

**NATIONAL
SUSTAINABILITY
AWARDS**
— 2024 —

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Introduction



Welcome to the National Sustainability Awards.

Sometimes something happens that restores a little bit of faith in the future. When the National Sustainability Awards were started we sought to explore and highlight the work that organisations are doing to secure a better world, but what we could not predict was the sheer broad sweep of innovations across so many areas, so many unique solutions to issues.

There never will be a silver bullet that cures all the problems, but by making these steps a journey is created, where the knowledge is shared and the best ideas adopted. All the entries to these awards have shown that inspiration, and hard work, can really make a difference, but it is an awards, and of course there must be winners.

In this brochure we list all of our winners and commendations, but also, in that spirit of sharing knowledge, have gone into more depth for a selection winners in diverse categories to explain what they have done and what set them apart from the other worthy candidates. So please, read these and congratulate them, and the other winners, and hopefully we shall see you at the 2025 event.

Yours

*Mark Evans, Editor,
National Sustainability News*

Winners 2024



Energy Innovation Award
GivEnergy



Green Energy Product of the Year
Best.Energy



Circular and Recycling Award -
Product Recycling
Recorra



Circular and Recycling Award -
Materials Recycling
Viridor



Sustainable Packaging Award
Liverpool Football Club



Innovation Award
Oracle



Sustainable Fund of the Year
Finance Earth – CORE



Green Fleet Award
DPD UK



Supply Chain Initiative of the Year
Sodexo UK&I



Partnership of the Year
E.ON UK, Segen &
POSTX



Major Project of the Year
Viridor



Water Conservation Award
GrowUp Farms



Carbon Reduction Programme
Coventry Building
Society



Carbon Reduction Project
Synergie Environ



Company of the Year
Octopus Energy



Transformation Award
The Berkeley Hotel



Sustainable Transport Award
Bibby Marine



Building of the Year
Syensqo



Use of Data and Analytics
Best.Energy



Cleantech Award
Terrafend



Education, Training and
Communication Award - National
Keep Britain Tidy &
Barley Communications



Education, Training and
Communication Award - International
AXA Investment Managers
Select



Team of the Year
Springer Nature



Rising Star
Sofia Szmirnov
Springer Nature



Biodiversity Protection Award
Biffa

Highly commended:

Green Energy Product of the Year
Salt-E Dog & Anton/Bauer

Partnership of the Year
Spacehive & North East Combined
Authority

Carbon Reduction Project
atNorth

Transformation Award
The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust

Education, Training and Communication Award -
International
AstraZeneca and UNICEF UK



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Building of the Year



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

An excellent approach to climate resilience, as one judge said: "You have to love the voluntary and community support; a great idea."



It might be more accurate to describe this as an 'unbuilding', but a little bit of history helps one understand the truly enormous conversion that has taken place under Syensqo's stewardship at its Oldbury site. Established in 1851 by Arthur Albright for the production of phosphorus and located there to obtain access to coal from the Black Country coal fields, the facility has spent most of its life the antithesis of climate friendly.

As a century and a half went by, the site became a typical industrial factory, constructed of concrete, brick and steel-clad buildings, with tarmac and concrete roadways, but in 2019 Syensqo unveiled a sustainability programme called One Planet. Under this the company vowed to transform at least 30 per cent of land owned by the site to a biodiverse area by 2030.

That might be impressive in itself, but as the judge's commented, part of this winning submission was that the change was not made top down, but by forming a Biodiversity Committee and encouraging spontaneous activities such as tree

planting to carry the ethos of shared ownership and engagement through to the very core of the project.

From these ideas a true target to "green" the entire footprint of two of the plant areas; one area of approximately 6,000m² and the other approximately 3,500m²; was formed. Even as a scope of the programme increased, the community effort was maintained and developed. Wolverhampton University advised on what habitat and species to develop and support, and the local Wildlife Trust will survey the biodiversity on site. It was, and will stay, very much a voluntary and team effort with enthusiastic help from the entire workforce benefiting nature and the employees in equal measure.

A once industrial legacy has been transformed into a rewilded area, with cornflower, calendula, thistle, poppies, nettles and bramble. Both areas are now regularly being visited by birds such as wagtails and goldfinches, which have not been seen on site previously. In the future the areas will be "joined up" to create a nature corridor from north to south and connect with other green areas in the region allowing the free movement of wildlife.

The judges were impressed by the scope of the project, the clear results, but also the process that welcomed all and sets a potential template for others to follow when 'unbuilding' legacy sites into sustainable natural environments.

Create the **future.**



Preserving Nature

At Syensqo, we go beyond reducing greenhouse emissions; we're dedicated to preserving nature. By monitoring water use, waste, air pollution, and effluents, we minimize our impact on biodiversity. Our local initiatives, employee training, and community partnerships drive positive changes in the world.

Join us in creating a net-zero, nature-positive future.

Syensqo. Explorers creating breakthroughs that advance humanity.



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Education, Training and Communication Award – International



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

A great example on how to drive the market forward through a deep understanding of customer demand.

The key to effective education and training is understanding what your audience wants. This motivated AXA IM Select, a global multi-manager committed to responsible investing, to embark on a worldwide survey to understand investors' views on ESG.

The study sought the views of 12,000 individuals across 12 countries in Europe and Asia, with the sample representative of age and gender in each country. Following an initial survey in 2021, this study allowed AXA IM Select to understand how views on ESG investing have shifted in recent years.

Subsequently, the investment manager could identify key priorities for investors, as well as gauge their perceptions of ESG and responsible investing. This could ultimately help reshape the way the industry communicates with investors, and so drive better understanding.

This year's award recognises this pioneering work and AXA IM Select's approach to disseminating these insights.

Firstly, the findings provided valuable insight into investors' current motivations

towards ESG, particularly at a time when there has been a slight decrease in the ownership of ESG products. According to the survey, investors' confidence in ESG fund performance has dropped to 37 per cent, compared to 48 per cent in 2021, and there are concerns about ESG miss-selling, alongside a low but persistent level of mistrust in ESG ratings and greenwashing.

These findings enabled AXA IM Select to analyse the key barriers to ESG investing and how perceptions could be challenged.

They launched a global campaign to share the findings through localised press activity in 11 markets, in addition to a dedicated campaign web page, videos, thought leadership articles and social media. Importantly, the public availability of the survey findings has meant it could be used broadly, including by other asset managers and educational institutions.

AXA IM Select also sent internal communications to all employees and held dedicated sessions with key stakeholders. These included the investment, propositions and distribution teams, as well as dedicated groups such as the Sustainability Forum.

The value of this research on sustainability and the transparency with which it has been shared globally have made this survey a roadmap for what investment managers need to do to engage with clients and how they can gain investor support. All making this an important educational tool and a worthy winner of this year's award.



Education, Training and Communication Award – International

AXA IM Select is a global asset manager providing investment management and advisory services which aim to help individuals and institutions meet their financial goals. Part of the AXA Group, we are a business unit of AXA Investment Managers (AXA IM), with assets under management of €32.5 billion¹ across Europe and Asia.

We aim to make investing accessible to everyone – whether they're saving for a comfortable retirement, generating an income or looking to grow their capital.

As a specialist investment multi-manager, we combine funds from some of the best fund managers worldwide to create solutions for our end clients' needs. These investments are sold through the AXA network and joint venture partners in 11 markets.

Responsible investors

We are committed to responsible investing and supporting the transition to sustainable economies. As long-term custodians of wealth,

we strive to identify and back environmental, social and governance (ESG) leaders that can protect and grow client portfolios. This means, in addition to financial analysis, we also scrutinise funds and their underlying investments to ensure they do not operate at the expense of the environment, its stakeholders and employees or its shareholders.

Where our portfolios are subdelegated and our clients have given us a mandate to do so, we also exclude investments that we believe have detrimental business practices, for example:

- 1) Environmental:** we review climate and biodiversity risks, so we exclude investments involved in coal mining and coal-based energy production, oil sands production and related pipelines, as well as palm oil production.
- 2) Social:** we consider the impact on health and human rights, so we exclude investments involved in tobacco manufacturing, the production of controversial weapons or those that violate the United

Nations Global Compact (UNGC).
3) Governance: we want to ensure companies are governed ethically and legally, for the benefit of their shareholders, so we exclude investments with questionable business ethics, such as those that have breached the UNGC.

Unless our clients have explicitly requested us not to, or in the case of passive portfolios, our portfolios are managed according to sustainable principles, in line with EU regulation on sustainability related disclosures. The portfolios that align with these disclosures either prioritise ESG characteristics alongside financial objectives, or have a primary sustainable investment objective.

Understanding clients' needs

However, we are well aware that some investors seem less convinced about responsible investing compared to a few years ago (e.g. during the Covid-19 pandemic). Notably, we've seen outflows from ESG-focused funds at the end of 2023.

To deliver on our objectives as a

¹ 30 June 2024. This figure includes assets under management and advisory for all AXA IM Select businesses as well as variable annuity assets that we provide hedging services on. The AXA IM Select businesses include AXA IM Select Asia Limited based in Hong Kong, Architas Multi-Manager Europe Ltd based in Dublin, AXA IM Select France and AXA IM Select Belgium. Issued in the UK by AXA Investment Managers UK Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in the UK. Registered in England and Wales No: 01431068. Registered Office: 22 Bishopsgate London EC2N 4BQ



responsible investment manager, it is crucial that we understand the reasons behind this, and how we can improve as an industry to help individuals invest according to their ethical needs. This inspired us to conduct a global survey to understand individuals' perceptions towards ESG investing – a follow-up to a similar study we conducted in 2021.

What we heard from individual investors

Here are the key take-aways from our survey of 12,000 individuals across 12 countries in Europe and Asia.

1. Sceptical of performance and authenticity

There was a slight drop in ESG product ownership since 2021, due to concerns about the performance of such funds, as well as questions about greenwashing. Despite this, 68% still feel that their ethical views should be taken into account in the investment process.

2. Governance is still no. 1

Similar to 2021, investors were most concerned about governance factors such as transparent accounting and data protection. Second to this, social issues were a priority in Asia, while environmental factors were important to investors in Europe.

3. Exclusions: a grey zone

While there are consistent views across the globe that some industries should be excluded from

ESG portfolios (e.g. deforestation and pornography businesses), other areas attract mixed opinions, for example 'dirty' sectors that contribute significantly to a country's economy, or oil, gas and mining companies in transition to more sustainable activities.

4. Bridging the ESG advice gap

Investors are still confused about the different investment approaches to ESG investing. Encouragingly, they have been more proactive in seeking out conversations with their advisers about responsible investing.

5. Opportunities to build confidence in ESG

Investor confidence in the performance of ESG funds has fallen significantly since 2021 (48% vs 37%). In addition, there are ESG mis-selling concerns and a low but persistent level of mistrust in ESG ratings. In this regard, we also sought to understand what would make responsible investing more attractive to investors. European individuals prioritised transparency, lower fees and government incentives (such as tax breaks), while Asian respondents require a longer track record of good investments, as well as a greater choice of investment products.

What this means for our industry

It was evident that fewer retail investors across Europe and Asia are expecting to increase their portfolio weighting of ESG investments, due

to some of the findings highlighted above. Despite this slight dampening in engagement, a healthy appetite for ESG funds is still evident throughout, but investors want to ensure a fine balance between performance, fees and product transparency.

In our business, we have used these findings to aid our proposition development, produce educational content and support training. As we support the broader AXA IM business to become a recognised investment manager among retail clients, our approach seeks to demystify the world of investing, helping clients better understand what we offer and how we operate. These findings have helped shape our communication agenda to deliver effective investor education, digestible investment views and engaging product storytelling in response to what clients actually need and want to understand.

For our wider industry, while we always strive to have clear and understandable content, it is clear that more can be done to ensure customers are treated fairly. This means better and clearer communications regarding the aims and objectives of products under the ESG umbrella. Our survey also suggests doubts about how well ESG investors really know and understand the products they have invested in, showing an opportunity for advisers to continue education about this area to grow investors' comfort in how their money is deployed.



Investment
Managers

/ Select



Helping investors reach their goals

To find out more, visit select.axa-im.com

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Sustainable Transport Award



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

A truly novel and useful approach. It may be a small start, but it promises a great future.

Ever since wind and sail gave way to coal and oil, shipping has been carbon intensive, currently being responsible for roughly three per cent of global emissions. Bibby Marine has history that dates back over two hundred years and to the days of tall ships, so it is appropriate that the company is now returning to its maritime past as it seeks one aspect of a low carbon future.

The latest stage of the company's Roadmap to Green, and the focus of this award, is the announcement of the world's first truly zero emission electric Commissioning Service Operation Vessel (eCSOV).

SOVs provide safe transfer of personnel to locations such as offshore wind turbines. A conventional SOV emits more than 7,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum and finding an environmentally friendly alternative has been a major step towards creating vessels that can actively aid the fight against climate change.

The first ship of its kind, the eCSOV has the potential to revolutionise the industry,

and can offer customers a safe, efficient, sustainable and cost-effective solution to challenge existing polluting options. The vessel is representative of a company that is working to advance the pace in which its assets are decarbonised, and although a significant step in itself, it is this ethos to drive change across the whole sector globally that is important and caught the judges' attention in addition to the advanced technology of vessel.

Bibby Marine began its roadmap to a cleaner, greener future in 2019 with a high-level look at what it could do and recognised that carbon emissions from its SOVs were an immediate issue to which there could be a solution.

Part funded by a DfT-led Zero Vessel Infrastructure (ZEVl) funding award and backed by a solid UK-based consortium of partners including Kongsberg, Shell, Port of Aberdeen, ORE Catapult, DNV and LJMU, this pioneering project also has the potential to showcase leadership in UK content and design, deliver emission and cost saving and most importantly take the vital next steps in the move towards decarbonising the marine industry and its net-zero ambitions.

This project is a crucial part of that vision with milestones already marked out to 2035 and beyond, whilst giving Bibby Marine the most advanced, efficient, and environmentally friendly SOV available.



Building tomorrow's future *today*

www.bibbymarine.com





Use of Data and Analytics



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

In an age of hype, this winner has identified a specific problem and really put their best foot forward in their solution.

Bristol-based Best.Energy is determined to use technology to fight climate change. The Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have all been harnessed, and whilst many claim to use these state-of-the-art technologies, this company's **Virtual Energy Management (VEM)** service represents a genuinely innovative gamechanger.

One major problem facing businesses is that they do not know what they are wasting. Only an effective monitoring system can allow a manager to make changes and reduce inefficiencies. Invisible data is without value, it must be revealed in order to turn that data into something actionable. So to help make the 'invisible, visible' Best.Energy's Eniscope hub and associated analytics suite allow businesses to not only extract that data right down to a granular, asset level but view it in the Cloud as actionable intelligence.

With a suite of 'Air' sensor devices interconnected across a network, granular minute-by-minute data can be sent to an intuitive cloud-based collation point,

allowing access via a simple and easy read dashboard that can be accessed online, anytime, anywhere to pinpoint where energy can be saved. In addition, an added layer of discovery is allowed by using AI for pattern discovery within the energy data collected, giving managers the most detailed information available in an intuitive form. In short, the company has created possibly the world's most complete end-to-end energy monitoring system, currently analysing more than three billion bits of data per day worldwide, allowing a far deeper analysis than other systems and giving a manager the ability to rapidly delve through the data and accurately find the optimum path to efficiency.

What impressed the judges was the simplicity of the interface to what is a very complex, capable and sophisticated system. Here again, the depth of information is only useful if it can be used; unused data is as valuable as unfound data, so here is a solution that understands the human factor too. When coupled with unarguable benefits (one client achieved 26.7% energy savings and £237,000 savings on annual energy bills by using the system, another client saved over three million kWh and 600 tonnes of CO2 annually) the result made this entry the favourite to carry off the award.

As a testimonial said, "If you're a business that is serious about reducing energy consumption to cut costs, I would recommend a conversation with Best.Energy".





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Green Energy Product of the Year



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

This winner has bypassed the competition by realising that the competitive advantage is neither artificial or human intelligence, it's both combined.



With looming net-zero targets, rising energy costs, and a worsening climate crisis all businesses need to be aware of how they can make a difference.

Yet, gobally, businesses are unaware of just how, when, and where they're wasting energy because over 80% of the world's buildings are not equipped with a Building Management System (BMS). Even if they do, many can also not afford onsite Energy Managers with the knowledge, skills, and expertise required to analyse energy data.

As demonstrated by winning the Use of Data and Analytics, Best.Energy wants to change this, so that data can be collected and actually used. To do this it wants to make monitoring and analysis more commercially accessible worldwide.

The judges chose the **Eniscope solution** as this year's winner; seeing it as an affordable end-to-end energy solution that can be used across any sector, combining hardware and Cloud technology to work with humans to help businesses reduce their environmental impact.

The Eniscope solution can be easily installed (plug-and-play) without disrupting a business's day-to-day activities, but its impact can be instant. A compact IoT hub, intelligent edge computer, data aggregator, and internet gateway, connects wirelessly to a range of monitoring devices ('Air' sensors) using the reliable LoRa network. Immediately this provides accurate, real-time, energy data at building and asset level, making energy usage visible across a facility. In conjunction with the Air sensor devices, it gives greater context to energy data such as environmental temperature, humidity, occupancy, and light.

But the key reason that this product was selected for the award was that, unlike some systems, it was built with the user in mind. Specialist Energy Managers who can interpret this data are expensive, so the affordable Virtual Energy Management (VEM) service was developed — combining the power of AI with the expertise of a specialist team of global Virtual Energy Managers. AI analyses data, identifying and alerting, then human energy experts curate the findings, to focus on the best value for savings with 24/7 support.

Indeed, so confident are Best.Energy, that they offer 100-200% guarantees on identified energy savings and Eniscopes are now installed in more than 70 countries with brands like 7-Eleven, Nando's, and NHS Trusts all helping to edge us closer to saving the planet.



AWARD-WINNING ENERGY MANAGEMENT

With the dynamic Eniscope EMS solution

Harness AI energy waste detection to divert spend away from your utility provider and onto your bottom line.



Enjoy up to 30% energy bill savings

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Already saving with Eniscope energy management...



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Biodiversity Protection Award



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

A great, if simple, idea well executed, and demonstrating an ability to deliver an intended outcome successfully.

Ecosystems are made from a variety of different species that work together in symbiotic relations to maintain our living environment, but each year this biodiversity is reducing. For example, between 5% to 10% of all insect species have vanished in the last 150 years due to intensive agriculture, the use of pesticides, introduced species and the effects of climate change.

Bees are of a particular concern as they underpin biodiversity, pollinating crops (worth £690 million in the UK alone), trees and flowers that then support other insects, birds and mammals.

Biffa has been in the waste industry for the last 100 years, and is now focussed on its low carbon collection network, enabling the UK circular economy and trying to change the way people think about waste and the environment.

In 2019 Biffa launched the Biffa Bees campaign, promoting biodiversity through the creation of wildflower habitats, which have seen a 97% decline in the UK. In the first year an estimated 35,000 bulbs and over 9,000 packets of seeds were distrib-

uted to multiple Biffa locations, allowing nearly 4 acres of wildflower planting. 'Bee lines' have been made, comprising of 'bee hotels' and 'bee cafes' linked across both urban and rural locations to provide much needed shelter and nesting sites for the various species of solitary bees.

In the following years the programme has expanded to reach out to more and more local communities. In 2023/24 over 19,000 packets of wildflower seeds and over 350 fruit trees were sent out to local communities. These have allowed schools and other groups to create spaces dedicated to biodiversity. As well as a space for nature it has also become a resource for people to learn more about nature, empowering them to take further positive actions in their community.

The company has allocated a target of having 30% of its portfolio of land (around 5,000 acres) to actively contributing to enhancing biodiversity, educates through its website and donates materials to local communities, available from the website and backed up with bee-friendly planting advice as well as information about bee life cycles and the benefits they bring to humans. Internally, its employees often help with planting in the local communities.

Making a commitment to biodiversity, promoting understanding and taking an idea and making it real is the hallmark of positive change, and for those actions Biffa Bees demonstrates a great result for the bees and the planet.

Biffa



Carbon Reduction Programme



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

Showcasing what can be achieved with the technology we have today, this submission shows is not just dedication to a mission, but also how it's entirely possible to achieve net-zero right here, right now.

As a mutual, Coventry Building Society has always acted for the greater good of its communities.

The organisation has a target to be fully net-zero by 2040 and the journey so far has seen a reduction by a third (34%) in Scope 1 and 2 emissions in 2023 compared to 2020, achieved through targeted interventions to improve property efficiencies, removal of gas usage and continued investment within renewable energy contracts.

There is onsite solar where possible (over 900 panels generating around 600MWh so far), plans to convert all branches from natural gas usage to electric heating, with 85% of these sites already converted, and the organisation only purchases 100% renewable energy. Even the fleet is mainly electric vehicles (69%), with a goal of a 100% electric fleet by 2030.

Coventry has also taken a renewable approach to its suppliers, achieving ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement accreditation. A Sustainable Procurement Working Group has been instigated to

help achieve this strategy, there is an annual Supplier Awards ceremony and an onboarding software platform to automate supply chain emissions calculations, improve emissions forecasting and incentivise suppliers to progress further on their own journey to net-zero.

Reducing the emissions caused by regular commuting, employees are invited to use a salary sacrifice scheme to lease an electric or hybrid car. Even the pension scheme has been updated to invest 50% into ESG specific funds.

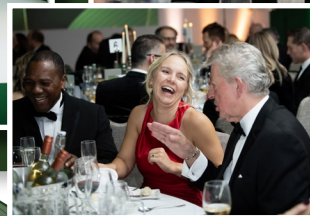
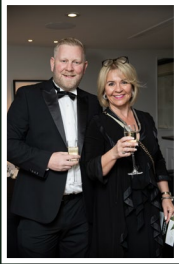
Internally 77% of total waste was recycled and zero waste has been sent to landfill since 2017, with the remaining 23% sent for energy recovery since 2023.

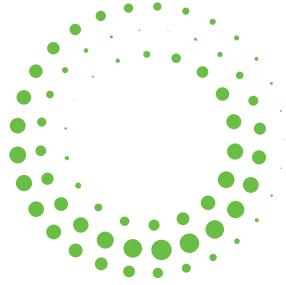
Customers benefit too, with a Green Additional Borrowing scheme for members, enabling them to benefit from a lower rate when they borrow more for energy efficiency improvements, and a partnership with the Energy Saving Trust to provide a Home Energy Efficiency Tool on the website for homeowners, landlords and brokers to utilise.

There are many more examples of how Coventry is reducing its footprint and helping others to do so, and the organisation continues to find new ways to drive down emissions in every corner of its operations. The sum of these parts add up to a comprehensive programme that swayed the judges, because it is not just what might be done, it is an example of what can be done.



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