

## **Accreditation requirements for Verification/Validation Bodies (VVB) and Inspection/Certification Bodies (CB)**

This document describes the requirements for a VVB/CB to become eligible and to maintain eligibility to conduct validations, verifications and inspections, certifications based on the standards owned by CSI.

An approved VVB/CB is eligible for verification and validation against the specified standards.

The approved VVB/CB will be published on the website of CSI. The VVB/CB shall offer services to operators only within the defined scope and only as long as their approval is valid.

### **Basic conditions for approval**

- All VVB/CB shall sign a contract with CSI before starting to work as an approved body.
- All approved VVB/CB shall comply with the requirements in this document. It is the sole decision of CSI to approve, suspend or cancel the approval status of any VVB/CB.
- All VVB/CB shall maintain a quality management system for ensuring consistent implementation and compliance with the requirements of CSI and its standards including the annexes of the standards. Double issuance of credits is not allowed, hence needs to be checked by VVB/CB.
- In case of changes in the standard or requirements of CSI the QM system shall be updated and an internal audit shall be performed to ensure the proper implementation of the changes.
- A VVB/CB shall be an entity registered under applicable national or international law and comply with the legal requirements in the countries in which it operates.
- Application to CSI shall be submitted in English and all documents related to the validation/verification and inspection/certification process should be available in English as well as the language of CSI is English.

### **Accreditations:**

A VVB/CB shall hold a valid accreditation for

- a) ISO 14064:3/ 17029 for Greenhouse gas activities and/or for
- b) ISO 17065 for product certification
- c) Inspections shall be carried out following the guidelines of ISO 19011

Other accreditations may be recognized over time.

If a VVB/CB loses one of the above mentioned accreditations, the approval for CSI standards will be discontinued immediately. It is the responsibility of the VVB/CB to inform CSI about changes in the accreditation status and the reasons for it.

### **Validity of CSI approval**

The validity of the approval has no defined end date, however CSI conducts an audit every year at the VVB/CB to monitor if all the requirements are kept.

## Steps of initial approval

1. Submission of the application for approval
2. Completeness check of the application documents by CSI
3. Desk review by CSI of the submitted documents (if needed requesting advice from the expert group or the scientific management board)
4. Final decision by CSI on approval or rejection of the application
5. In case of approval: issuing an endorsement certificate by CSI

## Documents to be submitted for initial approval as a VVB/CB:

See: Registration and application form (4000010EN)

## Maintaining approval of VVB/CB

The VVB/CB shall conform to the requirements of ISO standards mentioned above and all other CSI requirements relevant to the scope of approval.

The VVB/CB shall in line with ISO 17065 4.2 and 17029 submit its process description on the management of impartiality to CSI.

The VVB/CB shall in line with ISO 17065 4.6 and 17029 submit the price list related to CSI standards.

The VVB/CB and its personnel shall comply with the legal requirements in the countries in which it operates.

The VVB/CB shall perform at least once a year an internal audit on the processes related to CSI standards to make sure the those are followed. Non-conformities and root cause analysis shall be documented and corrective actions followed up in due time. Additionally witness audits and certification evaluations shall be conducted on a regular basis but at least every second year.

CSI can decide to make announced or unannounced audits to check the compliance to the requirements of the VVB/CB or can witness an inspection done by VVB/CB.

The VVB/CB shall ensure in its contract with the operators that CSI can get access to information, documentation, processing units and facilities at any time. CSI can request information from inspected/certified operators and also from the VVB/CB.

## **Modification, suspension or revocation of VVB/CB approval**

CSI might review, modify, suspend or revoke the approval of the VVB/CB at any time for good reason. During suspension or revocation, the VVB/CB may not continue to provide services to clients based on CSI standards or sign new contracts to conduct inspections or verifications. Within one month of suspension or revocation of the approval VVB/CB must inform the verified operations with a valid certificate that the VVB/CB has been suspended, their certifications will remain valid, the operation can continue to make claims under normal conditions and obligations that the suspension might lead to a change of VVB/CB for the client which might lead to a re-audit of the operator. The validity of certificates issued prior to the date of suspension of the VVB/CB is not affected unless CSI will decide otherwise.

An approved VVB/CB may request to voluntarily withdraw its approval for certain scope or as a whole or cancel its contract with CSI in writing. In this case the certificates of the certified operators will remain valid until further notice. It is the responsibility of the VVB/CB to inform the clients of the withdrawal and inform them how they can maintain their certification.

## **Resource requirements**

The VVB/CB shall employ or have access to a sufficient number of personnel to cover its operations related to CSI standards. The VVB/CB shall follow the requirements described in ISO 17029 chapter 4.3 & 7 and 17065 chapter 6.1 concerning different topics such as impartiality, confidentiality, competence and performance management and record keeping of the personnel etc. The VVB/CB shall have documented procedures and criteria for a) monitoring and measuring the performance of all persons involved, and b) identify training needs.

Verification/validation and inspection/certification personnel, irrespective of whether they are internal or external resources, shall be under the responsibility of the VVB/CB management.

For all approved scopes the VVB/CB shall have at least one approved inspector/certifier and one approved validator/verifier with the relevant competence. At least a four-eye principle shall be implemented for inspection and verification of CSI standards.

If VVB/CB uses external personnel, the rules of ISO 17029 chapter 7.4 and 17065 chapter 6.2 shall be applied.

If VVB/CB would like to outsource tasks to a third party, first CSI has to be informed about it and has to approve it.

VVB/CB in this case has to ensure that the subcontracted entity does not further outsource this function.

## **Competence requirements for inspectors/certifiers and validators/verifiers**

VVB/CB shall ensure that all inspectors/certifiers and validators/verifiers have the qualifications and competencies detailed below.

VVB's/CB's inspectors/certifiers and validators/verifiers shall follow guidance on auditing provided in ISO 19011.

The following skills and abilities are required to apply such knowledge:

### **Required skills of an auditor/ inspector:**

- Knowledge and experience of the applicable CSI standard and related documents
- Relevant language skills to communicate with the operator or use an independent translator.
- Regional experience and knowledge about the applicable rules and laws (especially concerning environmental and socio-economic matters) of the country of the operator
- Technical understanding and experience related to the relevant standard (e.g. calculation of GHG emission reductions, environmental impacts and monitoring requirements, measurement of emission reductions, C-sink etc.)
- Experience in auditing techniques and the ability to apply appropriate inspection principles, procedures and techniques
- The ability to verify the accuracy of collected information and be aware of the significance and appropriateness of evidence.
- The ability to understand the content of the appropriate standard and apply this knowledge during the inspection.
- Ability to prepare verification/inspection reports in high quality

### **Other requirements:**

- VVB/CB shall provide training about the relevant CSI standard(s) to its employees participating in validation, verification, inspection and certification and review process.
- Inspectors shall inspect the same client for a maximum of 6 consecutive years. The inspector must wait at least 1 inspection before he conducts the next inspection at the same client again.

## **Required skills of a reviewer/certifier**

A reviewer or certifier shall have auditing knowledge and the ability to apply them to perform validation or certification activities including:

- Data and system auditing techniques and methodologies;
- Risk assessment techniques and methodologies;
- Data and information sampling techniques and methodologies;
- Application of the concepts of materiality and level of assurance;
- Collecting of information through effective interviews, listening, observing and reviewing documents, records and data;
- Verification of the accuracy of collected information, evaluation of the sufficiency and appropriateness of gathered evidence to support findings and conclusions;
- Preparation of validation/verification or certification reports.

## **Trainings provided by CSI or its selected partners**

All verifiers/validators/reviewers/certifiers must participate in all mandatory trainings provided by CSI or its selected partner organizations before being approved.

All validators/verifiers/inspectors/certifiers must participate in the yearly further trainings provided by CSI. The VVB/CB will be notified whenever such trainings are available.

In order to maintain the CSI approval status for the validators/verifiers/inspectors/certifiers the proofs of the trainings and successful completion of the tests (at least 70% score) needs to be shown. If they score less than 70% the training needs to be repeated. There is a maximum of 3 attempts only. If a participant fails to pass the exam after 3 attempts, the VVB/CB shall contact CSI to agree on a training action plan for these individuals.

## **Monitoring of VVB/CB's performance and ensuring its competence**

CSI actively monitors the performance of the individual validators/verifiers/reviewers/certifiers by reviewing the performance on yearly audits of the VVB/CB including witness audits of the inspectors.

Serious or repeated problems with the VVB/CB might lead to the withdrawal of the approval of an individual or the VVB/CB.

## Requirements related to the inspection and verification processes

A VVB/CB shall implement the inspection and verification/validation process for CSI standards according to ISO 17065 before applying for the approval of CSI.

VVB/CB shall independently validate, verify, inspect and certify each operator according to the requirements written in the respective standard.

VVB/CB shall have a written legally binding agreement for provision of verification/validation and inspection activities with its clients (ISO 17065 4.1.2).

Prior to entering into a contract, VVB/CB shall check on the [Easy-Cert website](#) that the applicant is not already certified/validated/verified based on the standards of CSI. If the operator is already certified/validated/verified by another VVB/CB a transfer of validation/verification or inspection/certification related documents shall be initiated by the operator at the new VVB/CB because an operator cannot be certified/verified/validated by two VVB/CB at the same time. Where subunits apply for a certificate/verification/validation, VVB/CB shall sign a separate contract with the legal entities.

The operator shall accept additional or unannounced audits, from their VVB/CB and CSI.

The operator agrees to allow samples to be taken from their operation by CSI or a designated agent or the VVB/CB, when requested for the purposes of product authentication or conformity testing. The costs shall be charged to the client. The operator shall provide all necessary information to conduct an inspection (e.g. production or traceability records, invoices, bookkeeping etc.)

Any party wishing to use the CSI brands (e.g., EBC, WBC, Global C-Sink, etc.) and their trademarks and labels shall hold a license agreement with CSI. The VVB/CB shall verify if an applicant has used the trademarks/label without a license or sold products as certified prior to being certified and if needed raise a non-conformity and inform CSI about it.

As the official language of CSI is English the VVB/CB might be requested to translate reports and annexes related to validation/verification and inspection/certification into English.

Where applicable and available the inspection and certification process shall be followed in the software applications provided by CSI.

The inspection process consists of:

1. Review process before entering into a contractual relationship with the operator by checking:
  - a. the scope of the project,
  - b. the available human resources and their competences,
  - c. impartiality
  - d. regional and technical know-how of staff
  - e. timing
  - f. offer
2. When selecting the right person for the on-site inspection of the project the following needs to be considered:
  - a. the complexity of the project,
  - b. the risk level association with the project,

- c. the size and location of the facility
  - d. the type of field work
  - e. the language skills needed
  - f. the number of times an inspector has visited the same operator (maximum 6 times in a row)
3. Conducting inspection
- a. Preparation of the verification/inspection by studying the technical documents of the operator
  - b. Checking if the operator has identified and mitigated any potential environmental and social impacts/risks
  - c. Visit of the facility
  - d. Documentation of the findings and non-conformities in English language based on the checklist
  - e. Requesting corrective actions from the client and evaluating them
4. Technical review and issuance of certificate/ statements
- a. Review all documentation of inspection and findings as well as submitted corrective actions (note: major NCs need to be closed before issuing a certificate/statement)
  - b. Take the certification decision/ issue a verification statement and inform CSI

The process for managing complaints and appeals shall follow the ISO 17065 / 17029 standard.