

unseen business awards 2026

NOMINATION GUIDELINES



about the awards

Bold leadership and brave ideas is what turns good intentions into real change.

Do you know a company or individual who truly leads by example? Someone who goes beyond compliance and token gestures to create real, lasting change? This is your opportunity to recognise their work.

Since 2023, The Unseen Business Awards have highlighted organisations and individuals across all sectors who are demonstrating genuine leadership, tackling exploitation, reshaping value chains, and showing how business can drive positive impact.

In our 2026 awards, we continue to celebrate and elevate purposeful action. Whatever your size, sector, or stage of progress, if you're making meaningful change, we want to hear from you.

This year we will be presenting six awards, chosen by an expert judging panel. **Nominations close on 10 August 2026**, with winners announced at the Unseen Business Awards ceremony on Thursday 22 October 2026.



WHY ENTER?

Participating offers a unique opportunity to:

- Gain recognition for your anti-slavery efforts across your industry and inspire others.
- Benchmark your progress against industry best practices.
- Position yourself as a leader in ethical and sustainable business practices.

WHO CAN BE NOMINATED?

The awards are open to businesses and individuals of all sectors, sizes and locations taking meaningful action to tackle modern slavery. We encourage nominations for:

- Those with innovative approaches to ending exploitation.
- Those collaborating with others to drive positive change.
- Those demonstrating long-term commitment and measurable results.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We invite nominations for projects, strategies, or ideas implemented within the past two years. Nominees must demonstrate a commitment to effective change and the benefits it has brought to their organisation and the wider anti-slavery sector.

Focus your submission on:

- Clear strategy: a well-defined plan for tackling modern slavery across your operations and value chain.
- Effective implementation: demonstrating successful execution of the strategy.
- Positive impact: measurable results and improved anti-slavery practices.
- Tangible outcomes: data and evidence showcasing the initiative's success.

Examples of impactful actions could include:

- Actively increasing worker rights awareness exploitation identification.
- Improving organisational reporting and compliance with anti-slavery regulations.
- Conducting risk assessments and integrating findings into your anti-slavery approach.
- Creating and implementing an effective modern slavery strategy.
- Launching modern slavery training programmes across your organisation
- Championing worker voice.
- Developing new initiatives or technology to combat modern slavery.
- Demonstrating a continuous improvement approach with long-term goals.
- Building strong relationships with key stakeholders like suppliers and recruiters to effectively identify and mitigate modern slavery risks.
- Prioritising open and honest communication with suppliers to tackle exploitation within your value chain.
- Going above and beyond as a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) to integrate modern slavery solutions into wider organisational goals.
- Collaborating with the wider anti-slavery sector to strengthen the collective effort

the awards

This year, we're awarding prizes in the following two categories:

1. Business awards

These awards recognise businesses demonstrating exceptional leadership in tackling modern slavery within their operations and value chains.

Following feedback from last year's awards, we have introduced a new SME category to better reflect and recognise impact across organisations of all sizes.

BUSINESS IMPACT – SME CATEGORY

This award recognises small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have made a meaningful positive impact in addressing modern slavery. Eligible businesses may have championed worker voices, raised awareness of the issue in their communities, implemented practical improvements in their anti-slavery policies, or demonstrated openness about challenges they've faced. Technology may also play a role, such as using digital tools to improve reporting, monitor value chains, or engage stakeholders. This award celebrates SMEs whose dedication, innovation, and agility have led to tangible change.

BUSINESS IMPACT – LARGE COMPANY CATEGORY

This award celebrates larger organisations that have achieved significant positive impact in tackling modern slavery. Entrants may have led industry-wide initiatives, strengthened anti-slavery frameworks across complex operations, increased transparency in reporting challenges, or actively amplified worker voices at scale. Technology may be leveraged to enhance value chain oversight, improve data-driven decision-making, or strengthen engagement across networks. This award recognises larger companies whose leadership, resources, and systemic approach have driven measurable change across their business and value chains.

PARTNERSHIP

This award recognises the power of collaboration in tackling modern slavery and celebrates businesses that achieve greater impact through partnership. Eligible organisations demonstrate excellence in working with others—whether by engaging suppliers to improve practices, raising awareness and sharing expertise with industry peers, or forming strong alliances with NGOs, government agencies, or community groups. This award honours businesses that leverage collective action, build trust across networks, and create lasting change that would not be possible alone.

INNOVATION

This award celebrates businesses that challenge the status quo in the fight against modern slavery. We're looking for organisations that use creative approaches, including technology, to go beyond "tick-box" solutions, introduce new models, shift power dynamics, and give workers a stronger voice. Nominees may be developing digital tools, rethinking value chain practices, or pioneering approaches that others might see as impossible. This award recognises those refusing to accept "this is just how it works" and driving meaningful, transformative change.

2. Individual awards

These awards celebrate individuals within businesses who go above and beyond in the fight against modern slavery.

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

This award recognises individuals who have shown outstanding leadership in the fight against modern slavery. Nominees may have driven their organisation's anti-slavery strategy, developed and implemented training programmes, championed worker voices, or fostered collaboration across the wider anti-slavery sector. This award celebrates those whose vision, dedication, and initiative have led to meaningful change and inspired others to take action.

UNSEEN STAR OF THE YEAR

A personal award, presented by Unseen, to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding support for Unseen and the wider anti-slavery sector.

This award is chosen internally by Unseen and its trustees. **It is not open to nominations.**



Samantha Banks (centre), UK Sustainability Lead at Investec, celebrating her Star of the Year award 2025.

judging criteria

Our panel of judges will be looking for inspiring businesses and individuals who demonstrate a significant positive impact on tackling modern slavery. All submissions will be scored out of a total of 100 points based on the following four key criteria. Scores will be used solely to support the judges' decision-making process and **will not be shared with individual nominees**.

Please note: While these points offer guidance, nominations do not need to address every question within each criterion. By showcasing the nominee's dedication, collaboration, innovation, and measurable impact, you can strengthen your nomination and increase their chances of winning an Unseen Business Award.

COMMITMENT (20)

- How has the nominee demonstrated a dedication to improving lives of workers affected by modern slavery?
- Is there evidence of senior leadership support for their anti-slavery efforts?
- Has the nominee's commitment led to the development of a long-term strategy for combating exploitation?

COLLABORATION (20)

- Has your nominee effectively partnered with the anti-slavery sector such as NGOs or government agencies?
- How has the nominee collaborated with suppliers to improve anti-slavery practices within their value chains?
- Has the nominee collaborated with other businesses in the sector to share best practices and drive systemic change?
- What evidence shows the nominee is building strong, sustainable relationships with suppliers to promote ethical sourcing?

INNOVATION (20)

- Has the nominee implemented innovative approaches to combat and future proof their response to worker exploitation?
- How has the nominee harnessed technology to strengthen their anti-slavery efforts?
- Does the nominee incorporate survivor experiences into their approach, promoting a person-centred perspective?

IMPACT AND TANGIBLE RESULTS (20)

- Can the nominee demonstrate measurable improvements in their approach to modern slavery? This could include: Increased awareness of modern slavery risks within their operations and value chains.
- Positive impact on worker lives, such as improved working conditions, fair wages, and worker empowerment.
- A more robust anti-slavery strategy with clear goals and monitoring mechanisms.
- Concrete evidence to support the claimed impact.

submitting a nomination

ELIGIBILITY

The Unseen Business Awards are open to all businesses and individuals taking meaningful action to tackle modern slavery. We only consider recent or current business strategies or initiatives implemented within the past two years. You're welcome to submit nominations for as many awards as you wish.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO MAKE A NOMINATION

- Nominee Details: Name and contact information of the business/individual you're nominating, along with their consent to be nominated for an Unseen Business Award.
- Endorser: Name and email address of a second person who can corroborate your nomination.

HOW TO NOMINATE

Head to the [Unseen Business Awards](#) page and complete the online nomination form. You'll need to provide contact details for both yourself and your nominee.

The deadline for nominations is 10 August 2026.

NEXT STEPS

Shortlisted candidates will be contacted by the Unseen team by 22 September and invited to the Unseen Business Awards event in London on Thursday 22 October, where the winners will be announced.

Please note: The judges' decision is final. Correspondence regarding the selection process will not be disclosed, nor will the internal results used by the judges to inform their decisions.



Abhishek Singh, president of Mastek UK and Europe at the Awards 2025.

frequently asked questions (FAQs)

CAN I NOMINATE MYSELF?

Yes, self-nominations are welcome. Just ensure you're highlighting recent or current business initiatives or strategies implemented within the past two years.

WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY WON THE UNSEEN BUSINESS AWARDS?

Curious about last year's winners? Explore their achievements [here](#) and be inspired by the fantastic work driving positive change in the fight against modern slavery.

WHY CAN'T I NOMINATE FOR THE UNSEEN STAR OF THE YEAR AWARD?

The Unseen Star of the Year Award is a special recognition chosen by our Business Services Team. Throughout the year, we collaborate with a network of dedicated individuals continuously striving to make a difference. This award allows us to celebrate and acknowledge exceptional contributions from those we've worked closely with.

Interested in exploring how we empower businesses and other organisations to tackle modern slavery? Visit our dedicated business services page and learn more about the resources and support we offer [here](#).

WILL I RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON MY NOMINATION?

We understand the desire for feedback. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the judging process, judges are unable to provide feedback to nominees at any stage.

**Thank you for your interest
in the Unseen Business Awards.**

