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2026 – Best IR Programme

A. LISTED COMPANY CRITERIA
(See Part B below for Private Company category criteria)

Categories
Small-, Mid- and Large-Cap Listed Companies

IR Principles

Please note that for all awards categories, companies need to emphasise how they have successfully addressed the following IR principles within the last 12 months:

- Having an integrated equity story that is clearly communicated across all stakeholders, setting out the company's approach to sustainable long-term value creation
- Engaging with investors, analysts and other relevant stakeholders with the depth, transparency, and regularity to enable their fair assessment of the growth and value drivers of the company
- Meeting or exceeding regulatory requirements around disclosure and focusing on greater transparency of information on material risks, challenges, opportunities, progress and milestones.

Award Description

For this award judges will be looking for evidence of effective implementation of an IR strategy and programme, that both reflects and supports the company's purpose, vision and strategy.

<u>The IR strategy and programme should include and be supported by the following elements, demonstrating progress over time:</u>

Equity story and strategy
- A consistent and compelling equity story, underpinned by a clear and realistic strategic plan that is aligned to the group's internal policies.
- Transparent communication of the company's financial performance and outlook, including any significant challenges or changes in strategy.

Disclosure and reporting
- Regular, consistent and transparent financial and non-financial disclosure of the company's performance against its strategy and milestones
- Integration of ESG and sustainability reporting into the broader IR disclosure in a material and consistent manner.

Investor and analyst engagement
- Regular, pro-active and transparent engagement with equity analysts to inform a fair company assessment and consensus.
- A structured IR engagement and outreach strategy with existing and new, institutional, and retail investors, including roadshows and other thematic events, such as investor days/CMDs, site visits, and teach-ins.

- Evidence of C-Suite accessibility and Board level engagement with the investment community.
- Level of engagement: number of unique investor meetings, number of attended sell-side conferences, number of roadshows, etc (if possible, contextualise this information with trends in engagement, i.e. targeting new geographic markets or targeting new stakeholder types).

Website and digital communications

- Articulate how the IR website conveys a clear, substantive and timely picture of the company and serves as an interactive platform for delivery of its financial and wider material disclosure related to the company's long-term value in society.
- Ease of navigation with clearly laid out equity story narrative as well as access to core disclosure documents, up to date financial calendar and access to events
- Use of digital tools and technology (including webcasts and potentially other video content) to communicate the equity story and progress against strategy.

Along with an entry statement, entrants are encouraged to submit links to supporting materials and to use data where possible to highlight delivery of the strategy and its outcomes

AWARD CRITERIA

Introduction

Please provide, in 800 words or fewer, a concise but insightful description of how your IR programme demonstrates best practice, keeping in mind the IR principles and the individual awards description. We have provided considerations that the judges will be looking for below. Please don't forget to provide context, highlight what you have done differently and, most importantly, any evidence of success for the judges.

Considerations for your entry

Overview

Discuss the key objectives for your IR strategy and programme, and how do these align with and support the company's strategy and purpose. Include details of any challenges you faced.

Strategy & approach

Discuss the principal elements of your IR strategy and engagement programme. Include details on the approach you took, the channels you used and how you tracked progress.

Outcomes

Discuss what outcomes you achieved. Includes details on how you measured success and what improvements there were in the year.
Judges will be looking for entries that feel genuinely company-specific, reflecting your own voice, culture, and experience. AI tools may be used to assist with drafting, but the strongest entries will be those that clearly reflect the unique character of your organisation and include concrete, specific evidence of outcomes rather than generalised claims.

Entry statements, supporting evidence and size categories

Word format entry statements to be uploaded to the website (Max. 800 words).

Alongside your submission, please include any links to relevant supporting materials.

Please note Large-cap, Mid-cap and Small-cap categories are aligned to FTSE 100, FTSE 250 and FTSE Small-cap classifications as at 31 March 2026. For companies whose equity shares are admitted to trading on a public market in the UK or abroad but that are not included in the FTSE indices (including international and AIM-traded companies), size categories are determined by their market capitalisation as at 31 March 2026 as follows:

- *Large cap: above £3.5bn;*
- *Mid cap: £500m to £3.5bn;*
- *Small cap: below £500m.*

B. PRIVATE COMPANY CRITERIA

2026 – Best IR Programme – Private Companies

Category

Companies whose equity shares are not admitted to trading on a public market (in the UK or international)

IR Principles

Please note that for all awards categories, companies need to emphasise how they have successfully addressed the following IR principles within the last 12 months:

- Having an integrated equity story that is clearly communicated across all stakeholders setting out the company's approach to long-term value creation
- Engaging with investors, analysts or other industry experts and other relevant stakeholders with the depth, transparency, and consistency to enable an informed assessment of the growth and value drivers of the company
- Meeting or exceeding regulatory requirements around disclosure and focusing on greater transparency of information on material risks, challenges, progress and milestones both internally and externally.

Award Description

Capital markets are broadening their architecture to better align with the needs of private companies as they scale and compete for long-term institutional capital, while remaining private for longer.

For this award judges will be looking for evidence of the private company's effective and timely communication and engagement with investors or other stakeholders, which constitute an effective IR programme that both reflects and supports the company's purpose, vision and strategy.

Despite not having the same regulatory obligations as listed companies, private companies increasingly choose to implement a rigorously structured IR programme for different reasons, including:

- to engage existing private investors; monthly, quarterly, semi-annually/annually, ad hoc with e.g.:
  - Updates including key metrics; *monthly*: (ARR, churn, cash, runway); *quarterly:* P&L, balance sheet, cash flow)
  - Board presentations including information on progress update vs plan
  - Material updates including hires, customer wins/retention, risks
  - Strategic updates on priorities/challenges
  - Board meetings/Annual investor meetings
- in preparation for an IPO;
- as part of accessing a private securities trading venue under the PISCES regulation[1];

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[1] The UK's rollout of the PISCES regime (the Private Intermittent Securities and Capital Exchange System) represents a significant step in bridging private and public markets, enabling regulated, intermittent secondary trading in private company shares. Following HM Treasury legislation and FCA rulemaking in 2025, PISCES has been launched via a regulatory sandbox, with the London Stock Exchange becoming the first approved operator through its new Private Securities Market (PSM). The PSM leverages LSE's public-market infrastructure to deliver liquidity events for private companies and investors. Please consider the following materials detailing the launch of a regulated market for private company shares in the UK. Please follow the websites of the UK Government and the FCA for up-to date information.

PISCES: platforms for trading private company shares | FCA
PS25/6: Private Intermittent Securities and Capital Exchange System: sandbox arrangements | FCA First PISCES operator gets greenlight in drive for growth | FCA
Benefits for companies Private Securities Market | London Stock Exchange

- to support their issuance of listed debt; or
- as part of a growth-oriented strategic communications strategy with stakeholders.

The IR or communications programme should include and be supported by the following elements:

- A consistent and compelling equity story, underpinned by a clear and realistic strategic plan that is aligned to the group's internal policies.
- To the degree relevant to the business, a sustainability strategy that is integrated in the company's long-term value proposition and is communicated to investors and wider stakeholders.
- Timely reporting, as aligned with investor expectations, that clearly explains your business and communicates how the business is performing, and management is delivering against its strategic objectives – including any challenges faced as well as successes during the year.
- A corporate website that conveys a clear, substantive and current picture of the company including wider material disclosure related to the company's long-term value in the economy and society, supported by consistent and proportionate communications across all digital channels.

Along with an entry statement, entrants are encouraged to submit supporting materials showcasing their track-record of communications with stakeholders. For example, a link to your equity story on the company website, your annual report or if available, a sustainability report.

AWARD CRITERIA

Introduction

Please provide in 800 words or less, a concise but insightful description of how your IR programme meets best practice, keeping in mind the IR principles and the individual award description. We have provided considerations that the judges will be looking for below. Please don't forget to provide context, highlight what you have recently changed or done differently and, most importantly, any evidence of success for the judges.

Considerations for your entry

Overview

Discuss the key objectives for your IR/communications programme, and how do these align with and support the company's strategy, mission and purpose. Include details of any challenges you faced and how you sought to overcome them.

Strategy & approach

Discuss the principal elements of your IR/communications and engagement strategy and programme. Include details on the approach you took, the materials you published, channels and platforms you used and how you tracked progress.

Outcomes

Discuss what outcomes you achieved. Include details on how you measured success (for example, the level of engagement among the company's key investors and stakeholders, or the company's ability to procure further capital at a fair valuation, the positive impact of your corporate website and/or intranet on your IR/communications programme and the effectiveness of your communication of sustainability) and what improvements there were in the year. Remember quantifiable or anecdotal results or outcomes to support are welcomed.

Judges will be looking for entries that feel genuinely company-specific, reflecting your own voice, culture, and experience. AI tools may be used to assist with drafting, but the strongest entries will be those that clearly reflect the unique character of your organisation and include concrete, specific evidence of outcomes rather than generalised claims.

Entry statements, supporting evidence and category size

Word format entry statements to be uploaded to the website (Max. 800 words).

Alongside your submission, please include any links to relevant supporting materials.

Please note companies are eligible to enter if they were private (ie their equity shares were not admitted to trading on a public market, in the UK or internationally) as at 31 March 2026.