Japan EPD Program by SuMPO

Requirements for Competence of System Certification Auditors

Document ID: JC-02-04

Sustainable Management Promotion Organization

Revision history

Version	Date	Page	Details
04	April 1, 2022	-	Modifications due to changes in the program name.
03	January 21, 2022	5, 6	Revised work-related qualification criteria for system auditors and lead system auditors
02	October 1, 2019	-	Modifications due to changes in the program operator.
01	February 26, 2018	-	Document created. Newly published following integration of EcoLeaf Program and CFP Program.

Table of Contents

Preface

This document specifies the requirements for individuals or teams conducting certification audits of systems built in accordance with the system certification requirements of the Japan EPD Program by SuMPO (the "Program") operated and administered by the 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 consumers. Devising ways to reduce the burden of verification while maintaining credibility and transparency is important for organizations quantifying, verifying, and displaying declarations.

This Program has two verification methods: the "product-by-product verification method," in which each product quantified by an organization is verified externally; and the "system certification method", which eliminates the external verification process by auditing systems that incorporate quantification, verification, and publication processes internally and verifying these processes.

This document prescribes the requirements for those conducting audits of systems established under the system certification methods among the two methods.

Figure 1 shows the structure and flow of verification/certification methods in this Program.
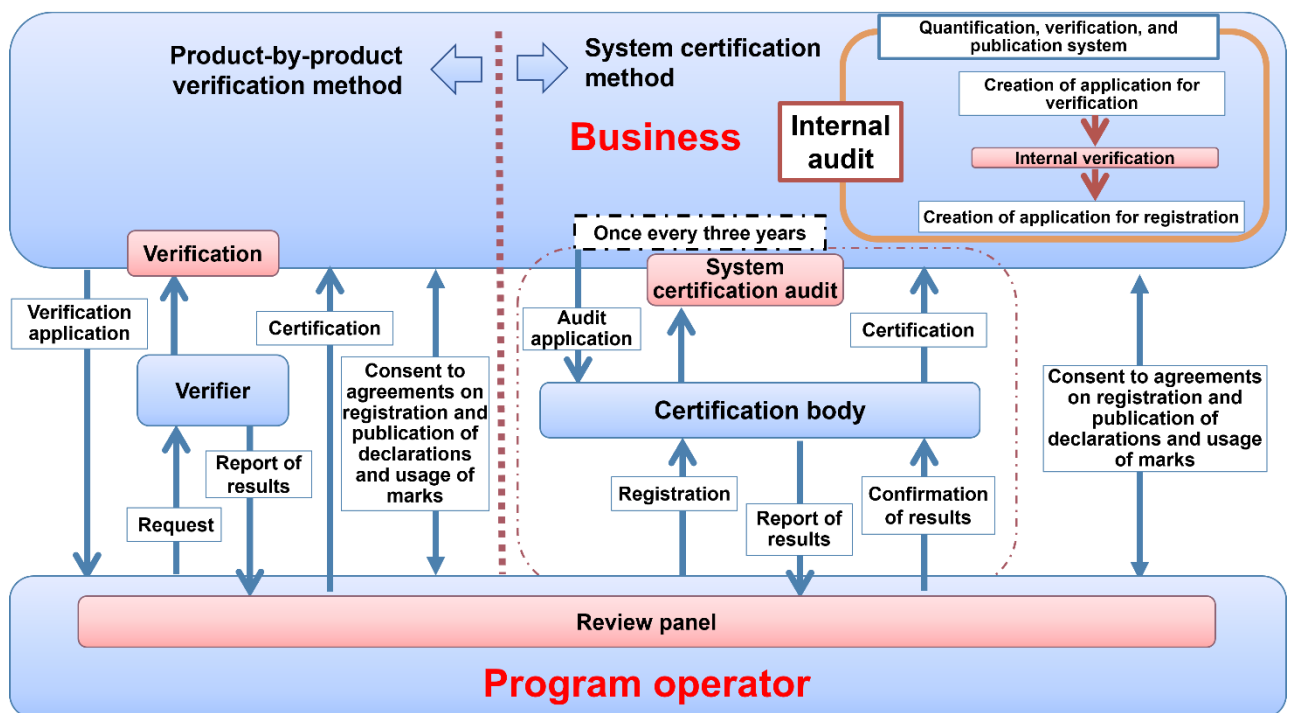

Figure 1. Structure and flow of verification/certification methods

0.2 Scope

These requirements apply to those performing system certification audits for organizations participating in this Program, to the extent that PCR exists within the 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.

a) General Program Instructions

b) Quantification and Declaration Rules

c) Declaration and Registration Publication Rules

d) Certification Body Registration and Evaluation Rules

e) Verification Rules

f) System Certification Rules

g) System Audit Report Form

h) Findings and Response (Audit Evaluation)

i) Ethics and Confidentiality Rules

j) Objection/Complaint/Dispute Resolution Rules

k) System Certification Body Registration and Evaluation Rules

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

m) 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. System Certification Auditor Qualification Criteria

The qualification criteria prescribe the standards that system certification auditors must meet in order to perform system certification audits effectively and uniformly. These criteria have been developed based on the concepts described in the appendix.

1.1 Types of System Certification Auditors

There are two types of system certification auditors, system auditor and lead system auditor, which are defined as follows:

1.1.1 System Auditor

a)   A person approved and registered by SuMPO who meets the qualification criteria set forth in Section 1.2.1.

b)   A system auditor may conduct audits under the direction and guidance of a lead system auditor approved by SuMPO.

1.1.2 Lead System Auditor

a) A person approved and registered by SuMPO who meets the qualification criteria set forth in Section 1.2.2 and is deemed competent to lead the audit as an audit team leader.

1.2 Qualification Criteria for System Auditors and Lead System Auditors

1.2.1 System Auditor

System auditors must meet requirements a) to f) shown below. Note that b) is only a recommendation.

a)   Has a high school diploma or higher under the School Education Act, and has an education equivalent to those listed below or higher:
   (1) Has graduated technical college, completed an upper secondary school designated by MEXT at least three years in length, has passed the high school equivalency examination based on MEXT ordinances, or has completed secondary education or higher overseas.

   (2) Has completed a course of an educational institution within an organization that is equivalent to a high school or higher.
b)   Has over five years of work experience in a technical, managerial, or expert position.
c)   Has participated in training sessions for system certification auditors provided by SuMPO.
d)   Has been recommended for the personal qualities listed in Section 4 of the appendix A by a manager of the organization in which the applicant has been working for over a year.
e)   Has passed the staff examination conducted by SuMPO. (Refer to Appendix A for examinations.) However, passing an LCA Expert Certificate Examination co-hosted by the Institute of Life Cycle Assessment, Japan and SuMPO is also acceptable.
f)   Qualification must be completed within a year of fulfillment of c) and e).

1.2.2 Lead System Auditor

System lead auditors must meet the system auditor qualifications prescribed in Section 1.2.1 and meet all the following requirements:

a)   Has experience conducting a product-by-product verification or conducting a product-by-product verification as part of a system certification audit at least once within the last three years, or has completed a system certification auditor training course hosted by SuMPO in which the applicant is deemed competent to conduct verifications independently.

b)   Has experience conducting audits related to management systems such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 or conducting system certification audits at least once in the past three years.

c)   Has been recommended for their ability to lead an audit team by a lead system auditor with whom the applicant has conducted an audit as part of the same audit team, or by someone in charge of an organization that the applicant has audited, or by the manager of the management system certification body.

d)   Has over five years of work experience in a technical, managerial, or expert position.

2. Registration, Maintenance, and Renewal of System Certification Auditor Qualifications

2.1 System Certification Auditor Registration

2.1.1   System Auditor

A person who meets the qualifications prescribed in Section 1.2.1 can be registered as a system auditor. System auditors shall complete procedures to extend registration every year and shall complete procedures to renew their registration every three years.

2.1.2 Lead System Auditor

A person who meets the qualifications prescribed in Section 1.2.2 can be registered as a lead system auditor. Lead system auditors shall complete procedures to extend registration every year and shall complete procedures to renew their registration every three years.

2.2 Registration, Maintenance, and Renewal of System Certification Auditors

2.2.1   Maintaining System Certification Auditor Registration

If the system auditor or lead system auditor has received any objections or complaints from an organization they have audited, a record of this must be submitted during annual procedures to extend registration.

2.2.2   Renewing System Auditor Registration

If the system auditor has received any objections or complaints from an organization they have audited, a record of this must be submitted during registration renewal procedures performed every three years. The system auditor should also participate in a training session for system certification auditors hosted by SuMPO prior to renewing registration.

2.2.3   Renewing Lead System Auditor Registration

When renewing registration every three years, the lead system auditor must fulfill a), b) or c) below sometime between the initial registration/renewal and the subsequent application for renewal.

a)   Has experience conducting system audits at least twice.

b)   Has experience conducting a product-by-product verification or conducting a product-by-product

verification as part of a system certification audit at least once, and has experience conducting audits related to management systems such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, or can prove equivalent experience.

c)   Has completed a system certification auditor training course hosted by SuMPO in which the applicant is deemed competent to conduct verifications independently.

If the lead system auditor has received any objections or complaints from an organization they have audited, a record of this must also be submitted.

3 Lapse of Qualifications

The lead system auditor will be demoted to system auditor if they fail to meet the requirements of 2.2.3 during the renewal of registration every three years.

4 Suspension and Revocation of Qualifications

SuMPO may suspend or revoke the registration of system certification auditors who fail to perform system audits properly or who violate the Program's Ethics and Confidentiality Rules. In addition, SuMPO may suspend or revoke registration if it finds that a system certification auditor obtained their qualifications through dishonest means.

Appendix A.

A1. General

A1.1 General Requirements

 The credibility and reliability of the system certification audit process within system certification depend on the competence of those conducting the system audits. Competence is based on the following evidence:

■ Knowledge and skills described in A2, acquired through the education, work experience, system auditor training, and audit experience described in A3.

■ Personal qualities described in A4.

 System certification auditors must develop, maintain, and improve their competence through continuous development of their professional skills and regular participation in system certification audits (refer to A5).

A1.2 Types of System Certification Auditors

There are two types of system certification auditors:

・System auditor

・Lead System Auditor

A2. Knowledge and Skills

A2.1 Common knowledge and skills related to management systems

 System certification auditors must have knowledge and skills in the following fields:

 a) Knowledge of business management practices

 b) Knowledge of general principles, practices, and techniques for audits and inspections

 c) Knowledge of specifications/standard documents for specific management system

 d) Knowledge of certification processes

 e) Knowledge of the client's area of business

 f) Knowledge of the client's products, processes, and organization

 g) Adequate language skills for all levels of hierarchy within the client organization

 h) Note taking and report writing skills

 i) Presentation skills

 j) Interview skills

 k) Audit management skills

A2.2 Knowledge and Skills Related to Products and Services, Knowledge and Skills Related to Environmental Science and Technology, and the Technical and Environmental Aspects of Operation

 System certification auditors should have knowledge and skills in the following fields:

 a) Knowledge and skills regarding quality management tools and their application

  - Quality terms, general principles for quality management and their application

 b) Knowledge and skills for products, including processes and services

- Industry-specific terms, technical characteristics of products, and industry-specific processes and practices

c) Methods and applications of environmental management

- Environmental terms, general principles for environmental management and their application

d) Knowledge and skills regarding environmental science and technology

- Human impact on the environment, interaction with ecological systems, environmental medium, management of natural resources, and general conservation methods

e) Technological and environmental aspects of operation

- Industry-specific terms, environmental aspects and impact, important characteristics of operational processes and products, monitoring and measuring methods, and pollution prevention techniques

A2.3 Specific knowledge and skills required for verification

System certification auditors must have knowledge and skills in the following fields:

a) Knowledge of LCA/this Program

・Knowledge related to the rules of LCA and this Program

- Knowledge of basic documents, PCR, and various regulations

・Expertise in LCA and LCA work procedures (general knowledge on LCA)

- Allocation methods, etc.

・Knowledge of GHG emissions calculation methods

- Knowledge of GHG emission sources

- Knowledge of GHS calculation methods related to sites and transportation

・Knowledge related to environmental declarations

- Knowledge related to ISO 14025 and ISO 14020, etc.

b) Verification skills

・The ability to perform verifications in accordance with evaluation criteria for procedures

・Communication skills

・Report writing and reporting skills

・The ability to respond appropriately to issues indicated during the review process

・The ability to make an expert judgment

A3. Education, Work Experience, Auditor Training, and Audit Experience

A3.1 General

System certification auditors should have the following education, work experience, system certification auditor training, and audit experience.

a) Has attained a level of education sufficient to acquire the knowledge and skills described in A2.

b) Has work experience that contributes to the development of the knowledge and skills listed in A2.1, A2.2, and A2.3. This work experience should be in a technical, managerial, or expert capacity, including judgment, problem solving, and communicating with other managers, experts, colleagues, customers, and/or other interested parties.

c) Has completed system auditor training that contributes to the development of knowledge and skills listed in A2.1, and A2.2. This training may be provided either by an organization to which

the applicant belongs or by an external organization.

d)   Has completed training that contributes to the development of knowledge and skills listed in A2.3.

e)   Has experience in product-by-product verification for environmental labeling programs.

f)   Has experience in auditing environmental labeling programs. This experience should be under the instruction and guidance of a system certification auditor who possesses competence as an audit team leader in the same field.

A3.2 Level of Education, Work Experience, Auditor Training, and Audit Experience

System auditors and lead system auditors must meet the following criteria for level of education, work experience, auditor training, and audit experience.

Table 1. Level of Education, Work Experience, Auditor Training, and Audit Experience for Auditors

Parameters	System auditor	Lead System Auditor
Education	Has a high school diploma or higher under the School Education Act or equivalent level of education	
Work Experience	Work experience in a technical, managerial, or expert position	
Knowledge and Skills	The knowledge and skills described in A2.1 and A2.3	
LCA-Related Work Experience	—	Practical verification work experience related to this Program
Quality or Environmental Management Work Experience	—	Experience auditing management systems such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, or system certification audits
Staff Training	Training for this Program/LCA verification	Training on verification + Training on management systems

A4. Personal Qualities

System certification auditors should have personal qualities that enable them to act in accordance with auditing principles shown in A1 in Requirements for Competence of System Certification Bodies.

System certification auditors should have the following qualities:

a)   Ethical: They are fair, credible, faithful, honest, and sensible.

b)   Broad-minded: They are willing to take different opinions and views into consideration.

c)   Diplomatic: They communicate tactfully with others to achieve objectives.

d)   Cooperative: They interact effectively with others.

e)   Observant: They are actively aware of their physical surroundings and activities happening around them.

f) Perceptive: They intuitively recognize and understand the situation.

g) Responsive: They readily adapt to changing situations.

h) Persistent: They are perseverant and focus on achieving objectives.

i) Decisive: They reach timely conclusions based on logical reasoning and analysis.

j) Autonomous: They act independently and fulfill their roles.

k) Professional: They are courteous, honest, and can generally adapt to their duties in the workplace.

l) Mentally Strong: They are willing to take responsibility and act ethically even if their actions are sometimes not accepted or lead to disagreement or conflict.

m)   Systematic: They demonstrate effective time management, prioritization, planning, and efficiency.

A5. Maintaining and Improving Competence

A5.1 Continuing Professional Development

   Continuing professional development is connected to the maintenance and improvement of knowledge, skills, and personal qualities. This can be achieved through a variety of means, including additional work experience, training, self-study, mentoring, participation in meetings, seminars, conferences, or other related activities. System certification auditors should demonstrate continuing professional development.

A5.2 Maintaining Audit Skills

   System certification auditors should maintain and demonstrate their audit skills by regularly participating in system audits.

Appendix B: Examination

(Examination Overview)

The purpose of the test is to confirm whether the examinee has the ability to implement the LCA method, and tests not only foundational knowledge on basic concepts, method frameworks, basic rules, and procedures for LCA, but also measures practical calculation skills that can be applied to actual work, such as creating, correcting, and calculating LCI data.

The question format, number of questions per session, question structure, and duration of the LCA examination are as follows:

　　　　(1) Question format: A written test that includes calculation questions.

　　　　(2) Number and structure of questions: 10 descriptive questions and 2 calculation questions per session for a total of 12 questions; composition of questions is shown in the "Number of Questions" column on the table.

　　　　(3) Examination Time:　　　120 minutes; students who have finished may leave the room 60 minutes after the examination starts.

(Examination Day Guidelines)

Guidelines for examination day are as follows:

　　　　(1) Answers are written on the question sheet, which will be collected from all examinees. Examinees may not take questions home.

　　　　(2) Examinees may bring up to two reference books to the test.

　　　　(3) Candidates must bring their own calculators and writing tools.

LCA Examination Question Criteria

No.	Subject	Question Content	Number of Questions
1	Overview and significance of LCA (descriptive questions)	1) Questions on basic concepts in LCA: concepts, application/validity, limitations/precautions 2) Questions on the ISO 14040 standard series: key terms and standard structure	2
2	LCA Methodology (descriptive questions)	1) Questions on "The Purpose and Scope of LCA Assessment" 2) Questions on "LCI Analysis" 3) Questions on "LCIA" 4) Questions on "Life Cycle Interpretation" 5) Questions on "Critical Review"	6
3	Applications of LCA (descriptive questions)	1) Questions on the applications of environmental labeling	2
4	Calculation questions	1) LCI calculation: Allocation-focused calculation (weight-based/value-based, etc.) and data processing calculation questions 2) LCIA calculation: characterization factor calculation question	2
	Total		12

Appendix C: Training

(Training Overview)

    The purpose of the training is to instruct and teach prospective auditors detailed information on the Program's system, requirements for system certification, calculation, and declaration, verification methods and procedures, system certification methods and procedures, and the knowledge and skills needed to perform the tasks expected of them.

    The training format, number of trainees per session, time, schedule, and number of instructors is as follows.

        (1) Training Format: A combination of classroom lectures and exercises.

        (2) Number of participants: 3 to 18 participants per training course.

(Evaluation of Training Results)

- Only trainees who have met the following requirements will pass the course.

    (1) At least 90% attendance of the total training time.

    (2) Performance during exercises will be evaluated as to whether the trainee is competent as an auditor.

- The training instructor will evaluate the performance of each trainee during exercises using the prescribed checklist to determine whether the training will pass.

- SuMPO will send a notification of training session results to inform applicants who qualify as verifiers that they have passed the training course, and will send trainees who did not qualify the reason that they did not pass as well as information on the next training session.

End of document.