Japan EPD Program by SuMPO

Registered Reviewer/Internal Verifier Registration and Evaluation Rules (General Rules, Requirements, and Procedures)

Document ID: JR-11-04

Sustainable Management Promotion Organization

Revision history

Version	Date	Page	Details
04	April 1, 2022	-	Modifications due to changes in program name.
03	January 21, 2022	3	Addition of system auditors as subjects in 2.2 Qualification Criteria
02	October 1, 2019	-	Modifications due to changes in the program operator.
01	April 28, 2017	-	Document created. Newly published following integration of EcoLeaf Program and CFP Program.

These rules specify details regarding the registration and evaluation of registered reviewers and internal verifiers of the Japan EPD Program by SuMPO (the “Program”), operated and administered by the Sustainable Management Promotion Organization (“SuMPO”).

Section 1 General Rules

1.1 Roles

Registered reviewer is a general term referring to any person registered through the procedure specified by the program operator to perform preliminary PCR reviews or product-to-product verification tasks. Internal verifier refers to a person who performs internal system verification tasks.

1.2 Auditing for the Purpose of Registration

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers shall register with SuMPO in order to perform their work. When registering, they shall undergo an audit to confirm fulfillment of requirements for registration.

1.3 Requirements for Registration of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers

Requirements for registration are specified in Section 2 of these rules, “Requirements for Competence of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers”.

1.4 Criteria for Registration of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers

Criteria for registration of registered reviewers and internal verifiers are specified in “JR-11S Judgement criteria for registration of registered reviewers and internal verifiers” (private).

1.5 Procedures for Registration and Evaluation of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers

Procedures for registration are specified in Section 3 of these rules, “Procedures for Registration and Evaluation of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers”.

1.6 Period of Validity of Registration of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers

The period of validity of registration shall be one year. Registered reviewers and internal verifiers who wish to maintain their registration shall complete procedures to extend registration according to the term set by SuMPO, which is one year as a rule, and shall complete procedures to renew qualification every three years.

1.7 Confidentiality Obligations of Registered Reviewers

Registered reviewers shall use the confidential information provided by businesses and SuMPO to perform their work, only for the purpose of performing their work, and shall never use it for any other purpose.

After their work is complete, registered reviewers shall securely dispose of all disclosed media containing confidential information provided by businesses and SuMPO.

1.8 Surveillance

SuMPO may perform confirmation of the results of work performed by registered reviewers and internal verifiers, if SuMPO judges it to be necessary.

During surveillance, internal verifiers are required to respond to SuMPO's demands, including the submission of necessary documents regarding verification results.

1.9 Suspension and Revocation of Qualifications

SuMPO may suspend or revoke the registration of any registered reviewer or internal verifier who fails to perform preliminary PCR reviews or verification work properly, or who violates the Program's Ethics and Confidentiality Rules. In addition, SuMPO may suspend or revoke registration if it finds that a registered reviewer or internal verifier obtained their qualifications through dishonest means.

Section 2 Requirements for Competence of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers

2.1 Subjects

The two following registration categories are subject to these rules:

(a) Registered reviewer

(b) Internal verifier

In addition, (a) has the following sub-categories:

Registered reviewer	Verifier	Lead verifier	Lead verifiers are recognized by SuMPO as having competence to perform verification.
		Assistant verifier	Assistant verifiers may perform verification under the direction and guidance of a SuMPO-approved lead verifier.
	PCR reviewer	Lead PCR reviewer	Lead PCR reviewers are recognized by SuMPO as having competence to perform PCR reviews.
		Assistant PCR reviewer	Assistant PCR reviewers may perform preliminary PCR reviews under the direction and guidance of a SuMPO-approved lead PCR reviewer.

2.2 Qualification Criteria

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers are required to have the competence and qualifications listed in Appendix A.

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers must fulfill all of the conditions listed in a) to f) as qualification criteria: Note that b) is only a recommendation for internal verifiers and system auditors.

Qualification Criteria for Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers

	Details	Registered reviewer	Internal verifier
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.	Mandatory	Mandatory
b)	At least five years of work experience.	Mandatory	Recommended
c)	At least 1 prior experience with performing quantification related to LCA, or verification experience related to LCA.	Mandatory	Mandatory
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.	Mandatory	Mandatory
e)	Successful completion of a training session for verifiers hosted by SuMPO.	Mandatory	Mandatory

f)	Has passed the staff examination conducted by SuMPO. (Passing an LCA Expert Certificate Examination co-hosted by the Institute of Life Cycle Assessment, Japan and SuMPO is also acceptable.)	Mandatory	Mandatory
g)	Qualification must be completed within a year of fulfillment of e) and f).	Mandatory	Mandatory

2.2.1 Examination

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. (See Appendix B for details)

2.2.2 Training

The purpose of training shall be to provide guidance and instruction to prospective verifiers, including details of the Program's organization, details about requirements for quantification and declarations, verification methods and procedures, and knowledge and practical skills related to points that verifiers must observe. (See Appendix C for details)

2.3 Registration

2.3.1 Qualifications

A person who fulfills the conditions in Section 2.2 can be registered as a registered reviewer or internal verifier. Registered reviewers and internal verifiers shall complete procedures to extend registration every year, and shall complete procedures to renew qualification every three years.

2.3.2 Renewal of qualifications

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers shall report records of the following information when performing renewal procedures every three years. At least one item from b) to d) must be completed.

a) Details of any appeals or complaints received from businesses, if applicable (registered reviewers only)
b) At least 3 cases of completed verification
c) Participation in training sessions for registered reviewers and internal verifiers hosted by SuMPO or an affiliate.
d) Completion of 15 hours of Continuing Professional Development ("CPD") from the list below:

(1) Applicable fields of professional abilities

Fields related to knowledge and skills for LCA/environmental labeling.

(2) Methods for developing applicable professional abilities, how to calculate CPD hours

One hour of actual activity conducted using the methods below, which corresponds to the applicable fields described above, shall be counted as one CPD hour.

Ability development methods	Description and conditions	CPD hours
(1) Individual study	Reading books and literature, voluntary group study (group discussion during training sessions falls under (2) Passive activities). * Searching for information or reading journals online is not acceptable. * Magazine subscriptions are not acceptable. However, study of a specific article, such as a special feature, is acceptable. * Work such as preparation of materials, summarization of ideas, and investigation is not acceptable.	Study time
(2) Passive activities	Participation in lectures, internal/external training sessions (including group discussions and presentations during training sessions). * Visits to environmental expos, participation in eco-tours, and individual or voluntary inspections are not acceptable. However, company visits for environmental inspections that are clearly hosted by organizations are acceptable. * Individual study before or after lectures or training sessions can't be counted as CPD hours.	Participation time (Note: Excluding break time)
(3) Activities managed by SuMPO	Participation and discussion in seminars and workshops managed by SuMPO related to LCA and environmental labeling.	5 CPD hours/ session
(4) Proactive activities	Lecturing at internal/external seminars and training sessions (presenting in group discussions during training sessions falls under (2) Passive activities). * If the same lecture, etc. is presented multiple times during one year, only the first lecture is applicable. * Preparation of presentation materials for lectures and training sessions can't be counted as CPD hours.	Lecture time
	Writing papers and academic books. * Excluding proofreading time.	Writing time
(5) Project activities	Activities such as transient research and development projects, and technical guidance or volunteer work for training programs at universities and academic organizations. * Internal/external activities and technical guidance which are regular duties are not acceptable.	Participation time

Section 3 Procedures for Registration and Evaluation of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers

3.1 Application for Registration as Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers

Applicants for registration as registered reviewers and internal verifiers (the “applicants”) shall complete the application form without omission, and submit it to SuMPO together with attached documents required for evaluation.

Application Details:

1) Registration application form
   (1) Name
   (2) Affiliation
   (3) Contact information: address, telephone number, fax number, and email address
   (4) Address for notifications, etc.
   (5) Date of birth
   (6) Highest education and work history
   (7) Experience with performing quantification related to LCA, or verification experience related to LCA.
   (8) Examination type and date
   (9) Training session type and date
2) A written pledge
3) Letter of recommendation
4) Attached documents

3.2 Evaluation based on application forms

SuMPO checks the submitted application form and attached documents, and determined applicant’s compatibility with “Requirements for Competence of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers” based on the application form and attached documents.

3.3 Registration

SuMPO shall register applicants as registered reviewers or internal verifiers after their registration has been judged to be appropriate, and shall notify them of their registration number.

After receiving notification of registration, applicants shall pay the registration fee, and registered reviewers shall sign the contract.

3.4 Maintenance and Renewal of Registration

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers who wish to maintain and renew their registration shall complete procedures to extend qualification registration according to the term set by SuMPO, which is one year as a rule, and shall complete qualification renewal procedures every three years.

SuMPO can require the applicant to participate in training sessions, etc., if necessary.

1) Maintenance

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers who wish to maintain their registration shall pay the registration fee and extend their registration according to the term set by SuMPO, which is one year as a rule.

2) Renewal

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers who wish to renew their registration shall submit a renewal request to SuMPO every three years (in the term following completion of two extensions).

Application Details for Renewals:

2-1) Renewal application

(1) Name
(2) Affiliation
(3) Contact information: address, telephone number, fax number, and email address
(4) Address for notifications, etc.
(5) Previously registered qualifications and number
(6) Demonstration of completed PCR planning, EcoLeaf/CFP quantification, PCR review, and/or verification
(7) Training session type and date
(8) Demonstration of completed continuing professional development
(9) Experience with appeals or complaints (registered reviewers only)

2-2) Attached documents

(Section 2 Requirements for Competence of Registered Reviewers and Internal Verifiers)

Appendix A.

1. General Requirements

Trust and confidence in PCR and declarations relies on the competence of registered reviewers and internal verifiers. Registered reviewers and internal verifiers are expected to fulfill the requirements for competence as specified in Section 2 to 5.

2. Knowledge and Skills

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers shall demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas listed below.

a) Knowledge of LCA/environmental labeling and the Program

・Knowledge related to LCA and Program rules

- Knowledge of basic documents, PCR, and various regulations

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

- Knowledge related to ISO 14040 and 14044, etc.

- Allocation methods, etc.

・Knowledge of methods for quantification of environmental impact

- Knowledge related to environmental impact

- Knowledge of methods for quantification of environmental impact related to sites and transportation

・Knowledge related to environmental labeling

- Knowledge, etc. related to ISO 14025, ISO 14020, and ISO/TS 14067

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

3. Education and work experience

3.1 Registered reviewers and internal verifiers

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers should have the following education and work experience:

d) Completion of adequate education to acquire knowledge and skills described in Section 2.

e) Work experience that contributes to the development of knowledge and skills described in Section 2. 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.

f) Completion of training exercises which contribute to the development of knowledge and skills described in Section 2.

3.2 PCR Reviewer

PCR reviewers must have practical experience working as verifiers for the Program. PCR reviewers are expected to perform at a higher level than verifiers, and must have completed training related to PCR review.

4. Personal Qualities

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers 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.

5. Maintaining and Improving Competence

5.1 Maintenance of Abilities

Registered reviewers and internal verifiers should maintain and demonstrate their auditing abilities through regular participation in PCR review and verification work.

5.2 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. Registered reviewers and internal verifiers should demonstrate continuing professional development.

Appendix B: Examination

(LCA 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 style of examination questions, the number of questions per examination, the structure of questions, and examination time shall be 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.

(4) Scoring criteria:

・Each descriptive question shall be worth 5 points.

・Each calculation question shall be worth 25 points, and points will be deducted from responses that show a lack of understanding of the calculation process, even if the answer is correct.

(5) Passing score: 75 points or higher.

(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”	
3	Applications of LCA (descriptive questions)	1) Application 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 training shall be to provide guidance and instruction to prospective verifiers, including details of the Program's organization, details about requirements for quantification and declarations, verification methods and procedures, and knowledge and practical skills related to points that verifiers must observe.

The style of verifier training sessions, the number of participants in each training session, training session time, training session timetables, and the number of instructors shall be 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.
- The office shall send training session results notifications to inform applicants who qualified as verifiers that their training session was completed, and to inform applicants who didn't qualify of the reason for disqualification, with information about the next training session.