

SUSTAINABILITY ADVANTAGE RECOGNITION SCHEME FAQs

How much does it cost to apply for Partner recognition?

There are no additional costs involved in applying for recognition as a Bronze, Silver or Gold Partner of the Sustainability Advantage program.

How do we tell if we are ready to apply for the next level of recognition?

A good starting point would be to refer to the recognition information pack of the relevant level of recognition. Review the criteria and the examples of suitable evidence provided. If you're not sure if you're ready, talk to your Sustainability Advantage Project Officer.

We need help completing this application, who can we talk to?

Your Sustainability Advantage Project Officer can assist you with advice and can review your draft application on request to provide additional guidance as required.

If we are not successful, how long before we can reapply?

There is no time limit. If your application is not successful, you will be provided with detailed feedback of the additional information and/or actions required to meet the criteria. Whenever you judge you can now meet the criteria, you can reapply.

How long does our recognition last?

Bronze and Silver Partners maintain their recognition status as long as they are active members of the Sustainability Advantage program.

Gold Partner recognition lasts three years, after which they need to apply for reaccreditation. This allows the organisation to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to the sustainability of their business and their industry. Alternatively, they can elect to revert to Silver Partner status.

How long before we can apply for Bronze?

Most members will participate in the program for at least twelve months prior to applying for Bronze Partner status. You can look at the Bronze Partner Information Pack for a detailed description of what is required at this level of membership. When you feel your organisation can meet all the criteria talk to your Sustainability Advantage Project Officer.

Want to apply?

Information and application packs for Bronze, Silver and Gold levels can be downloaded from our website at

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainabilityadvantage/recognition.htm

Alternatively contact your Sustainability Advantage Project Officer.



We are new to the program but have been working on sustainability for a while. Can we fast track our recognition?

The recognition scheme recognises not only your performance but also your active participation in the Sustainability Advantage program.

However, we recognise that one size does not always fit all so please talk to your Sustainability Advantage Project Officer if the membership duration requirements are not a good fit for your organisation. We may make adjustments on a case by case basis.

Can we skip levels of recognition as we think our organisation could successfully apply for Gold Partner status, although we are currently at Member level?

The recognition criteria at all levels require the organisation to demonstrate commitment to and participation in the Sustainability Advantage Program. Therefore, level/s of recognition can't be skipped. However, adjustments can be made, on a case by case basis, to membership level duration requirements.

Do we need to fulfil all the criteria?

Yes. If a particular criterion is not well suited to your organisation's circumstances then contact your Sustainability Advantage Project Officer to discuss alternatives.

Does the diagnostic count as a module?

No, it's not a module. The diagnostic provides a snapshot of where your business is up to sustainability-wise, sets directions and priorities for action and identifies which modules would best support your program. The diagnostic can be re-done after six to twelve months to measure progress made on your sustainability journey.

Do we have to use the Recognition Data Template?

You do not need to use the exact template provided. You can use any method of providing the annual resource data so long as the same information is provided. It is important to select measures (for example, energy, water, waste, resource use) that best suit your business and to provide both quantity and cost data. Many businesses also choose to provide productivity data to demonstrate productivity-based efficiency gains.

What types of benchmarking are suitable for fulfilling the criteria?

This depends on your organisation and your sector. For example, if you occupy buildings that are covered by the NABERS benchmarking criteria you could use this option. Some industry bodies and sectors are able to provide either formal or informal benchmarking - ask about what is available for your sector.

Our organisation has grown substantially since our last application, we cannot show overall improved resource efficiencies, should we still apply for the next level?

Yes, increases in production or turnover can be used to normalise your energy, water, waste or resource data. For example, while your total kilowatt hours may have increased substantially, your kWh/\$turnover, or kWh/unit of production may have decreased. If neither of these are the case you should still apply, but include in your application an

Check out the information packs for each Partner level – they provide detailed examples of evidence for each criterion and will give you a clear indication of the kind of supporting evidence review panels will be expecting.



explanation of why you have not achieved improvements and what measures are in place to address this.

If your increase in usage is due to expansion or acquisitions, you will need to set a new baseline year for the new parts of the business. Only compare data which is equivalent in scope to your original baseline year. Alternatively, you can elect to only have your recognition apply to a single site (Bronze and Silver only), to which your data applied prior to expansion.

How much of our business will the recognition award apply to?

The application form asks you to define the scope of your application. Bronze and Silver applicants can choose to limit the scope to which the recognition applies (for example, one or several sites or subsidiary businesses or all NSW sites and/or subsidiaries).

Be clear about the scope to which you wish the recognition to apply and ensure that the evidence you provide with your application shows that all parts of the organisation referenced in your nominated scope meet the criteria.

Gold applicants must define their scope as the full extent of their operations within NSW. Gold recognition can only be awarded to organisations that are able to demonstrate they meet the criteria for all sites and subsidiary businesses throughout NSW.

Please note
Recognition status
is not transferable
and will only apply
to the scope defined
in your application.

Can just one of our sites or subsidiaries apply?

Bronze and Silver applications can have a limited scope. Members can elect to apply for recognition of individual unit/s, division/s or site/s, provided this is clearly defined in the application. Gold applications must cover the full scope of an organisation's operations in NSW.

We have been members for over a year and have acquired two new companies recently. Does our recognition level cover those companies also?

No, your recognition award only covers the parts of your organisation described in the scope defined in your original application. You can reapply to include new parts of your organisation provided you can demonstrate that the recognition criteria are met.

Recognition cannot simply be transferred to any new sites or subsidiary businesses until those parts of the organisation are the subject of an application in which they are detailed in the scope.

Our company has been acquired by another company. Does our recognition transfer to the new parent company?

Recognition cannot be transferred to a parent company. The new parent company would need to reapply for recognition under the new entity.

If your organisation
is party to a
takeover, merger
or acquisition you
will need to contact
your Sustainability
Advantage Project
Officer about your
recognition status.

What is the real difference between Silver and Gold?

The increase in rigour from the Silver to the Gold requirements is a significant jump and is primarily characterised by:

- ongoing improvements in environmental performance as part of a policy of continuous improvement



- a systematic approach, integrating sustainability into all business systems as a normal part of doing business
- ongoing leadership support for sustainability coupled with a supportive workplace culture
- taking a leadership role to drive sustainability outside the organisation.

Do I need to organise my Gold Partner application to be independently verified?

Gold Partner applications need to be independently verified by a business sustainability expert. Your SA Project Officer will organise an appropriate expert from the SA panel to undertake the verification.

What's a Platinum project?

Platinum projects are innovative sustainability projects that aim to achieve a transformation in the way value is delivered to the market by the organisation. A Platinum project may be focussed on a product, service or process that demands a new business model and have the potential to shift society and the economy towards a more environmentally sustainable future. Platinum projects will generally feature innovative technologies and are characterised by exceptional leadership and advocacy. They can only be undertaken by Gold Partners.

Is this scheme recognised by people outside of SA – ie what is its value to win us new customers or give us the edge?

Our members consistently tell us that recognition is highly valued inside and outside their organisations. Recognition status provides a clear and unequivocal message to your stakeholders and clients that you are committed to sustainability. Members report that recognition helps in many practical ways, such as when they are addressing tender requirements, reporting to shareholders and nominating for industry awards.

Can we use it in marketing campaigns?

Absolutely! You can promote your recognition status by using the appropriate Partner logo on your marketing and promotion materials. You can download the logos and guidelines for their use from our [website](#).

Unanswered questions?

Contact your Sustainability Advantage Project Officer
or email the Sustainability Advantage Team:

sustainbus@environment.nsw.gov.au