

Preparing for your Qualmark Evaluation

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

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 visit; plus the TBA will review past or pending recommendations for improvements to the business since the last evaluation. This is also an opportunity to get some of the paperwork out of the way. Documentation provided prior to the date of the evaluation visit leaves more time to discuss 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 across the four key areas of the criteria we measure against. Their focus will be providing an independent review of your business to uncover potential, recognise areas to add value and give you the best advice possible.

The Methodology

The key focus of the on-site evaluation will be on asking you questions in relation to the Sustainable Tourism Business Award (STBA) 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 provide evidence to ensure a smooth and valuable evaluation process.

Following an evaluation, a Qualmark business will receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold award based on their performance under the Sustainable Tourism Business Award criteria. Accommodation operators will also receive a star rating as part of their endorsement. 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 receive a separate award for each.

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.	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
Opportunities for improvement of the basic functions and systems are likely				

Sector Specific Criteria

Businesses will also be assessed against sector specific criteria. Whether you are a hotel, backpacker, kayak, bike or bus operator, there will be industry specific criteria that is relevant to the type of business you operate.

The TBA will critique what evidence you provide and give you insights and advice from their commercial experience to add value to your current operations and identify opportunities for future development.

The criteria outlined below gives you a good indication of the areas that the TBA will be investigating to prepare you for an in-depth discussion, and to gather evidence to support your current business practice.

The Sustainable Tourism Business Criteria

The Sustainable Tourism Business Award (STBA) criteria covers four areas. Your TBA needs to understand how you are performing in each area. You can find a more in-depth break down of the criteria [here](#)

+	Economic	+	Social & People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations manual and operating procedures • Marketing plan • Reservations and payments • Business information • Business planning • Asset register/maintenance plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job management • Service standards and product knowledge • Staff training • Customer feedback processes • Team culture • Community engagement/social licence • Industry engagement 	
+	Environment & Culture	+	Health, Safety & Wellness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy and resource usage • Discharge and waste management • Staff engagement/involvement • Customer engagement/involvement • Investment and enhancement of operating environment • Hosting other cultures • Cultural interpretation and integration • Embracing Manaakitanga 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting and Recording • Investigating and Improving • Staff Engagement, Participation and Training • Leadership • Staff Wellness 	

Post-evaluation

Your TBA will create a report with their findings against the evaluation framework to award a Gold, Silver or Bronze Sustainable Tourism Business Award, plus an appropriate Star rating for accommodation operators.

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 revisit any points of discussion to get your action plan underway.

The Outcome - What do the awards and ratings mean?

Qualmark looks to recognise businesses that are delivering a holistically sustainable experience. Once the minimum requirements for each of the criteria are met, your business will be awarded a Gold, Silver or Bronze Sustainable Tourism Business Award that denotes your businesses performance and the standards achieved.



Bronze Sustainable Tourism Business Award

To achieve a Bronze Award a tourism business must meet all Qualmark's minimum standards contained in the Sustainable Tourism criteria. It identifies a business with a high level of professionalism, an awareness of the impact it has on the environment and a customer centric approach.



Silver Sustainable Tourism Business Award

A Silver Award is evidence of a sophisticated tourism business that consistently exceeds visitor expectations. Proactive leadership and management ensure that a culture of high performance is evident throughout the entire business. The business will have a real focus on continuously improving their economic, social and environmental performance to ensure the tourism product they deliver is a genuine, constantly improving sustainable experience.



Gold Sustainable Tourism Business Award

A Gold Award recognises the best sustainable tourism businesses in New Zealand, with the delivery of exceptional customer experiences an integral part of everything they do. A Gold Sustainable Tourism Award identifies those businesses leading the way in making the New Zealand tourism industry a world class sustainable visitor destination.

The Star Rating Criteria

Accommodation operators will also receive a star rating as part of their endorsement. 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 award for each.

Your TBA will assess the property based on industry specific norms and expectations and award an official star rating that denotes the quality of the facilities on offer.

This criteria is broken down in to five focus areas:

- Cleanliness
- Overall Appearance & Aspect
- Public Areas
- Private Areas
- Services

1 Star	Facilities and service meets customers minimum requirements
2 Stars	Exceeds customers minimum requirements
3 Stars	Good to very good facilities and services
4 Stars	Consistently high quality levels of facilities and service
5 Stars	Facilities and services amongst the best on offer in New Zealand

To help travellers understand the breadth and depth of what Qualmark stands for, we have highlighted the three key pillars of our story



Light Footprint
An environmentally friendly and holistically sustainable experience



Safe & Sound
Where safe principles and practices are part of every experience



Warm Welcome
Where you will always find a genuine welcome and true New Zealand hospitality

Preparation Checklist

You can use the following list as a guide for the types of documents 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.

Economic	Tick
Operations manual and standard operating procedures	
Sales and marketing plan and collateral	
Reservation procedures, processes and cancellation policies	
Statutory requirements (licences, endorsements, certificates, WOFs)	
Business plan	
Compliance documentation	
Environment & Culture	
Resource use and waste management plans	
Environmental initiatives and sustainability plan/policy	
Procurement policies	
Kaitiakitanga/Manaakitanga	
Historical and cultural positioning	
Social & People	
Feedback mechanisms, surveys and data	
Service standards expectations	
Complaint handling procedures	
Training schedules	
Examples of employment contracts	
Health, Safety & Wellness	
Up to date hazard and risk register	
Accident and incident log	
Training records	
First aid register	
Health & safety meeting agenda and actions	
Staff engagement and leadership examples	
Emergency management procedures and plan	