The **"Star Awards"** is a Troop and Patrol management and self-evaluation system which is also used to recognise Troops and Patrols who are meeting the Aims of SCOUTS South Africa. The Scout methods used are the tools that make scouting different from any other youth organization. The **"Star Awards"** also serve as an essential tool for Scouters, DC's and Regional Support Team Members to identify areas where support is needed.

The Star Awards take account of the activities completed between **1 January and 31 December** every year.

Star Awards Timetable:

October of previous year	CoH , with TS agree on Star Award goals for the following year.
May/June	Regional Support Team Member Scouts (RSTM) or DC visits each Troop and assists with first self-assessment evaluation. Patrol Leaders and the Troop Scouter are guided on how to improve and overcome any challenges in order to achieve their goal for the year. These results are entered into the "1st Eval." column on the evaluation form.
July/August	Requirements discussed by DC with Troop Scouters at District Meeting
November/December	The second assessment is carried out by the RSTM or DC. Results are entered in the second column with comments and venues of hikes, etc. in the "comments and details" column.
7 December	Deadline for completed forms to be received from by the Regional Team Coordinator (RTC): Scout Programme. The RTC checks the forms, compiles summary spreadsheet and records the results for their strategic planning for the next year.
20 December	Deadline for completed spreadsheet along with comments from RTC SP to be received by the Chair: National Scout Programme.
31 December	Final Deadline for completed spreadsheet to be sent by the Chair: National Scout Programme to the National office for processing
Early February	National Office will issue Certificates in time for BP day parade. Badges will follow
LATE ENTRY TIMETABLE	**LATE ENTRIES** Awards will not be available for BP day parade
31 January	Late entry deadline for completed forms to be received by the Regional Team Coordinator (RTC): Scout Programme. The RTC checks the forms, compiles summary spreadsheet and records the results for his/her strategic planning for the next year.
15 February	Late entry deadline for completed spreadsheet along with comments from RTC SP to be received by the Chair: National Scout Programme.
25 February	Final Deadline for completed spreadsheet to be sent by the Chair: National Scout Programme to the National office for processing
March	National Office produces additional certificates and all Badges

Additional Information:

1. Every Troop and Patrol must complete an assessment, complete and submit the forms. Certificates are awarded to all Patrols and Troops who participate.
2. The Star awards system is very important for the progress of youth and Troops as well as for the monitoring, support and ongoing development of the Scout Programme. The DC or Regional Support Team Member Scouts (RSTM) should carry out each evaluation as part of their quarterly troop visits.
3. It is recommended that the same Scouter should assist with both evaluations.
4. The evaluation form should be used as a guide for ongoing discussion between the Patrol Leaders, Troop Scouters, the District, RSTM and the RTC Scout Programme about the Troop and Patrol goals and the support needed.
5. The comment column must be used for details of successes and growth areas, which should be discussed in detail with the Patrol Leaders and Troop Scouter.

6. As it stands currently, the Star Evaluations will not change due to COVID-19 (Level 1). However, if that situation changes and another lockdown happens or the lockdown level hinders Scout activity, the Star Evaluations will be reviewed and amended accordingly so that no Troop or Patrol is prejudiced.

Purpose and overview of the Star Award programme is to Assess and Review:
- The implementation of the Scout programme within the Troop and its Patrols;
- The methods for the implementation of the programme;
- The requirements and interpretation of the award at each level:
    o Patrol;
    o Troop.

How does SSA support the achievement of this award system at the Troop and Patrol level?
1. At the Troop action-planning meeting, use the Star Award evaluations form as a guide in deciding on activities and developing goals for the patrols and the Troop to achieve in the year ahead
2. The RSTM assigned to the Troop holds an action planning meeting with each Troop. If a RSTM is unavailable, a DC or Regional team member can help to ensure that every Troop has this meeting.
3. Ensuring that the RSTM or a designated volunteer completes and submits the completed form, by the deadline, for every Patrol & Troop.
4. Based on the outcome of the preliminary and final evaluations, each District should compile a list of action items that are needed to assist its Troops to improve in the following year. The Team should develop the list as a work plan for the District team in the months ahead. The progress should be reviewed monthly, at District Scouters councils and District team meetings, to ensure that the actions needed to provide support to the Troops are being implemented.
5. The goal should be to improve the quality of the Scout programme and help every Troop in the District to qualify for an Award each year.

Purpose of evaluation meeting (This can be used as an agenda for the meeting):
1. To review the Troop's goals, successes, and vision for the coming year.
2. To evaluate the Troop's progress toward achieving a Star Troop Award.
3. To identify any areas of improvement—leadership, programme, and membership.
4. To highlight any areas of support needed by the Troop
5. To determine any specific actions needed to assist with Troop improvements and determine who will follow up on those actions.
6. To schedule any necessary follow-up to monitor progress.

When to conduct the evaluation and feedback meetings:
1. After the RSTM / DC has visited the Troop for the first evaluation.
2. Annually, to review strengths and areas of improvement to help provide direction for needed support, preferably before the final review and prior to your annual planning for the year ahead.
3. As needed when a problem may be identified.

How should the arrangements for this meeting be set up?
1. The RSTM /DC speaks to the Troop Scouter during the first Troop visit to schedule the meeting date, time, and location.
2. The dialogue should include approaching the Troop Scouter after the meeting and requesting that a second meeting be set up with the Troop Scouter and Patrol Leaders.
3. Setting the meeting, preferably at the Troop meeting place.
4. Asking them to complete the Troop -assessment form prior to the meeting, it is their self-assessment.
5. Letting them know the visit will include a discussion of the self-assessment form and how the goals and vision of their Troop's programme can be supported

Why should only the PL's, Troop Scouters, RSTM/DC Attend
- It provides a small group to analyse the programme, their Troop's needs, and steps to be taken to help resolve any issues.
- It helps create a dialog between the Troop and the District. Once they meet and determine what needs to be done, others can be involved in helping to determine in which direction to go and any potential improvements that can be identified.

What preparation should be made prior to the action planning meeting?

Review the statistics of the Troop available from the District and the RSTM, especially to review:

- Star Award achievements from the previous year
- Outdoor programme participation
- Advancement reports
- Trained leadership status
- Participation in District and Regional events
- Attendance register
- Review the Troop self-assessment form during the visit to determine areas that "need improvement" and those the Troop felt that they "need help" with as you support the Troop during the year in the achievement of their goals.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Star Awards

Question 1— when will the star award assessment forms be available to Troops?

Answer— Troop forms will be available from your Regional headquarters by the end of March each year. They are also available to download from the national Web site, www.scouts.org.za

Question 2— how does a Troop start the evaluation for the Award?

Answer— Troop leadership will meet with their assigned DC or a RSTM to review the Troop's programme and establish programme objectives. This should be done prior to the start of the new calendar year.

Question 3— when will Troops & Patrols be able to qualify to earn the award?

Answer— All Patrols and Troops are eligible and should participate and earn a certificate. The dates are in the Timetable above.

Question 4— how will the criteria for the award be distributed and explained to all Regions, Districts, and Troop leadership?

Answer— National publish the requirements annually. The Regions and Districts must use all opportunities to explain the system. It should be an item on Troops, Districts, and Regional; training agendas; and Troop planning meetings.

Question 5— are there other ways to learn about the Star Award programme?

Answer— The programme explanation can be found on the Web site or in most Scout literature.

Question 6— when will the recognition items be available?

Answer— If the forms are received by the RTC Scout Programme by 6 December, the certificates will be available for BP Sunday. If the submissions are only submitted by end January, they will only be available about the end March.

Question 7— can I obtain an electronic version of the Star Awards form?

Answer— Yes, you can download it from the SCOUTS South Africa Web site

Question 8— what qualifies as an outdoor programme or activity per month?

Answer— Normal Troop meetings cannot be counted as "outdoor activities", even if they are held outdoors. For this section of the Star Awards, the term "Outdoor Activity" refers to activities held away from the usual meeting place, and which are not run at the usual meetings time. They could include, treasure hunts, wide games, etc.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE FORMS:

Star Troop

1. **Outdoors:** An outdoor adventure is an exciting, challenging experience, which is characterised by uncertainty of outcome and perceived risk. Examples could be a hike into new territory or a wide game away from the hall. These activities are not usual Scout meetings and are held away from the usual meeting place.

2. **Patrol System:** This is fundamental to Scouting. Every Patrol needs to be evaluated for a Patrol Star award. Each Patrol should participate and strive to achieve at least a Bronze award, while the Gold Award should be the goal.

3. **Troop Camping:** The nights do not have to be consecutive. More than 50% of the Troop should have attended. Overnight Troop hikes may be included if not used under the Outdoor section. The evaluator must comment on the variety of venues.

4. **Advancement:** Have earned Theme badges in their respective Advancement levels or have advanced this year to a new level; Membership, Traveller, Discoverer, First Class or Springbok.

5. **Interest Badges:** Earned this year, this includes Scoutcraft badges.

6. **Participation:** The Troop must be represented by at least 2 Patrol-sized groups at events.

7. **National Challenge**: Total number of SDG badges or Tide Turner awards earned by the Scouts in the evaluation year – this is to encourage participation in the SDG / Tide Turner challenge and build awareness of the Sustainable Development and/or Environmental Goals.

8. **Retention:** Members lost through reasons beyond the control of the Troop do not count against the Troop. (e.g. Transfers out of the District or becoming 18 years old)

9. **Recruitment:** this may include Cubs coming up and new recruits during the year.

10. **Number of Scouts:** Total number of registered scouts at the last day of November. Compare with census figures (there should not be a vast difference). Should be the same numbers as the top of evaluation sheet.

11. **Scouter Advancement:** Each Scouter must attend/complete some form of recognised and Scouting relevant training or workshops. This can be within the Scout Movement, or at University, Work, School, Private Tuition, etc.

12. **Troop Records:** Records to be simple and up to date.

13. **Communication:** A simple display and printed or easily accessible newsletter used to publicise achievements and promote events. As well as up to date notice of time of meeting for public to see. Email communication can be counted, provided that the evaluator can see proof of the regular emails.

14. **Court of Honour:** Attendance and minutes to be kept in a Court of Honour log book.

Star Patrol Notes

Creating Teams That Win

Successful teams are based on a number of essential group member behaviours. One of the keys to a group's success is its size. In Scouting, we learned much from the founder of Scouting.

Robert Baden-Powell wrote:

"The formation of the boys into Patrols of from six to eight and training them as separate units each under its own responsible leader is the key to a good Troop."

"The patrol system is not one method in which Scouting can be carried on. It is the only method."

Please take this quote in its context when this was written by BP, nowadays it refers to girls too.

Star Patrol Guidelines

1. **Patrol Jobs:** Jobs must be realistic, understood and functional and carried out during the year. These can include Patrol Leader, Assistant Patrol Leader, Scribe, Den keeper, Logbook keeper, Patrol Quartermaster, etc.

2. **Patrol Corners:** Where permanent dens or corners are not possible, a portable display is satisfactory.

3. **Attendance:** Must be recorded in the Patrol register

4. **Patrol Leader Advancement:** The number of Theme badges the PL has earned to date.

5. **PL training:** The PL must have attended either a recognised Leadership Training Course, (ie. LDC, PLTC or PLTU) or complete the Leadership requirements in the Personal Development Theme in their current advancement level.

6. **Assistant Patrol Leader Advancement:** The number of Theme badges the APL has earned to date.

7. **APL training:** The APL must have attended either a recognised Leadership Training Course, (ie. LDC or PLTC) or complete the Leadership requirements in the Personal Development Theme in their current advancement level.

8. **No.'s 3 and 4:** The number of Theme badges earned in the evaluation year.
9. **National Challenge**: Total number of SDG badges earned by the Patrol members in the evaluation year – this is to encourage participation in the National challenge and build awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals.
10. **Number of Scouts:** Total number of Scouts in the Patrol – this needs to be reflected in the attendance register.
11. **Patrol in Council:** Minutes of the meeting to be kept in a Patrol Logbook.
12. **Patrol Activities:** Must be recorded in the Patrol Logbook. PL was in charge. Defined as a gathering of a Patrol to carry out an activity as a patrol.
13. **Patrol Hikes:** Must be recorded in the Patrol Logbook. PL was in charge. Not necessarily overnight but at least 2 hours on the actual hike. Be defined as a gathering of a Patrol.
14. **Patrol Camps or overnight hikes**: Must be recorded in the Patrol Logbook. PL was in charge. At least overnight. If patrol exceeds 2 overnight hikes, then the extra ones may be credited to outdoor activities or Patrol Activities. Be defined as a gathering of a Patrol.
15. **Patrol Community Service:** Must be recorded in the Patrol Logbook. Although the period is defined by number of months, the service should be carried out at regular intervals and be meaningful to the community. A Springbok service project may be counted.

* Minimum patrol attendance at activities to qualify, must be either 4 Scouts out of a Patrol of 6, 5 Scouts out of a Patrol of 7, or 6 Scouts out of a Patrol of 8 Scouts.