

Benchmark Rating Method Compliance Requirements

Project-Based Activities

11 February 2021



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1. Introduction

1.1. About the VEU program

Under the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007 (the VEET Act), the Essential Services Commission is responsible for monitoring compliance with the VEET Act, the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Regulations 2018 (the principal VEET Regulations), the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (Project-Based Activities) Regulations 2017 (the PBA Regulations), Benchmark Rating in Victorian Energy Upgrades – Specifications (the benchmark rating specifications).

Accredited persons (APs) must adhere to the requirements as outlined in the VEET Act, the principal VEET Regulations and the PBA Regulations, the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Guidelines (the VEET Guidelines), benchmark rating specifications, and any guides issued by the commission.

1.2. About project-based activities

Project-based activities (PBA) allows an AP to create Victorian energy efficiency certificates (VEECs) for energy efficiency projects in business and non-residential premises, and on common services in Class 2 or Class 3 residential buildings under part A3 of the Building Code of Australia (BCA).

Benchmark rating is the second method introduced under PBA.

1.3. Purpose of this document

This document is designed to guide you as the AP, and other interested stakeholders through the compliance requirements for benchmark rating projects by outlining the evidence that you are required to collect and maintain for each project. It also contains compliance checklists for each stage of the project.

Those needing further guidance on key concepts and issues, stages, processes and resources for PBA benchmark rating are directed to the Benchmark Rating Method Activity Guide, available at www.esc.vic.gov.au/benchmark-rating

1.4. How this document is structured

This document outlines the evidence that you are required to collect for each benchmark rating project. You should familiarise yourself with the documents that must be collected and provided to us upon request to verify that benchmark rating projects have been carried out in accordance with program compliance requirements. Monitoring compliance in consultation with the following checklists will help ensure that each project meets the requirements of the VEU program.

You will need a firm grasp of these key concepts and issues, as they are referred to in the compliance checklists. These key concepts and issues are covered in greater detail in the Benchmark Rating Method Activity Guide.

Section 2 of this document outlines the compliance checklists for the steps in the benchmark rating project process.

It is important that you familiarise yourself with the evidence that is required to be collected for each step. Similarly, it is essential that you pay close attention to the document collection requirements for each section outlined in the compliance checklists (i.e. mandatory or optional documents).

1.5. Record keeping

APs must ensure that appropriate records are kept verifying all details of the project which relate to the calculation of greenhouse gas abatement and the creation of certificates.

The commission may request additional supporting evidence to confirm details relevant to the calculation of abatement, the proper creation of certificates as well as subsequent validation and registration of claims.

Additional supporting evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- calibration records for sub meters or portable meters used to measure energy consumption
- other raw data files

APs must ensure that the maintained documentation constitutes an auditable record of the work undertaken. Documents must be stored for six years after the date that the final certificate for the project has been registered.

If the standard of documentation maintained fails to provide auditable records of the work undertaken, the AP may be required to surrender certificates equal to those that cannot be verified.

1.6. Legal context for this document

The commission has prepared this compliance requirements guide as a general summary of the relevant parts of the:

- Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007
- Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Regulations 2018
- Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (Project-Based Activities) Regulations 2017
- Benchmark Rating in Victorian Energy Upgrades – Specifications
- Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Guidelines.

Access the above legislative documents at www.esc.vic.gov.au/veu-legislation

This document should not be relied upon as substitute for legal advice and should be read in conjunction with the above source documents. In the event of inconsistency between this guide and the source documents, the content in the source documents takes precedence.

2. Compliance checklists

2.1. Compliance checklist – scoping and project plan approval

You can either apply for a scoping plan approval on its own or apply for a combined scoping and project plan approval. To apply for combined scoping and project plan approval, the AP (you) must complete the relevant Scoping and Project Plan Approval Form and any other required forms (these can be found at www.esc.vic.gov.au/benchmark-rating) as well as providing the evidentiary requirements outlined in the following compliance checklist. These must be submitted to us for the scoping plan stage of a benchmark rating project. If you are applying for the scoping plan prior to applying for the project plan, you should use the relevant Scoping Plan Approval Form at this stage.

2.1.1. Applicant details

You must provide your details (the AP's details).

Question	Description
1-7 ¹	You must fill in details such as account name, name of AP, address of AP, who the primary contact is and their contact details.
8	Give the full address of the project. Where the project does not have an address, or the site address is a very large area, provide further information on the specific location of the project site.
9	Explain what the normal site activities are, i.e. what normally happens at the site where consumption of electricity or gas is being reduced.

2.1.2. Legal right

APs must identify the energy consumer and provide details of their right to apply for and carry out this project.

Question	Description
10	You must provide evidence showing who the energy consumer at the site is. This should specifically relate to the electricity or gas being abated through the project. This must be a document which contains the retailer's letterhead and contact details, the site address (including any relevant NMI and/or MIRN) and the name of

¹ The question numbers indicated in this explanatory note reflect those of combined application forms. When using separate scoping and project plan application forms, question numbers may differ from those indicated. Please consult the relevant application form along with this explanatory note.

Question	Description
	the energy consumer. This document is normally a copy of the energy bill (but at the scoping plan-only stage (i.e. not a combined application), this does not need to include energy consumption details, so this information can be blocked out).
11	Indicate whether you are also the energy consumer (e.g. if you are doing a project at your own site). In most cases this question will require a Registration of Interest Form which has been signed by the AP and the energy consumer. Please refer to the Benchmark Rating Activity Guide for details of what to do when there are multiple energy consumers or where the site owner is not the energy consumer.
12	Give a description of the ownership structure at the site. This information should clearly indicate where the energy consumer sits in relation to any other entity involved in the site.
13	(Optional question). If either you or the energy consumer are using an agent (e.g. a consultant) who will be providing us with information, please use this question to tell us about this.
14	(Optional question). Following on from the previous question, please indicate when we should contact the agent instead of you, and/or when we can expect the agent to contact us.

2.1.3. Project details

APs must provide details of the proposed project.

Question	Description
15	<p>Enter a unique name which identifies the project:</p> <p>Name must be suitable and not misleading about the project's ownership, scope or purpose. Use the format:</p> <p>[organisation name]_[location]_[purpose]_[start date]</p> <p>e.g. Finance company_Ballarat_HVAC Upgrade_Jan 2019.</p> <p>Note that if you or the energy consumer are concerned about having certain details publicly listed, such as the name of the company, you do not need to have this explicitly stated in the project name, provided the name is suitable and does not mislead.</p>
16	Indicate whether the project is being undertaken at a site which is classed as business or non-residential.
17	If the site is classed as residential (e.g. a backpacker hostel, apartment building or hotel or any other building which comes under Class 2 or 3 in the Building Code), confirm whether the project relates to any services exclusively supplied to a sole-occupancy dwelling. For example, an apartment building can have a PBA project for equipment relating to common services (for example central HVAC), but cannot contain any element of energy consuming equipment in individual dwellings.

Question	Description
18	Confirm that the project abatement does not derive from the construction of a new building.
19	<p>Indicate whether or not the site's address appears on the Register of SAP found at www.veu-registry.vic.gov.au/register-saps</p> <p>Note that if the site is a SAP, then an authorised person at the site must 'opt-in' before the application can be considered, so this should be done well in advance of submitting the Scoping and Project Plan Approval Form (see the Large Energy User's Scheduled Activity Premises Guide for further information on 'opt-in' requirements).</p>
20	Enter the date that project works are due to commence (at scoping plan-only stage, this can be an indicative date).
21	Select which energy services will be affected by the project. Pick from the list all that are relevant. Use the 'Other' field where the services are not included in the list. For projects with multiple energy conservation measures, you must include all services relating to the project. Note: You will not be able to vary this to increase the list of services once the scoping plan has been approved.
22	<p>If lighting equipment will be installed as part of the project, this equipment must be listed on the Register of Products found at www.veu-registry.vic.gov.au/register-products prior to the next application for project impact report being submitted.</p> <p>You must also provide details of any lighting control devices (e.g. occupancy sensors, daylight linked controls, etc.) that these products use.</p> <p>If the lighting products you plan on using are not relevant to the requirements of Activity 21, 27, 34 or 35 installation environments and are highly specialised for the specific project purpose, you may contact us to discuss details. The product(s) <i>may</i> be able to be added to the register under a specialised category. If this is the case, it is best to contact us early to confirm whether or not the product is eligible for use using this method.</p> <p>The brand and model entered in this list must match the exact terms used on the Register of Products.</p> <p>Note that if there are multiple products, list all of these in the brand/model fields or in the case where the form does not provide enough space, attach a separate list with these details.</p>
23	<p>Explain any work which has already been carried out. This includes project planning and design, scoping, meter installation, asset installation, asset modification and/or project construction work.</p> <p>Use this field to give as much detail as possible. We may request further information on this or arrange to visit the site if this information is unclear.</p>

2.1.4. Energy

You must provide details on the sources of energy supply at the site.

Question	Description
24	List all the energy sources at the site which will be affected by the project. Select from the list and give details of any other energy sources affected using the text box.
25	<p>Confirm whether the project involves fuel switching to non-renewable fuels including fossil fuels, waste from fossil fuel sources, or wood from native forests (other than wood waste from a native forest which is a waste product from the construction of buildings or furniture, including timber off-cuts and timber from demolished buildings)?</p> <p>Note that this type of project is not eligible to create VEECs. For example, you cannot create certificates for a project which switches from a gas-fired steam boiler to a steam boiler fueled by waste oil (where that oil is fossil-based).</p>
26	List the energy sources at the site which will be introduced by the project. Select from the list and give details of any other energy sources affected using the text box.

2.1.5. Greenhouse gas emissions

You must provide details on the greenhouse gas emissions at the site.

Question	Description
27	Selection of the approved benchmark administrator and process intended to be used in the project. A list of approved benchmark administrators can be found in the benchmark rating specifications.
28	You must explain how the project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity or gas consumption. This may include a list of the equipment to be upgraded or may indicate how a change in fuel type, process or operation might reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
29	You must explain participation in any other prescribed scheme (where relevant). To avoid double-counting abatement, any participation in other prescribed schemes must be fully explained, including a description of how it is intended to separate out any abatement relative to the differing schemes. This will require introducing additional metering specifically relating to this.

2.1.6. Applicant's undertakings in relation to scoping plan approval

You must complete the undertakings detailed in this section of the Scoping and Project Plan Approval Form.

Question	Description
30-32	All undertakings must be completed regardless of the project activities.

2.1.7. Project site

You must provide details relating to the project site.

Question	Description
33	<p>Indicate if there is any renewable energy generation equipment to be installed between the baseline period and the reporting period. If there will be, then you must indicate if the systems claim benefits under any other prescribed greenhouse gas scheme (so for example if STC's or LGC's are also being claimed, you must tell us about this here). If this is the case, you must describe how this generation claimed under the other scheme will be measured and accounted for using the unaccounted energy value in the calculations.</p> <p>It may be useful to attach a drawing to help explain the above arrangements. If you have one, please attach this to the application and enter the filename of the drawing in the appropriate field.</p>
2	<p>Note – this question is only applicable to an individual Project Plan Approval Form.</p> <p>Indicate if there have been any changes since the corresponding scoping plan application for the same project was approved (where relevant). If changes have been made, an application for variation may need to be made using the Variation Approval Form.</p>

2.1.8. Project finances and abatement

You must provide details relating to the project finances.

Question	Description
34	<p>Give the estimated cost of the project. This cost should be in Australian Dollars and should relate to the entire project. If the project includes non-VEU elements, please indicate only the cost of the elements which relate to the VEU project activities.</p>
35	<p>Give an estimate of the greenhouse gas abatement likely to result from this project. For projects which include non-VEU elements, this estimate should relate to only the VEU related project activities.</p>
36	<p>Provide details on how the greenhouse gas abatement estimate in the previous question was calculated. This can be a collection of calculations and explanations. Where more space is needed, please attach a separate worksheet and write the filename of this in the text box.</p>

2.1.9. Planned project timing

You must provide details of all planned timeframes for the project activities. This differs from any timeframe given in the scoping plan, where the scoping plan timeframes were indicative, the timeframes in the project plan should be the actual dates activities are planned. Any change to these dates will require a variation.

Question	Description
37	Give the date the baseline period is planned to begin. This is the first date that is included within the baseline rating report.
38	Give the date the baseline period is planned to end. This is the last date that is included within the baseline rating report.
39	Give the date that project works are planned to begin (known as the project works start date). This is the date that activities start (e.g. old equipment is switched off in order to install a new upgrade).
40	Give the date that the project works are planned to end and any changes brought back into service (known as the project works end date ²). This is the date, and optionally the time, that activities end (e.g. the date that upgraded equipment is switched back on after commissioning). This date sets the start of the reporting period, so should be carefully considered.

2.1.10. Expert advisors

You must provide details relating to any expert advisors used in the planning and implementation of the project.

Question	Description
41	<p>If advice was provided by an assessor from the nominated approved benchmark administrator, please indicate so, giving the assessors details.</p> <p>Note that this differs from the person carrying out the rating assessment, so you do not need to list the details of the person carrying out the assessment, only the details of the person who provided additional advice.</p>
42	If an expert was used or is planned to be used, list their responsibilities and functions in the project.

2.1.11. Insurance

You must maintain appropriate levels of insurance.

Question	Description
43	<p>If the project is to be carried out at your own site, you must provide a signed insurance waiver document. Otherwise you must declare that your insurance level is appropriate for participation in this project.</p> <p>If you provided all the requested insurance details as part of your application for accreditation/activity approval and it is in date and valid, then you do not need to provide this again and no need to provide it for every project. However, if you need to update your insurance details, you should do so along with the scoping plan application.</p>

² Referred to in the PBA Regulations as the implementation start date.

2.1.12. Application format

You as the AP must provide details on any templates you have used instead of the Scoping and Project Plan Approval Form.

Question	Description
44	<p>Q44: Selecting 'Yes' in answer to this question means that only questions, declarations and signatures from this point onwards need to be provided.</p> <p>You must have had your template approved by the commission prior to selecting 'Yes'. Please contact us via VEU Support at veu@esc.vic.gov.au to discuss your proposed template.</p> <p>Attach completed approved template document including all related file attachments.</p> <p>Please include a unique project name, as per the instructions for Q15.</p>

2.1.13. Declaration

You must agree with and certify that you have understood and will comply with the declarations listed in the Scoping and Project Plan Approval Form.

Question	Description
45	<p>All declarations must be read, understood and complied with. A signature of the AP and appropriate witness must certify these statements.</p>

2.2. Compliance checklist – variations to scoping or project plans

The following compliance checklist outlines the evidentiary requirements you as the AP must submit for varying a scoping plan or project plan.

2.2.1. Variations to previously approved scoping or project plans

You must seek approval from us to vary approved scoping and/or project plans. The Variation Approval Form can be found at www.esc.vic.gov.au/benchmark-rating

Question	Description
1-16	<p>You must propose variations to the planned project and seek our approval before the variation is implemented.</p> <p>The Benchmark Rating Activity Guide details which variations can be considered and which cannot.</p> <p>Any evidentiary documentation supporting this application should be attached (e.g. revised headcount forecast).</p>

2.3. Compliance checklist – impact report

The following compliance checklist outlines the evidentiary requirements APs must include with each application for impact report approval submitted. To apply for impact report approval, complete the Impact Report Approval Form and any other required forms (these can be found at www.esc.vic.gov.au/benchmark-rating) as well as providing documentation as outlined in more detail below.

2.3.1. Project details

APs must seek approval of the commission for impact report applications.

Question	Description
1	You must fill in the AP's VEU account name.
2	Give the project name that this application refers to. The text must be an exact match for the project name given in the corresponding scoping and project plan application and any approved variations for the same project.
3	Give the number of whole calendar years between the baseline period and the reporting period. This number is simply the calendar year from the reporting period end date (the one relating to this application), minus the calendar year from the baseline period end date.
4	Indicate which impact report this application relates to (pick from the list in the form).
5	Identify which process developed by an approved benchmark administrator was used to produce the ratings report relating to this application (pick from the list in the

Question	Description
	form).
6	Tick this box to confirm that no aspect of the project has changed since either the project plan or the latest variation was approved.
7	Identify if a variation to the project was approved after the submission of a Variation Approval Form.

2.3.2. Lighting (if applicable)

Where lighting products were removed or installed as part of the project, the old equipment must have been appropriately decommissioned and the new equipment should be the exact brand and model you told us about in the scoping and project plan applications or any relevant approved variations. Ignore this question if lighting equipment was not installed or removed as part of this project.

Question	Description
8	<p>Both declarations must be read, understood and complied with.</p> <p>All lighting products and control gear which were removed or bypassed as part of the project must have been appropriately decommissioned. This can be a geo-tagged photograph of decommissioned equipment showing brand and model label, along with a recycling receipt.</p> <p>Any mercury containing lighting product(s) replaced as part of the installation must be disposed of in a class of waste disposal facility as determined by the commission.</p> <p>Any lighting product(s) replaced as part of the installation must not have been installed for the purposes of being decommissioned as part of the project (i.e. the baseline environment must not be altered prior to the installation).</p> <p>Refer to the Building Based Lighting Upgrade Guide found at www.esc.vic.gov.au/building-based-lighting for further details on decommissioning.</p>

2.3.3. Energy sources

You must identify the energy sources affected by the project.

Question	Description
9	<p>List all the sources of energy which were affected by the project (tick all relevant boxes). Where an energy source is not listed, please use the text box to identify this energy source.</p> <p>Relevant energy sources are the different types of energy that are consumed or generated within the project measurement boundary.</p>

2.3.4. Greenhouse gas emissions

You must respond to the questions about greenhouse gas emissions relating to the project.

Question	Description
10	<p>Answer 'Yes' or 'No' to each of the questions. Where the project involved any instance of correcting for over-servicing, give details of why this was necessary in the text box.</p> <p>The purpose of PBA is not to reduce service levels unless there is clear evidence of over-servicing. If this is the case, you must provide a detailed statement giving justification for this reduction. Any justification must also have evidence verifying the statement.</p> <p>For example, for lighting projects, this evidence could be a detailed lux-level report prepared by a lighting expert (e.g. a Member or a Fellow of the Illuminating Engineering Society of Australia – MIES or FIES) showing over-servicing of lighting in the area in question.</p> <p>Use the text box to indicate the filename of any related documents which have been attached.</p>

2.3.5. Final project cost

You must declare the final project cost.

Question	Description
11	<p>Enter the final project cost. This cost should only include the activities relating to the achievement of abatement under the VEU program. Additional project activities unrelated to the program do not need to be included.</p>

2.3.6. Dates

You must provide the dates activities actually happened.

Question	Description
12	<p>Enter the baseline period start date, which is the first day covered by the benchmark rating report for the baseline period (before the project work has been carried out).</p>
13	<p>Enter the reporting period end date, which is the last day covered by the benchmark rating report for the reporting period (after the project work has been carried out).</p>
14	<p>The date that project works begin is important as the commission cannot approve plans where work has already started. Evidence clearly showing this start date must be provided.</p> <p>You must provide documentation showing the date that equipment was delivered,</p>

Question	Description
	<p>the date of the earliest final invoice (i.e. the final invoice for the first piece of equipment), or the date that installation/modifications took place as detailed in an installers invoice.</p> <p>If the project was commissioned on the same day as installation, a commissioning engineer's report may also have this date (generally for small projects – so if using a commissioning engineer's report we would need to see additional evidence that this was a one-day installation).</p> <p>We must be satisfied that this documentation verifies the commencement of project works. If the start date cannot be verified, alternative documentation must be provided.</p>
15	The date that the project works end is also important as this sets the dates for all subsequent reporting periods. This is the date project works were completed and brought back into service.

2.3.7. Baseline

You must provide an explanation for the baseline period.

Question	Description
16	Give details of why the baseline period was selected.

2.3.8. Benchmark rating reports and related documents

You must attach copies of the benchmark rating reports for both the baseline and reporting periods. These reports should include the corresponding data summary spreadsheets (which you will need to request from the benchmark rating assessor).

Question	Description
17	Attach the benchmark rating certificate, report and any other relevant documents (such as the rating data summary or hospital rating spreadsheet, as applicable) for the baseline period.
18	Attach the benchmark rating certificate, report and any other relevant documents (such as the rating data summary or hospital rating spreadsheet, as applicable) for the reporting period.
19	For the baseline, attach copies of documents which describe any on-site generation or sub-meters that exclude energy consumption, such as the benchmark rating tool data summary, hospital rating spreadsheet or other similar documents.
20	For the reporting period, attach copies of documents which describe any on-site generation or sub-meters that exclude energy consumption, such as the benchmark rating tool data summary, hospital rating spreadsheet or other similar documents.

2.3.9. Abatement

You must provide details of the abatement calculations and explain how the final abatement figure was arrived at.

Question	Description
21-25	<p>This section requires you to provide all the information, documentation, descriptions, modeling and data which explains and justifies the abatement calculations. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• description on how calculations have been undertaken (including written justification on steps, assumptions made and decisions taken)• description and approach taken to counted savings, negative savings and unaccounted savings• detailed calculations using Equations 1-5 of the benchmark rating specifications (as relevant)• description of any renewable energy systems installed at the project site (between the end of the baseline period and the end of the reporting period) and how these have been dealt with in the calculations• description of arrangements between certificates claimed under the VEU program and any other prescribed greenhouse gas scheme, where applicable• description of any different metering arrangements between this reporting period and the baseline period.
26	Number of VEECs calculated using Equation 1 of the benchmark rating specifications.

2.3.10. Reverse calculator

APs must attach a copy of the reverse calculator in spreadsheet form and answer questions relating to this.

Question	Description
27	<p>Identify if the building has undergone a renovation or had an upgrade that required planning approval (e.g. from the local council) in the period between the start of the baseline period and the end of the reporting period (for this impact report).</p> <p>Where this is the case, identify the benchmark rating from the most recent ratings report ending prior to when planning approval was issued; and identify any minimum rating required under the planning requirements of the local government area that applies to the building.</p>
28	Attach the reverse calculator in spreadsheet form.
29	Confirm that the breakdown of all fuels input into the reverse calculator have been completed in units of MWh.

2.3.11. Conflict of interest

You must provide details of any conflict of interest, real or perceived. This is done by submitting a Conflict of Interest Declaration for any relevant rating periods. This document can be found at www.esc.vic.gov.au/benchmark-rating.

Question	Description
30	Give the name and organisation of the assessor who provided the benchmark rating for the baseline period.
31	Give the name and organisation of the assessor who provided the benchmark rating for the reporting period.
32	Indicate if any of these assessors are also the AP, energy consumer, site owner, site operator, or if they have had any other involvement with the site or project.
33	Please provide a Conflict of Interest Declaration outlining any (actual or perceived) conflicts of interest and how they will be managed. These forms should be completed and signed by the assessor of the rating reports (if the same assessor carried out both baseline and reporting assessments, they only need to provide one form).

2.3.12. VEEC assignment form

An authorised representative of the energy consumer must assign rights to create certificates to you, the AP. This still must be completed even if you are also the energy consumer.

Question	Description
34	The VEEC Assignment Form must be completed and signed by the energy consumer and AP. This only needs to happen for the first impact report.

2.3.13. Application format

You must provide details of any templates you have used instead of the standard Impact Report Approval Form.

Question	Description
35	Selecting 'Yes' in answer to this question means that only questions, declarations and signatures from this point onwards need to be provided. You must have had your template approved by us prior to selecting 'Yes'. Please contact us via VEU Support at veu@esc.vic.gov.au to discuss your proposed template. Attach completed approved template document including all related file attachments. Give the project name that this application refers to. The text must be an exact match for the project name given in the corresponding scoping and project plan

Question	Description
	applications for the same project.

2.3.14. Declaration

You must agree with and certify that you have understood and will comply with the declarations listed in the Impact Report Approval Form.

Question	Description
36	All declarations must be read, understood and complied with. Your signature and that of an appropriate witness must certify these statements.

Document version control

Version	Amendments made	Date published
V1.0	First release following the amendment of the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (Project-Based Activities) Regulations 2017 on 11 December 2018.	11 December 2018
V1.1	Clarified registration of interest and insurance. Added new lighting requirements. Corrected minor errors and adjusted document structure in Section 2	12 September 2019
V1.2	Changed 'activity start date' and 'activity end date' terminology.	11 February 2021