

Japan EPD Program by SuMPO

Requirements for Competence of System Certification Bodies

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Sustainable Management Promotion Organization

Revision history

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Preface

This document lists the requirements for organizations that certify systems built based on the requirements for system certification under the Japan EPD Program by SuMPO (the “Program”) operated and administered by Sustainable Management Promotion Organization (“SuMPO”). The requirements in this document will be revised in a timely and appropriate manner, through the efforts of this Program.

0.1 Introduction

In dissemination of this Program, it is necessary to ensure the reliability and transparency of the figures and labeling released to declaration users. It is also important to reduce the burden placed on businesses by the verification process as they conduct quantification, verification, and publication while maintaining reliability and transparency.

This program uses two methods for verification: the “product-by-product verification method” that each product an organization quantifies is then externally verified; and the “system certification method” that the organization’s internal system, incorporating quantification, verification, and publication, is then audited and certified by an external certification body, thereby cutting out the external verification stage (Figure 1 shows the structure and flow of verification and certification in this Program).

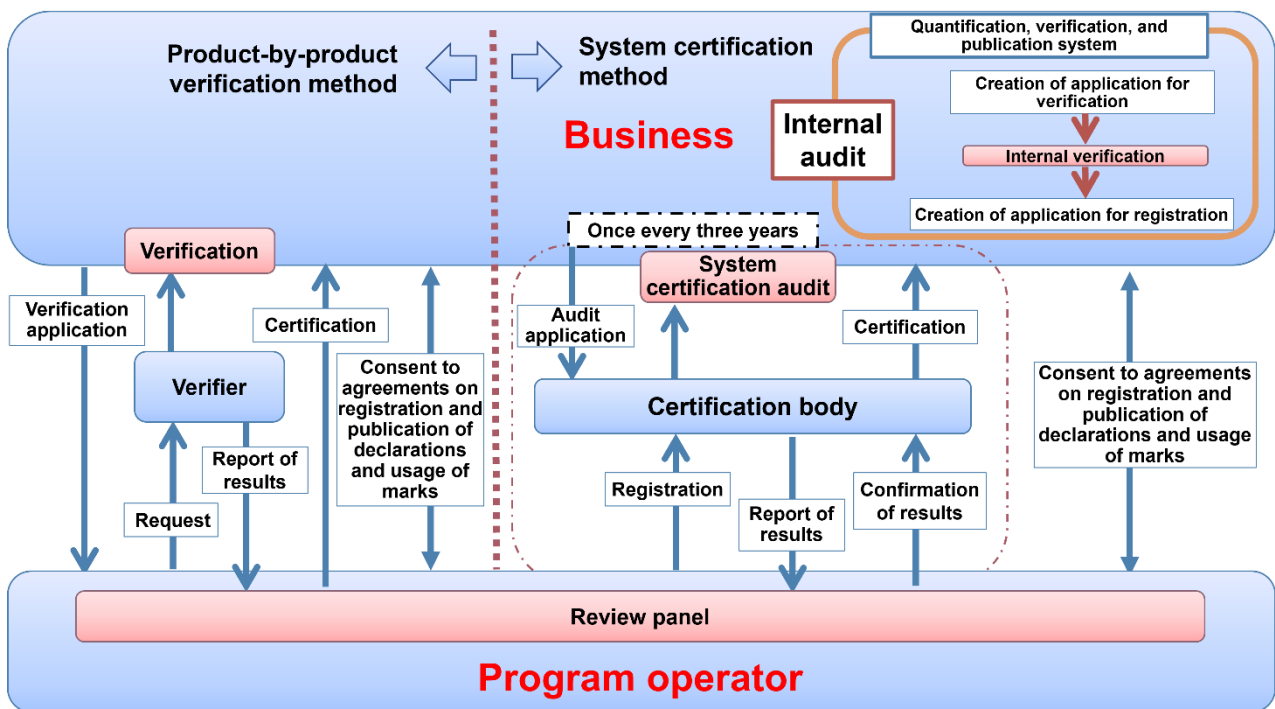


Figure 1. Structure and flow of verification/certification methods

This document lists the requirements concerning the competence of a body conducting certification with the system certification method.

0.2 Scope

The requirements in this document apply to bodies certifying systems that were built based on the requirements for system certification under this Program.

These requirements are not intended to establish standards or criteria based on laws or regulations.

0.3 Cited Standards

The documents listed below form part of these requirements when cited therein.

General Program Instructions

Quantification and Declaration Rules

Declaration and Registration Publication Rules

Verification Rules

System Certification Rules

Ethics and Confidentiality Rules

Objection/Complaint/Dispute Resolution Rules

System Certification Body Registration and Evaluation Rules

JIS Q 17021:2011 Conformity assessment - Requirements for organizations performing audits and certification of management system

JIS Q 14065 Greenhouse gases - Requirements for organizations performing greenhouse gas-related validation tests and verification for use in accreditation or other forms of approval

1. Principles

1.1 General

1.1.1

The principles listed here are the foundation for the specific requirements for performance and notation stipulated from section 2 onwards. These principles are not requirements, but should rather be applied as guidelines for decision-making necessitated by unforeseen circumstances.

1.1.2

The ultimate goal of certification is to confirm that a system has been built to satisfy rules and requirements, and to give credibility to declarations quantified and verified by organizations seeking certification. The certification only has value so far as the public trusts that it has been established by a third party through an audit that fairness and competence have been ensured.

1.1.3

Principles for establishing credibility include the following:

- Fairness
- Competence
- Responsibility
- Transparency
- Confidentiality
- Appropriate handling of complaints

1.2 Fairness

In order for a certification body to provide credible certifications, it must be impartial and also perceived as such. Unless specifically stipulated in these requirements, these procedures must not be used to prevent or prohibit inquiries, applications, or other access to the bodies in question by applicant organizations.

1.3 Competence

Competent personnel are required in order to provide credible certifications.

1.4 Responsibility

1.4.1

The organization applying for certification, and not the certification body, is responsible for ensuring conformity to system certification requirements.

1.4.2

The certification body is responsible for assessing sufficient objective evidence in order to give foundation to its decision on certification. The certification body is to award certification if the results of the audit indicate there is sufficient evidence of conformity. Otherwise, it is to withhold certification if there is insufficient evidence of conformity.

1.4.3

All audits are based on sampling from the applicant organization's system, and are therefore not guaranteed to conform perfectly to requirements.

1.5 Transparency

1.5.1

For a certification body to provide assurance of the completeness and credibility of its certifications, its auditing and certification processes along with timely and appropriate information concerning the certification status of all certified organizations must be disclosed and made publicly accessible. Transparency is the principle of ensuring that appropriate information is made accessible and disclosed.

1.5.2

To provide or maintain credibility in their certifications, the certification body should provide specified interested parties with the means to obtain non-confidential information regarding the results of a specific audit (for example, an audit conducted in response to a complaint), or disclose the information to them.

1.6 Confidentiality

In order for the certification body to have privileged access to the information they need to properly audit the conformance to system certification requirements, it is vital that they treat all proprietary information relating to applicant organizations as confidential.

1.7 Handling of Complaints

Those relying on certification should expect that their complaints will be investigated, and they should trust that when a complaint is found to be valid it will be managed appropriately and have suitable effort applied to its resolution. Handling complaints appropriately and effectively is an important aspect of protecting certification bodies, applicant organizations, and other certification users from mistakes, negligence, and other improper conduct. When complaints are properly managed, credibility is maintained in the certification process.

2. General Requirements

2.1 Clarification of Scope

The certification body must build, implement, and maintain an internal certification system in accordance with these requirements. In addition, the system certification body shall clarify the scope of the certification system that has been built.

Certification bodies carrying out system certification activities under this Program must register their structure and scope of activities with SuMPO.

The certification body should acquire the certifications ISO 17021 [JIS Q 17021], ISO 17025 [JIS Q 17025], ISO 14065 [JIS Q 14065], or Guide65 [JIS Q 0065].

2.2 Fairness Management

2.2.1

The certification body must make sure its services are available to all applicant organizations whose activities fall within the scope of business operations for their public initiatives under this Program. It must not impose any unfair financial or other conditions. Service must be provided equally regardless of the size of the provider, or membership to SuMPO or said body's group. In addition, certification applications must not be favored or disfavored based on the number of certificates previously issued.

2.2.2

Neither the certification body nor any department of the same corporation may offer or provide system consulting or internal system auditing to organizations applying for certification, or certified organizations. After providing consulting or an internal system audit, neither the system certification body nor any department of that organization may engage in any certification activity for the organizations involved for a period of 2 years.

3. Requirements for Operating Organizations

3.1 Clarification of Organizational Structure

The certification body must make clear the obligations, responsibilities, and authority of personnel involved in certification.

3.2 Administrative Manager

The certification body must appoint an administrative manager with responsibility and authority to carry out the following activities related to the Program:

- a) Supervision of operational policy
- b) Supervision of finance
- c) Development of certification services and schemes
- d) Performance of audit and certification, and appropriate response to complaints
- e) Decisions regarding certification
- f) Entry into contractual agreements
- g) Provision of appropriate resources for certification activities

3.3 Structure of Audit and Review Teams

The certification body must form an audit team and a review team. A person shall not serve as a member of both the audit team and the review team for a single certification case.

3.4 Audit team

3.4.1

The audit team shall be made up of one or several persons, and audit the system constructed by the applicant organization. Each case must have an audit team leader assigned from the audit team. The audit team leader must be a lead system auditor. The audit team must use the stage 1 audit to judge readiness for stage 2.

If they judge that the stage 2 audit may proceed, that audit must confirm the points listed below. It must also clearly describe the audit process.

- a) Suitability of the System Scope
- b) Compliance with System Requirements
- c) Validity of the Declaration, based on verification of the declaration's quantification results and what is displayed therein.

The audit team must create separate audit results reports after completing the stage 1 and the stage 2 audits respectively.

3.4.2

The audit team leader must communicate with the person in charge of the application prior to conducting an audit. Their communication should cover the following:

- a) Confirmation of the audit date
- b) Confirmation of the audit location
- c) Explanation the team conducting the audit
- d) Confirmation of necessary documents for the audit
- e) Judgement on whether the audit can proceed

3.5 Review Team

The review team should consist of around three members. They must review the audit team's results. Their review must confirm the points listed below. It must also clearly describe the review process.

- a) Validity of the audit team's process
- b) Validity of the audit team's results

After completing the review, the review team must create a report on the audit review results.

4. Requirements for Resources

4.1 General Considerations

The certification body must have processes to ensure competence of all personnel. The certification body must specify the competencies required for each area of expertise, and their respective functions in the certification process. There must also be a process in place to assess competency.

4.2 Competence of the Audit Team

Members of the audit team must all be sufficiently competent to satisfy "JC-02 Requirements for Competence of System Certification Auditors", specified separately.

4.3 Competence of Review Team

The review team must possess the following capabilities:

- a) Knowledge of this Program
- b) Knowledge of LCA including ISO 14040 and ISO 14044

- c) Knowledge of management systems including ISO 9001 or ISO 14001
- d) Knowledge of certification procedure

4.4 Management of Personnel

The certification body must keep track of the qualifications, education and training, experience, affiliations, professional status and competence of all personnel involved in the Program. For each audit, the certification body must confirm the competence of all personnel and assign their roles.

4.5 Education and Training of Personnel

The certification body must hold at least one education and training session a year on knowledge of the Program required for auditing.

4.6 Outsourcing

The certification body must have a process that clearly defines conditions for when outsourcing (subcontracting another organization to provide part of the certification process on behalf of the certification body) may be used. The certification body must enter into a legally binding agreement covering various arrangements including confidentiality and conflicts of interest with each of its outsourced service providers.

5. Requirements for Information

5.1 Publicly Accessible Information

The certification body must make information relevant to the provision of the audit publicly accessible, or else provide it when requested to do so by the applicant organization. This information must include the period of validity, scope of certification, and information on certified PCRs.

5.2 Certificates

The certification body must provide certification documentation to the certified organization. This documentation must contain the following information:

- a) Name of the certification body
- b) Address of the certification body
- c) Date of certification
- d) Validity period of the certification
- e) Information on the system's scope for certification (target product groups and organizations)
- f) Kinds of declarations covered
- g) In the case of an extended scheme certification, a statement to that effect
- h) System certification number

5.3 Confidentiality

By a legally binding agreement, the certification body shall have policies and arrangements to protect confidential information obtained or generated during certification process at all levels of operations (including subcontracted individuals and organizations carrying out certification on

behalf of the committees and the certification body).

5.4 Management of Documents

The certification body must retain documents concerning the certification of an applicant or a certified organization in either physical or electronic form for a minimum of 5 years after issuance of certification documentation.

6. Requirements for Process

6.1 General Requirements

The certification body must assess and determine whether the application from an applicant organization is ready for audit. The assessment must consider the following conditions:

- a) Clarity of the scope (target product groups and organizations)
- b) In the individual product verification for the relevant declaration type (EcoLeaf or CFP), the applicant has experience with verification by a third-party verifier, and has passed at least one product verification
- c) Prior to the stage 1 audit, at least one product has been quantified and verified with the built system, and an internal auditing and management review have been completed

If it is judged based on the above that the audit can proceed, the certification body must then conduct a two-stage system certification audit (stage 1 audit and stage 2 audit).

In the stage 1 audit, the certification body must conduct a preliminary document audit of manuals and other documents created by the applicant organization. They must also conduct an in-person audit to check the construction of the system, including checking manuals.

In the stage 2 audit, the certification body must make sure that the applicant is operating their system according to the manual. They must also conduct a main audit to check the validity of internal verification of declarations that were quantified using the system, and a site audit for sites where primary data was collected.

Depending on circumstances the site audit can either be conducted prior to the main audit or omitted.

A site audit may be omitted in the following cases:

- The site is located overseas
- There is a range of different sites, making it unfeasible to audit all of them
- The data collected at the site is not relevant to the core data, or has a low impact on the data
- The information from the site is unable to be disclosed, even to auditors, because it relates to security or trade secrets, etc.
- Production capabilities have been outsourced to a third party, such as with OEM.

Additionally, if during or after the completion of the stage 2 audit the certification body judges it necessary, they may repeat the stage 1 audit.

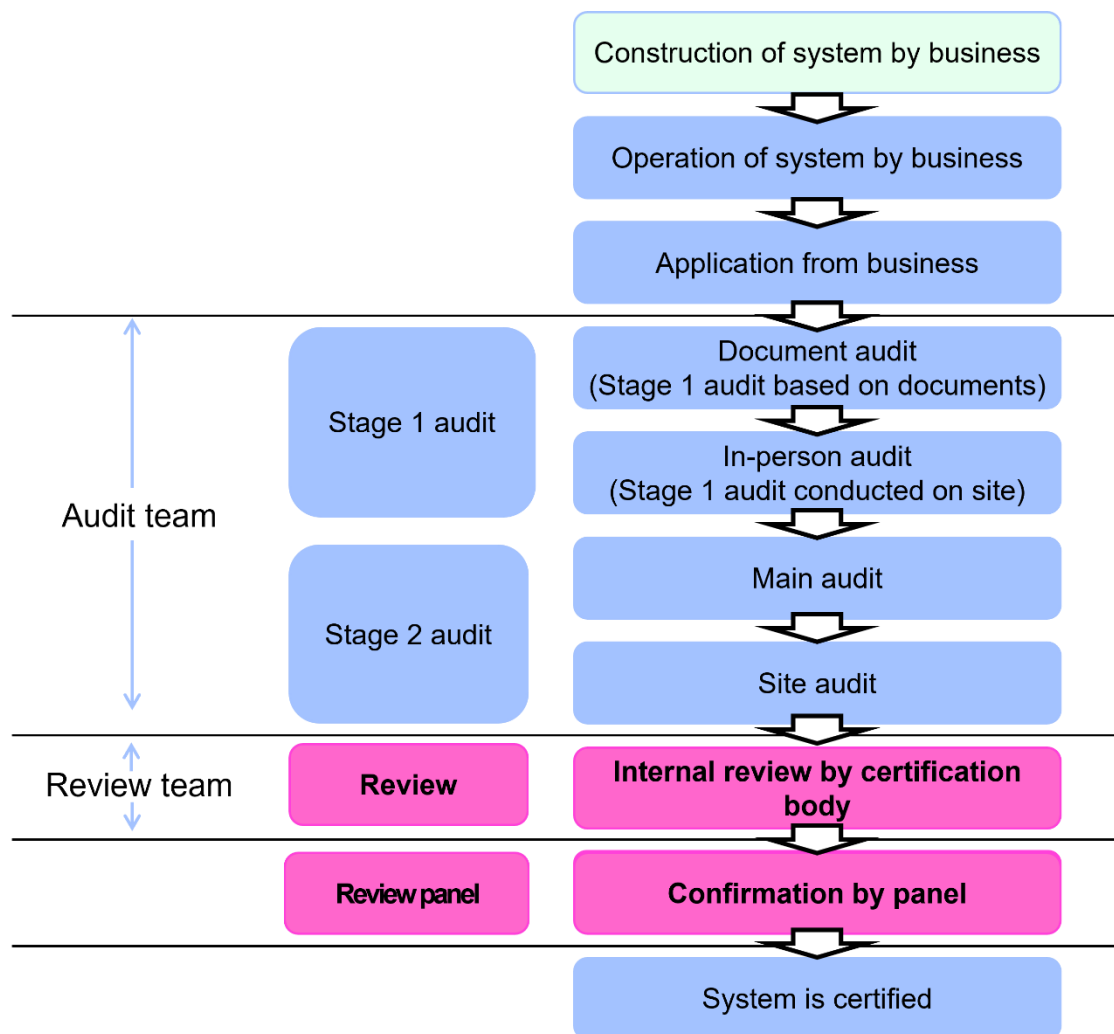


Figure 2. Flow of auditing for system certification

6.2 Audit Planning

When initiating an audit, the certification body must create an audit plan so as to provide the foundation for agreement on the implementation and scheduling of the audit. The audit plan must include the objective, scope, the scheduled date, location, and team members of the audit. In the case that a site audit is conducted, the site and scheduled date must be included in the audit plan.

6.3 Audit Report

The certification body must prepare an audit report after the audit team has completed the audit. After the review team have completed their review, they must submit to SuMPO the audit report, review results report, and system certification criteria conformity checklist, accompanied by any comments on conformity or nonconformity, and also confirm the validity of the audit. The certification body must manage the documents listed above internally.

6.4 Decision of Approval of Certification or Re-audit by Certification Body

The certification body must determine, based on the audit report and the review results report, whether to certify or to re-audit. In the short term, determination must be made by considering the results confirmed by the review panel set up by SuMPO.

6.5 Maintenance Audits and Additional Audits of Certified Organizations

6.5.1

The certification body must develop an audit maintenance process in order to determine whether application documents created and verified using a certified system are valid.

6.5.2

The certification body must specify when a maintenance audit is to be conducted, and carry it out.

6.5.3

If the certification body judges that an additional audit is required, such as for an expansion of system scope, the additional audit can be conducted at any time regardless of the certification validity period. The scope of the additional audit should be limited to areas that have been changed.

6.6 Objections and Complaints

6.6.1

The certification body must have a process for receiving, assessing, and deciding on objections and complaints. An overview of the resolution processes for objections and complaints must be publicly accessible.

6.6.2

The certification body must ensure that the persons handling the process for managing objections and complaints are not the same as those conducting the system audit or deciding on certification.

6.6.3

Upon receipt of a complaint, the certification body must check to see if the complaint is relevant to the activities for which the certification body is responsible, and if so, it must manage the complaint. If a complaint is relevant to a certified organization, the validity of the certified system must be considered in the investigation into the complaint.

6.6.4

The certification body must take responsibility for all decisions at all stages of the resolution processes for objections and complaints.

6.6.5

The resolution processes for objections and complaints must include at a minimum the following elements and methods:

- a) Processes for receipt of objections and complaints, confirmation of validity, and investigation; decision process for appropriate resolution of the objections and complaints by considering the prior similar objections and complaints

- b) Progress tracking and recording thereof for objections and complaints, including measures taken for their resolution
- c) Reliable implementation of appropriate corrections and corrective actions

6.6.6

The certification body must notify the applicant organization and SuMPO when an objection or complaint is received, and submit progress reports as well as any matters that have been decided thus far. The decisions communicated to the applicant organization shall be made by parties who had no involvement in the objection or complaint, or, if performed by a party involved in the objection or complaint, undergo approval by review.

The certification body must formally notify the applicant organization and SuMPO of the conclusion of resolution processes for objections and complaints.

7. Requirements for Registration

7.1 Auditing for the Purpose of Registration

Certification bodies carrying out system certification audits under this Program must register to SuMPO as a certification body. When registering, they shall undergo an audit to confirm fulfillment of these requirements. If the audit results determine that registration is possible, the registration period will be three years. Registration maintenance procedures will be carried out every year during the registration period.

Afterwards, if the system certification body wishes to extend its registration period, it must undergo an audit for re-registration within six months of the final day of the registration period.

7.2 Surveillance of Certification Bodies

SuMPO may, if judged necessary, check any results certified by a certification body. This includes verifying documents related to audit results, observation by the organization's review panel, and observation of audits.

7.3 Suspension and Revocation of Registration

7.3.1

If a certification body continually fails to satisfy these requirements, SuMPO can suspend or revoke its registration. SuMPO can make public the fact that registration has been revoked.

7.3.2

If SuMPO confirms that a certification body does not satisfy these requirements, it can request that the certification body take corrective actions. If the certification body is unable to make these corrections within three months, SuMPO can suspend its registration.

7.3.3

SuMPO can revoke the registration of a certification body if the certification body's registration has been suspended and corrections have not been made within one year of the suspension; or if the registration period stipulated in the contract at the time of registration with SuMPO will terminate in less than one year, and if corrective actions have not completed by the termination date.

7.3.4

The certification body can re-validate its registration if corrective actions are completed on time after suspension of registration. If the certification body reaches the re-registration date during the corrective action period, a re-registration audit can be conducted immediately after corrective actions have been completed, and the registration period will be extended by the original termination date.

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