Top Employers
Certification Guide

The official guide to the Top Employers Certification Programme

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Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Introduction

Congratulations on your participation in the Top Employer Certification Programme!

The Top Employers Institute globally certifies excellence in the conditions that employers create for their people. Optimal employee conditions ensure that people develop themselves personally and professionally. This in turn enables companies to grow and to develop.

We are committed to the integrity of the Top Employers Certification and the quality of your experience as a participant. For the last 20 years, the Top Employers Institute has developed its proprietary research methodology. The methodology used to certify Top Employers is a constantly evolving process that reflects global trends in the conditions that employers create for their people. Over the years the processes we’ve put in place and the deliverables we offer participating organisations have developed and grown. This is to ensure we provide relevant tools and maximum value to companies that participate in the Certification Programme.

Our mandate is to Develop. Always. This permeates everything that we do, from the evolution of our methodology, to the inspiration and value that we offer our participants and the personal development of our own employees. We collaborate with partners, industry experts, participants and our employees to ensure continuous, quality development.

This guide provides information into the Certification Programme and your overall participation in the Top Employers Certification Programme. Please read the following sections to familiarise yourself with our processes and terminology, as well as the ‘do’s and don’ts’. We recommended that you use this document to address and brief the team responsible for taking your organisation through the Certification Programme, and who will complete the different stages in the Top Employers Certification Programme. As we are there to support you, do not hesitate to contact us should you have any queries as you move through the different stages of the Certification Programme.

Hans Rothweiler
Member of the Executive Board
Certification, Research and Innovation
Top Employers Institute
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# Chapter 1

## CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME

### 1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME

Our Certification Programme consists of Six Stages. Each of these stages will be elaborated in the next sections in terms of general overview, key steps and outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1: HR Best Practices Survey</strong></td>
<td>Completion of the HR Best Practices Survey by the participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2: Validation</strong></td>
<td>Validation of the quality of the provided answers by Top Employers Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 3: Audit</strong></td>
<td>Top Employers Institute’s procedures, processes, systems and data are audited by an external auditing company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 4: Certification Process</strong></td>
<td>Calculate final scores and grant Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 5: Final Certification</strong></td>
<td>Communication of Certification outcomes to participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 6: Feedback and Benchmark Reports</strong></td>
<td>Insights and Feedback Session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 THE STAGES OF THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME EXPLAINED

Stage 1: HR Best Practices Survey

Introduction

The survey is the method by which we research your employee conditions (these include your HR policies, practices and employee offerings). It consists of 100 questions. There are some questions that require you to provide supporting documentation in order to substantiate your answers (for further details, please see the Rationale & Glossary.) Within the survey we differentiate between rating questions and benchmark questions. Your end score will only be based on rating questions; benchmark questions are only used for benchmark purposes.

Key Steps

- Kick-off session
- Completion of the survey by participant
- Final submission of the survey

Outcome

- Complete filled-in survey
Stage 2: Validation

Introduction

The purpose of Validation is to ensure that questions and answer options in the survey have been interpreted correctly and potential errors or ambiguities are proactively identified and rectified.

This stage ensures that your answers to the survey accurately reflect your organisation’s employee conditions (HR policies, practices and employee offerings). The Validation consist of the following four steps.

Key Steps

- Document Validation: We will check if the uploaded documents (submitted through the online survey) can be considered as accurate proof for the selected answer options. During this process, we may request you to send additional documents or evidence. This step is only relevant for first year participants as previous years’ participants do not need to upload documents to the survey tool.

- Survey Review: After your submission of the survey, we will use both manual and automated systems to review the surveys. The analyses undertaken will assess outliers, consistency, highly mature practices, scoring questions, year-on-year changes, numeric answers and open answers submitted in the ‘other’ free text boxes.

- Validation Session: We will generate a ‘key findings document’ based on the assessment of your submission and supporting documentation. You will be contacted by us to schedule this Validation Session. The Validation Session can be a Call/Webinar or an On-Site Validation, depending on the year of participation and/or our findings. In order for you to prepare for the Session, an agenda and the key findings document will be sent to the participant prior to the Session. Based on the outcome of the Validation Session we may request supporting documentation.

- Final Validation: Once all results are in, we review all participations and scores. This may necessitate final checks and you could be asked to answer additional questions or provide further supporting documentation.

Outcome

- Validated – and potentially adjusted – survey
Stage 3: Audit

Introduction

After the Validation stage has been completed and the final surveys are submitted for all participating companies, the Audit by a third party auditor takes place.

The Audit provides assurance to the Top Employers Institute and the companies participating in the survey that the prescribed procedures were followed throughout the research. The auditor focuses on the integrity of the Top Employers procedures, processes, systems and data. The aim of the audit is to enhance the credibility of the research conducted by the Top Employers Institute.

The Audit time frame is two weeks.

The Audit Report is submitted by the external auditor and signed off by the Top Employers Institute’s Headquarters.

Key Steps

- Third party audit
- Review of outcomes by Top Employers Institute

Outcome

- Ensured integrity of Top Employers procedures, processes, systems and data
Stage 4: Certification Process

Introduction

In order to be certified as a Top Employer, participants are required to obtain 60 per cent of the maximum score in the Certification Programme. For Vertical Certification Programmes the Certification Cut-Off is relative as participants need to obtain 60 per cent of the highest scoring organisation within the Certification Programme.

The final report of certified and non-certified companies is generated by the Top Employers Institute’s Headquarters determining which participants made the Certification Cut-Off. The results are communicated to participating organisations and placed under local embargo until the Certification is officially announced. During the embargo period you may prepare for the announcement and inform key stakeholders, but you may not communicate your status as a Top Employer.

Your Top Employers Account Manager/Research Project Manager will hold a Certification Call with you to explain the details of the process in the weeks prior to the Certification announcement. You will be asked to supply information (logo and information about your organisation) in order to complete your online profile featured on our global website www.top-employers.com.

Key Steps

- Determine final scoring of participants in programme
- Initial communication of outcomes to participants (under embargo)
- Certification Call
- Completion of online profile by participant

Outcome

- Determining final scoring and eligibility for certification of participants
Stage 5: Final Certification

Introduction

The Annual Certification Dinner marks the official awarding of the Certification and the Certification Seal. The aim of the Certification Dinner is to celebrate the Certification with other HR teams or executives of Top Employers.

Should your company be certified, you will receive:
- Two seats at your Certification Dinner
- A glass Award with your name engraved on it
- A Certificate – a signed document of Certification
- An electronic version of the Certification Seal to communicate your Top Employer status

Your Certification as a Top Employer is valid for one year.

All certified companies are featured on the Top Employers website (www.top-employers.com) with an individual company profile. This includes content from the research that has been agreed upon prior to certification.

You may publicly announce your company’s Certification on a certain date, depending on the embargo period of your programme. This date will be shared with you during the kick-off session.

Key Steps

- Certification Dinner
- Communication of status via media partnership
- Launch of certified companies through Top Employers website

Outcome

- Final Certification of participants
Introduction

During the Certification Process, your Account Manager/Research Project Manager has contacted you to plan a 90-minute Feedback Session with you and the relevant executives. During this time, we will unpack the Certification Programme results and benchmark findings. We highly recommend that the HR leadership and executives of the organisation attend the Feedback Session.

The Feedback Session will take you through an overview of your results and show you how to use your Feedback and Benchmark Report, which contains your full results and comparisons with other Top Employers.

All participating companies (whether certified or not) in the year of participation are entitled to deliverables that include the following:

- Feedback Session
- Feedback Report
- Benchmark Report

Your Feedback Report is a summary of your performance, showing a snapshot of your results, and comparisons with other Top Employers. Your Benchmark Report contains your full set of results in the survey and compares you with other Top Employers.

Other benchmarks within industries or with a self-selected benchmark group are available on request.

Should your company be certified, the Feedback and Benchmark Reports will be made available to you once the Feedback Session has been conducted. This can be accessed and downloaded from your personalised Top Employers Resource Centre.

Key Steps

- Feedback Session
- Provide access to Feedback and Benchmark Reports through Resource Centre

Outcome

- Understanding of how to interpret the results of within the Feedback and Benchmark Report

NOTE: We do not publicise any details about companies that do not gain the Certification.
Chapter 2

HR BEST PRACTICES SURVEY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The scope of our Certification focuses on the conditions that employers create for their employees. Our research focuses on HR policies, practices and employee offerings. The certification centres around fact-based research. Please note that the research does not measure employee engagement or satisfaction.

2.2 SCOPE AND TOPICS

The following topics are covered within the HR Best Practices Survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Number of questions</th>
<th>Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Talent Strategy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Workforce Planning</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. On-boarding</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Learning &amp; Development</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Performance Management</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Leadership Development</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Career and Succession Management</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Compensation and Benefits</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Culture</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Approx 100</strong></td>
<td><strong>Approx 600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY

In order for an HR practice or policy to be effective it requires strategy, ownership, training, communication, monitoring and support. The questions per topic are structured in a similar way*:

|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
Within the ‘Culture’ topic, certain areas are combined and structured slightly differently because the focus is more on practices. The following elements are included in the ‘Culture’ topic: Values; Direction and Communication; Engagement; Employee Value Proposition; Diversity; Connecting; Well-Being; Ethics and Integrity; Corporate Social Responsibility; and Exit Management.

*Due to the different nature of each of the topics, in some cases not all the question categories are applicable (see Figure 1).

2.4 SCORING

The Certification is based on a universal standard. This means HR policies, practices and employee offerings covered in the HR Best Practices Survey can be applied globally. The underlying scoring model is formulated by the Top Employers Institute’s Headquarters and synchronised in all countries. Questions and answer options within the survey have been rated at a certain level based on the maturity and importance of the practice itself. Approximately 80 per cent of the questions in the survey are scored. Certain questions are asked for benchmarking purposes to provide our participants with insight into their HR policies, practices and employee conditions.

The Top Employers Institute’s research and positioning focuses on the development of talent. As such, within the ‘Compensation and Benefits’ topic, salaries, bonuses, pensions and secondary benefits will not be scored. We believe these elements should be out of scope for Certification purposes due to the fact that there are various differences per country in terms of regulations and industry. We do recognise that these benefits are important for many employees. The subjects are therefore included in our survey but will only be used for benchmarking purposes.

The scoring model and weighting of questions and answer options is reviewed and updated annually. One reason for this is the fact that we update our survey annually by adding and/or removing answer options. This means that the relative scoring of certain questions and answer options can change. Moreover, we update the scoring model to correct for the gradual increase in improvement and to ensure that the relative value of the certification will not erode over the years. As a result of these scoring updates, comparing scores year-on-year should be done with caution.

2.5 SUPPORTING MATERIAL

Supporting documents have been included to help you while you complete the survey:

1. Certification Guide: The Certification Guide (this document) provides you with all the details of the Top Employers Certification Programme, including entry criteria, the process and background on the survey.

2. Rationale & Glossary: The Rationale accompanies the survey and provides information or instructions about each question in the survey. The Glossary explains certain terminology in the survey.
2.6 TIPS AND GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY

Instructions – General:

Before you commence, you should take time to read the instructions carefully. They are in place to assist you and make this process as simple as possible. If you run into any technical problems, please contact us immediately.

- For security reasons you will be issued with one set of user credentials (a login code and password) for the online survey. If you choose to have more than one person working on the survey, we encourage you to have one person carefully check the final survey before it is submitted.

- When you start the HR Best Practices Survey you are required to accept the ‘Declaration of Truthfulness’.

- We suggest that you first sign into the online survey, familiarise yourself with the questions and how to navigate before actually starting it. You can save and logout at any time.

Instructions – For completing the survey

- If you have participated in the previous year’s Certification Programme, some of the answers will be pre-filled – this is for your convenience and saves time when completing the survey. Please note that not all answers will be pre-filled. You always have to ensure that the provided answer is still correct and valid before submission.

- You are required to answer all questions. Please do not enter ‘dummy’ values. If there are any questions that may be challenging to complete, or where you have organisational policies that will affect your ability to answer, please discuss or inform us of this.

- If you tick a box, that implies that the related HR policies or practices have been implemented and communicated to staff prior to you answering the survey.

- Throughout the survey we distinguish the following job levels: Executive, Management, Professionals, Support, Blue collar and administration and other staff. For these questions we ask you to specify your answers to the relevant job levels. In other questions we specifically ask whether a practice is applicable to a specific group of employees, like managers, leaders or in some cases even all employees. In this case you can only include the practices when they are applicable to 100% of the specified target group. For those questions where a specific target group is not defined, the practices you tick should be applicable to at least 80% of your employees.

- Some questions include an ‘other’ answer option. Use this to list alternative practices or programmes that provide added value within the context of the question. Please make sure you include adequate details when entering free text into any ‘other’ answer box. Please do not use the ‘other’ answer option to provide explanations on the options you have selected for a particular question or to state why you are unable to provide an answer for a certain question.

Top Tips:

1. Nominate one person to centrally manage the survey. You will need to involve relevant people from the departments or functions that the research covers. Experts in specific areas or business units will be best able to answer these questions.

2. Have a second person check the survey before you submit it, preferably an HR senior executive or one of the business leaders.

3. Keep the ‘Validation’ in mind when completing the questions. If you were asked to provide additional proof for a question, what would you submit as evidence?
You should always save your interim survey submission to make sure you don’t lose any answers given. You only can save per group of questions (it’s mandatory to complete the whole set). It is also possible to print interim results for your own reference.

In case the question has a document upload button, you can upload a maximum of five documents as ‘proof’ of the selected answer options.

When answering the questions in the HR Best Practices Survey, please take note to include the RELEVANT research data from your last financial year, taking into account all relevant entities.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

1. Should you require any changes to your survey once it has been submitted, you will need to submit this request to us in writing. Changes are made by the Top Employers Institute on behalf of the participant, and a final copy of your survey will be sent to you.

2. Should the request for supporting document/s or other evidence not be supplied by the participant, The Top Employers Institute reserves the right to change an answer/s to ‘Not Applicable’ and zero points will be allocated accordingly.

3. Participants have five working days in which to respond to the key findings document received as discussed in either the Validation Call or On-Site Validation. If no response is received from the participant, the survey will be passed on in its current state for the audit and scoring process.

4. You will receive written confirmation if any adjustments are made to their submission, as well as a final copy of the survey for their records.
3.1 MINIMUM ENTRY CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION

In order for an organisation to participate in the Top Employers Certification Programme the following minimum entry criteria need to be met:

- National companies must have a minimum of 250 employees
- Multinational companies must have a minimum of 2,500 employees worldwide

You can participate as a single entry or as a group participant. In order to apply for group participation you need to have similar employee conditions in place for all entities regarding the organisation’s talent strategy, leadership programme, compensation and benefits policy, and competency framework.

3.2 CERTIFICATION

Permission to use the Certification Seal and title is valid for one year and commences the day after the Certification Dinner or any other specific date communicated for a specific country or continent.

1. Scope of Use: the Certification can be applied to any marketing or other collateral of the certified company.
2. Renewal: The research is conducted annually. If the participant meets the required minimum standard for Certification as a Top Employer on an annual basis, the Certification will be renewed. A new and modified Certification Seal is provided to the participant for each year that the Certification is achieved.

3.3 TOP SCORE

The Top Employers Certification Programme in each country or continent has a ‘Top Score’ component. However, the full list of Top Employers (ranking from number 1 to the last top performer) will not be made public.

This ranking is based on the total achieved score of all certified organisations within your country.

The size of the Certification Programme determines the nature of the ranking component:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Certified Top Employers within Certification Programme</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Certified Top Employers within Certification Programme</td>
<td>Top 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-30</td>
<td>Certified Top Employers within Certification Programme</td>
<td>Top 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60</td>
<td>Certified Top Employers within Certification Programme</td>
<td>Top 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>Certified Top Employers within Certification Programme</td>
<td>Top 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101+</td>
<td>Certified Top Employers within Certification Programme</td>
<td>Top 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the continental programmes a ranking will also be applied. The number of participants ranked per continent or region follows the same logic as above.

For continental participants the ranking is based on the average score of the highest-scoring local participants for that participant within that continent. For each continental programme the average score is calculated based on a fixed number of local organisations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent / Region</th>
<th>Number of countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia Pacific</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East Region</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 CONTINENTAL CERTIFICATION

Your company may choose to participate in the Continental Top Employers Programme.

In order to apply for Continental Certification, your company must enter a minimum number of countries on the same continent. This means you must join and go through the Certification Programme in each country during the same research period. You may enter as many countries as you wish beyond the minimum.

To gain the Continental Top Employers status, you must achieve the Certification in the minimum number of countries. If this is achieved your organisation and each certified participant may carry the Continental Certification as well as the Certification in each specific country.

The minimum requirements for Continental Certification are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continental Programme</th>
<th>Number of countries</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Turkey and Cyprus are included in Top Employers Europe and Top Employers Middle East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Azerbaijan are included in Top Employers Europe and Top Employers Asia Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia Pacific</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• All countries east and north of Iran are part of Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Asia Pacific includes Oceania (primarily Australia and New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• No countries in North/Central America are included in the Top Employers Asia Pacific Certifica-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tion (primarily Australia and New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Azerbaijan are included in Top Employers Africa Pacific and Top Employers Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>• The Middle East is not a part of our Top Employers Africa Certification Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Egypt is included in Top Employers Africa and Top Employers Middle East</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.5 CRITERIA FOR CERTIFICATION AS A TOP EMPLOYER GLOBAL

Your company may choose to participate in the Global Top Employers Programme.

To gain the global Top Employers status, you must achieve Certification in the minimum number of countries and/or continents. If this is achieved your organisation and each certified participant may carry the Global Certification as well as the Certification in each specific country.

The minimum requirements for Global Certification are as follows:

**Option 1:**
- Certification as a continental Top Employer in at least three regions, AND
- Certification in at least 25 countries, AND
- Certification in the country where the global headquarters are based

**Option 2:**
- Certification as a continental Top Employer in at least four regions, AND
- Certification in at least 20 countries, AND
- Certification in the country where the global headquarters are based

**Option 3:**
- Certification in at least 20 countries, of which:
  - At least 12 (80%) of the 15 countries with the highest GDP (source UN, IMF): United States, China, Japan, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Brazil, Russia, Italy, India, Canada, Australia, Spain, Mexico, South Korea, AND
  - Certification in the country where the global headquarters are based

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle East Region</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The Middle East is not a part of our Top Employers Africa Certification Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Egypt is included in Top Employers Africa and Top Employers Middle East</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North America</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Certification must be achieved in three or more countries in North America (of which two are USA, Canada or Mexico)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All countries north of (and including) Panama are considered North America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All countries in Central America and the Caribbean are included in North America and Latin America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All countries south of the USA are considered Latin America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All countries in Central America (from Panama and further north) and the Caribbean are included in Latin America and North America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTICIPANT

4.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTICIPANT

Pre-Certification

- Each participant is responsible for answering the HR Best Practices Survey truthfully and accurately and for supplying evidence to support answers where relevant.
- Participants are responsible for the answers in the survey. Whereas the Top Employers Institute conducts the Validation, participants are responsible for ensuring that any answers and documents that have been submitted are correct.
- Participants are responsible for submitting their surveys and supporting documents within the timeframe set by the Top Employers Institute.
- Mandatory documents must be submitted with the survey. Additional documents requested during the Validation process must be provided within the required timeframe.
- Each participant must be available for their Validation Call and the On-site Validation within the timeframe set by the Top Employers Institute.

Post-Certification

- Upon being informed of successful Certification, each participant is responsible for submitting the materials that Top Employers Institute requires to create the participant’s online profile. This includes the profile text, logo and images. Failure to submit this within the specified timeframe may result in the delayed launch of your full profile on our website.
- You are responsible for informing us of your company’s attendance at our Certification Dinner, including any dietary requirements or special needs, by the deadline set by the Top Employers Institute.
- Being available for the Feedback Session, so that we can take you through your results.

Although not mandatory, we really do appreciate feedback from our participants because we are constantly growing and changing. Many of our best changes have come from the feedback and ideas submitted by our participants and we value this input. We issue an annual mini-survey to solicit feedback from all participants and appreciate you taking the time to fill this in.
4.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TOP EMPLOYERS INSTITUTE

Pre-Certification

- The Top Employers Institute is responsible for setting up each participant with their online survey and Certification Guide, as well as for providing reasonable support during the process of completing the survey. We are not responsible for ensuring that each participant answers truthfully and accurately, as outlined in section 4.1.

- We are responsible for providing support material/tools including the Certification Guide and the ‘Rationale & Glossary’ for each participant.

- We are responsible for ensuring that each participating company is given the opportunity to be included in the Validation process without any bias or discrimination.

- The Top Employers Institute’s Headquarters is responsible for final sign-off of all results after the Audit has taken place.

- The Top Employers Institute is responsible for deliverables as outlined in stage 6 of section 1.2.

- The Top Employers Institute’s Headquarters deals with disputes, complaints and appeals that cannot be solved at a country level.

4.3 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE TOP EMPLOYERS INSTITUTE

If you have any complaints about your results in the Top Employers Certification Programme, you can choose to go through an appeal process which is outlined in the Participation Contract. If you have any other complaints about our processes pertaining to how you have been treated or about any of our employees, we ask that you try to directly resolve these with your Account, Country Manager or Director of your respective territory. If you feel that the issue has still not been resolved, you may escalate your complaint to The Top Employers Institute Headquarters. For details please contact your Account Manager/Research Project Manager. Your situation will be assessed in order to provide an adequate balanced response.
**General Definitions**

- ‘Top Employers Institute’ refers to the legal entity within the group of companies of the Top Employers Institute that is named in the Participation Contract.

- ‘Top Employers’ refers to the annual Certification whereby companies gain the status of, and right to use, the status of being a Top Employer for the given year.

- ‘Participant’ refers to any organisation participating in the Top Employers programme.

- ‘Participation Form’ means the written signed participation contract entered into between the Top Employers Institute and the Participant.

- ‘Partners’ refers to individuals or organisations that we work closely with, formally or informally. This might be an industry expert, local advisor, media partner or service provider.

**Specific Definitions**

1. ‘Certification’ refers to the status awarded to participants who meet the Certification criteria.

2. ‘Methodology’ refers to the process and principles by which participating companies in the Certification Programme are assessed against predetermined standards.

3. ‘The survey’ or ‘HR Best Practices Survey’ refers to the online survey that each participant must complete in order for their employee conditions (HR policies, practices and employee offerings) to be assessed against our predetermined standards.

4. ‘The Programme’ refers to the Certification Programme which participating companies enter into when joining Top Employers, as described in this Certification Guide.

5. ‘Deliverables’ refers to the deliverables that the Top Employers Institute is contracted to provide to each participant after the research results have been produced, in accordance with stage 6 of section 1.2 of this Certification Guide. These deliverables may differ according to whether a participant has achieved the Certification or not, and they may also differ from country to country.

6. ‘Employee conditions’ refers to the circumstances that an employer has in place to create the conditions for a rewarding and satisfying experience for an employee, often specified as HR Policies and Practices and employee offerings.

7. ‘Validation’ refers to a process comprising two aspects: firstly to make sure that all questions
and answer options have been interpreted correctly and that potential errors or ambiguities are proactively corrected, and secondly to make sure your submission is supported by appropriate evidence. The nature of this evidence will vary according to the subject. Examples: employee handbooks, screen shots of intranet showing employee benefits, photograph of facility, policy document or process printout. For more details see section 1.2 under Stage 2 of this Certification Guide.

8. ‘Validation Call’ refers to the conversation with each individual participant to verify that all questions and answer options in the HR Best Practices Survey have been interpreted correctly and that potential errors or ambiguities are proactively removed.

9. ‘On-site Validation’ refers to a process where the above Validation is achieved on-site with a participant, rather than via call or webinar.

10. ‘Audit’ refers to the third party Audit of processes, methodology and system integrity conducted by an external auditor in each country together with Top Employers Institute Headquarters, each year. For more details see Stage 4 of section 1.2 of this Certification Guide.

11. ‘Certification Seal’ refers to the internationally recognisable symbol that each certified employer can use to show their Top Employers status for the year.

12. ‘Certification Period’ refers to the period that starts on the day of the Certification Dinner and will end on the date of the subsequent Certification Dinner, which will normally take place after approximately 12 months.

13. ‘Certification Cut-off’ refers to the minimum criteria for Certification. Minimum criteria for Certification is 60 per cent of the total score.

14. ‘Certification Notification’ refers to notification from a Top Employers Institute representative (Country Manager or Regional Director) that the participant has reached the Certification Cut-off and will therefore be certified. This Certification Notification is under embargo until the day after the Certification Dinner.

15. ‘Certification Call’. Following the Certification Notification, a call is planned between the Top Employers Account Manager and the participant to go through details of the process in the weeks prior to the Certification.

16. ‘Certification Dinner’ refers to the dinner that marks the official start of the Certification period. The participants that qualify for Certification receive their Certification at this festive evening.

17. ‘Feedback session’ refers to the individual session in which an organisation’s research results are discussed and insights are shared.

18. ‘Feedback Report’ refers to a summary of a company’s participation, providing a snap shot of the results in comparison to other certified Top Employers. After the Feedback Session, a copy of the Feedback Report will be uploaded in the individual Resource Centre for companies to access and download.

19. ‘Benchmark Report’ refers to the full results of a company’s survey, including comparisons with other Top Employers. After the Feedback Session, a copy of the Benchmark Report will be uploaded into the individual Resource Centre for the company to access or download.