

Factsheet on the Business Excellence Initiative**About Business Excellence Initiative**

The Business Excellence (BE) initiative, which was launched in Singapore in 1994, provides organisations with a roadmap to achieve excellence. The BE initiative comprises two recognition programmes – BE Certification and BE Awards. Embarking on the BE initiative represents a journey of continuous improvement for both private and public organisations aiming for sustainable superior business performance. It allows organisations to assess which stage they are at on the excellence journey and what they need to do to achieve a higher level of performance. This is done through a thorough assessment of organisational performance by independent assessors against the requirements of the BE framework.

About Business Excellence Framework

The BE framework is aligned with international excellence frameworks adopted by counterparts in Australia, Europe, Japan and the United States. The framework was enhanced in early 2017, where criteria requirements and scoring were updated to reflect changes in business trends and landscape. This is to ensure it remains current and relevant to organisations pursuing continuous improvements to achieve worldclass business performance.

Using the BE framework with sound approaches and effective deployment, helps organisations to know where they are on the excellence journey and what they need to do to strengthen their management systems to improve stakeholder value and organisational results.

About Business Excellence Certification

Under the revised framework, all organisations have to pursue the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) as a required foundation, before deepening their niche capabilities, in Innovation, People and Service¹. The strong core fundamentals established under SQC provide better support in the pursuit of these niche capabilities.

The SQC has also been repositioned as the single mark of excellence for organisations who embark on the BE journey. The rigour of BE assessments ensures that the SQC recognition serves as a trust factor for Singapore enterprises, allowing them to instil confidence in their stakeholders and distinguish themselves from their competitors.

¹ Previously, companies can choose to embark on People, Service or Innovation niche (People Developer, Singapore Service Class or Singapore Innovation Class) independently from the holistic BE framework (Singapore Quality Class).

I. Singapore Quality Class (SQC)

SQC is the certification for the overall excellence standard and provides organisations with a holistic model for managing business excellence. There are 314 SQC-certified organisations as of September 2019.

SQC Star recognises organisations that have attained greater heights of excellence on the BE journey. There are 102 SQC Star certified organisations as of September 2019.

About Business Excellence Awards

BE Awards recognises organisations that demonstrate outstanding performance based on the holistic BE standard.

I. Singapore Quality Award (SQA)

SQA, introduced in 1994, is the pinnacle award for business excellence in Singapore. The Award is presented to organisations that have demonstrated outstanding management capabilities, and delivered superior performance and results as benchmarked against the industry. There are 63 SQA awarded thus far, including the 2019 winners.

Singapore Quality Award with Special Commendation (SQA SC)

SQA SC, launched in 2006, recognises past SQA winners who have shown improvements in their performance and demonstrated global leadership in key business areas. To date, 15 SQA SC have been awarded.

II. Innovation Excellence Award (IEA)

Launched in 2001, IEA recognises organisations for outstanding innovation management capabilities resulting in breakthrough or impactful innovations observed in areas such as business models, processes, and products and services. 19 IEA have been given out over the years, including the 2019 winner.

III. People Excellence Award (PEA)

Launched in 2001, PEA is the highest accolade given to organisations that demonstrate excellent practices in people management, and have a strong culture that inculcates learning and development. 19 PEA have been awarded thus far.

IV. Service Excellence Award (SEA)

The SEA was returned to the umbrella of BE Awards in 2016. It recognises organisations that display superior management capabilities to drive and sustain service excellence. To date, 5 SEA have been awarded to outstanding organisations.

Eligibility, Assessment and Approval Process for Business Excellence Awards

All public and private sector organisations may apply for the BE Awards. Private organisations must have a major business operation in Singapore. There is no limit to the number of organisations that can receive the Award each year.

All applicants, regardless of their sector or size, are assessed against the same criteria and have to go through the same rigorous process, which encompasses assessment of the application reports, verification of documentation, multiple site visits and indepth interviews with staff at all levels.

The SQA Governing Council draws up policies and guidelines for the awards and approves the winners. The Council is chaired by Professor Cham Tao Soon, Special Advisor to the SIM Governing Council and President Emeritus, Nanyang Technological University, with members including Chief Executives of leading organisations from both the private and public sectors.

Assisting the Council is the SQA Management Committee, comprising senior management practitioners and experienced assessors. The Committee is responsible for periodically reviewing the BE framework, short-listing award applicants and reviewing the assessment process.

The assessors are industry practitioners from leading organisations that have won the BE Awards or have adopted the BE framework as well as from overseas to help calibrate the assessment process to international standards.

The award assessment process is highly beneficial to organisations, as it requires them to critically examine their management systems and processes. The award criteria serve as a guide for them to focus on areas for improvement. The feedback they receive will help them fine-tune their systems and processes and foster a culture for business excellence.