



**Western Cape
Government**

Provincial Government: Department of the Premier

Western Cape Government: Service Excellence Awards (SEA) – A Practical Guide to Preparing Strong Service Excellence Awards Nominations

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Table of contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
2.	Before You Begin.....	2
3.	Preparing a Strong Nomination... ..	3
3.1	Explain the Challenge.....	3
3.2	Describe the Initiative	3
3.3	Demonstrate the Results	3
3.4	Explain the Impact	3 - 4
3.5	Demonstrate Sustainability.....	4
4.	Supporting Evidence.....	4 - 5
5.	Category-Specific Considerations.....	5
6.	What Assessors Look For.....	5
7.	Final Tip	5 - 6
8.	Final Thought & Conclusion	6
9.	Nomination Checklist.....	6 - 7

1. Introduction

The Western Cape Government (WCG) Service Excellence Awards (SEA) recognise excellence in public service delivery by celebrating the achievements of Western Cape Government employees, teams, municipalities, residents, community organisations and collaborative partnerships that have made a meaningful contribution to improving the lives of the people of the Western Cape. The Awards promote innovation, collaboration, good governance and resident-centred service delivery across all sectors participating in the Awards.

Preparing a strong nomination is about more than describing a good initiative. Successful nominations clearly demonstrate the challenge that was addressed, the actions taken, the results achieved and the positive impact on residents, employees, communities or organisations. They are also supported by relevant and credible evidence.

Important: This guide provides general guidance applicable to all Service Excellence Awards categories. As each category has its own assessment criteria and evidence requirements, nominators should carefully review the requirements of their selected category and ensure that every criterion is addressed and supported by relevant evidence before submitting their nomination.

Top Five Tips for a Strong Nomination

- ✓ Choose the correct award category.
- ✓ Answer every assessment criterion.
- ✓ Focus on outcomes and impact rather than activities.
- ✓ Support every claim with relevant evidence.
- ✓ Keep your responses clear, concise and evidence-based.

2. Before You Begin

Before completing your nomination, carefully read the relevant award category and assessment criteria.

Ask yourself:

- Have I selected the correct award category?
- Does my nomination clearly address each assessment criterion?
- Can I demonstrate the impact of the initiative?
- Do I have sufficient supporting evidence to substantiate my claims?

If you are uncertain which award category best suits your nomination, consult the SEA Framework or SEA Project Team before completing your submission.

Different award categories recognise different types of excellence. Some categories focus on individual achievement, others on teamwork, innovation, collaboration, municipal excellence or community impact. Tailor your nomination to the requirements of your chosen category rather than using a generic approach.

Remember that assessors evaluate nominations against the published assessment criteria and supporting evidence, not simply the quality of the writing.

3. Preparing a Strong Nomination

When completing your nomination, consider including the following information where relevant:

3.1. Explain the Challenge

Describe the service delivery challenge, opportunity or community need that led to the initiative.

Help assessors understand:

- What problem needed to be solved?
- Who was affected?
- Why was action required?

3.2. Describe the Initiative

Clearly explain what was implemented.

Consider including:

- the objectives of the initiative;
- how it was implemented;
- who was involved;
- the respective roles and responsibilities of key partners or stakeholders; and
- any innovative approaches that were introduced.

Where applicable, explain how collaboration between departments, municipalities, residents, community organisations, businesses, non-governmental organisations or other stakeholders strengthened service delivery outcomes and contributed to the overall success of the initiative.

3.3. Demonstrate the Results

Rather than simply describing activities, explain what changed because of the initiative.

Where possible include measurable results such as:

- improved service delivery;
- improved municipal services;
- enhanced community wellbeing;
- increased resident participation;
- improved customer, resident or employee satisfaction;
- reduced turnaround or response times;
- improved accessibility of services;
- financial or operational efficiencies;
- improved governance or accountability;
- increased compliance;
- economic or social benefits;
- environmental improvements; or
- any other measurable performance improvements.

Where possible, quantify your achievements by including baseline information and measurable improvements. For example, explain how service delivery improved before and after the initiative, rather than simply stating that improvements were made.

3.4. Explain the Impact

Assessors are particularly interested in the difference your initiative has made.

Consider explaining:

- How residents, communities, customers, employees or beneficiaries benefited;
- How service delivery, municipal services or community outcomes improved;
- Whether the initiative strengthened organisational performance, municipal governance or community participation;
- Whether the initiative contributed to economic development, environmental sustainability, social wellbeing or improved quality of life;
- How the initiative aligns with the principles of Batho Pele, Good Governance, WOGA and/or WOSA, where applicable; and
- How the initiative demonstrates the Western Cape Government Values of Integrity, Caring, Competence, Accountability and Innovation, where applicable.

3.5. Demonstrate Sustainability

Where applicable, explain:

- whether the initiative continues to operate successfully;
- whether it has become part of normal business practice;
- how it will continue delivering benefits in future; and
- whether the initiative could be replicated elsewhere within the Western Cape Government or municipalities.

4. Supporting Evidence

Supporting evidence is often the difference between a good nomination and an outstanding nomination.

Where appropriate, consider including evidence such as:

- Project or programme reports;
- Municipal reports (where applicable);
- Community project reports (where applicable);
- Performance reports;
- Monitoring and evaluation reports;
- Audit reports (where applicable);
- Attendance registers;
- Performance statistics and dashboards;
- Customer, resident or employee satisfaction survey results;
- Testimonials from residents, customers, employees, beneficiaries, community leaders or stakeholders;
- Letters of support or appreciation from departments, municipalities, community organisations, businesses or other partners;
- Presentations or communication material;
- Policies, procedures or guidelines;
- Photographs illustrating the initiative;
- Media articles or publications;

- Awards, commendations or certificates;
- Maps, diagrams or before-and-after comparisons (where relevant);
- Financial or operational performance data; and
- Any other documentation that supports the information contained in the nomination.

Only include evidence that is relevant to your nomination and clearly demonstrates the results achieved.

5. Category-Specific Considerations

If you are nominating a...	Consider emphasising...
WCG Employee	• Leadership, professionalism, innovation, service delivery improvements and measurable results.
WCG Team	• Collaboration, teamwork, innovation, service improvements and organisational impact.
Collaborative Programme or Project (WOGA/WOSA)	• The contribution of each partner, collaboration, shared outcomes, sustainability and measurable impact.
Municipality or Municipal Project	• Improved municipal services, governance, community impact, financial stewardship, sustainability and innovation.
Resident (Individual)	• Community leadership, voluntary contribution, measurable community impact and collaboration.
Resident Team or Community Project	• Collective action, partnerships, community outcomes, sustainability and innovation.

6. What Assessors Look For

Strong nominations generally:

- clearly address every assessment criterion;
- explain the challenge before describing the solution;
- demonstrate measurable results;
- focus on outcomes and impact rather than activities alone;
- provide credible supporting evidence;
- clearly explain the benefits to residents, communities, employees or the organisation;
- demonstrate innovation, collaboration and sustainability where relevant; and
- demonstrate that the initiative addresses the specific requirements of the chosen award category; and
- present information that is supported by relevant, verifiable evidence.

7. Final Tip

A successful nomination tells a complete story:

Challenge → Initiative → Results → Impact → Evidence → Sustainability

Note: Sustainability is one of the strongest differentiators in high-scoring nominations

Remember that assessors are generally less interested in what activities were undertaken and more interested in the difference those activities made.

The strongest nominations clearly demonstrate how the initiative improved service delivery, strengthened organisational performance, benefited residents or communities, and contributed to building a professional, innovative and resident-centred Western Cape Government.

Remember that assessors can only evaluate the information and evidence that is submitted with your nomination. Do not assume that they have prior knowledge of your initiative or its achievements.

8. Final Thought & Conclusion

A successful nomination is more than a description of a good initiative—it is a well-supported account of how an individual, team, municipality or resident made a meaningful difference through service excellence.

The Western Cape Government Service Excellence Awards celebrate excellence in public service by recognising individuals, teams, municipalities and residents who make a positive and lasting contribution to the lives of the people of the Western Cape. The Awards also promote a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, collaboration and resident-centred service delivery.

When preparing your nomination, remember that assessors evaluate submissions against the published assessment criteria and the supporting evidence provided. Strong nominations clearly explain the challenge that was addressed, the actions taken, the measurable results achieved and, most importantly, the positive impact on residents, communities, employees or the organisation.

Rather than focusing solely on **what was done**, demonstrate **what changed because of the initiative**. Support your achievements with credible evidence and ensure that your nomination addresses each assessment criterion in a clear, concise and evidence-based manner.

By taking the time to prepare a thoughtful and well-supported nomination, you not only improve your chances of success but also contribute to sharing good practice and inspiring service excellence across the Western Cape Government, municipalities and communities.

We wish you every success with your nomination and thank you for your commitment to delivering services that make a meaningful difference to the people of the Western Cape.

9. Nomination Checklist

Nomination Checklist	
	• Selected the correct SEA category for your nomination?
	• Carefully read and addressed every assessment criterion for the selected category?
	• Clearly explained the service delivery challenge, problem or opportunity that gave rise to the initiative?
	• Clearly described the initiative, project or achievement, including the role of the nominee(s) and any collaborating partners?
	• Demonstrated how the initiative improved service delivery, organisational performance or community outcomes?
	• Included measurable results, such as performance improvements, participation levels, customer satisfaction, efficiencies, cost savings or other relevant indicators?
	• Clearly demonstrated the impact of the initiative on residents, employees, communities or stakeholders?
	• Explained how the initiative demonstrates innovation, collaboration or good governance, where applicable?

	• Demonstrated alignment with the principles of Batho Pele and the Western Cape Government Values, where applicable?
	• Explained how the initiative has been sustained or how it can be replicated elsewhere?
	• Attached sufficient supporting evidence to substantiate the information contained in the nomination?
	• Included only relevant supporting evidence that clearly demonstrates the results achieved?
	• Ensured that all information provided is accurate, complete and easy to understand?

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