

ProTerra Foundation

Guidelines for standards evaluation and benchmarking

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to clearly explain the process used for benchmarking against the ProTerra Standard, so that both external and internal stakeholders can be assured of integrity.

Scheme owners who desire to conduct a benchmark exercise against ProTerra Standard can do so following these guidelines.

ProTerra embraces mutual recognition and synergies wherever applicable. These synergies aim at reducing costs and complexity on all levels and encourages cooperation.

Business evaluation

After a standard owner shows interest on a benchmark assessment and applies for benchmarking, a simple business evaluation should be performed by ProTerra Foundation and the scheme owner. This may be done in writing or conference call, but in this case, the call is to be documented on minutes and dated. The scope of this phase is to have a better understanding of the goals and the potential of the benchmarking, such as the value chain of given crops to regions and countries, volumes, potential economic interest, synergies, etc.

Assessment

A customized excel template of the ProTerra standard should be used to conduct the benchmark, see Figure 2.

A first draft of a benchmark can be carried out by a trained expert.

Benchmarking of a standard can be done in isolation or in combination with one or more other standards.

The process of the benchmarking is shown in Figure 1.

At the completion of the benchmarking exercise a round of discussions with the expert may be conducted to align interpretation. A Final version of the benchmark result is to be issued subsequently to this discussion.

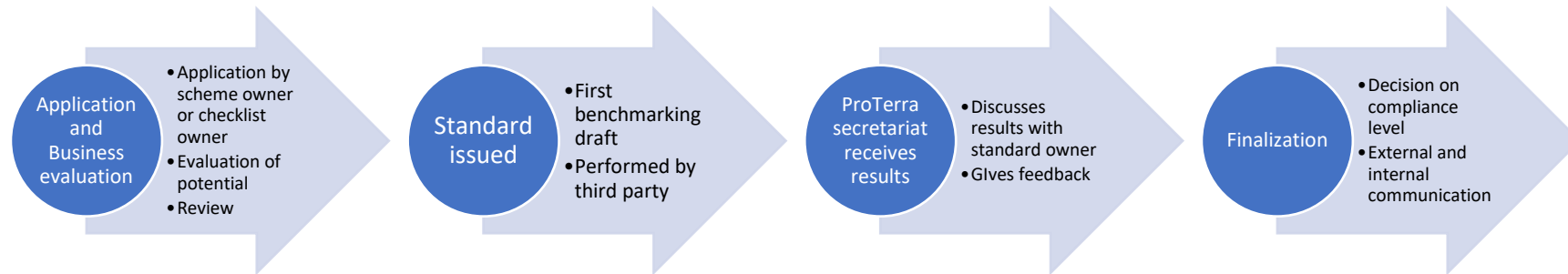


Figure No.1: Process of a benchmarking assessment

Costs

The costs of benchmarking will depend on complexity, such as the number of criteria to be compared, number of performance indicators within a standard, consultation and standards development, and whether a first internal draft is already available.

The costs and the way of sharing these should be discussed and agreed directly with the benchmarking consultants and standard owners before the assessment.

Length of validity

The benchmark result is valid for a certain version of the issued standard and for the version of the ProTerra standard applicable at the time of the assessment. A benchmark may be redone, if for example, the standard being benchmarked, or the ProTerra standard, is revised and/or a new version has been published.

Scoring

The ProTerra Foundation supports a stepwise approach and continuous development therefore believes that there is possibility of mutual recognition approaches depending on the level of alignments with a specific standard.

Each ProTerra Principle should be assessed individually on its coverage by the standard under review, as shown in Figure 2. The scores are presented as a percent. Recommendations are not considered in the benchmark.

The goal of the benchmarking is to give an overview of the level of alignment with the ProTerra standard and which principles require additional verification and action to become aligned.

To be considered equivalent to ProTerra a standard must demonstrate alignment with **80% of all indicators, in which all core indicators are included**, that is, 100% of compliance with ProTerra CORE indicators as part of the 80% of all indicators. Under this situation an organization, upon request, is granted a ProTerra Certificate as far as:

- It has been subjected to a third-party audit under the original scheme and is currently certified under this scheme;
- The Certification Body/Third party mentioned previously is accredited in ISO/IEC 17065:2012 by an Accreditation Body that is member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) or European Co-operation for Accreditation (EA) and signer of the Multilateral Agreement, which includes peer to peer verification by other IAF or EA member accreditation bodies. The Certification Body has also to operate at least one accredited scheme under ISO/IEC 17065:2012 which is relevant to the sustainability criteria as required by ProTerra Standard;
- It abides by the ProTerra Certification Protocol in respect to:
 - It is register as member of ProTerra Foundation; and

- ProTerra certified materials and products are identified using correct claims, ProTerra logo, seal and certificates, according to the Guidelines and Requirements for the Use of the ProTerra Logo and Seal.
- The ProTerra certificate shall be issued by the certification body authorized and approved by ProTerra, upon a documentary based review audit, DBR for short.

The validity of the ProTerra Certificate will correspond to the validity of the certificated associated to the original scheme.

A recognition agreement is to be signed with the original scheme owner.

For all those schemes that do not pass the ProTerra equivalence criteria, a detailed action plan can be agreed with ProTerra aiming at a future alignment. Alternately a *partial recognition agreement* can be established between ProTerra and the scheme owner indicating that organizations certified under the scheme may be granted a ProTerra Certificate if subjected to a complementary audit with a reduced scope. In this case the complementary audit would cover the individual requirements where no equivalency has been found during the benchmarking exercise. This essentially means that an organization may implement the additional requirements under ProTerra and be audited against these.

Under a partial recognition situation, the certification of an organization by ProTerra is only possible if:

- It has been subjected to a third-party audit under the original scheme and is currently certified under this scheme;
- The Certification Body/Third party mentioned previously is accredited in ISO/IEC 17065:2012 by an Accreditation Body that is member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) or European Co-operation for Accreditation (EA) and signer of the Multilateral Agreement, which includes peer to peer verification by other IAF or EA member accreditation bodies. The Certification Body has also to operate at least one accredited scheme under ISO/IEC 17065:2012 which is relevant to the sustainability criteria as required by ProTerra Standard;
- A complementary audit against ProTerra Standard is conducted by a Certification Body that is authorized by ProTerra Foundation, who shall issue the certificate;
- The organizations pass the complementary audit, and
- All ProTerra system rules apply as per the ProTerra Certification Protocol.

The validity of the ProTerra Certificate will correspond to the validity of the certificated associated to the original scheme.

Figure 2: Benchmarking results per topic

Total Standard ABC										
Principle	Align	Not Aligned	Partially Aligned	NA	TOTAL	Adjusted for NA	% alignment of indicators	Not Aligned with Core Indicators	Total Core Indicators	Total Aligned Core Indicators
Principle 1 - Compliance with law and the ProTerra Standard	1	5	1	1	8	7	21.43%	4	5	1
Principle 2 – Human Rights and responsible labour policies and practices	15	24	4	0	43	43	39.53%	17	29	12
Principle 3 – Responsible relations with workers and community	1	6	2	0	9	9	22,22%	2	2	0
Principle 4 – Biodiversity conservation, effective environmental management and environmental services	2	4	1	0	7	7	35.71%	3	5	2
Principle 5 – No use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)	0	5	0	0	5	5	0.00%	3	3	0
Principle 6 – Pollution and waste management	0	4	4	0	8	8	25.00%	7	7	0
Principle 7 – Water management	0	5	0	0	5	5	0.00%	4	4	0
Principle 8 – Greenhouse gases and energy management	0	1	1	0	2	2	25.00%	1	1	0
Principle 9 – Adoption of good agricultural practices	10	15	3	0	28	28	41.07%	12	19	7
Principle 10 – Traceability and Chain of Custody	0	13	0	1	14	13	0.00%	0	0	0
Total ProTerra Indicators	29	82	16	2	129					
Total CORE								53	75	22