

Environmental Tools:

Environmental Performance Awards

What are environmental performance awards?

Environmental performance awards recognize and showcase individuals, corporations and other agencies for their outstanding commitment and action towards continuous environmental improvement and/or protection. Environmental performance awards enhance the public visibility of environmental leaders who have demonstrated improvements in environmental practices above and beyond regulatory requirements.

Where are they used?

Environmental performance awards have been employed as a tool to entice and display exemplary environmental performance in many contexts. Usually, governments honour voluntary action undertaken by corporations, non-government agencies, and individuals in protecting and enhancing environmental well-being. Performance awards are also awarded internally within government, industry, sector and professional associations, corporations and other private and public agencies to recognize individuals and groups that have encouraged outstanding everyday environmental performance.

Examples

[USEPA National Environmental Performance Track](#)

Performance Track is a partnership program, established in 2001, designed to recognize leading environmental performance among participating U.S. public and private facilities of all types, sizes, and complexity. Program partners demonstrate leadership in many areas, including preventing pollution at its source, resource use efficiency improvements, and environmentally responsible operations. Currently, the program has about 400 members and welcomes all qualifying facilities.

[Alberta Emerald Foundation For Environmental Excellence](#)

The Alberta Emerald Foundation for Environmental Excellence, founded in 1991, recognizes outstanding environmental initiatives and leadership by Albertans. The award foundation is committed to ensuring the recognition of significant strides being made by Albertans to protect, preserve, enhance and sustain the environment. Its mission statement is [as follows]:

Promote environmental stewardship and sustainable development through stimulating public awareness of environmental progress and recognizing best practices in Alberta by celebrating and advancing environmental excellence.

Partners for a Green Hill

The Partners for a Green Hill is a federal government initiative committed to supporting and implementing environmental initiatives at Parliament Hill. In the past, each of the government's institutions had separate award programs for their employees who have demonstrated exemplary environmental practices. Since 2005, Partners for a Green Hill has celebrated significant environmental performance with a single award. This award program acknowledges efforts to advance environmental initiatives internal and external to the day-to-day operations of Parliament Hill.

Tool performance:

Pros

- Recognition to those who have made the extra effort in environmental initiatives, which can provide an incentive for action above and beyond regulatory requirements.
- Can encourage those who may not normally do so, to take action toward protecting our environment.
- Empowers consumers to choose more environmentally-responsible companies that have received recognition.
- Highlights greener companies, empowers green financial investing.
- Can provide opportunities to strengthen the relationship between business and government.

Cons

- Some concerns exist with the value and appropriateness of some claims associated with award qualification.
- May not provide the needed incentive for an individual/company/agency to go beyond regulatory requirements.
- May fail to recognize those most deserving an environmental performance award.
- Does not legally necessitate a certain level of environmental protection and enhancement.
- May be seen as a form of greenwashing, depending on the credibility of the body granting the award.

Special considerations

Although some environmental performance awards are more prestigious than others, any award that recognizes exceptional environmental performance is of value. Further, being recognized for efforts in enhancing environmental performance should not be the sole motivation for pursuing a strategy of continuous environmental improvement and protection.