2020-2021 Florida Sterling

Independent Evaluation Phase

Team Lead Handbook

To contact the Florida Sterling Council for information or to comment, please call (850) 922-5316.
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www.floridasterling.com

Independent Evaluation Phase

Independent Evaluation

Purpose

To start team-building and establishing a relationship with the applicant.
To establish and communicate expectations, and
ensure all deliverables are completed on time

Time Commitment

10-17 Hours

Customers

Applicant
Sterling Staff
Fellow Team Members

Key Duties

Mentor - Team Leader

Team Conference Calls
Individual Feedback

Applicant Communication

Establish Rapport
Schedule Conference Calls
Delivery of Updated Results

Examiner Assignments

Key Factors Worksheet
Initial Item in IE Scorebook
Consensus Assignment

Develop Team Schedules

Examiner Due Dates:
- Key Factors
- Scorebook

Consensus:
- Pre-Meeting Conference Calls
- Meeting Dates and Location

CALENDAR

Key Deliverables

Conference Call Schedules:
- Applicant – Results Calls, Business Overview Calls
- Team – Pre-Consensus Instruction, Pre-Meeting Consensus

Team Leader/ Backup Roles & Responsibilities
IE Team Scoring Summary
Team Leader Feedback
Project Plan

Independent Evaluation Phase

Critical Time Management

This year due to COVID restrictions, the Sterling evaluation process has changed significantly and time management is especially critical. The Consensus phase is entirely completed with weekly team-applicant conference calls. These calls must be scheduled as soon as possible with input from the applicant and team members. The intent is to conduct Process and Results interviews, normally done during Site Visit, within a 6-week time frame. Site Visits will be 2 to 3 days long and focus mainly on deployment and a few OFIs that could not be clarified through the conference calls.

Typical Weekly Schedule*

*****Assumes Site Visit the 1st week of March. All dates are highly dependent on the complexity of the organization,

	1st Week	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
November	• Sterling Examiner Training concludes • Sterling Office sends Application link to team members	**Independent Evaluation (IE)** • Examiners assigned to Teams • Contact Team Members • Call the Applicant Point-of-Contact • Negotiate Team-Applicant call Schedule • Start to prepare the *Project Plan* file • Assign *Key Factors Worksheet*	**Independent Evaluation (IE)** • Complete the *Consensus Key Factors Worksheet* • Assign an initial preparation *Independent Evaluation Scorebook* • Provide Feedback	**Independent Evaluation (IE)** • Team call with to review IE Process, Expectations, Due Dates • Complete Team-Applicant call Schedule
December	**Independent Evaluation (IE)** • Business Overview call with Applicant to review Key Factors	**Independent Evaluation (IE)** • Team call to check progress	***Happy Holidays***	**Independent Evaluation (IE)** • Check uploaded IE Scorebook files; provide feedback • Finalize Consensus Category/Item assignments
January	**Consensus Preparation** • Assign Categories/Items for Consensus • Team call to review Consensus Process, Expectations, Due Dates, and Team-Applicant call guidelines • Assign initial preparation for Consensus	**Consensus Preparation** • Provide feedback on initial Consensus assignment • Team reviews all Documents provided by Applicant • Category leads prepare questions for Applicant reviews	**Consensus** • Team-Applicant calls: Results 7.4 & 7.5 and Process Categories 1 & 2 • Category leads for 1 & 2 and write Consensus comments & • Team consensus & Scores	**Consensus** • Team-Applicant calls: Results 7.1 and Process Category 6 • Category lead for 6 and write Consensus comments & • Team consensus & Scores
February	**Consensus** • Team-Applicant calls: Key Results and Process Category 4 • Category lead for 4 and write Consensus comments & • Team consensus & Scores	**Consensus** • Team-Applicant calls: Results 7.2 and Process Category 3 • Category lead for 3 and write Consensus comments & • Team consensus & Scores	**Consensus** • Team-Applicant calls: Results 7.3 and Process Category 5 • Category lead for 5 and write Consensus comments & • Team consensus & Scores	**Pre-Site Visit** • Team calls to review Site Visit phase • Category leads prepare Interview Scripts

Independent Evaluation Phase

	1st Week	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
March	**2 or 3-day Site Visit** • Conduct Interviews • Summarize findings • Evening team meetings for consensus • Finalize *Site Visit Scorebook*	**Post Site Visit** • Revise final Site Visit Comments, if needed	**Post Site Visit** • Be available to answer any questions about your Site Visit category	

IE Key Steps

Team Setup and Organization Contact:

- ❑ Discuss / identify Roles & Responsibilities with the Backup Lead Examiner
- ❑ Contact each team member. Welcome the Examiner and discuss conference call dates and times, and Category preferences
- ❑ Assign a mentor to each first-year Examiner; consider mentors for second-year Examiners
- ❑ Call the organization's Point-of-Contact.
- ❑ Set up the Team-Applicant Conference Call Schedules
- ❑ Review the Apex-Stratex system, particularly the App Team Shared Files
- ❑ Setup the team Project Plan

Independent Evaluation:

- ❑ Key Factors Assignment and Consensus
- ❑ Independent Evaluation Assignments
- ❑ Team Scoring Summary
- ❑ Consensus Category/Item Assignments
- ❑ Examiner Feedback

Key Deliverables for IE:

- *Roles & Responsibilities* file
- *Project Plan* file
- Organization-Team Conference Call Schedules (Business Overview, Process & Results Reviews)
- Examiner Team Schedule – Key Dates and Deliverables
- *Consensus Key Factors* file
- *Team Scoring Summary* file
- Examiner Feedback

Samples:

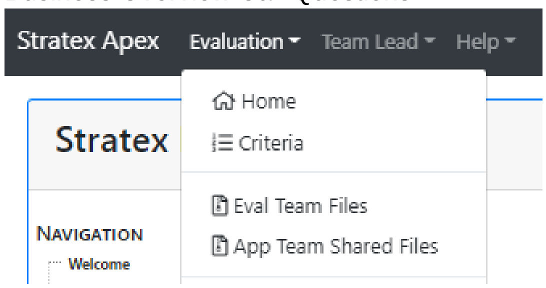
- Project Plan
- Agenda for Team Welcome Conference Call
- Key Team Dates – Timelines
- Team Scoring Summary
- Correspondence
- Examiner Feedback

NOTE: Copy the Sterling Office on all correspondence with the applicant.

Leader Roles & Responsibilities

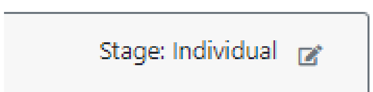
Call the Backup Lead Examiner

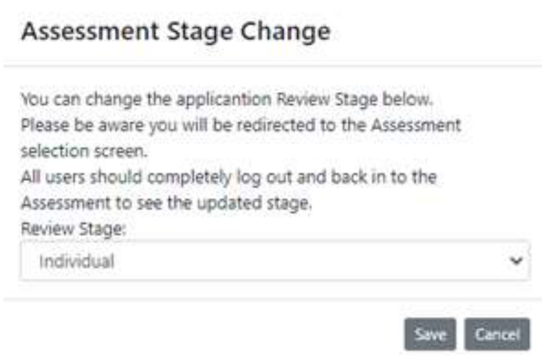
- Discuss, and understand, each other's sector, work, Criteria, and Examiner experiences; and learning goals for the process.
- Discuss team and organization communication protocols throughout the process.
- Become comfortable with the structure within the **Apex-Stratex system**, particularly the **App Team Shared Files** replacing Box as the file repository. There is a folder specifically for Resources for the Team Leader and Back-Up, such as the Project Planning Tool and Business Overview Call Questions.



Agree on Roles/ Responsibilities

- Download and complete the *Leaders Roles and Responsibilities* file
- Reach agreement with your Backup Lead Examiner on the roles and responsibilities assigned to the Lead Examiner, Backup Lead Examiner, and to other team members as appropriate.
- Complete the form within 2 weeks of receiving the application.
- Inform the Sterling Office of the file name and its storage location.
- Review Leaders Roles and Responsibilities with the team during the first conference call.
- Reach agreement on who will be responsible for **moving the Apex-Stratex system between stages** (Independent Evaluation, Consensus, and Site Visit). To transition, click the edit button in the top right-hand corner next to the name of the stage you are currently in. An "Assessment Stage Change" text box with a dropdown menu will appear.





Results Lead and Backup

- Read the Examiner Handbook, Results section to become familiar with the requirements of the Results lead, the Lead Examiner, and the applicant.
- The Results Lead will be an experienced Examiner with a solid background in Results.
- The Team Lead, Backup Lead, or another Examiner interested in learning to be the Results Lead, may serve as the Results Category Backup.

- This is the only Category where the Lead and Backup are assigned at the start of the examination process.
- The Results Lead will be responsible for the detailed analysis of charts and data for Results Items; and responsible for preparing and updating the *Results Analysis Worksheet*, *Results Clarification*, and *Expected Results*. **These items will live within the Apex-Stratex system.**
- The Results Lead will only read the application's process Item responses for basic understanding and to identify expected results.
- The Process Category Examiners will do the standard Independent Evaluation of the Process categories.

First Steps

- **First**: draft a schedule from the day you receive notification of your team until the final Feedback Report is submitted within the first few days.
- **Then**: within the first week, contact team members and the Applicant point-of-contact for introductions and development of meeting schedules:
    - **Joint Applicant-Team**: Business Overview, Results & Process Item Interviews, Applicant Presentation & Roundtable, Site Visit Interviews, Site Visit Out-Brief, etc.
    - **Team**: Training, Consensus, Caucus, Status Checks, etc.
- Determine the platform (Zoom. etc.) to be used for all Team conference calls.
    - **Note**: the team <u>will not use</u> the Applicant's platform for its calls.
- The Applicant will supply the platform for all calls with the Applicant and team.

Schedule Team Conference Calls

Team Conference Calls

- Setup a schedule for reoccurring Team Conference Calls; base the days and the times on input from all team members.
- Check individual Examiner availability for Team and Applicant calls during your first call to each person.
- A brief weekly call helps ensure Examiners stay engaged and have an opportunity to ask questions as well as connect with other team members.
- Prepare an agenda for each call, store the agenda, and inform Examiners of the storage location.
- Email a reminder to the team reminding them of the day, time, call-in numbers, the agenda.

Schedule Applicant Conference Calls

Organization Conference Calls

Conference calls with the applicant include the Business Overview Call(s) and weekly Results and Process Item calls during the six-week Consensus phase. These calls must be scheduled as soon as possible to ensure all participants understand the commitment to a schedule.

- The **Business Overview Call(s)** will be conducted early in the Independent Evaluation phase to review the organization's Key Factors and ensure the team's understanding of the organization and its business. Schedule about 1½ hours for the call. If possible, end the call within an hour.
- **Consensus calls** will be a six-week series with two calls every week. The first call will be to review the Results Item that relates to the Process Category that will be reviewed during the second call for the week. Recommended sequence:
    - Week 1: Results 7.4 & 7.5 and Process Categories 1 & 2
    - Week 2: Results 7.1 and Process Category 6

  - Week 3: Key Results and Process Category 4
  - Week 4: Results 7.2 and Process Category 3
  - Week 5: Results 7.3 and Process Category 5
  - Week 6: (in reserve)
- With the applicant, determine/negotiate the best days and times for all conference calls both for the organization and team members that will either participate, or listen, in on the calls.
- Schedule calls for the same day and time (i.e., every Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 to 4:00).
- Jointly, determine the organization's personnel to participate on the calls. The purpose of the call will require different participants, depending on the topic.
- Agendas and questions should be available to both the applicant and team members at least two days prior to each call.

Business Overview Call

Business Overview Call(s)

The Business Overview call is the first introduction of the team and the applicant. The Team Lead will facilitate the conversation with the team's examiners listening in; this is an opportunity for Examiners to better understand how the interview calls during Consensus will be.

The purpose of the Business Overview call is to gain a thorough understanding of the organization and its business based on the organization's Key Factors; provide a copy of the Key Factors Worksheet to the applicant prior to the call to use as a guide to topics.

- Develop a list of questions, that consider the following topics:
  - The Organizational Profile, with a review of key organizational structure, challenges, core competencies, and ethical considerations. Special attention should be given to the unique characteristics that may be different from organizations within the same sector and/or of comparable size.
  - Clarify any issues important to the overall evaluation, such as its relationship to a parent organization (e.g., a division of a larger organization, or a manufacturing plant to the parent organization).
  - **A template with standard Business Overview Calls questions is in the Team Leader/Back-Up Team Lead Resource folder within Apex-Stratex.** This list of questions is a starting off point to ensure no key topics go unaddressed.
- Share the questions with the Sterling Office at least one (1) week prior to the call.
- After review by the Sterling Office, share the file with the team and the organization at least two (2) days prior to the call.

Team Introductory Call

The objective for the Introductory Team Call is to begin the teaming process and to establish expectations. Topics may include,

- Examiner Introductions:
  - a personal fact that has nothing to do with the examination process such as places they have visited, hobbies, famous friends, favorite book, family, pets, etc.
  - Level of experience related to business sectors, positions held, Criteria use, and Examiner experience.
- Category Preferences: ask each Examiner their Process Category preference(s) for Consensus and Site Visit. Use the information to make Consensus and Site Visit assignments.
- Briefly explain the Category 7 process.
- Apex review:
  - File storage, sharing, and retrieval location and expectations.
  - File naming conventions and the importance of following them. Review the files and documents that will be needed, and how to access them.

  - How to set up headers in files (details are in the IE Scorebook file), do not change formats, fonts, tables, etc.
- Team Schedule:
  - Team calls: verify availability.
  - Team-Applicant calls: six weeks of twice-weekly Results and Process interview calls with the Applicant; participation is required for all calls.
  - Verify availability for all days and times for team and applicant calls, as well as the Site Visit dates.
- Consensus Process: briefly explain that Examiners will be assigned a Category/Item for Consensus and will prepare interview questions to verify and clarify comments.
- Examiner Handbook: stress the importance of using the Examiner Handbook instructions and samples.
  - Mentors: identify a Mentor for each new Examiner (possibly other Examiners that may need help). Mentors will review Examiners' IE work and provide feedback (Key Factors Worksheet, initial IE assignment, and scorebooks/worksheets).
- Lead Examiners: Review Leaders Roles and Responsibilities with the team.

Getting Started

Examiner Welcome

You, or your Backup, should personally call each Examiner to:

- Welcome each Examiner to the team; begin to establish rapport and build a relationship.
- Verify mailing address, email address(es), phone number(s), and the preferred methods for contact.
- Review proposed schedules for team calls, team-applicant calls, and Site Visit – all are required participation.
- Review the importance of confidentiality,
- Determine the level of experience each Examiner has with the Criteria, years as an Examiner, number and type of Site Visits, use of the Criteria within an organization, experience on teams, etc.
- Provide the name and contact information of the Examiner's mentor, if applicable. Mention how the mentor will help the Examiner and will review and provide feedback on their Independent Evaluation deliverables (Key Factors, initial IE Assignment, and IE Scorebook).

If you cannot reach the Examiner after several attempts, call the Sterling Office, as they may have alternate methods to contact a specific Examiner.

Introduction Team Call

During your first phone call with Examiners, briefly describe the mentor process and let them know who will be their mentor, and provide contact information. Review the overall evaluation process, the team calls and especially the weekly calls with the applicant during Consensus phase.

- **Ensure the team has access to the Apex-Stratex system** https://apex.stratexsolutions.com.
- Review the **App Team Shared Files** structure within the Apex-Stratex system and the resources provided within. Review the methods to be used for file storage, sharing and retrieval.

Assignments, Due Dates, Deliverables

Clearly communicate your expectations to the team, including:

- Scheduled calls with the Team and with the Applicant.
- Key assignments, due dates, and deliverables. Stress the importance of file Naming Conventions.
- Assign a due date to complete and store the Key Factors Worksheet.
  - Allow no more than one (1) week to complete the Key Factors Worksheet.

- Establish the date for team consensus of the Key Factors, and the method to establish consensus (conference call or email).
- Assign a due date to complete and upload the preliminary assignment for Independent Evaluation.
- Assign a due date to complete and upload the completed IE Scorebook-Final (Process Categories) and the Results Analysis Worksheet.

Computer Requirements

Email: test and ensure the address used by all Examiner team members can be accessed 24/7: preferably access is only by the Examiner – not office assistants or family members.

Computers: all software and hardware are virus free; check that MS Word and Excel versions are compatible. All team members are required to have a laptop for Site Visit.

Apex: review access and structure; ensure all Examiners have logged in at least once.

Key Factors

Key Factors Worksheet

The *Key Factors Worksheet* is the only process during all phases of evaluation to be done outside of Apex. When the consensus version of key factors is loaded into Apex, all further work is done in Apex.

Be sure all Examiners have downloaded the organization's *Application* and the *Key Factors Worksheet*. The Key Factors worksheet is located in the **App Team Shared Files in the Key Factors Folder within the Examiners Folder in the Apex-Stratex System.** Review purpose of the Key Factors and that the team will consensus on the Key Factors to use during Independent Evaluation.

Stress the importance of following the file naming conventions.

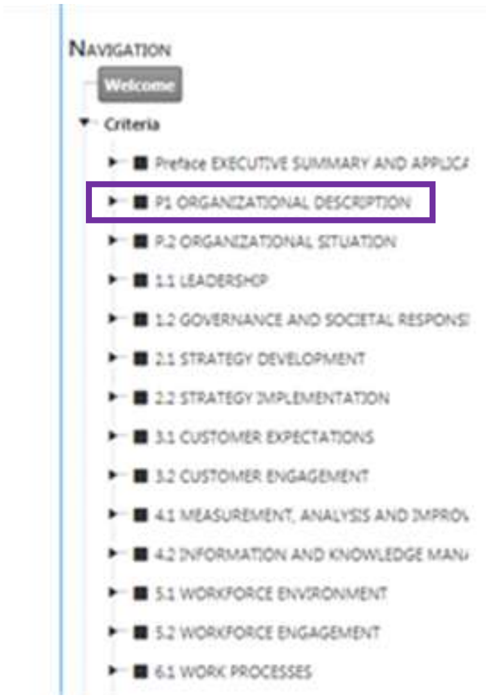
Assign the due date to complete the *Key Factors Worksheet*. Allow no more than one week to complete and upload the assignment. The completed Key Factors Worksheets should be uploaded back into the **App Team Shared Files in the Key Factors Folder within the Examiners Folder in the Apex-Stratex System**.

Remind Examiners to refer to the *Examiner Handbook-Independent Evaluation*.

Get team consensus on the Key Factors they will use during Independent Evaluation within 2 days of receiving each member's file.

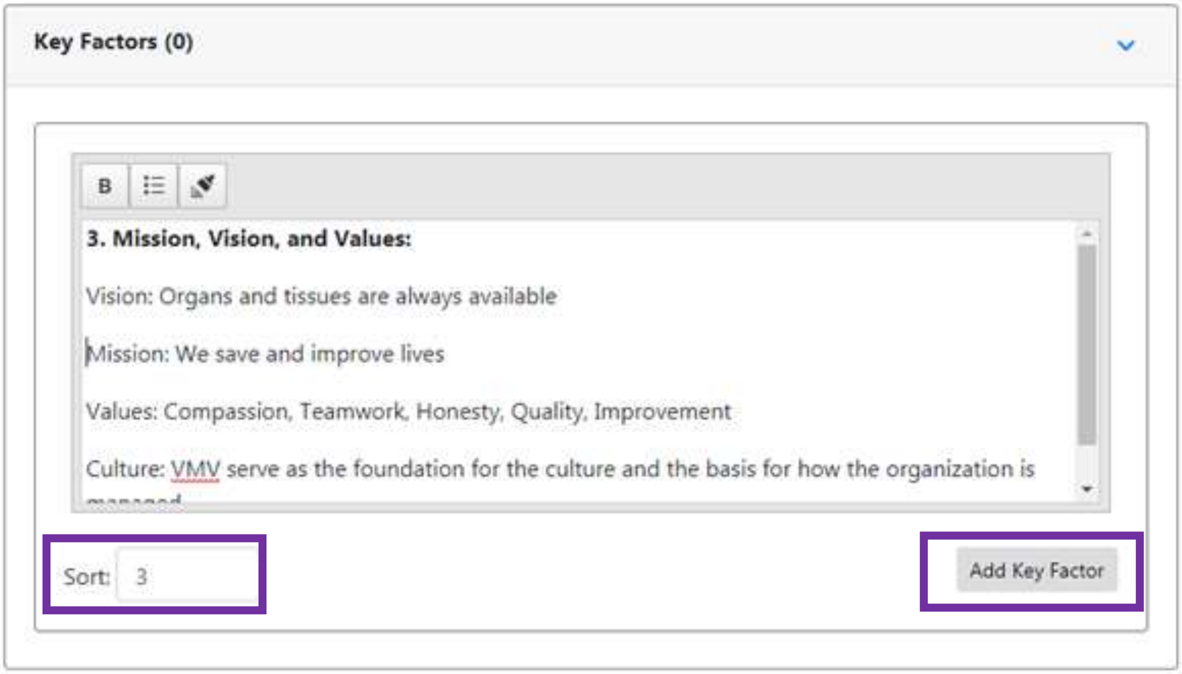
Once consensus on the Key Factors has been reached, identify one member to enter the consented key factors into the Apex-Stratex system.

1. To capture the consensus Key Factors, utilize the navigation menu on the left-hand side to select the portion of the organization profile in which you want to work.



2. When the area to address has been selected, you will see the criteria language, the applicant's response any related figures, and a text box to capture the Key Factors.

3. Add Key Factors
    a. Begin with the number of the Key Factor.
    b. Make the heading bold; for example: Organizational Environment.
    c. Use bullets to list multiple components, when appropriate.
    d. Use "Sort" to indicate the Key Factor number. When your cursor hovers in the box next to "sort," up and down arrows will appear. Use the arrows to select the desired number. The number in the sort box should match the Key Factor number. This will ensure the Key Factors are listed in numerical order through the subsequent stages of the process.
    e. Continue these steps until all Key Factors have been entered into the system.



To edit a Key Factor already added, simply click on the edit icon. Make any wanted revisions to the text, then click "update" to save changes.

To view/download the applicant's Key Factors, select "Identified Key Factors" from the Evaluation drop down menu. To download the list, select the download icon in the top right-hand corner.

Examiner Mentoring

Purpose	The relationship between the Lead Examiner and Examiners is critical to the team's success. Mentoring is one of the primary ways the Lead Examiner builds relationships with Examiners; mentors …. • Establish rapport and a point-of-contact for Examiner. • Build Examiner self-confidence. • Improve Examiner skill levels. • Help Examiners achieve success in the Sterling Examiner process.
Guidelines	• Provide feedback within 24-48 hours, if at all possible. ALWAYS say something positive. ALWAYS offer to help. • If possible, deliver feedback in a phone call, especially important for those Examiners who are struggling. • Can be brief not have to be detailed; just note what was done well and suggestions to help the Examiner address any significant opportunities for improvement. • Do not unduly influence the Examiner's independent thought; focus on the Sterling process. • Remember to first refer Examiners to the appropriate Examiner Handbook sections for instructions and samples.

Provide Examiner Feedback	**Key Factor Attributes** to look for.
	○ Confidentiality of the organization is maintained - the organization is not identified by name or acronym.
	○ On time submittal and file uploaded to appropriate repository.
	○ File format follows instructions and demonstrates adequate computer skills.
	○ Complete thoughts but not necessarily complete sentences.
	○ Summarized without copying the organization's words.
	○ Appropriate Key Factors that indicate an understanding of the organization.
	○ Appropriate detail level—balance between too much detail and a lack of information.
	• Note briefly the Examiner's strengths and 1-2 improvement suggestions.
	  ○ If an Examiner needs to address more than 1 or 2 significant factors, call to talk about the assignment with him/her.
	  ○ Time spent now setting Examiners on the right path is very important for team success.
	• Call if possible (or email) each individual Examiner with feedback. Try to call the first-year Examiners rather than use email, especially for the first feedback.
	
	You must contact (phone or email) within 2 days so Examiners realize that you also adhere to time constraints. You cannot expect your Examiners to be on time if you are not.
	○ If an Examiner does a "great/good" job, send a brief email immediately.
	○ If an Examiner is struggling, it is imperative to talk to him/her as soon as possible. Many Examiners may be working ahead of your assignments.

Organization's Point-of-Contact

Initial Call with the Point-of-Contact	Call the organization's Point-of-Contact as soon as you know his/her name**.** It is important to introduce yourself, establish a relationship, and start working the assessment details as soon as possible.
	• Use the conversation to establish the best way to communicate (conference call/video platform, phone, fax, email, etc.); determine if there is a best time for subsequent calls with the Point-of-Contact.
	• Review the requirements for call/video platform for all joint team-applicant calls (e.g., Zoom). Note: the team will not use the applicant's platform for its team calls.
	• Review the calls to be scheduled, and their purpose / objective.
	  ○ Schedule calls for each week, if just for brief contact / status / questions.
	  ○ Business Overview – to verify and gain an understanding of the organization based upon the Organizational Profile and application.
	  ○ Results Calls – to clarify and gain understanding of the organization's business results as presented in the application, revised results, and any new results requested by the team.
	• Weekly Results and Process Item calls – the purpose and extent of the interviews during Consensus.
	• Briefly discuss Site Visit:
	  ○ Determine if the organization has participated in a Site Visit before; explain the difference this year as virtual.
	  ○ Review how Site Visit will be done virtually, starting with the Applicant Presentation & Roundtable.
	
	ALWAYS Follow-up with an email to the Point-of-Contact to document what was discussed, and copy the Sterling Office.

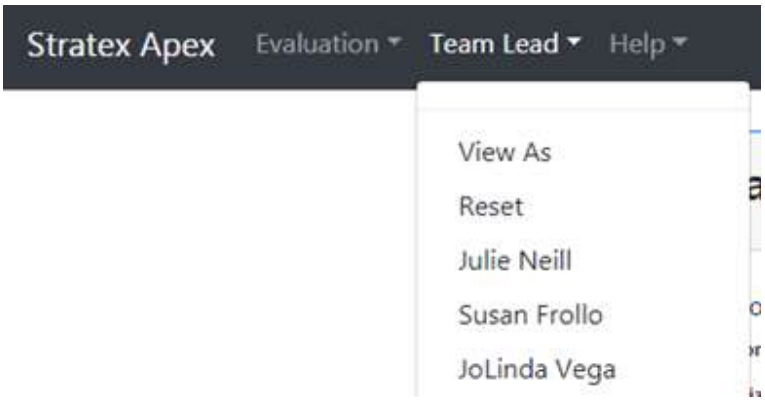
Team Project Plan

Establish Project Plan	Download and save the Project Plan file **located within the Apex-Stratex system in the Team Leader – Resources folder.** The most current file should live here so the Back-Up Team Lead and the Team Lead are on the same page. Follow the instructions within the file. This is an Excel worksheet that automatically determines due dates and milestones, based primarily on the Site Visit dates. It is pre-populated with each milestone / task and the corresponding individual / group, task duration, timeframe, baseline, and scheduled and completion dates. The worksheet helps the Team Lead and the Sterling Office plan all aspects of the Examination process – from Independent Evaluation through Site Visit.

Independent Evaluation

Initial Assignment for Independent Evaluation	Possible assignments include just 1 or 2 Strengths and OFIs; a Process Item; a Category. Consider Category 2 or 6 as the first assignment as this will provide context for the rest of the application. This is the best performance indicator you will have from each Examiner. Clearly communicate your expectations, including how much you expect to be completed and when (due date). ***Independent Evaluation comments*** provide the diverse perspective of each Examiner and provide the basis for consensus comments. They are based solely on an individual Examiner's evaluation of the application. Independent Evaluation comments are **brief statements** that are not always complete sentences. Think of it as an outline of the key strengths and opportunities.

Team Leader View within the Apex-Stratex system is designed to allow the Team Leader and Back-Up to view and review the work of the team during the Independent Evaluation stage. By selecting the "Team Lead" from the top ribbon and the team member whose work you would like to review, the Team Lead with then see "Viewing As: Team Member" in the top right corner of the ribbon and have the ability to see this team member's comments. Once you are ready to leave the Team Leader View, select "Reset" from the Team Lead drop down menu. The top right corner of the ribbon will go back to normal.



Review Process Items and Provide Feedback

Process Evaluation Attributes:

- **Utilize the Team Leader View within the Apex-Stratex system** to review the comments of your team members.
- The 4-6 most relevant Key Factors for the Item. 5-8 relevant comments for the Item.
- Comments comply with Independent Evaluation Comment Guidelines.
- **Bold** all Criteria language.
- Examples relate to the Criteria and support the Strength or OFI.
- Key Factor link (**I**ntegration) for all comments and proper use of the ADLI Evaluation Factors
- Content demonstrates understanding of Criteria Requirements in relation to the Key Factors.
- Appropriate balance of Strengths and OFIs.
- Evidence of Innovation, if appropriate.
- Relevance of the "Expected Results" listed and linked to the specific comment.
- Scoring Range and the H, M, or L indication are appropriate for the Strengths and OFIs.

Review Results Items and Provide Feedback

Results Category

Results Analysis Category leads are experienced Examiners and do not usually need as much mentoring as new Examiners.

You may want to assign a Results Item, just as with Examiners completing a Process Item.

Results Analysis Attributes:

- Evidence of review, and appropriate interpretation of results.
- LeTCI&G Analysis Factors
- *Results Analysis Worksheet* attributes to look for before starting Results Calls with the applicant:
  - Questions are open-ended and related to the Criteria and Results.
  - Questions are appropriate for the person and the chart(s).

- Notify Sterling when the questions are available for their approval – at least one week prior to the Results Call.

Review Assigned Items and Provide Feedback

Carefully review the completed assignments in Apex. This should take approximately 15 minutes per Examiner.

- It is important to provide quick, accurate feedback.
- Note key strength and improvement suggestions.
- It is imperative to call Examiners that are having trouble with the process, evaluation, or analysis; and provide guidance for improvements.
- This is probably the most critical step in the entire mentoring process.
  - This is THE TIME to get Examiners on the right track! If not done early in the process, you, the Examiner, and the entire team will have a much more difficult time in Consensus, and possibly at the Site Visit.
  - Errors resolved now will result in much improved Independent Evaluations and Analyses, better Consensus Preparation for calls with the Applicant.

Review Final IE Scorebooks and Provide Feedback

Review the completed *Independent Evaluation Scorebooks* and *Results Analysis Worksheet.* This will take approximately 30-60 minutes per Examiner. Refer to the attributes above for your review.

- Store all Examiner feedback in the proper repository.
- If your team has an Examiner that does not seem able to complete assignments with reasonable quality and on-time, discuss options with your Backup Lead Examiner and the Sterling office.

At the end of the Independent Evaluation phase, assess each Examiner's overall performance and provide feedback to the Examiner (verbal or written).

Perform a Quality Check within the Apex-Stratex system prior to moving the team into the Consensus stage within the system.

1. Utilizing the **Team Leader View**, ensure the comments from your team follow the structure and formatting of strength and OFI comments for the IE stage.
2. Utilizing the **Evaluation Dashboard** (accessed from the Evaluation dropdown menu), ensure an adequate amount of strength and OFI comments have been crafted by each team member.

Utilizing he **Evaluation Dashboard**, ensure all team members have submitted scores.

Consensus Assignments

Consensus Considerations

During the Independent Evaluation process, keep notes on individual Examiner strengths and opportunities. Consider these factors as you determine the Category / Item assignments for Consensus.

- Work with the Backup Lead Examiner to determine how to assign the six (6) Process Categories. If there are fewer than seven (7) Examiners on the team, you will need to assign multiple Categories / Items for Consensus.
- When dividing or combining Process Items, consider the relationships between Items, the commonality of people to interview, etc., to make logical assignments.
- The Team Lead should not lead a Category or Item; the lead is responsible to mentor Examiners, prepare schedules and agendas, manage logistics, and communicate and build relationships with the applicant.
- The Backup Lead Examiner is typically assigned Category 1 – Leadership.

Do not inform Examiners of Consensus assignments until you verify the completion of the Examiner's *Independent Evaluation Scorebook-Final.* Once verified, notify each Examiner of

	his/her assignments; when all IE Scorebooks are complete, inform the entire team of all assignments - Leads and Backups.

Sample Team Correspondence - Welcome

To: Team Members
Cc: Sterling Office

Welcome to the Sterling experience! I am looking forward to working with you as members of our Examination Team. John Smith, Backup Team Lead, and I will do our best to provide the team with the leadership you expect and deserve. We have scheduled a team conference call for Wednesday, November 15 at 9:00 am.

The Sterling process is more or less difficult in direct proportion to the quality of the Independent Evaluation, which you are doing now. The effort that you expend now will save us all a great deal of time during Consensus and Site Visit. Please put in the time up front; and, if you have any questions or concerns, contact me or John.

Independent Evaluation:

- Remember to keep all materials, including computer files in the strictest confidentiality. No one (outside the team) is to know what organization you are evaluating! Evaluate and score the application without discussion with anyone, including other team members.
- Never use the organization's name. When referring to the organization in comments, use the "organization" during Independent Evaluation.
- Use the Examiner Handbook, Independent Evaluation section, for detailed instructions.
- Your completed *Key Factors Worksheet* is due to be uploaded this Friday, December 1.
- Our team conference call is next Wednesday, December 6, 9:00-10:00 am (call number 555-555-5555, access code 55555). I will post the proposed *Consensus Key Factors* by December 3 and check for consensus on the call. We will all use the same *Key Factor-Consensus* file for Independent Evaluation.
- IE Comments: **bold** Criteria, bulleted specific example(s) for ADL (as appropriate), and I – importance to the organization (a Key Factor), and expected results for each comment (as appropriate) in Categories 1 through 6.
- Include words used by the organization when writing your comments. For example, if they call employees "associates," refer to employees as associates in your comments.
- Complete the *Independent Evaluation Scorebook*. Absolute deadline is no later than noon, January 2; as soon as I ensure your file is complete, I will let you know your Consensus assignment.

Thank you,

Sample Call Agenda

Welcome Conference Call Agenda
Wednesday, Nov. 15, 9:00-10:15

Call-in Number: 1-555-555-5555 Pass Code: 5555

Welcome and Introductions	5 Minutes
Around the Table – 2 Minutes Each to Share:	20 Minutes
Your Name	
Your Background	
Sector Experience	
Category Preference	
Examiner Experience	

Some Little Thing About Yourself

Virtual Process Review	10 minutes
Examiner Roles and Responsibilities	5 Minutes
Applicant Conference Call Schedule	5 Minutes
Independent Evaluation	5 Minutes
Deliverables and Due Dates	5 Minutes
Site Visit Dates	5 Minutes
Questions	15 Minutes

Sample Team Key Dates

Note: Times and/or dates are subject to change

Date	Requirement	
Mon, Nov 16, 2020	9:00 am: Complete *Key Factors Worksheet*	Examiner
Wed, Nov 18	Consensus *Key Factors Worksheet* available to the team	Team Lead
Wed, Nov 18	Start Independent Evaluation	Examiner
Wed, Nov 25	Business Overview Call	Entire Team + Applicant
Wed, Dec 9	Complete *Independent Evaluation Scorebook* for Item 6.1: 4-6 Key Factors, 5-8 IE Comments, Expected Results, and Score	Examiner
Thu, Dec 31, 2020	9:00 am: Complete *Independent Evaluation Process Scorebook*	Examiner
Mon, Jan 4, 2021	1:00 – 2:00 pm: Consensus Planning Phone Call	Entire Team
Wed, Jan 6	5:00 pm: Synthesize <u>two</u> key ideas (1 Strength, 1 OFI)	Examiner
Fri, Jan 15	Complete Key Ideas and Questions for applicant calls (deadline somewhat dependent on the date of each Category interview)	Examiner
Weeks of Jan. 18 – Feb. 26	**Weekly scheduled calls with applicant to review Categories and related Results**	**Appropriate Team Members + Applicant**
Weeks of Jan. 18 – Feb. 26	**Team Consensus calls will follow each week's Results and Process Category/Item interviews with the Applicant**	**Entire Team**
Mon, Mar. 1	Team call to review Site Visit process	Entire Team
Tue, Mar 2	Applicant Presentation and Roundtable	Entire Team + Applicant
Fri, Mar. 5	Completed site visit Strategy and Interview Scripts	Entire Team
Mon-Wed, Mar. 8-10	Site Visit	Entire Team + Applicant

Sample Examiner Feedback

Timely, constructive feedback to Examiners is critical at every stage of the evaluation process. You must personalize feedback to the individual Examiner. Personally, talk to an Examiner that is struggling or turns in assignments very late. All feedback must be personalized to the individual Examiner.

Factors to Consider for Examiner Feedback

Overall Performance

- Produces complete and error-free work; follows file format instructions.
- Is prompt and meets time schedules with completed deliverables.
- Maintains confidentiality.

Key Factors Worksheet

- Concisely presents a bulleted list of the most significant facts and characteristics of the organization.

Process Item Worksheets

- Appropriate number and type of strengths and OFIs for the Item Score.
- Number of comments is balanced across Items and Categories.

Process Item Comments

- Addresses criteria requirements relative to Key Factors; criteria highlighted.
- Single, complete thoughts.
- Uses appropriate, specific examples.
- OFI Integration (Key Factor) aligns with the criteria and comment.
- OFIs begin with the opportunity statement – "It is not clear…" or "It is not evident…" (rather than "Although" or "While")
- Comments demonstrate knowledge of the purpose and requirements of the criteria.
- Appropriate use of A-D-L-I + I (Innovation).

Results

- Expected Results demonstrate an understanding of the correlation to the Process Item requirements.
- Appropriate LeTC&G analysis.
- Results identified are related to the particular comment.
- Includes appropriate expected results.
- Appropriate assessment of charts/graphs.

Project Plan
Abbreviated Sample

Project Plan

			Application Due:		11/4/2017				
			Site Visit:		3/12/2018				
#	**Milestones / Tasks**	**Who**	**Est. Duration**	**Plan Timeframe**	**Baseline Due Date**	**Schedule Due Date**	**Date Completed**	**Follow up Notes / Comments**	**Notes / Comments**
	Application due to Sterling Intl Office	Applicant		Early November	11/4/2017				
	Application delivered to Ambassadors	Sterling Intl Office		Mid November	11/16/2017				
1	**Establish Team**				**11/22/2017**				
1a	Place phone call to individual Ambassadors	Lead Ambassador	2 hours	Mid to Late November	11/16/2017				
1b	Prepare for first meeting - set phone number, prepare agenda, calendar, team list and expectations	Lead Ambassador	2 hours	Late November	11/19/2017				
1c	Send email introducing team and first meeting agenda items (set up email distribution list for the team)	Lead Ambassador	30 mins	Late November	11/20/2017				
1d	***Hold First Team Meeting***	**Team**	**1 hour**	**Late November**	11/22/2017				
1d1	During meeting - encourage introductions, review team list, calendar, expectations, on-going meeting schedule (Be sure to get agreement on dates of consensus meetings, site visit and team conference calls)	Lead Ambassador	20 mins	Late November	11/22/2017				
1d2	Review Independent Evaluation expectations (Scorebook and Results Analysis Worksheet)	Lead Ambassador	30 mins	Late November	11/22/2017				
1d3	Define Backup Leader Ambassador's role and gather Category Lead preferences	Lead Ambassador	10 mins	Late November	11/22/2017				
2	**Independent Evaluation Process**				**12/27/2017**				
2a	Alert Ambassadors to start Independent Evaluation via email or phone call	Sterling Office / Lead Ambassador	30 mins	Late November	11/19/2017				
2b	Identify mentors and mentees within the team (pair team members) and notify team members of pairings	Lead Ambassador	30 mins	Early December	12/2/2017				

Sample Scoring – Independent Evaluation

	JN	SF	TV	CC	JN	KS	LM		DB	LB		MH	RK	YT	AP	AF
1.2																
STR:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
OFI:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Score:													10% - 25% (20)			
2.1																
STR:	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
OFI:	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Score:		50% - 65% (60)													30% - 45% (35)	
2.2																
STR:	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
OFI:	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Score:		30% - 45% (40)				30% - 45% (45)							30% - 45% (35)		30% - 45% (30)	
3.1																
STR:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
OFI:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Score:													10% - 25% (10)			50% - 65% (55)