

Preparing for your Qualmark evaluation



The following information is designed to help you understand the new Qualmark process; what's required of you and what you can expect from your Tourism Business Advisor (TBA).

The Sustainable Tourism Business Criteria

The new Sustainable Tourism Business (STB) criteria covers four areas. The biggest change from the previous criteria includes the removal of the Enviro award; the assessment of your sustainability practices is now included in your overall evaluation. Your TBA needs to understand how you are performing in each area.

| The Sustainable Tourism Business criteria covers: | |
|---|--|
| <p>Health and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating & safety management systems • Reporting, recording investigating • Staff engagement/participation • Training • Leadership • Continuous improvement | <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring & Reporting • Resource Usage • Discharge & waste management • Customer Engagement / Involvement • Complements surrounding environment • Cultural interpretation/hosting |
| <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Manual • Marketing Plan • HR • Reservations • Business information • Facilities management • Visitor Experience | <p>Social/People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service standards, training, • Service /Product knowledge • Complaints handling • Feedback processes, feedback analysis, Third party reviews • Recruitment processes, staff training • Team culture • Community/Industry engagement • Visitor Experience |

The Process

Pre-evaluation

Your TBA will contact you well before your next evaluation date. This is an opportunity to discuss any concerns that you may have regarding the on-site process; plus the TBA will prompt regards past or pending improvements made to the business since the last evaluation.

This is also an opportunity to get some of the paperwork out of the way. Some documentations could be provided prior to the date of the evaluation; thus leaving more time to discuss business opportunities and enhancements to your business.

On-site evaluation

Your TBA will visit your business on the agreed day and time.

They will ask you questions to establish your performance and achievements within the four key areas of the criteria. Their focus will be on uncovering key opportunities and improvement ideas.

Post-evaluation

Your TBA will create a report with their findings and confirm a Sustainable Tourism Business Award – Gold, Silver or Bronze; plus if relevant advise of the appropriate Star rating.

An Action Plan of ideas and opportunities to enhance your business will be part of the report. At an agreed later date the TBA will contact you to discuss the progression of your Action Plan. This is also a great time to ask any questions you may have.

The Methodology

The key focus of the on-site evaluation will be on asking you questions in relation to the criteria. From your answers and evidence provided the TBA will score the business using the matrix below. It is important that you can demonstrate appropriate actions and evidence on the day to ensure a smooth and valuable evaluation process.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Acceptable standards in place | Good business practices | Very Good business practices | Excellent Sustainable practices | Represents Best Practice |
| The Minimum Entry requirements have been met to an acceptable level. Opportunities for improvement of the basic functions and systems are likely. | The business has good systems and procedures in place and is likely to be looking to improve and enhance these. | Very good practices are in place. In some cases these will be in line with industry norms and expectations. Others may be advanced and well cemented in the business. | Business practice, service and sustainability are likely to be above industry norms. The business will be viewed by peers as a very well managed business. | A business that demonstrates being at the forefront of their sector. Leads by example with exceptional business, service and sustainability and looks for continuous improvement. |

The TBA will critique what evidence you provide and give you insights and helpful tips to assist in enhancing your product; plus identify ideas and opportunities for future development.

The criteria outline gives you a good indication of the areas that the TBA will be investigating. It is envisaged that you will be well prepared after your discussions with them during the Pre-evaluation discussions.

The Outcome

If the basic minimum requirements for each of the criteria items are met, your business will receive a Qualmark Sustainable Tourism Business Award. Depending on your performance, the business may be awarded a Bronze, Silver or Gold status.

Accommodation providers will also receive a Star rating as part of their accreditation.

If your business has more than one operation (e.g. you have a bed and breakfast but also offer kayaking trips), you will be assessed for both your accommodation and your activity and you will receive an accreditation for each.



Preparation checklist

You can use the following list as a guide for the types of things your TBA will want to see. There may be things unique to your business that are not listed here that you may need to provide evidence of.

Also some of these may have previously been provided to the TBA through the Pre-evaluation process.

| Health and safety | Tick |
|--|-------------|
| Up to date hazard register | |
| Incident log | |
| Training records | |
| First aid register | |
| Meeting agenda and actions | |
| Staff engagement and leadership examples | |
| Environment | |
| Resource use/ waste management | |
| Environmental initiatives | |
| Kaitiakitanga/ Manaakitanga | |
| Historical and cultural positioning | |
| Economic | |
| Compliance documentation | |
| Sales and marketing collateral | |
| Reservation procedures | |
| Employment and staff records | |
| Statutory requirements | |
| Social/people | |
| Feedback mechanisms, surveys and data | |
| Complaint handling procedures | |
| Service standards expectations | |
| Training schedules | |

What is Qualmark?

Qualmark is New Zealand tourism's official quality assurance organisation, providing a trusted guide to quality travel experiences in New Zealand.

Why Qualmark?

There is plenty of evidence to support the idea that business planning, good management and solid processes result in a better product. Business planning should be at the heart of what you do to help deliver a better and more polished experience for your visitors.

Qualmark looks at your business with these things in mind, to help strengthen the experience you offer. It can help you prioritise where you should reinvest in your business, identify where improvements can be made and keep you up to date with industry development and visitor expectation.

The Benefits

As well as ensuring your business remains competitive and current, your Qualmark accreditation gives you the opportunity to leverage off the work Tourism New Zealand carries out overseas. Benefits include but are not limited to:

- Evidence to demonstrate that your business has been officially evaluated
- Nationwide publicity through the i-SITE network
- Credibility with online booking platforms
- Preference with Tourism Export Council inbound tour operators' members
- Access to key insights from Tourism New Zealand, including market readiness and product development advice
- The opportunity to be included in Chinese ADS tours
- A priority business listing on newzealand.com, where Tourism New Zealand directs consumer marketing activity
- The opportunity to be included in trade famils (global travel sellers visiting New Zealand to experience product to sell)
- The opportunity to be included in media files (media visiting New Zealand to experience product to write about)
- Access to Tourism New Zealand's offshore events programme
- Inclusion in global trade communication and trade training with travel sellers
- Inclusion in content on traveltrade.newzealand.com
- Eligibility to feature in trade marketing collateral
- Inclusion in PR features for media.newzealand.com
- Ability to be included in marketing campaign photo shoots
- Opportunity to be included in Tourism New Zealand's Explore Programme for accredited visiting trade and media