of effective and successful investor relations activity relating to a corporate transaction, which may be defined as an IPO, a merger, a significant sale or acquisition of a business, a rights issue or a defence.

### **What is the award for Best Investor Engagement?**

This is under the Voted Awards and addresses the importance of the target audience that IR seeks to engage. This award will be decided by the most number of votes by Company IROs for an investor/buy-side firm that the investment community believes represents the best in investor engagement with companies. The process for nominations follows the same timeline as other Voted Awards.

### **Where can I find out more information about the awards and past winners?**

On the IR Society [website](#), members can access Best Practice Guidelines, and a review of the 2018 Best Practice Awards, including a summary of the entries, names of the judging panel, key highlights and comments from the judges on the 2018 award winners. We also included a summary of feedback from the judges as part of our coverage this year.

For more information on this year's Best Practice awards, please do not hesitate to contact the team at the IR Society, or the [Best Practice Committee](#).

### **Any other enquiries?**

Do please get in touch with the team at the IR Society:

Laura Hayter: [laura.hayter@irsociety.org.uk](mailto:laura.hayter@irsociety.org.uk)