



Assessment Tool Users Guide

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Change log

Release date

Description of changes

30 May 2009

Release

20 November 2013

Changes to accommodate expanded framework including two additional assessment parts, Part III – VOC and Part - IV Cleaning Products.

Removed 'Part IV' from document title.

1.0 Foreword

The Assessment Tool User Guide (User Guide) is a guidance document that provides detailed explanations of the sections and content in the *Assessment Tool for Product Certification Schemes* (Tool). The User Guide should be used by schemes when completing the Tool, in conjunction with *Criteria for Evaluating Product Certification Schemes* which provides the detailed compliance requirements and guidance for the 22 Criteria in the Tool.

The Tool is the spreadsheet that schemes must use to provide the GBCA with evidence of compliance with the Criteria. Refer to the *Assessment Tool for Product Certification Schemes*.

Section 2.1 in *Criteria for Evaluating Product Certification Schemes* provides additional information on criteria weightings and point allocation principles embodied in the Tool.

2.0 Compiling and lodging a submission

- All submissions (the Round 1, and if applicable, Round 2 and Appeal) must be submitted electronically via email.
- Email submissions shall be sent to the GBCA contact and include the following in the subject line of the message: ‘<insert scheme name> Submission to GBCA Assessment Framework for Product Certification Schemes’ .
- The content of the submission must include:
 - a soft copy (MS Excel file) of the completed Tool;
 - supporting documentation (as necessary) to demonstrate compliance with the Assessment Criteria must be provided as follows:
 - with all information as required by the compliance requirements;
 - with all relevant communication with the GBCA (e.g. GBCA responses to queries pertaining to the submission);
 - with all relevant sections of documents highlighted to facilitate IAP navigation
 - with clear page breaks included between criteria;
 - with all PDF documents oriented in the same direction; and
 - with no blank pages included.

Information for schemes applying for recognition of multiple standards

Schemes applying for recognition of multiple standards are only required to provide a submission against the Assessment Criteria for Part I (scheme criteria) one time. However, it must provide a separate submission against Part II or IV for each standard that it puts forward for assessment. For Part III multiple standards can be facilitated in one submission.

Information for tiered standards Part II

A tiered standard, meaning a standard that includes provisions for different levels of compliance (e.g. silver, gold, platinum), will be considered as one standard for the purpose of assessment fees (refer to section 4 below). However, separate Part II submissions must be provided to document the differences in criteria between each tier awarded within the standard. Copies of three Part II worksheets are provided in the Tool for this purpose.

3.0 Part I – (Scheme Criteria) Governance, Transparency and Standards Development

3.1 Getting Started

Complete the blank cells in the top section of the Tool as prompted to provide the organisation name, date the tool was completed and the name of the person(s) responsible for completing it.

3.2 'Criteria' column

The 'Criteria' column is the first column in the Tool. It contains the 14 Assessment Criteria of Part I Section A and Part I Section B.

3.2 'Reference, Supporting, and Evidence Documents' column

The 'Reference, Supporting, and Evidence Documents' column requires the scheme to make a clear reference to the piece, or specific section, of supporting documentation that is provided for compliance with each of the criteria. The applicant scheme:

- Must reference document titles or the titles of chapters/headings within a document where evidence for compliance can be found; and
- May also chose to provide links to web addresses that provide evidence of compliance.

If there is not enough room in the cell to enter the information or relevant hyperlinks to support the scheme's claims for criteria, then additional documentation may be provided in a separate PDF document for Assessment Criteria. Refer to section 2 above for information on how to present such documentation.

3.4 'Assessment Comments' Column

The 'Assessment Comments' column is where the IAP will document its comments during the assessment and is reserved for IAP and GBCA use only.

4.0 Part II, IV and IV – (Standard Criteria) Content of Standards

4.1 Getting Started

Complete the blank cells in the top section of the Tool as prompted to provided the organisation name, standard being put forward for assessment, date the tool was completed and the name of the person(s) responsible for completing it.

4.2 Scope of Standard Mandatory Requirement

The cells pertaining to 'Scope of Standard' require the user to indicate compliance with one of the mandatory requirements for Part II and IV as a prerequisite for the awarding of any points in the Tool.

The scope of the standard being assessed must apply to an entire product category (e.g. carpet) rather than a product sub-category (e.g. nylon, modular, or wool carpet) that is relevant to one of the Green Star Material Calculators.

4.3 'PAC' Column

The 'PAC' column is the first column in Part II and IV of the Tool. It lists the 8 Priority Areas of Concern and the various requirements of each criterion that comprise a PAC.

4.4 'Criteria Weighting' Column, Part-II

The 'Criteria Weighting' column displays the weighting of each criterion as a component of the entire associated PAC. Some PACs include a single criterion only (e.g. PAC - 1 Greenhouse Gases), while some have multiple criteria (e.g. PAC - 3 Toxicity).

4.5 'PAC Weighting' Column, Part-II

(This section of the User Guide should be read alongside the relevant section of the Tool).

There is a total of 100 points available for a scheme to claim in Part II. The Tool distributes these points across the eight PACs based on the weighting that the scheme enters into the 'PAC Weighting' column. The Tool provides three groups of PAC weightings for a scheme to choose from. However, each weighting may only be used a certain number of times as follows:

- 20 points may be used twice which allocates 40 of the 100 available points (**20 X 2 = 40**);
- 14 points may be used twice which allocates 28 of the 100 available points (**14 X 2 = 28**); and
- 8 points may be used four times which allocates 32 of the 100 available points (**8 X 4 = 32**).

(40 + 28 + 32 = 100 points total)

Two of the PACs have already been pre-assigned with a weighting by the GBCA and therefore cannot be altered by the user. These are:

- PAC-7 - 'End of Life', which is fixed at 20 points; and
- PAC 8 - 'Product Emissions', which is fixed at 8 points.

This means that the scheme must assign the weightings for the remaining 6 PACs that do not have a fixed weighting.

The scheme may assign PAC weightings at its discretion. However, the GBCA encourages the scheme to consider the strengths, weaknesses and relevance of its standard(s) with regards to each PAC when assigning the weightings.

The GBCA's rationale for creating flexibility between PAC weightings is to acknowledge the variability in approaches used by schemes to assess the environmental preference of products as well as the variability in product/material types and environmental performance standards. If the weightings for all PACs were fixed by the GBCA then the Framework would be prescriptive and unable to recognise the differences between standards that may be put forward for assessment through the Framework.

4.6 'Indicate Compliance' Column, Part-II

The 'Indicate Compliance' column requires an entry to be selected from the menu. Generally the options available for selection include 'Comply' or 'Do Not Comply'. There are some variations to this, for example in the case of the 'Acutely Toxic Substances' criterion in PAC-2 'Toxicity', the options of compliance response include 'Exposure' or 'Content' or 'Exposure and Content' or 'Do Not Comply'.

4.7 'Reference, Supporting, and Evidence Documents' Column, Part-II, III and IV

The 'Reference, Supporting, and Evidence Documents' column requires the scheme to make a clear reference to the piece, or specific section, of supporting documentation that is provided for compliance with each of the criteria.

- The scheme must reference document titles or the titles of chapters/headings within a document where evidence for compliance can be found;
- The applicant scheme may also choose to provide links to web addresses that provide evidence of compliance; and
- Requirements/criteria of a standard which are being referenced:
 - must be performance-based. 'Performance-Based Criteria' refers to criteria which can definitively validate claims that a certain level of environmental (and/or other) performance has been achieved;
 - must not allow the applicant (e.g. the manufacturer) to customise the requirements/criteria; and
 - must not be optional, flexible or allowed to be achieved post-licensing.

If there is not enough room in the cell to enter the information or relevant hyperlinks to support the scheme's claims for criteria, then additional documentation may be provided in a separate PDF document for Part I Assessment Criteria. Refer to section 2 above for information on how to present such documentation.

4.8 'Assessment Comments' Column, Part-II, III and IV

The 'Assessment Comments' column is where the IAP will document its comments during the assessment and is reserved for IAP and GBCA use only.

4.9 'Points Awarded' Column, Part-II

The 'Points Awarded' column displays the points calculated and awarded as data is entered into the Tool.