

GUIDELINES ON TRADE BENCHMARKING CERTIFICATION



2020

Certified by COER the developers of TRADE

TRADE Benchmarking Certification

Provides assurance that the TRADE benchmarking methodology is fully understood and delivers major benefits (operational and financial)



TRADE Benchmarking Trained Certificate (BRONZE)

Awarded to all those that have been trained at a TRADE Benchmarking Workshop (*Documentation for submission: List of attendees and date of workshop*).

TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certificate (SILVER)

Awarded to TRADE trained individuals that have undertaken a TRADE benchmarking project and demonstrated benchmarking proficiency.

Submissions are graded using a star system as shown below in Table 1:

Table 1 – Assessment grades and certificate awarded

Assessment grades	Certificate awarded	Explanation
7 Stars ★★★★★★	TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certificate <i>with Commendation</i>	Role Model, World-Class, Wow! (Across 3 or more TRADE stages)
5 to 6 Stars ★★★★★★	TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certificate <i>with Commendation</i>	Excellence, Outstanding, Exceeds Expectations (Across 3 or more TRADE stages)
3 to 4 Stars ★★★	TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certificate	Competent, Professional (Across 3 or more TRADE stages)
1 to 2 Stars ★★	Incomplete	Deficient, Incomplete (Across 3 or more TRADE stages)

- To be awarded a TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certificate the first 3 stages of TRADE, "T", "R", "A" must be complete with each stage achieving a Proficiency grade or greater.
- To be awarded a TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certificate with Commendation at 5 to 6 stars all stages of TRADE "T", "R", "A", "D" and "E" must be submitted and achieve a minimum of 3 to 4 stars with at least 3 stages achieving a Commendation grade of 5 or 6 stars or higher.
- To be awarded a TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certificate with Commendation at 7 stars all stages of TRADE "T", "R", "A", "D" and "E" must be submitted and achieve a minimum of 5 to 6 stars with at least 3 stages achieving a Commendation grade of 7 stars or higher.

The following needs to be submitted for assessment:

1. **TRADE Benchmarking Certificate Application Form.**
2. **TRADE Benchmarking Report Form** – Use the form provided to compile a Benchmarking Report.
3. **Supporting Documentation** – This is documentation that is referred to in your Benchmarking Report. This may be supplied as an Appendix to the Benchmarking Report, TRADE Spreadsheet, PPT Slides, or as additional files.

An assessor will use the **TRADE Benchmarking Certification Criteria** (refer to Table 2, page 3) to assess your project.

Further information on the grading system is shown in Table 3, page 6.

Additional comments:


1. All benchmarking projects are different. The benchmarking approach used will depend on the importance of the project, the level of understanding of the current process/area of focus and whether there are any resource or time constraints. It is important to choose a project that will enable you to demonstrate your understanding of benchmarking at each stage of TRADE utilising a variety of benchmarking techniques. You do not need to undertake a project that requires a site visit to other organisations if you can justify the appropriateness of other research tools.
2. When completing the TRADE Benchmarking Certificate Application Form you will be asked to specify whether you are seeking certification for specific individuals or the whole project team. A Certification Fee is charged per project with a small additional fee for each person requiring certification.
3. Confidentiality – Your application will be reviewed by COER staff. You can be assured that any data or information you share will not be shared with other parties without your consent. If there is confidential information in your report that you would rather not share it may be blacked out. Ensure you have clearance to share potentially sensitive information obtained from your benchmarking partners or do not name them and refer to them as organisation X, Y

TRADE Benchmarking Mastery Certificate (GOLD)

Awarded to individuals that have undertaken and/or facilitated two benchmarking projects that have achieved TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency or higher with at least one project receiving a Commendation grade. The certificate will show the number of stars received for both projects.

COER can also certify those trained in other benchmarking methodologies.

For a TRADE Benchmarking Certificate Application Form or for more information contact Dr Robin Mann, r.s.mann@massey.ac.nz, www.coer.org.nz.

Table 2 – TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certification Criteria	
TRADE stage	For certification purposes submitted projects (Benchmarking Report Form and supporting documents) will be reviewed on approach and deployment with respect to the criteria listed below.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of the project <i>(Review clarity of the project aim, scope, objectives)</i> • Value/importance of the project <i>(Review if expected benefits (non-financial and financial) and expected costs were provided. Were these benefits specific and measurable showing performance at the start of the project and expected performance at the end? Were expected benefits greater than expected costs?)</i> • Purpose of the project fits the need <i>(Review relationship between background and aim, scope, objectives)</i> • Project plan and management system in place <i>(Review TOR form, task worksheets, communication plan, minutes of meetings, planning documents and risk assessment and monitoring forms)</i> • Selection of team members and a team approach <i>(Review if team members' job roles are related to the project topic, are team members all contributing to the project with responsibilities and tasks allocated? Have all team members been attending project meetings?)</i> • Training of team members in benchmarking and other skills as required <i>(Review TOR form to see if all team members have attended a TRADE training course or if other benchmarking training was provided, were other training needs for the project identified and training given as appropriate?)</i> • Involvement of key stakeholders. <i>(Review if key stakeholders were identified and involved in the TOR stage via meetings or through other activities, is there evidence of two way communication with stakeholders rather than one-way?)</i> • Review and refinement of project <i>(Review if TOR form, task worksheets, project plan has been reviewed and refined based on stakeholder involvement and gaining project knowledge)</i> • Project support from sponsor <i>(Review if sponsor holds a senior position and whether the sponsor has supported the team's requests and recommendations, review if there has been regular involvement of the sponsor in meetings or other activities)</i> • Adherence to Benchmarking Code of Conduct (BCoC) <i>(Review if training on BCoC has been provided, has a benchmarking agreement form been signed with all team members indicating adherence to the BCoC?)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of area of focus <i>(Review how the current process and systems were analysed, were process flow charts, fishbone diagram, swot analysis, process analysis, root cause analysis, self-assessment, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, surveys or expert opinion used to aid understanding? Were improvement ideas acquired through this activity and recorded on the Improvement Ideas and Best Practice Form (II&BP) or other forms?)</i> • Understanding of current performance <i>(Review if metrics have been selected that measure performance related to the project aim and objectives and if performance at the start of the project was measured, also was trend or segmented data obtained to give a deeper understanding of performance)</i> • Prioritisation of areas to research for best practices. <i>(Review how the area(s) to focus on for the project were selected, what prioritisation methods were used (if any) and were prioritisation ratings given, were prioritisation meetings held? Review if the TOR form was refined based on prioritisation information)</i> • Involvement of key stakeholders. <i>(Review if key stakeholders were involved in the Review stage via meetings or through other activities to obtain their opinion, is there evidence of two-way communication with stakeholders rather than one-way?)</i> • Project support from sponsor <i>(Review if the sponsor has supported the team's requests and recommendations, review if there has been regular involvement of the sponsor in meetings or other activities)</i>



- **Development of benchmarking partner selection criteria** *(Review if partner selection criteria were developed. Does the criteria specify the best practices that were being searched for and describe the minimum performance levels of potential partners? Were these criteria relevant for finding innovative practices and include the opportunity for cross-sector learning?)*
- **Selection of benchmarking partners** *(Review how techniques such as brainstorming, desk-top research, surveys, expert opinion and comparisons against benchmark data were used for generating the names of organisations that may fit the partner selection criteria. Were forms such as a Best Practice Search Form or Partner Selection Table completed?)*
- **Invite and acquire benchmarking partners** *(Review benchmarking partner invitation emails, letters and records of phone calls. Were benchmarking partners informed of the benchmarking code of conduct? If only desk-top research was used for learning from other organisations was there a good reason for this?)*
- **Preparing for learning from benchmarking partners** *(Review the planning that went into learning from benchmarking partners. Review for site visits if there was a clear description of questions to ask and how responses were to be recorded, were template forms/ questionnaires developed and a plan detailing the information and documents that the team would like to see? Was a site visit agenda developed and agreed in advance with the benchmarking partner? How were the duties of data collection shared between project team members?)*
- **Adherence to Benchmarking Code of Conduct (BCoC)** *(Review if benchmarking partners were informed of the BCoC? Review if two way sharing occurred. For example, did the project team leave a copy of how its own organisation performed with respect to the questions asked or was the benchmarking partner invited to the project team's own organisation to learn from them?)*
- **Collect and store data** *(Review documentation and records of learning from site visits, surveys and desk-top research).*
- **Analysis of learning** *(Review how the learning was shared, discussed and analysed by team members. Did this learning involve holding meetings, using prioritisation criteria and/or involving stakeholders?).*
- **Formulate recommendations** *(Review how recommendations were developed and agreed upon by the project team? Was the Improvement Ideas and Best Practices Form (II&BP) or other form/approach used?)*
- **Involvement of key stakeholders** *(Review if key stakeholders were involved in the Acquire stage via meetings or through activities such as an invitation to a site visit, is there evidence of two-way communication with the stakeholders rather than one-way?)*
- **Project support from sponsor** *(Review if the sponsor has supported the team's requests and recommendations, review if there has been regular involvement of the sponsor in meetings or other activities)*








- **Communication of project findings/recommendations** *(Review how the project findings/recommendations were communicated and to which stakeholders. Were the costs/benefits of each recommendation provided? Were reports or presentations used and were the recommendations received favourably?)*
- **Development of action plans for implementation** *(Review how action plans for implementation were created, were they created by the project team or handed over to another project team? Were other stakeholders involved? What detail did the action plans contain, for example, were resources, roles, responsibilities and a timeline specified?)*
- **Approval of action plan** *(Review how the action plans were communicated and to which stakeholders. Were the costs/benefits of each action calculated? Were reports or presentations used to communicate the proposed actions and were the actions signed off?)*
- **Implementation of action plans** *(Review if the actions were implemented, and if so, how the implementation of the actions were monitored and how frequently. What mechanisms were in place if actions were not producing the desired results? Did the benchmarking project team have oversight of the actions?)*
- **Involvement of key stakeholders** *(Review if key stakeholders were identified and involved in the Deploy stage via meetings, is there evidence of two way communication with the stakeholders rather than one-way?)*
- **Project support from sponsor** *(Review if the sponsor has supported the team's requests and recommendations, review if there has been regular involvement of the sponsor in meetings or other activities)*



- **Evaluation of project outcomes** *(Review if a thorough evaluation of project outcomes has been undertaken consisting of a cost/benefit analysis and stakeholder feedback, when was the project closed or is it still ongoing? Have the objectives/benefits in the TOR been met or surpassed? If not, why not and have lessons been learnt? Has a final project report been written or presentation delivered?)*
- **Evaluation of the benchmarking project as a whole** *(Review if an evaluation of the whole benchmarking project was undertaken to identify what went well and what did not go well. Was this learning captured through a report or presentation and will the learning be applied to future projects?)*
- **Sharing of project success** *(Review if the findings from the project were shared with internal and external stakeholder groups via reports, presentations, conferences or promotional articles. Is information on the project readily available to all staff members? How has this sharing impacted on gaining support for future projects?)*
- **Involvement of key stakeholders** *(Review if key stakeholders were involved in the Evaluate stage via meetings, is there evidence of two way communication with the stakeholders rather than one-way?)*
- **Project support from sponsor** *(Review if the sponsor continued to support the project in the Evaluate stage and ensure that the outcomes from the project were measured)*

Table 3 - Assessment Grades for TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certification

Assessment grades for projects applying for TRADE Benchmarking Proficiency Certification					
Commendation 7 Stars ★★★★★★	Role model approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the TOR stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Role model approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Review stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Role model approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Acquire stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Role model approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Deploy stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Role model approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Evaluate stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)
Commendation 5 to 6 Stars ★★★★★★	Excellent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the TOR stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Excellent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Review stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Excellent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Acquire stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Excellent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Deploy stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Excellent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Evaluate stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)
Proficient 3 to 4 Stars ★★★	Competent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the TOR stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Competent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Review stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Competent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Acquire stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Competent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Deploy stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Competent approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Evaluate stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)
Incomplete 1 to 2 Stars ★★	Deficient approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the TOR stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Deficient approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Review stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Deficient approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Acquire stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Deficient approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Deploy stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)	Deficient approach/ deployment of TRADE steps in the Evaluate stage as specified in the certification criteria ^(refer to Table 2)