

Scottish Thistle Awards 2023 | Award Categories

Regional to National Categories:

1. [Best Bar or Pub](#)
2. [Best B&B or Guest House Experience](#)
3. [Best Eating Experience](#)
4. [Best Hotel Experience](#)
5. [Best Outdoor or Adventure Experience](#)
6. [Best Self-Catering Accommodation Experience](#)
7. [Best Visitor Attraction](#)
8. [Celebrating Thriving Communities Award](#)
9. [Climate Action Award](#)
10. [Inclusive Tourism Award](#)
11. [Innovation in Tourism](#)
12. [Outstanding Cultural Event or Festival](#)
13. [Tourism & Hospitality Employer of the Year](#)
14. [Tourism Individual of the Year](#)

National-only Categories:

15. [Best Business Event](#)
16. [Outstanding Sporting Event](#)
17. [Best Luxury Experience](#)

Word count

Executive summary: 200 words (not scored)

Q1 - 3: 500 words (increased from 300 in 2022 following review of entrant feedback)*

**Excluding Tourism Individual of the Year – see category detail below*

Regional Categories

Best Bar or Pub

This award celebrates the key role of bars and pubs as part of the Scottish visitor's memorable experience. Our licensed trade provides visitors with a wide variety of options, from traditional music and fayre by the fire to bespoke cocktails.

We are celebrating those offering an authentic, cultural experience with a warm welcome. Businesses should have sustainability at their heart and strive to support the local community.

Who should enter?

Any business which considers its main activity to be a bar or pub.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business

- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please demonstrate your approach to delivering exceptional visitor experiences. Please provide examples of what sets you apart from the competition.

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and outcomes within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.

2. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 – 18 months and how will you measure success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- Targeting new customers
- How will you respond to current market influences?

3. Please demonstrate your business or event's commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- Your approach to managing and minimising food waste
- Your approach to seasonal/local food and drink sourcing
- How you ensure your bar/pub is inclusive and accessible to all
- How your bar/pub invests in, and engages with, the local community

Best B&B or Guest House Experience

B&Bs and guest houses are at the front line of Scotland's hospitality reputation and are key to creating visitors' lasting impressions of Scotland. This category celebrates businesses going the extra mile to provide a personal memorable and authentic experience.

Businesses should provide a warm welcome to all visitors and have sustainability at their heart.

Who should enter?

Any business that considers itself a guest house or B&B and demonstrates exemplary levels of customer service and satisfaction.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer

- Size and purpose of your business
- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please demonstrate your approach to delivering exceptional visitor experiences. Please provide examples of what sets you apart from the competition.

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and outcomes within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.

2. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 – 18 months and how will you measure success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- Targeting new customers
- How will you respond to current market influences?

3. Please demonstrate your business or event’s commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy’s ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- Measures undertaken in your accommodation to increase energy efficiency
- How you ensure your accommodation is inclusive and accessible to all
- How you promote, and encourage responsible enjoyment of, Scotland’s natural and cultural heritage in your customers

Best Eating Experience

In Scotland there are eateries to suit every occasion and budget. This category is designed to recognise restaurants and eateries that provide an exceptional customer experience and a warm Scottish welcome.

We are celebrating those with a quality food and drink offering, promoting local Scottish produce. Businesses should have sustainability at their heart, with a responsible approach to food sourcing and waste, and strive to support the local community.

Who should enter?

Any business which considers its main activity to be providing customers with a distinct, memorable experience centred around Scottish food and drink.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of

information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business
- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please demonstrate your approach to delivering exceptional visitor experiences. Please provide examples of what sets you apart from the competition.

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and outcomes within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.

2. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 – 18 months and how will you measure success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- Targeting new customers
- How will you respond to current market influences?

3. Please demonstrate your business or event's commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- Your approach to managing and minimising food waste
- Your approach to seasonal/local food and drink sourcing
- How you ensure your eatery is inclusive and accessible to all
- How your eatery invests in, and engages with, the local community

Best Hotel Experience

Accommodation is a vital part of the visitor journey. The hotel experience is key to creating visitors' lasting impressions of Scotland. This award celebrates hotels of all sizes which provide customers with a memorable and authentic experience.

Businesses should provide a warm welcome to all visitors and have sustainability at their heart.

Who should enter?

Hotels of all sizes demonstrating exemplary levels of customer service and satisfaction.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of

information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business
- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please demonstrate your approach to delivering exceptional visitor experiences. Please provide examples of what sets you apart from the competition.

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and outcomes within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.

2. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 – 18 months and how will you measure success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- Targeting new customers
- How will you respond to current market influences?

3. Please demonstrate your business or event's commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- Measures undertaken in your hotel to increase energy efficiency
- How you ensure your hotel is inclusive and accessible to all
- How your hotel invests in, and engages with, the local community

Best Outdoor or Adventure Experience

Outdoor, adventure and wildlife experiences are a key part of what makes a visit to Scotland so unique and memorable. With a vast and varied landscape full of opportunity for adventure and excitement, there truly is an activity for every visitor. This category celebrates businesses that provide unforgettable, quality and authentic experiences to their visitors who engage with the landscape and local communities in a positive and environmentally sensitive way.

Who should enter?

Businesses large and small that provide exceptional outdoor, adventure or wildlife experiences and have a focus on delivering real customer satisfaction.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better

understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business
- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please demonstrate your approach to delivering exceptional visitor experiences. Please provide examples of what sets you apart from the competition.

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and outcomes within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.

2. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 – 18 months and how will you measure success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- Targeting new customers
- How will you respond to current market influences?

3. Please demonstrate your business or event's commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- Measures undertaken in your business to increase energy efficiency
- How you ensure your outdoor or adventure experience is inclusive and accessible to all
- How you promote, and encourage responsible enjoyment of, Scotland's natural and cultural heritage in your customers
- How your outdoor or adventure experience invests in, and engages with, the local community

Best Self-Catering Accommodation Experience

This category celebrates those providing outstanding overnight accommodation, which do not consider themselves a hotel, inn or guest house. Businesses should provide an authentic Scottish experience and genuine engagement with the visitor, whether online or in person, and an exceptional service. This award celebrates those providing a unique and bespoke accommodation experience to suit visitors' travel style, while ensuring true Scottish hospitality is at the forefront of the offering.

Who should enter?

If you offer overnight accommodation but are not a hotel, inn, guest house or B&B – then this award is for you! Examples may include, but are not limited to: self-catering or serviced apartments,

holiday lets, wigwams, campsites, caravan parks, campervan hire, agritourism businesses with an accommodation offering.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business
- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please demonstrate your approach to delivering exceptional visitor experiences. Please provide examples of what sets you apart from the competition.

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and outcomes within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.

2. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 – 18 months and how will you measure success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- Targeting new customers
- How will you respond to current market influences?

3. Please demonstrate your business or event's commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- Measures undertaken in your accommodation to increase energy efficiency
- How you ensure your accommodation is inclusive and accessible to all
- How you promote, and encourage responsible enjoyment of, Scotland's natural and cultural heritage in your customers

Best Visitor Attraction

Scotland has a wealth of unique and fascinating visitor attractions, from castles and palaces to nuclear bunkers and famous pandas! This category celebrates the variety of opportunity provided to Scotland's visitors, and the attractions which provide world class service with an authentic Scottish experience.

Attractions should provide a warm welcome to all visitors and have sustainability at their heart.

Who should enter?

For visitor attractions that demonstrate exemplary levels of customer service and visitor satisfaction. This category is open to visitor attractions of all types and sizes.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business
- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please demonstrate your approach to delivering exceptional visitor experiences. Please provide examples of what sets you apart from the competition.

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and outcomes within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.

2. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 – 18 months and how will you measure success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- Targeting new customers
- How will you respond to current market influences?

3. Please demonstrate your business or event's commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- Measures undertaken in your attraction to increase energy efficiency
- How you ensure your attraction is inclusive and accessible to all
- How you promote, and encourage responsible enjoyment of, Scotland's natural and cultural heritage in your customers
- How your attraction invests in, and engages with, the local community

Celebrating Thriving Communities Award

It is now more important than ever to ensure that the benefits of tourism are experienced directly by our communities and that our visitors enjoy enriched experiences delivered by proud and passionate people who live and work in Scotland's destinations.

This category celebrates partnerships, collaborations and team working – whether that be with local businesses, communities or a group of individuals – coming together to protect and enhance our environment whilst growing social, cultural and economic wealth.

Who should enter?

This category is open to anyone (businesses and individuals) in the tourism and hospitality industry – community tourism, tourism businesses (B2B and B2C), hospitality businesses, destination management organisations (B2B), tour operators, destination marketing companies, destination management companies, transport operators, destination and sector organisations, retail and entertainment venues. If you believe that "tourism is everyone's business" and you are operating a collective approach to deliver activity, this is the category for you!

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your day-to-day business/project. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for information only.**

- Who's involved in the project/business/collaboration
- Size and purpose of project/business/collaboration
- Type(s) of activities/services on offer
- How long the project/business/collaboration has been operating
- Demonstration of project/business/collaboration sustainability or annual growth
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. How is your activity excelling in delivering for the local community and visitor experience?

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and outcome within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- What evidence do you have to support the value and excellence of the activity? E.g., feedback, increase in numbers (bookings, financial, engagement figures)
- How has your activity improved resilience and/or economic sustainability?

2. How do you intend to build upon the collaboration in the next 12 – 18 months?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- What is the legacy of the collaboration and/or will the collaboration continue?
- Customer/staff feedback system
- Clear strategy outlining investments for the future
- Potential additional collaborative workings
- Plans to achieve continued growth
- Ways in which you have expanded your engagement with new or hard to reach audiences

3. Please demonstrate your commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- How your activity invests in your local community e.g., through employment, training, use and promotion of local products and services
- How you have engaged with local communities to inform the development and/or delivery of your activity
- Measures undertaken in your activity to increase energy efficiency
- How you promote, and encourage responsible enjoyment of, Scotland's natural and cultural heritage

Climate Action Award

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Tackling climate change is one of the biggest long-term challenge facing Scottish tourism now, and in the future, and we want to inspire future generations to say that Scottish tourism made a difference and led the way to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

This award celebrates businesses, events, and destinations, who have made demonstrable progress on their climate action journey to NetZero. This includes the measurement and monitoring of emissions, taking action to decarbonise, as well as communicating and collaborating with their staff, customers, and wider stakeholders.

Who should enter?

This award is for any tourism businesses, events or destinations who set the standard for Responsible Tourism practices and can serve as an example to the tourism industry, by emphasising their commitment to reducing carbon emissions, taking climate action and engaging within and beyond their business.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your day to day businesses. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. This question is not scored and is for information only.

- Size and purpose of business/ event/ destination
- Types of activities/services on offer to guests
- How long you have been operating
- Demonstration of economic sustainability/ resilience
- Membership of any sustainability groups or certification programs
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please demonstrate your approach to measuring, monitoring and reporting carbon emissions.

How do you approach measuring your carbon emissions and use those results to prioritise actions, monitor changes, set targets and report on your results? You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and the outcome within the time period from **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.. Please cover any areas you think are relevant. Below are some aspects you may wish to include:

- Details on your annual carbon emissions, any changes you have seen year on year (if data for multiple years is available)

- How you are measuring your carbon emissions; What tools or mechanisms you are using; how long you have been measuring?
- Which Scope of carbon emissions does your carbon measurement currently covers (e.g. scope1, 2, and what aspects of Scope 3)?
- What key sources of emissions you have identified?
- What targets have you set for carbon reduction and whether you have a net zero target?
- How you are reporting this data? Communicating it internally and/or externally?

2. Please demonstrate your approach to reducing your carbon emissions.

How do you approach reducing your carbon emissions? What projects have you already implemented and any planned for the next 12 months? You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and the outcome within the time period from **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.. Please cover any areas you think are relevant. Below are some aspects you may wish to include:

- What your priority areas are for taking action to reduce your carbon emissions. This may cover the following areas:
 - Energy- efficiency, low carbon heat, renewable energy
 - Travel and Transport- low carbon/EV vehicles, public transport, active travel (walking and cycling)
 - Food and drink- Food waste reduction, plant-based options, local and seasonal
 - Waste- reduce resource use, avoid single use plastics
 - Nature based solutions- tree planting, peatland conservation, biodiversity projects, green infrastructure
 - Influencing behaviour change (staff and customers)
- What actions you have implemented over the last 2 years
- What actions you are planning to implement over the next 12 months

3. Please demonstrate how you communicate and collaborate to implement and amplify the work that you do to tackle climate change.

How do you use communication and collaboration to support the implementation of your climate action plan and inform and inspire others. You should provide **clear evidence** of activity and the outcome within the time period from **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant. Below are some aspects you may wish to include:

- (if applicable) How you have engaged with your team (staff) on your climate action plan? What training/development have you provided for your team to support their awareness and the implementation of actions?
- How you have engaged your customers in your climate action journey to raise awareness and encourage action. What feedback have you had from your customers?
- How you have engaged with your supply chain, to raise awareness of your climate action plan and work together on implementation, as well as supporting action in your suppliers.
- Creative partnership working or innovative ways of working with businesses in your sector or destination, other stakeholders, organisations, or your local community, to share your learnings from your climate action journey to encourage collaboration and capacity building to drive forward climate action.

Inclusive Tourism Award

Our ambition for Scottish Tourism is to make tourism physically and financially accessible to everyone. This award celebrates a business, who has developed an outstanding welcome for all customers, who provides accessible facilities which can be enjoyed by all customers.

Some examples of inclusive practices would include:

An ongoing commitment to training frontline staff in equality and disability awareness

Providing facilities and services designed for different customer groups or a specific customer groups e.g., autism or dementia friendly tours or accommodation which is accessible to wheelchair users, services for deaf or for the hard of hearing, braille signage etc.

Social tourism activity which offers opportunities for low-income families or young disadvantaged adults to participate in Scottish tourism.

Who should enter?

This award is for any tourism businesses who set the standard for inclusive tourism practices and can serve as an example to the tourism industry, by emphasising their inclusion ethos, who demonstrates a commitment to serving the market and providing excellent customer service.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business
- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please explain your motivation and reasons behind the development of inclusive tourism practices within your business or event?

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant, although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- What you've done to make your product or service accessible, available to everyone
- What are the customer service experiences and enhancements?
- The identified gap in the customer experience/market – and identify how this differs from standard business activity or business as usual
- How you have created and developed your product or service
- Creative partnership working or innovative ways of working with your local community
- Uniqueness of the product or service
- Ways in which you have expanded your engagement with inclusive tourism customers
- What steps do you take to promote your accessibility facilities and services, how are these being marketed, are you using social media/ or influencers?

2. What practical steps have you taken to make your business more inclusive and what have been the outcomes/results for your business and the visitor experience, as well as any learnings you've gained so far?

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Cover any areas you think are relevant, although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Working with assets in your area to meet the needs of your target market
- Training/development of team to enhance customer experience
- Improving customer experience/journey
- Have you achieved what you set out to do?
- Increased turnover
- Appropriate information provision
- Are you using any specific technologies or apps to support disabled people to engage with your business?
- Audience/Visitor growth
- Other awards / external verification
- Are you having conversations with the target audience to encourage feedback and continual improvement?

3. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 – 18 months and how will you measure success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Clear strategy outlining investments for the future either financial or resource led
- Plans to achieve continued audience/visitor growth
- How do you plan to expand your engagement with this market
- Potential additional collaborative working
- How you are responding to current market influences
- Other awards / external verification
- Customer/staff feedback system

Innovation in Tourism

This category celebrates businesses taking significant steps to improve and invest in the future of 21st century Scottish tourism. This award sets out to honour those driving forward positive change in innovative ways, and those creatively adapting in line with the changing landscape and consumer behaviour. Entrants should be finding new ways to provide exceptional experiences to visitors.

Who should enter?

This award is for any business operating within the tourism, hospitality and events industry championing innovation, whether that be in technology and digital, physical expansion, or investment in change.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business

- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please explain the driving reason and purpose behind your innovation, and the resulting outcomes and learnings.

You should provide clear evidence of activity within the time period from **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- If relating to an existing part of your business what is the new and innovative products/services/element to this
- The identified gap in the customer experience/market — and identify how this differs from standard business activity or business as usual
- How you have effectively adapted to change
- How you have created and developed your unique selling point
- Creative partnership working
- Uniqueness of the innovation
- Visitor or staff feedback systems

2. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 — 18 months and how will you measure success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Clear strategy outlining investments for the future either financial or resource led
- Plans to achieve continued audience/visitor growth
- How do you plan to expand your engagement with new or hard to reach audiences
- How do you plan to adapt in line with upcoming trends

3. Please demonstrate your commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- How your activity invests in your local community e.g., through employment, training, use and promotion of local products and services
- How you have engaged with local communities to inform the development and/or delivery of your activity
- Measures undertaken in your activity to increase energy efficiency
- How you promote, and encourage responsible enjoyment of, Scotland's natural and cultural heritage

Outstanding Cultural Event or Festival

Scotland is the Perfect Stage for events. From large scale international events to regional and community festivals, Scotland has a rich annual programme of events and festivals, and each makes an important contribution to our thriving communities and cities.

Who should enter?

This category aims to celebrate and recognise outstanding cultural events/festivals that are part of our tourism offering. Entries are sought from events/festivals that can demonstrate creativity, innovation and the delivery of unique, excellent experiences. Eligible event editions will have taken place between **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your event or festival. Your entry should focus on the most recent edition of your event/festival taking place between 1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023. Some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. This question is not scored but it is important to set out a good overview of your event/festival for general understanding/background knowledge.

- Type of event - e.g. what aspect of culture did your event/festival celebrate/showcase; who is it for; what does it aim to achieve?
- Audience/spectator/participant/artist numbers and profile
- Number of years the event has been operating for and how it has developed
- Outline programme/Event experience
- If the event is recurring or a one-off
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. In what ways is your event or festival unique to your area/Scotland? Provide examples of how it provides an authentic and unique experience for participants and attendees.

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity within the time period from **1st May 2022 to 31st March 2023** Please cover any areas you think are relevant, although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- How does your event utilise and develop the key assets that make Scotland the Perfect Stage for events: Our people, cultural identity and heritage, natural environment, built facilities and our signature events.
- How does your event/festival showcase the area in which it takes place?
- What's unique about your offer?
- Describe how you have collaborated with Scottish tourism businesses/partners to strengthen your event/festival and the visitor experience

2. Please tell us what success your event achieved in terms of the event experience, programming, audience engagement and media reach (inc. print, broadcast and digital).

This is your chance to highlight to judges what made your event/festival outstanding in terms of the experience that was delivered and how it engaged with attendees and through wider media reach. Please cover any areas you think are relevant, although we suggest you include aspects such as:

- The event experience — how did it engage, excite or inspire attendees/participants, performers, etc?
- Provide an outline of attendee and/or participant feedback/research/stats that evidence high satisfaction and engagement

- Tell us how many people your event engaged. Please provide detail in terms of live and/or online audience numbers, participation, media reach, etc. Where did you attendees come from and who were they?
- Describe any new/innovative developments that have helped improve the event experience
- Please tell us about your future ambitions for the development of the event experience

3. Please tell us how your event incorporated responsible planning and delivery?

Responsible event delivery is an essential criterion for excellence and should be core to all event planning. Delivering responsible events encompasses protecting the environment and our cultural heritage, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity and providing benefits for our host communities. The judges are looking for you to demonstrate that responsible event planning and delivery was central to your approach and that you excelled in this respect. Please cover the areas you think are relevant but at minimum you should outline:

- How your event has shown ambition and innovation to reduce your environmental impact, e.g. energy efficiency, waste reduction, water conservation, low-carbon transport
- Your commitment to protecting the environment impacted by your event
- How is your event promotes and preserves our culture and traditions?
- What you've done to make the event as inclusive and accessible as possible and how you ensure potential attendees know what's available for different needs.
- How your event invests in and benefits the host community.

Tourism & Hospitality Employer of the Year

This category celebrates employers who have demonstrated a real commitment to the welfare of their employees, providing a supportive and inspiring work environment. Diversity and inclusivity should be core to the business, ensuring the right conditions for workers from all backgrounds to thrive and succeed.

This award aims to highlight and celebrate employers who are showcasing tourism, hospitality and events as an exciting career path and inspiring the next generation. In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy, businesses should support Scotland's ambition to become a leading Fair Work Nation, and provide opportunities for development to their employees.

Who should enter?

Tourism and events businesses which are going above and beyond for their employees. Employers should demonstrate a commitment to Responsible Tourism practices and align with Scotland's Outlook 2030 strategy and its commitment to a skilled, committed, diverse, and valued workforce.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored and is for background information only.**

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business
- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. In what ways do you provide an inspiring and supportive work environment for your employees?

You should provide clear evidence of activity within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant, although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- How you demonstrate a commitment to the welfare of your employees
- Training and development opportunities on offer
- Staff feedback systems
- How you support Scotland's ambition to become a leading Fair Work Nation

2. How are you, as an employer, showcasing tourism, hospitality and/or events as an exciting career path?

You should provide clear evidence of activity within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant, although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Your approach to attracting and recruiting young people across your organisation
- Your approach to retaining youth talent and creating a pipeline of talent
- Any work experience opportunities you offer

3. Please demonstrate your commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- How your activity invests in your local community e.g., through employment, training, use and promotion of local products and services
- How you ensure employees from all backgrounds and abilities can thrive and succeed in your workplace
- Do you have an ongoing commitment to staff training on welcoming all customers?

Tourism Individual of the Year

People are the essence of the tourism, hospitality and events sector and we all have a responsibility in shaping the future of our industry. This category is for individuals who go above and beyond to deliver exceptional customer service, and who prioritise inclusivity, sustainability, community and responsible practices.

This award aims to highlight and celebrate those individuals who act as an ambassador for change within the industry, showcasing a commitment to tourism as a force for good.

Who should enter?

Self-entry is not permitted for this category and entries should be submitted on behalf of the individual by a colleague or contact.

This category is open to anyone working within the Scottish tourism and hospitality industry – from front of house staff to senior management – who has gone above and beyond, striving to make their workplace, community and/or local area a better place for everyone.

N.B. word count for this category is 100 words per answer.

- 1. What is this individual's role, and how do they go above and beyond to deliver exceptional service?**
- 2. Please provide a specific example(s) of a time this individual has gone above and beyond in their role.**
- 3. How does this individual prioritise community and inclusivity in their work?**
- 4. How does this individual prioritise sustainability and responsible practices in their work?**
- 5. How does this individual act as an ambassador for positive change within the industry?**

National-only Categories

Best Business Event

This category celebrates business events as catalysts for economic and social transformation. Aligned to VisitScotland's Journey to Change, the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) business events can range from corporate conferences or incentive programmes to annual global congresses with thousands of international delegates.

Who Should Enter:

Organisers, intermediaries and owners of business events such as Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs), venues, hotels and suppliers to the business events sector. Intermediaries are invited to submit on behalf of or in conjunction with corporate clients where appropriate. Please note that the event must have taken place within the time period from **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023** and outcomes should be known at the time of submission.

Please note NOT eligible to enter: Events which recur annually in Scotland, Christmas Party Night programmes, Corporate AGMs and B2C exhibitions, team-building activities, business events with no in-person element (100% online).

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business event. Some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. Your event must have taken place and outcomes collated during the time period of **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. **This question is not scored** and is for general understanding/background knowledge only.

- Type of event i.e. Association Congresses at UK, European or International level, Incentive Programmes, Corporate Conferences, or Sectoral Innovation Events.
- Number of delegates/participants in person and online
- Number of years the event has been operating for, frequency of event and previous locations
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. In what ways is your business event unique to Scotland?

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity within the time period from **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant, although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Highlight any innovative programming or presentation
- Collaborative working with other Scottish businesses and stakeholders, including the "adjacent industries" beyond tourism
- How have you developed a sustainable element to your business model

2. Tell us about the impact and outcomes your business event generates for the area or location in which it takes place, and what will be the real legacy and ultimate "leave behind" to make it worthy of this award?

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity within the time period from **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant, although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- How did the event enhance the profile of the town, city or region and Scotland?
- Legacy from the event – actual or anticipated. e.g. academic, social, infrastructural, experiential, learnings
- For competitive bid scenarios, how did you convince the client to choose Scotland?
- How client and delegate objectives were met and exceeded
- Alignment to Scottish Government frameworks and Journey to Change

3. Please tell us how your event incorporated responsible planning and delivery?

The judges are looking for you to demonstrate that responsible event planning and delivery was central to your approach and that you excelled in this respect. Please cover the areas you think are relevant but at minimum you should outline:

- How your event has shown ambition and innovation to reduce your environmental impact
- How your event promotes and sustains our culture and traditions
- What you've done to make the event as inclusive and accessible as possible

Outstanding Sporting Event

Scotland is the Perfect Stage for events. From large scale international events to national and local events, Scotland has a rich annual programme of sporting events which make an important contribution to our thriving communities and cities and the health and wellbeing of our people.

If your events bring attendees in from outside of the immediate area, from across Scotland or internationally, then you should consider your event part of Scotland's tourism and events offering and eligible to enter.

Who Should Enter:

Organisers of regional, national or international sporting events that contribute to Scotland's tourism offer, attracting out of region participants/spectators and showcasing our built facilities and natural environment are eligible to apply. Events must have taken place in Scotland within the time period from **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. For annual or recurring events, it is the most recent edition that is eligible.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your event or festival. Your entry should focus on the most recent edition of your event taking place **between 1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. **This question is not scored** but it is important to set out a good overview of your event/festival for general understanding/background knowledge.

- Please let us know if your event was local/regional/international in terms of its participation/spectator base and if travel restrictions impacted this.

- Spectator / Participant / Athlete numbers and profile, recognising where appropriate the restrictions that were in place at the time with regards to participation numbers and /or spectators
- Number of years the event has been operating for
- If the event is recurring or a one-off
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. In what ways is your event or festival unique to your area/Scotland? Provide examples of how it provides an authentic and unique experience for participants and attendees.

You should provide **clear evidence** of activity within the time period from **1st May 2022 to 31st March 2023** Please cover any areas you think are relevant, although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- How does your event utilise and develop the key assets that make Scotland the Perfect Stage for events: Our people, cultural identity and heritage, natural environment, built facilities and our signature events.
- How does your event showcase the area in which it takes place?
- What's unique about your offer?
- Describe how you have collaborated with Scottish tourism businesses/partners to strengthen your event and the visitor experience

2. Please tell us what success your event achieved in terms of the event experience, participant experience, media reach (broadcast, digital) and sporting excellence.

This is your chance to highlight to judges what made your event outstanding in terms of the experience that was delivered and how it engaged with spectators, participants and /or attendees and through wider media reach. Please cover any areas you think are relevant, although we suggest you include aspects such as:

- The event experience - how did it engage, excite or inspire spectators and/or participants?
- Provide an outline of feedback /research /stats from event attendees that evidence high visitor satisfaction and engagement
- Tell us how many people your event engaged. Please provide detail in terms of live and/or online audience numbers, participation, media reach, etc. Where did you attendees come from and who were they?
- Describe any new/innovative developments that have helped improve the event experience
- Please tell us about your future ambitions for the development of the event experience

3. Please tell us how your event incorporated responsible planning and delivery?

Responsible event delivery is an essential criterion for excellence and should be core to all event planning. Delivering responsible events encompasses protecting the environment and our cultural heritage, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity and providing benefits for our host communities. The judges are looking for you to demonstrate that responsible event planning and delivery was central to your approach and that you excelled in this respect. Please cover the areas you think are relevant but at minimum you should outline:

- How your event has shown ambition and innovation to reduce your environmental impact, e.g. energy efficiency, waste reduction, water conservation, low-carbon transport
- Your commitment to protecting the environment impacted by your event
- How your event promotes and preserves our culture and traditions?

- What you've done to make the event as inclusive and accessible as possible and how you ensure potential attendees know what's available for different needs.
- How your event invests in and benefits the host community.

Best Luxury Experience

This award celebrates those businesses bringing luxury to the Scottish visitor experience. Luxury experiences are those bespoke offerings which showcase the best of Scotland and bring the wow-factor to every step of the customer journey. This award recognises unique tour offerings or experience packages, with a focus on exclusivity and attention to detail.

Who Should Enter?

Scottish-based tour operators with bespoke luxury offerings, food and drink or accommodation providers offering specific luxury packages.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to give judges a general overview and better understanding of your business. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the type of information judges will be looking for are listed below. This question is **not scored** and is for background information only.

- Types of services on offer
- Size and purpose of your business
- How long you have been operating
- Any other information you feel is relevant

1. Please tell us how your luxury experience or package stands out, providing a wow-factor for your guests.

Do you go above and beyond in unique and innovative ways to ensure your guests experience luxury during every moment? You should provide **clear evidence** of your commitment to quality and how you gather and implement feedback to ensure your full guest experience consistently delivers world class standards, within the time period **1st May 2022 – 31st March 2023**. Your entry should focus on a specific luxury experience or package, rather than your business as a whole.

Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Examples of collaboration and partnership with other high-quality tourism providers to create a full luxury package for your visitors
- How your staff recruitment and training methods ensure the highest standards of hospitality and service
- The unique aspects of your experience on which your guests comment most positively
- The ways in which you bring a sense of place to your experience (using local produce, working with local producers, craftspeople and suppliers) and the storytelling experience your customers receive
- The attention to detail paid to all aspects of the guest experience – from pre-arrival (digital presence) through to post-visit

- Any luxury accreditation awarded, such as VisitScotland Quality Assurance Star ratings

2. What are your aspirations/ambitions for the next 12 months and how will you measure success? Tell us what you plan to do.

You should provide **clear evidence** of future planning and how this will be **monitored / measured**. Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- How will you respond to current market influences and benchmark your provision against other businesses?
- How will you measure the success of a newly developed product or service (TripAdvisor, customer reviews, growth of a different type of customer, social media engagement etc.)?

3. Please demonstrate your commitment to Responsible Tourism.

In line with the Outlook 2030 strategy's ambition for sustainable and responsible growth, it is important that the tourism and events industry in Scotland continues to develop in a responsible way. Please cover any of the [four priority areas of Responsible Tourism](#) where relevant, but you may wish to highlight:

- How your activity invests in your local community e.g., through employment, training, use and promotion of local products and services
- How you have engaged with local communities to inform the development and/or delivery of your activity
- Measures undertaken in your activity to increase energy efficiency
- How you promote, and encourage responsible enjoyment of, Scotland's natural and cultural heritage