



# 2020-2021 Florida Sterling

## Sterling Challenge Process

### Handbook

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# Sterling Challenge Process

## Challenge Process

### Purpose

To evaluate the organization at the Category-level, including the team's top three-to-five recommended priorities for improvement

### Time Commitment



IE: 24-40 Hours  
Consensus: 8-16 Hours  
+ 2 Days  
Site Visit: 2-4 Hours  
+ 6-7 Days

### Customers

Applicant  
Sterling Staff  
Fellow Team Members



### Key Duties

#### Independent Evaluation

Applicant Contact  
Team Assignments  
Consensus Dates



#### Consensus

Prepare Agendas  
Consensus Meeting  
Site Visit Preparation



#### Site Visit



Schedules  
Daily Brief



Manage Site  
Visit Process



Out Brief

### Key Deliverables



Site Visit Worksheet  
Sterling Best Practice  
Team Leader Feedback





## Sterling Challenge Process

### Sterling Challenge “At-A-Glance”

The key differences between the GSA and the Challenge are,

- The Challenge evaluation assesses the organization at the Category level.
- The *Challenge Executive Summary* includes three (3) key recommendations for the organization.
- Both the GSA Teams and the Challenge Teams will use the Stratex/Apex system to document the evaluation process.
- GSA and Challenge Team evaluations will be done virtually; the organization has the option of request an In-Person site visit (usually 2-3 days).
- GSA and Challenge Examiners will use the same Handbook sections, with the exception of the following:
  - Challenge Team Examiners use the *Challenge Criteria*, the *Challenge IE Scorebook*, and the *Challenge Consensus-SV Worksheet* files.
  - The Challenge Criteria are pre-populated in the Examiner files.
  - The numbering style is different as you evaluate and write comments to questions at the Category level, not the detailed Item Level to Address.

**Challenge At-A-Glance:** Virtually the same as for the GSA level assessment.

**Challenge Key Deliverables:** Virtually the same as for the GSA level assessment.

- *Key Factors Worksheet*
- *Challenge IE Scorebook -Final* (IE Comments & Scoring Matrix)
- *Challenge Consensus-SV Worksheet-Final* (Final Consensus Comments & Scoring Matrix)
- *Challenge Consensus-SV Worksheet-Strategy* (Site Visit Strategies)
- *Interview Scripts-Notes*
- *Challenge Executive Summary* (with 3 Recommendations for areas to improve)
- *Sterling Best Practice*
- *Executive Out Brief* (with Recommendations)
- *Team Scoring Summary*
- *Examiner Evaluations*



# Sterling Challenge Process

## Challenge Process

Refer to the Team Lead Handbook (IE, Consensus, Site Visit) for detailed instructions.

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### **Independent Evaluation**

Sterling Teams assigned to Challenge organizations may have a high percentage of new Examiners; therefore, mentoring Examiners is a critical activity.

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### **Consensus Preparation**

- Contact the organization's Point-of-Contact to identify expectations and concerns, and to gauge the organization's needs and level of Challenge assessment process understanding.
- Consensus is accomplished through weekly team-applicant conference calls for both Results and Process Categories.
  - Be prepared to coach team members on appropriate protocol for these calls.
  - Be prepared to politely step in if an Examiner is faltering or not getting the appropriate information during the call.
- Caution team members about using Sterling terminology during interviews and in the feedback comments.
- Challenge organizations often have limited Results; thus, the team needs to prepare to "dig" for results data and information throughout the assessment process.
- If the organization appears to be high scoring, use the GSA-level Criteria Areas to Address to better evaluate the organization's maturation level.

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### **Team Consensus**

- After each week's Results and Process Category Items there will be a team call for consensus and scoring.
- Provide clear rationale for Consensus decisions as a learning tool for new and less experienced Examiners.
- Ensure that all Examiners actively participate in the discussions and that no one dominates the discussions.

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### **Site Visit Preparation**

- Review Examiner strategies to ensure appropriate breadth and depth of the interviews.
- Ensure that interview questions are appropriate for the person interviewed.
- Encourage Examiners to identify several Site Visit examples for each Site Visit issue.
- Site Visit may be virtual or in-person.
- **IF** Site Visit will be in-person, the Team Lead must work closely with the organization regarding hotel, conference rooms, on-site lunches, etc. Follow the in-person instructions in the Team Lead Handbook.

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### **Site Visit**

- Feedback comments for Process and Results will be completed by the end of Site Visit.
  - The *Executive Summary* will include three (3) recommendations to help the organization focus on steps that are most likely to lead to performance improvement.
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# Sterling Challenge Process

## Sample Team Consensus Agenda

<p><b>Approximate Time Allocations:</b></p> <p><b>Results</b> Items: 15 minutes to review + 5 minutes to score</p> <p><b>Process</b> Items: 15 minutes to review + 5 minutes to score</p>
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Time		Discussion Leader	Minutes Allocated
4:00 – 4:10	Consensus Process Review, Ground Rules, Roles	Lead or Backup	10
4:10 – 4:20	Key Factors Review & Draft Key Themes	Backup Lead	10
4:20 – 4:40	<b>Item 7.4: Leadership Results</b> review & Score	Results Lead	20
4:40 – 5:20	<b>Item 1.1: Leadership Process</b> Comment review & Score <b>Item 1.2: Leadership Process</b> Comment review & Score	Cat. 1 Lead	40
5:20 – 5:30	Wrap up, Next Steps	Lead	10

... Other calls follow the same format ...

## Sample Recommendations (*Executive Summary*)

### RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

In order to help the Department move to the next level on its journey for performance excellence, the Sterling Team recommends the following:

- Prioritize data to provide a “snapshot” of overall performance to be reviewed by senior leaders on a regular and consistent basis, in the same way leaders currently review Active Strategies Enterprise data for some areas of performance. Include the most critical indicators of the organization’s overall health, and include segmentation, as necessary, to allow meaningful analysis. Include in-process measures to provide the ability to predict performance issues rather than having to react to them.
- Identify the specific core competencies that provide the Department with its competitive advantage. Align the individual work processes developed by the Department to both the core competencies and the strategic objectives or challenges, and regularly evaluate them to ensure that the service being provided to the customer meets the Department’s vision of “Delivering Excellence Every Day.”
- Look within and outside of the Department for benchmark processes and best practices to be emulated Department-wide and provide the impetus for breakthrough improvement. Information from this benchmarking process can be a source of comparative data and could be used to identify stretch goals and make innovations in key work processes, as necessary, to meet those goals.