



# GUIDANCE FOR ENTRANTS TO THE CONSTRUCTING EXCELLENCE REGIONAL AWARDS



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# Guidance for Entrants to the Constructing Excellence Regional Awards

## Introduction

So, you are thinking about entering for one of our regional awards run by one of Constructing Excellence's nine regional partners. Thank you – we want to make this as easy and as rewarding for you as possible so we have written you a guide.

In the past our judges have found that entrants have missed the objective of some of our criteria or skimmed on information or added to the response to the wrong question – so that told us the entry forms might be a bit confusing. This guide addresses these possibilities.

These guidelines for entrants will of course help our judges as well.

## Who Am I Writing This For?

Initially you are writing this for a group of judges who are particular to your region; they may know of the project, initiative, organisation or person you are writing about and whilst this should not add any advantage to your entry it may mean that in their minds they sometimes fill in the gaps in your information.

What you should be aware of when you commence planning your entry is that if it wins regionally it will automatically be entered into the Constructing Excellence national awards where all regional winners compete to carry off the national 'best of the winners' accolade. Yes, you could win a second award nationally to add to the regional award recognition, and for no more effort than turning up on the evening to collect it on stage!

We recommend this means you should think about 2 things:

- The answers to your questions need to be for those who know little about your entrant and may never have seen, met or encountered it so please be as complete and informative with your answers as possible
- Ultimately, you may not be competing against regional peers, so consider how strong a case for top scores your answers give so that you make an impression not only for yourselves but also for the region you represent

## Will All Categories Go Forward to the National Awards?

The regional partners have agreed twelve awards which go forward from each region however some regions run additional categories to suit their regional supporters requirements. Only the twelve categories below will be entered for the national awards:

1. Client of the Year
2. Digital Communication Award
3. Health, Safety & Wellbeing Award
4. Innovation Award
5. Integration & Collaborative Working Award
6. People Development Award

7. Preservation & Rejuvenation Award
8. Project of the Year (Buildings and Civils)
9. SME of the Year – categories 1-50 or 51-250 employed
10. Sustainability Award
11. Value Award
12. Young Achiever

### **Is My Work Good Enough to be Entered?**

That's a question hundreds and hundreds of entrants ask themselves every year. Let's let you into an inside fact - typically we will only receive 10 to 12 entries per category per region because people limit themselves by not entering – so, we would suggest that making a submission gives you a fairly high chance of being our winner before we even get down to judging its quality. Who knows if your entry is the one that will lift the standard to an even higher level than normal?

Bottom line is, that until you enter your work neither of us will know. We can see by the look of surprise and delight on their faces on award evenings that winners are often amazed that they made it to the top – like many in the industry they take their great achievements for granted and just consider it “business as usual” but our awards can identify that it is “business beyond the usual of their peers.”

## What Are These Awards About?

### Constructing Excellence

All of the nine regions running these awards have one thing in common; we are all partners of Constructing Excellence and run these awards to further the movement's vision and goals. If you don't know much about Constructing Excellence this could be a good time to find out so that your entries reflect some of the great stuff we aim to bring to the construction industry. In particular, we are the only industry body with no allegiance to any single profession or body representing the industry, so no matter what you do or who you are we welcome your entry and there are no barriers that will give anyone any better advantage than you.

Whilst Constructing Excellence is a movement of parts with national members, regional members and local Club membership these awards are open to all, whether engaged in the movement in some way or not. That means these awards are totally transparent and open across the United Kingdom to anyone – we welcome your entries.

Of course, we would like you to get engaged with the Constructing Excellence movement as a result of entering but there will be no pressure on you to do so.

Constructing Excellence was an amalgam of industry bodies back in 2003, when it formed to replace the Construction Best Practice Programme. More recently it has again merged with a well know industry body to further its work and turn it into a charitable trust to further benefit the industry. We are now part of BRE, and continue trading as a separate entity.

Our vision and values remain unchanged and can be reviewed at <http://constructingexcellence.org.uk/about>. Perhaps reading some of this material, and in particular the Vision, will help you to better understand why we run these awards and what we consider represents excellence.

You may also find the CE & CEW annual report informative and it can be downloaded from the Constructing Excellence web site at <http://constructingexcellence.org.uk> [English Annual Report](#) [Welsh Annual Report](#)

## Explaining Some of the Terms Used in the Entry Criteria

### Asset

The built environment or infrastructure which results from a design and its construction.

### Best Practice

Constructing Excellence is always looking for the leading edge and innovative ways in which tomorrow's best practice will exceed today's benchmarks. Those setting best practice are moving ahead and beyond what their peers achieve today.

That said, if everyone were to move up to today's best practice it would be good for the industry and its clients so we are just as interested in hearing how you have adopted and adapted current best practice as how you may have innovated and set new exemplars.

### Collaboration

A big part of Constructing Excellence's ethos is collaborative working. The regional centres and partners share this ethos, as each one strives to be the focal point of unifying and strengthening the joint image of their local construction supply chain. The awards add to this by giving us exemplars of the best in the industry in our region.

Of course, collaboration can come in degrees of numbers of collaborating parties and subjects, but we like to think this definition says what Constructing Excellence means "Collaboration is the process of two or more people or organisations working together to realise or achieve something more successfully. Collaboration is very similar to, but more closely aligned than, cooperation, and both are an opposite of competition. Most collaboration requires leadership and can be more difficult than traditional hierarchical approaches. Teams that work collaboratively can obtain greater resources, recognition and reward than those who are working in a formal hierarchy and simply doing as directed."

### Community

We are referring to the group of people that surround the project, organisation or person that your entry relates to. This may be a professional community, like professional or trade bodies, construction education providers, etc. It could be a social community like a charity, local residents, unemployed people, schools, etc. It may be the end users of your project, like patients, motorists, the public, etc.

The reason we have described this is because we want you to understand how wide this word could mean.

### Continuous Improvement

Not wanting to stop at the great results you have already achieved and setting new higher and harder stretch targets for the future.

## Demonstrate

Most entries manage to demonstrate what we are asking for and what they think meets it, but then they fail to evidence it. For demonstrate you could also substitute “describe enough for us to understand things”

## Display

If you or your work display the attributes we are looking for then you should be able to give us some evidence of that. Often, we would be more interested in a 3<sup>rd</sup> party saying you do it than you telling us that you do.

## Engaged

Typically, we are looking for evidence of collaborative involvement between two or more organisations. We do not consider collaborative involvement is the same as “master and servant” type relationships, where one party just does what the other tells them because the “master” has the commercial or contractual upper hand.

## Evidence

A lot of our entry criteria say we are looking for evidence. You wouldn’t want a criminal trial judged on hearsay or unsupported evidence and we don’t want our winners chosen in that way either.

Whilst it is easy to write that you did this or achieved that, it is important that you take the trouble to demonstrate it as well. We cannot tell you what evidence you need – if you have collected it you will know what it is, but just to give you a few examples of the sort of thing judges find “tick their box” to award marks:

- A letter of commendation, thanks, etc. can evidence your client’s satisfaction;
- An award certificate from Considerate Constructors Scheme with the score benchmarked against your region’s median for all sites;
- Certificates/logos for other awards you have won;
- A certificate for your most recent ISO certification;
- A photo of your school involvement day;
- A graph of your results over time rather than just a single number;
- A table of your KPI results;
- A letter (voluntary!) from the supply chain saying how good you are to work with;

The options are limitless but one thing that is common to all the above – they could all be visual additions to your entry without the use of a lot of your limited word count.

## Exemplary

It’s simple – we want something that we can use as an example to others of what best practice regionally and nationally looks and feels like, with business reasons for going the extra mile.

The last question in each entry asks you “Why do you think this work stands out from the crowd and should be our winner and how do you suggest we share this with the industry” so come on, tell us:



- What is special; and
- How you think we could collaborate to bring this work and its benefits to regional and national attention

### Impact

What difference your entry has achieved compared to a less exemplary peer.

### Innovation

This is one of those things that means lots of things to different people. It could range from doing something new in your organisation to something new to everyone in the industry.

If you are harnessing someone else's existing innovation but it means new progress for you, we would probably consider that to be best practice. Although, if you adopt their best practice but improve on it, that would be innovation.

If you are doing something entirely new to the industry or to the type of work you are undertaking, then we think that is innovation.

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

What are the construction industry's KPIs? As the UK Government has been involved in their measurement since the last century, we turned to their web sites to get the answer ([www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/construction/construction-statistics/no--11--2010-edition/chapter-16---key-performance-indicators-and-benchmarking.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/construction/construction-statistics/no--11--2010-edition/chapter-16---key-performance-indicators-and-benchmarking.pdf)). Here they said that:

"Sir John Egan's report, "Rethinking Construction" concerned itself directly with improving both the effectiveness and efficiency of the UK Construction Industry. It challenged the industry to meet some ambitious improvement targets and to measure its performance over a range of its activities. The creation of Key Performance Indicators and the release of the first KPI Pack in early 1999 were the first steps in the process of answering those challenges"

For many years Constructing Excellence has had an involvement in the measurement of the construction industry's performance using an objective set of KPI benchmarks and every year the results are published. When they are published they appear on a number of web sites including Constructing Excellence's. The free and downloadable annual publication shows the results of each KPI since 1999, so you can compare not only your own results with the industry's median performers but also see if your measurement trends match or out perform these.

The KPIs cover all facets of the industry, as below, so no matter who you are or what your entry is about we think you will find some objective benchmarking data here to compare to your own performance:

- Economic Indicators
- Client Satisfaction
- Contractor Satisfaction
- Profitability

- Predictability
- Respect for People
- Environmental Indicators
- Housing
- Non-Housing
- Consultants

Of course, we recognise that this is not the only source of objective measurement data you may have for your entry, and use of the above KPIs is not mandatory for entries. Many clients set their own KPIs for use in their frameworks or adopt those from a relevant body, and these are equally acceptable.

What we would ask you to remember is that we seek objective benchmarking of your performance compared to your peers to evidence best or better practice, so simply giving us some performance measures of your own may not score as well.

Let's use health and safety as an example of what we mean. You may have your own records of RIDDOR incidents and accidents to quote to us, but we would appreciate them more if they were turned into measurements like Accident Frequency Rate and Accident Incidence Rate (information on the HSE web site, e.g. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/adhoc-analysis/injury-frequency-rates.pdf>) where there are national benchmarks from Constructing Excellence's KPIs or from the HSE and you can tell us how you are doing in comparison.

### **Leadership**

We could write a text book on this – others have! If we tell you that leadership can be defined as the capacity to influence people, by means of personal attributes and/or behaviours, to achieve a common goal and vision we hope that explains what we are looking for. The charismatic approach from the front by a person or organisation that gets the group they lead to perform better, go the extra mile and deliver exemplary results.

We hope you won't disappoint our judges by describing strong management from behind.

### **Stakeholder**

Anyone who has an interest in a project or initiative, whether directly contractually involved or peripheral to its design and construction, e.g. the local community or the public in general.

### **Supply Chain**

Supply chains go in two directions, upwards towards the organisation employing you and downwards towards the organisations supplying you. We recommend you don't forget to look in both directions when answering these types of question.

### **Sustainable**

Something which can be repeated at the same rate and level because it is affordable, has renewable resources and is not destructive.

## Triple Bottom Line Sustainability

A thing which address all three considerations of society, environment and economy.

## Tools

These can be any process, equipment, method or software that serves to enable the desired outcome to be achieved.

## Value

In brief, we consider that value is not price and we certainly do not consider exemplars come from price driven relationships.

Value is what you get in benefits within the price and it may be more than just the building or civil engineering work that you asked for. A typical example might be creating jobs and training opportunities or value engineering that delivers more for less (not the same for less!).

Added value is the extra provided within the price over and above the specified requirements; examples might be an early completion, a final account below tender sum for the same level of work or turning waste into a beneficial feature on site. Possibilities are endless so tell us about them.

## Tips for Writing Your Entry

### Word Limits

The entry forms show the number of words your entries may not exceed. Judges do not have to score any text which exceeds the word count stated on the entry form and some regions will use an online submission system which does not allow you to go beyond the limit.

If you find you are exceeding the word limit we suggest you check the following to try and reduce it:

- Make sure it still makes sense and remove the normal words that we tend to pad out speech with, e.g. instead of “we believe *that* this means” can be shortened to “we believe this means”
- Rearrange the words to use less, e.g. “the outcome from this has been” can be shortened to “the outcome was”
- Consider the verb tense you have used, e.g. “we have been contributing thousands of pounds to local charities” could be written “we contributed £000s to local charities”
- You may write with abbreviations such as “we’ve”, “don’t”, “we’ll”, etc. although to make it easier for judges to read we suggest that if you go this way you should adopt such a style consistently

Another way of reducing word is to use bullet points to cut out conjunction words, however do consider that if you bullet point list too much information you may get carried away and tell us lots of things but overlook adding the necessary evidence for them.

### Font

Most of us find it easier to read a font with serifs and line spaced at least 1.5 lines, in a size large enough to scan such as the examples below:

- Garamond 14
- Calibri 12
- Cambria 11
- Comic Sans MS 11

Your entry form may not be formatted to any particular font and we leave this to your discretion and available time.

### **Titles for Inserts**

If you are inserting images, graphics or tabulated data we need to know what it is so please give it a brief title, and put that title in bold font in a text box so it is clear it is not part of the word count, e.g.



**A Collection of CE Award Trophies**

### **Interviews**

In some regions the finalists are asked to attend an interview to present their entry to a panel of judges. This does not happen in every region.

We want to assure you that this process does not influence the judging by the national judges.

## Supporting Information

### Logos

The awards managers need copies of any organisational logos which relate to your entry. These may just be your own, or for team entries a collection of team member logos or maybe your entry is for an individual like a Young Achiever where we need their organisation's logo.

It is probable that for the winner these logos will be put onto the award itself, and any certificates, as well as being used in publicity media so it really important that:

- The correct logo is issued to us
- It is the current logo
- It is in a high quality print ready format, e.g. an .eps file or a .pdf file experience tells us that .jpeg, .gif, .png and .tif files are not good enough quality and you will not be happy with the finished product when you receive it

If you are in doubt about what you can provide, please contact the award managers and check the details with them.

If for any reason you rebrand between submitting your entry and being announced as a finalist, you should contact the award managers and provide them with your new logo as quickly as possible before trophies are manufactured.

### Images

We want good quality images that illustrate your entry so that it can get the best publicity and so we have the right material to compile the award event slides from. Think about the images you send us – do they really illustrate what you have told us about and what you are proud of? Do you want to see that image in the press or displayed to hundreds and hundreds of guests at the awards event?

We always recommend that if you are doing something worthy of entering these awards you should be collecting pictorial support during the life of that entry – pre build, during construction, completion, in use, etc. to show all facets of its success.

The actual number of images any region wants from you will be stated in their entry information but all have common requirements of the quality. We need to receive:

1. High quality images, with any corrections to illumination, red eye, etc. made by you before you submit them
2. They need to be high quality .jpeg, .gif or .pdf that are not over pixelated and can be produced at different sizes without loss of quality. If you can let us have them as .eps which naturally scales and maintains quality that will be even better
3. They need to be focused on the subject matter – if it is in the distance in a panoramic or wider shot please crop and focus it before submitting it as the award managers will not do this

## **Other Documents, Presentations or Evidence**

You are welcome to submit two items of additional supporting evidence – why wouldn't you want to show off your work? However, be careful to ensure your submission entry has all the great stuff you need us to know about to award your marks when scoring as our judges, regional and national, are not required to review your additional supporting information and hunt for more evidence.

We recommend you think of your entry form in the same way as a procurement Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ), i.e. all the requested information and evidence has to be presented within the word limited answers so that every entrant has a transparent, fair and equal chance to gain the judges marks and appreciation.

So, you are probably asking "What's the point of submitting extra documents?" There are two possibilities to consider; (1) If your entry is considered a regional, and maybe a national winner, we are always looking for good evidence and material to promote best practice and your supporting documents may add to our ability to do so, and (2) if the judges do get to a tie breaker situation with entries (yes, it sometimes happens) then they will most likely be asked to refer to supporting documents and see if that splits their decision.

Probably the worst, lowest scoring answer you can give to a question on the entry form is "Please refer to the attached ....." because the judges are not going to.

## **Glossies, Alternative Entry Documents & PR/Marketing Publications**

We have to discourage submission of these types of entry. These awards are not about the organisation with the biggest marketing budget or best PR company. Of course you may use professional writers and PR experts to write your entry if you wish to.

What entries in alternative formats do, in our experience, is to make it really hard for judges to find what they are looking for – i.e. responses to the criteria questions – and to ensure that word limits have not been exceeded. Formatting your entry as a .pdf file is also a tiresome problem for judges to unravel when it comes to word count limits. The result is often that they will give up and give low scores – there is no evidence at all that glossy, alternative format submissions have a winning track record in these awards. If you want to impress the judges stick to the entry forms provided.

## Our Judges

### Who They Are

We select people who we believe support and demonstrate Constructing Excellence's ethos. They will generally be considered experienced and relatively expert in their field.

All judges are volunteers giving up their time freely and supporting our awards with their expertise and fair judgement of peer entries.

Most often the national judges are a selection of the regional judges, but each will declare any conflict of interest and avoid judging any category in which they or their organisation have been involved with a regional entry.

### What They Are Not

Our judges are not:

- Detectives who will hunt for the information in awards entries
- Gifted of enough time to read through all your supporting documents in the hope of discovering the evidence that they did not find in your entry form
- Allowed to score any word count which exceeds the limit stated in the entry form

We suggest that when planning and formatting your entry you use the following check list to ensure it will make their job easier.



## Award Entry Planning Checklist

Which category or categories are you going to enter?					NB: Do a separate entry for each one
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What is the subject of your entry going to be: Person/Project/Organisation/Initiative					
Last date to Submit award					