

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 and verification assessments in support of the standards, guidelines and methodologies managed by CSI.

An approved VVB is eligible for verification and validation against the specified standards, guidelines and methodologies and optional in specified countries. An approved CB is eligible for inspection and certification against the specified standards, guidelines and methodologies and optional in specified countries.

The approved VVB/CB will be published on the CSI website stating the beginning of the approval, the validity, the status of the approval and the scopes and countries they are approved for. The VVB's/CB's shall only offer services to operators within these scopes and after having obtained their approval and as long as they are approved.

Basic conditions for approval

- All VVB/CB shall sign a contract for VVBs/IBCs with CSI before starting to work as 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 of the VVB's/CB's.
- All VVB/CB shall maintain a quality management system for ensuring consistent implementation and compliance with the requirements of CSI.
- In case of changes in the standard, guidelines, methodologies or requirements of CSI the QM system shall be updated and internal audits performed to ensure the functioning system for CSI.
- 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.

Accreditations:

A VVB/CB shall hold a valid accreditation for

- a) ISO 14065/ 17029 for Green house gas activities and 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 the CSI standards will be redrawn 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 is granted for 36 months from the date of approval. The VVB/CB can re-apply for approval. An application for re-approval shall be submitted no later than 3 months prior to the end of the approval period.

Approval Procedure

Steps to be followed for 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

Documents to be submitted for approval by a VVB/CB:

- a) Application form
- b) Declaration to commit to the CSI standards and principles
- c) Copy of the valid accreditation certificate for 14065/17029 and/or 17065 and a copy of the last audit reports from the accreditation body.
- d) Evidence confirming the legal status of the VVB/CB
- e) Evidence for liability insurance in place
- f) Organisational chart of the VVB/CB and lines of authority and responsibility and functions
- g) Evidence on mechanism for guarding impartiality and conflict of interest
- h) Demonstration of existing competence (e.g. CVs) relevant to the scopes of application
- i) List of auditors and verifiers with their CVs that will apply for approval
- j) List of subcontracted individuals and contractual relationship
- k) Payment confirmation for the application fee
- l) CSI might request additional information or documents during the desk review of the application

Maintaining and renewal of approval of VVB/CB

The VVB/CB shall conform to the requirements of the ISO 17065 system for the CSI standards, guidelines and methodology and all other CSI requirements relevant to the scope of approval.

The VVB/CB shall in line with ISO 17065 4.6 make available price lists and fee schedules for clients to CSI.

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

The VVB/CB shall perform at least a yearly internal audit on the processes and procedures of CSI standard to make sure the processes are followed. Non-conformities and root cause analysis found 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 quality of a VVB/CB or can witness an inspection done for VVB/CB.

The VVB/CB has to ensure with their contract with the operator that CSI can get access to information and documentation and to processing units and facilities at any time.

CSI can request information and from inspected and certified operations from the VVB/CB.

To submit the application of renewal of VVB/CB, the VVB/CB shall submit a new application. The same process is followed as for new applications.

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 cause. During suspension or revocation, the VVB/CB may not continue to provide services to client for CSI Standards or sign new contracts to conduct inspections or verifications. Within one month of suspension or revocation of the approval the 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 scopes or as a whole or cancel its contract with CSI in writing to CSI. In this case the certificates of the operators certified will remain valid until renewal is due. 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 the CSI schemes it wants to cover. The VVB/CB shall follow the requirements described in ISO 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 monitoring and measuring the performance of all persons involved, based on the frequency of their usage and the level of risk linked to their activities and identify training needs.

The VVB/CB shall have sufficient personnel resources with the necessary competence to cover its workload.

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 verifier/inspector and one approved validator/certifier with the relevant competence. At least a four eye principle shall be implemented for inspection and verification of the CSI standards, guidelines and methodologies.

If the VVB/CB uses external personnel, the rules of ISO 17065 Chapter 6.2 shall be applied.

If work is outsourced to a third party body CSI has to be informed about it and have given its approval before entering into any work relationship.
The VVB/CB in this case has to ensure that the subcontracted entity does not further outsource this function.

Competence requirements for verifiers/inspectors and validators/certifiers

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

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

The following skills are required and the ability to apply such knowledge:

Skills of the verifier/inspector:

- Knowledge and experience of the applicable CSI standard, guidelines, methodologies, rules and related documents
- Relevant language skills to communicate with the operator or use an independent translator.
- Regional experience and 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, guideline and methodology (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, guideline and methodology and apply this knowledge during the inspection.
- Demonstrate knowledge of correlation of the methodology and the climate
- VVB/CB training about the appropriate standard, guideline and/or methodology
- Inspectors shall inspect an individual client for a maximum of 6 consecutive years and appoint an alternative inspector in the seventh year. The inspector must wait at least 1 inspection before he conducts the next inspection at the same client again.

Skills of the validator/certifier

A validator 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;
- Collection of information through effective interviewing, 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 validation or certification findings and conclusions;
- Preparation of validation or certification reports.

Trainings by CSI or selected partners

All verifiers/inspectors and validators/certifiers have to participate in all mandatory trainings provided by CSI or his selected partner organizations before being approved.

All verifiers/inspectors and validators/certifiers have to 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 verifiers/inspectors and validators/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 to obtain the pass mark. If members fail to obtain the pass mark for a training course after 3 attempts, the VVB/CB shall contact CSI to agree on a training action plan for these individuals.

Monitoring of performance and ensuring competence

CSI does actively monitor the performance of the individual verifiers/inspectors and validators/certifiers by

- Reviewing the reports submitted to CSI
- Monitoring of the first verification/inspection reports and validations/certifications by a VVB/CB and newly approved employees.
- Review of the performance by audits of the VVB/CB or witness audits of the verifiers/inspectors on a regular basis.

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

Requirements for the inspection and verification process

A VVB/CB shall implement the inspection and verification process for the CSI standards, guidelines and methodologies according to ISO 17065.

The VVB/CB shall have a written legally-enforceable agreement for provision of verification and inspection activities with its clients, which may include the application form (ISO 17065 4.1.2).

Prior to entering into a contract, the VVB/CB shall check on www.easy-cert.com that the applicant is not already certified. If the operator is already certified a transfer of certificate has to be done as an operator can not be certified with 2 VVB/CB at the same time. Where 2 or more legal entities apply for a certificate, the VVB/CB shall sign a contract with all 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 agents, 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, World Climate, World Trace) 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.

The official language of CSI is English. The VVB/CB might be requested to translate reports and annexes into English.

Where applicable and available the inspection and certification process shall be followed in the software applications provided by CSI. All relevant data shall be uploaded in the system and validation and certification implemented directly in the system of CSI.

The VVB/CB shall inform the operator about the current version of the CSI standard, guideline, methodology and other requirements relevant to their scope of verification/inspection, the information that a license agreement will be required prior to use of the trademark or starting the verification/inspection process, the Guide on logo and trademark use of CSI. The VVB/CB shall guide the operator to the CSI website and tool to start the verification/inspection process.

The inspection and verification process consists of:

1. Review process before entering into a contractual relationship with the operator 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

- g. signing a license contract with CSI
- 2. Verification/inspection planning with staff with the correct approval and without conflicts of interest is chosen. Selecting the inspection and verification team for 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 the verification/inspection
 - a. Preparation of the verification/inspection by studying the technical documents of the operator
 - b. Onsite or online visit of the facility
 - c. Documentation of the findings and non-conformities in English language based on a checklist
 - d. Requesting Corrective Actions from the client and evaluate these
- 4. Technical review and issuance of certificate
 - a. Review all documentation of the verification/inspection and results related to the verification/inspection as well as submitted corrective actions (note: major NCs need to be closed before issuing a certificate)
 - b. Take the certification decision
 - c. Issue a certificate and inform the client and CSI about the result
 - d. Notify the operator about the decision taken and issue a certificate (based on ISO 17065 requirements chapter 7.7)

Any complaints or appeals from an operator shall be recorded by the VVB/CB in the client application CSI be notified on a regular basis. The process for managing complaints and appeals shall follow the ISO 17065 standard.