



We have compiled some frequently asked questions to guide your submission process. Please read through all of them as they may answer many of your questions. If your question has not been answered, you can [send an email requesting clarification](#).

- ***Are the awards open to anyone?***
 - Yes, financial intermediaries from across the globe are invited and encouraged to apply. For the category of *SME Financier of the Year*, there are regional categories for which country-specific or regional institutions can apply.
 - We welcome entries from across the spectrum of institutions that are serving the SME sector.

- ***Can we enter the competition with one of our partners?***
 - Yes, partnerships or consortia are welcome to enter the competition. Just one entry should be created that highlights the joint nature of the work and meets the criteria of the respective category.

- ***How do you define SME? How do you distinguish this from microenterprise?***
 - If you have a distinction between micro and small enterprises, just explain in your answer what it is. For example, you might distinguish by employee numbers, or assets, or turnover...or even by size of loan. If you don't have such a distinction, that's ok, too.
 - What's most important is the data you share about how many clients you are reaching with your services, and what the impact on businesses and on lives has been of your work.

- ***You are asking us to provide sensitive information/data as part of our entry. Who will have access to our entry and how might this information be used?***
 - We recognize and appreciate that some of the information we are requesting is sensitive. The information that you provide as part of your entry is held in the strictest of confidence and is shared only with those on a need to know basis and to those who have signed a confidentiality agreement.
 - *World Bank and IFC staff:* Access to the entries is only for staff who have direct involvement with the Global SME Finance Awards which includes some of the SME Finance Forum staff and limited IFC staff with a specific business need. All information contained in your entry falls under the Confidentiality Agreement

that all World Bank Group staff must abide by and as such, specific company information will never be shared externally and will only be shared internally on a limited basis and where no conflict of interest exists.

- **Judges:** When recruiting judges, we stress the paramount importance of confidentiality when serving as a judge and expect them to act with integrity and professionalism when reviewing entries.
 - All judges are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement before being provided any entries to evaluate, and judges only have access to the entries they have been assigned to evaluate.
 - Additionally, we assign entries to judges so that we avoid any known or possible conflicts of interest, and if a judge is assigned an entry with which they have a conflict, they recuse themselves from evaluating the entry.

- ***SME Finance Forum Privacy Policy:***

The SME Finance Forum may collect and manage your information in accordance with the Forum's Privacy Policy (<https://www.smefinanceforum.org/privacy>). By confirming your participation to the SME Finance Awards, you agree to allow the organizers to contact you as and when required for the administration of the competition, for example, to let you know you have advanced in the competition or to notify you about a service change or new upcoming award competitions we organize. We won't be sharing your contact details with third parties outside of the SME Finance Forum team and the competition judges. For more information, see our privacy policy.

- ***I have questions about the IDA and fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS) Award***

- ***We are based and work in an IDA/FCS country, so how do we apply for this award?***

If you are entering either the Product Innovation of the Year or SME Financier of the Year category, you will be automatically entered into this award as the entry form is the same, but the evaluation process is slightly different.
- ***We are not headquartered in an IDA or FCS country, but the Product Innovation we are presenting is focused in one or more of these countries. Are we eligible for this award?***

Your entry will be eligible based on the location of the work as we are interested in what is being done in these challenging environments and recognizing this work.
- ***We are not headquartered in an IDA or FCS country, but we work in one or more of these countries as part of our portfolio and our SME Financier of the Year entry presents our work in both non IDA/FCS and IDA/FCS countries. Are we eligible for this award?***

If your entry clearly presents your work between these two contexts and allows the judges to disaggregate practices, results and approaches in IDA/FCS countries vs the other countries, then you can be considered.

- ***If we put 'N/A' in any of the fields, will this affect our eligibility or likelihood to win an award?***
 - You want to answer the questions and criteria as completely and fully as possible so that judges are provided with enough/sufficient information to make an evaluation of your entry.
 - If a question is 100% irrelevant or inapplicable to your business model/institution, you should put 'N/A' in the field.

What documents should we attach to our entry?

- Provide relevant and meaningful supportive attachments that provide quantitative and/or qualitative data or information to help the judges evaluate your entry. Do not include attachments simply to show you have a lot of documentation.
 - Good practice would be to refer to the name of a specific attachment to guide the judges to specific supportive documentation for claims/assertions you make in your entry. For example, you could state "our SME portfolio growth is x% year over year for the past 3 years and you can refer to our 2020 Annual Report on pages 34-35 that summarize this growth and includes a graph that illustrates it".
 - Judges will not do any additional research and will evaluate each entry based on what is submitted in the entry. Do not expect judges to sift through hundreds of pages of attachments to try and pull out what is relevant. For example, if you are providing an annual report where a particular innovation/practice/etc is mentioned, you could attach the annual report but write in your entry the specific pages where judges can find the information specific to your entry that you want them to read.
 - Ideally it would be good to have documents that have been externally validated such as annual reports or statements, but that may not be available, so if you have reports, presentations, articles, websites, etc that have already been created, used, presented to capture the work you are doing, those could be included.
 - If difficult to provide a large-volume business data due to confidentiality provide data summaries but be precise enough that the judges can see that your numbers make sense and have validity and haven't been created.
- ***One section is about project details, can you further guide as to what type of information is required in this section? What does "project" mean here?***
 - For this section, we are looking for a short executive summary of your entry that provides a concise narrative of why you are submitting an entry.
 - If this is for Product Innovation of the Year and Digital Innovator of the Year, then this refers to providing a summary of the specific innovation, service, product, project, process, investor guidelines, etc that you are choosing to showcase.
- ***Who has won in the past years?***
 - The Global SME Finance Awards were launched in 2018 and as such, there are three years of winners. You can find all the winners on the [SME Finance Forum website](#) – [2020 winners](#), [2019 winners](#), [2018 winners](#).

For SME Financier of the Year category:

- **The SME Financier of the Year worksheet has metrics that aren't relevant to my institution?**
 - If some of the fields cannot be filled out or are not relevant to your business model, then fill in with N/A.
 - This category is appropriate for all financial intermediaries who are providing financing in some form to SMEs and so many of the metrics in the worksheet would be relevant as the judges want to see the quality and sustainability of your business in supporting SMEs.

For Product Innovation of the Year category:

- **For the subsection "How has it brought direct value to the financial institution/fintech company/other?", does the "financial institution/fintech company/other" refer to our company or the financial institutions we work with?**
 - This applies to your organization and the questions after that are specific ways in which you can illustrate this value.

For Responsible Digital Innovator of the Year category:

- **How many Investor Guidelines do we need to include in our application?**
 - For the SME Global Finance Awards 2021, we are encouraging entrants to consider specific priority areas of [Responsible Finance Forum – Investor Guidelines](#).
 - You should describe specifically how you are implementing these into practice.
 - If women are a focus, also provide how a “gender strategy” or “gender lens investing” is being implemented in practice.
 - Among the 10 Investor Guidelines, we encourage you to consider the two listed below in particular:
 - Guideline #9: “Prevent Over-Indebtedness, Strengthen Digital Literacy and Financial Awareness”
 - Guidelines #5 “Establish Customer Identity, Data Privacy and Security Standard” and #6 “Promote Fair and Transparent Pricing”
 - Refer to the [Investor Guidelines](#) to understand what they are and to see all ten of them.
 - Additionally, you should refer to [Investor Guidelines Potential Actions](#) to see just a few examples of practices within each of the ten guidelines that may help you to evaluate your own institution's actions to see which guidelines you might showcase in your entry.

If you are ready to start your submission, you can use this link to take you to the [Awards Platform](#).