

“Employer of Choice” Gender Diversity Awards

Frequently-Asked Questions

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Understanding Public Disclosure in Business Reporting

1. What is the advantage of registering for the “Employer of Choice” Awards?

At the “Employer of Choice”, leadership values accountability and openness to the public. For *external stakeholders* of the company, public disclosure showcases organizational culture to its investors, helps fill information gaps for customers, manages the heightened perception of reputational risk for investors, and attracts motivated and talented employees.

For *internal stakeholders*, public disclosure of policies and performance metrics retains talent, improves employee productivity, reduces attrition rates, and helps better manage labour-related conflicts.

2. Why should my company disclose publicly if it is not legally mandated?

The Awards are voluntary, and the PBC does not mandate companies to sign up or submit to it any documents. However, public disclosure allows firms to position themselves as forward-thinking organizations that are in line with global trends on business reporting, and assist investors in making informed decisions about companies with responsible business conduct. It also helps companies improve their revenues as consumers increasingly prefer socially compliant businesses.

Furthermore, as the regulatory requirements on business reporting increase in Pakistan, companies ahead of the curve will be able to avoid any risk associated with noncompliance.

3. Which businesses can apply for the Awards?

All private and public sector for-profit entities operating in Pakistan are eligible to apply. This includes companies from any city across Pakistan, from any industry and of any size, as well as multinational companies with offices in Pakistan – as long as the company limits its evidentiary documents to its local operations and workforce.

Eligibility Criteria for the Awards

4. My company does not have enough female employees. Should we still register?

Yes, all private and public sector companies are eligible to apply. Companies with fewer female workers are *especially* encouraged, because the Awards process will help them understand the

progress they have made, and measure gaps in their policies and practices. This gives them an opportunity to structure their approach to gender equality as per global and local expertise. Companies with overall lower proportions of female employees were some of the top “Employers of Choice” in the past two years, such as K-Electric, Engro Fertilizers, Bank Alfalah, and EBM.

As the expectation of transparency and accountability from businesses increases, it is better to be a part of processes that promote these values. It is also important to note that the Gender Diversity and Disclosure Scorecard does not primarily measure the number of female employees, but focuses on how the company fosters an equal-opportunity work environment that is free of discrimination, respects its employees, and understands the importance of tapping into and improving the vast potential of Pakistan’s workforce.

5. My company is part of the heavy manufacturing sector/automobile industry, which is a male-dominated industry. Can we still apply for the Awards?

Yes, you should apply to the Awards. And as stated above, the Scorecard does not primarily measure the number of women in the organization. All other benefits of being part of this public disclosure process also apply!

6. Are small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) eligible to apply for the Awards?

Yes, SMEs are eligible to apply for the Awards. The Scorecard does not score on company size but on its level of disclosure. While SMEs have fewer employees, they may still have in place the relevant policies to promote gender-equal workplaces or offer employee benefits to retain and promote female employees.

Moreover, submitting to the Awards can help SMEs identify and prioritize areas of improvement, allowing them to benchmark their progress against other companies, and lay the foundation for expanding the size of their operations and workforce.

7. Can social enterprises apply?

Yes, because a social enterprise is any business that seeks to maximize profits while meeting specific social or environmental goals as its primary purpose.

8. Why are NGOs not eligible to apply?

NGOs are not eligible to apply for the Awards since the Scorecard is structured towards for-profit entities.

Information on the Awards Cycle

9. Is there a fee associated with signing up for the ‘Employer of Choice’ Gender Diversity Awards 2024?

No, there is no fee for any company to sign up for the Awards. You will not be asked to pay at any time throughout the Awards cycle, including the ceremony.

10. When will the Awards ceremony take place?

The Awards ceremony will take place in August in Karachi, Pakistan. The exact day will be confirmed later in June.

11. What does the process leading up to the Awards look like?

The Awards process will include three webinars that will discuss the Scorecard and offer examples of best practices, along with answering questions from the participating companies. Moreover, the process consists of 3 rounds of reviews for each submission, after which the winners will be finalized.

The last date to submit is 15th May. A ceremony to announce the winning companies will take place later in August of the same year. The dates for the webinars and the Awards ceremony will be announced gradually during the Awards cycle.

12. What Awards will you be giving to the nominated companies?

Awards will be presented to the top 5 companies with the highest level of public disclosure. Moreover, the team at CERB is working towards developing other categories for recognizing top-performing companies. More details about the new categories will be shared during the Awards process on our social media.

Answering the Gender Diversity and Disclosure Scorecard

13. What if some questions do not apply to my company?

Each question on the Scorecard is voluntary. If specific questions do not apply, they can be skipped, as there are ample other opportunities to score points.

14. What is a supporting document?

- Public declarations and reports available on the company website and social media
- Corporate policy manuals (HR, safety, corporate culture, etc.)
- Evidence of reporting to management (letterhead, emails, internal processes)
- Company reports (annual, integrated, sustainability, etc.)
- Third-party audit reports (UN WEPs, EDGE, SMETA, etc.)

15. Can we share some documents privately to CERB, PBC?

Private disclosure is no longer accepted as the Awards focus on increasing public accountability. Please only submit documents marked for public disclosure.

16. Can we submit a document that was not previously publicly disclosed?

Yes, as long as your company is prepared to publicly disclose the information in the document. *The Pakistan Business Council (PBC) reserves the right to share best practices from the nominated companies for the purpose of knowledge-sharing and capacity-building, as well as report progress of the business sector in gender diversity.*

17. We are an equal-opportunity employer and don't calculate the pay gap. Do we still have to submit quantitative proof for question 3a?

Yes, we strongly advise companies to calculate the pay gap even if they consider themselves equal-opportunity employers. While this commitment is a good start, calculating the pay gap is essential to understanding the parities that exist within the company.

It is mandatory to provide quantitative data for question 3a. Any submission without numerical data will not get a score on this question. To calculate the pay gap for your company, you can use this [tool](#) developed by the Australian Government.

18. Our company has many factory workers, so we do not provide flexibility to any employee; will this count as proof for the Awards?

Flexibility is an approach that allows employees to work more efficiently while catering to their personal duties as well. It can vary from company to company and even amongst departments, since each business function operates differently.

CERB recommends establishing flexible workplaces and urges companies to adopt more flexible working methods for the factory staff. These can include job sharing, shift selection and compressed work weeks.

19. Our company provides all employees with the same mentorship and training programmes. Can we submit the same documents for questions 5a and 5c if we don't have specific training programs for women?

It is essential to submit proof for questions 5a and 5c *only* if your company has programmes specifically tailored to women. Women-specific programmes are designed keeping in mind the struggles, journeys and experiences women face in the workplace and, hence, have a higher chance of impacting the target audience. Therefore, any proof submitted to these questions must include programmes specific to female employees.