



NETWORK FOR CERTIFICATION AND CONSERVATION OF FORESTS (NCCF)

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# **Accreditation Requirements for Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme (SBCS)**

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## **Preface**

The Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) is a not for profit organization registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. NCCF is actively engaged in diverse conservation activities including development of globally benchmarked and India specific sustainability certification standards for various constituents of our natural resource base, viz.; forests, trees outside forests, non-wood forest produce, protected areas and wetlands, quality planting material, ecotourism, biomass and biofuels, land degradation neutrality, etc., as its core working areas, and also addressing the needs for policy advocacy in natural resource management, awareness raising, capacity building in and multi-stakeholders engagements.

The Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests is the scheme owner of Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme (SBCS) and has overall responsibility for the smooth working/functioning of the SBCS while maintaining its credibility.

This document describes the procedure to be followed for the accreditation of certification bodies and testing laboratories involved in the Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme.

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## REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

## I. Scope

This document outlines the requirements for Certification Bodies along with the laboratories performing tests or calibrations at customer's location (site) or at a location temporarily established (away from the permanent laboratory) for a limited period of time; intending to operate as per the Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme (SBCS) being launched by the Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) for their accreditation.

## II. Normative References

1. ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
2. ISO/IEC 17025:2005 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories
3. ISO/IEC 17000:2020 Conformity assessment - Vocabulary and general principles
4. ISO 9000:2005 Quality management systems - fundamentals and vocabulary
5. ISO 9001 Auditing practices group guidance on third party auditor impartiality and conflict of interest, 2005
6. NABL 130 Specific criteria for site testing and site calibration laboratories
7. NABL 131 Terms and conditions for obtaining and maintaining NABL accreditation
8. Safeboards Certification Standards – Version 1.0

## III. Terms and Definitions

1. **Accreditation Body (AB):** AB is an authoritative body that performs accreditation.
2. **Appeal:** An appeal is a request by the person or organization that provides, or that is, the object of conformity assessment to a conformity assessment body or an accreditation body for reconsideration by that body of a decision it has made relating to that object.

3. **Appellant:** An individual or an organisation that files an appeal is known as an appellant.
4. **Application Reviewer:** the person(s) in charge of the application review, the audit process, and determining whether or not a certification applicant looks to be ready and prepared for an audit.
5. **Audit:** Systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining objective evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled.
6. **Auditor:** An auditor is a person who is qualified to conduct an audit.
7. **Certification Body (CB):** A third party that performs conformity assessment services.
8. **Certification:** Third-party attestation related to products, processes, systems or persons.
9. **Certified product:** The product covered under the scope of certification.
10. **Client:** Organization whose management system is being audited for certification purposes.
11. **Certificate:** A document issued under the rules of a certification system, indicating that adequate confidence is provided that a duly identified product, process or service is in conformity with a specific standard or other normative document.
12. **Competence:** Competence is ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results.
13. **Complainant:** Person or organization filing a complaint.
14. **Complaint:** Any individual or organisation that presents a CB with a written statement of discontent (other than an appeal) relating to the NCCF activities of that CB and/or the NCCF activities of their clients. A complaint in the context of NCCF contains the complainant's name and contact information, a detailed description of the problem, and proof to back up each part or component of the complaint.
15. **Conflict of Interest:** Situation where business, financial, family, political or personal interests could interfere with the judgment of persons in carrying out their duties for the organization.
16. **Dispute:** Disagreement arising from a complaint.
17. **Impartiality:** presence of objectivity

NOTE 1 Objectivity is understood to mean that conflicts of interest do not exist, or are resolved so as not to adversely influence the activities of the body.

NOTE 2 Other terms that are useful in conveying the element of impartiality are independence, freedom from conflicts of interest, freedom from bias, freedom from prejudice, neutrality, fairness, open-mindedness, even-handedness, detachment and balance.

18. **Major Non-conformity:** Non-conformity that may result in a systemic risk to the function and effectiveness of the standard and/or affect confidence in the client organisation's claims on certified raw material.
19. **Minor Non-conformity:** Non-conformity that may result in no systemic risk to the function and effectiveness of the chain of custody and/or affect confidence in the supplier's claims on certified raw material.
20. **Observation:** An evaluation finding that does not warrant non-conformity but is identified by the audit team as an opportunity for improvement, also known as OFI.
21. **Permanent Laboratory:** A testing or calibration laboratory set up in a dedicated location for an indeterminate amount of time.
22. **Site Testing/Calibration Facility:** Testing/calibration performed by staff of a laboratory or entity at the customer's premises or location outside of a permanent laboratory.

#### IV. Role of NCCF and CB

**Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests:** NCCF is the Scheme owner and a standards setting organisation which has developed the "Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme" for composite wood products.

NCCF, being the scheme owner, also provides provisional recognition to the Certification Bodies, pending formal accreditation, based on assessment of their competence in accordance with accreditation requirements for Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme



**Certification Body (CB):** Third-party conformity assessment body operating NCCF certification scheme.

## V. General Requirements

### 1. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

CB shall conform with requirements of ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 4.1.1.

### 2. CERTIFICATION AGREEMENT

2.1 CB shall conform with requirements of ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 4.1.2.1

2.2 Certification/service agreement shall clearly define the responsibilities of CB and its client(s); and the same shall be made available to AB upon request.

2.3 The CB shall ensure that its certification/service agreement requires that:

the client shall notify the CB (*within 07 working days*) and the same shall also be notified to AB (within 07 working days) of appropriate changes or implementation that may affect its ability to conform with the certification and/or accreditation requirements.

**Note:** These changes include the following but not limited to: *the legal, commercial, organizational status or ownership; organization and management (e.g., key managerial, decision-making or technical staff); modifications to the product or the production line; contact address and production sites; and changes to the quality control management system.*

### 3. MANAGEMENT OF IMPARTIALITY:

3.1 CB shall conform with requirements of ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 4.2.1, 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.

3.2 If a risk to impartiality is identified, the certification body shall be able to demonstrate how it eliminates or minimizes such risk. This information shall be made available to the NCCF in a specified manner.

3.3 For a minimum period of two years, personnel of the CB shall not be eligible to review, audit or make a certification decision for clients for which they would have provided consultancy or worked for.

3.4 All personnel of the certification body (either internal or external) or committees who could influence the certification activities shall act impartially.

#### **4. LIABILITY AND FINANCING**

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 4.3.

#### **5. NON-DISCRIMINATORY CONDITIONS**

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 4.4.

#### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

6.1 CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 4.5.

6.2 The CB shall agree that NCCF have the right to access confidential information, examine necessary documentation, and access to relevant location(s), premise(s), personnel, and bodies providing outsourced services which are covered under scope of accreditation.

6.3 The CB shall also require that the client is obliged to provide information to the NCCF. To comply with this requirement, the CB shall have the written consent of the organization regarding obligation of the CB to disclose information to the NCCF, if necessary.

#### **7. PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION**

7.1 CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 4.6

7.2 The CB shall inform NCCF, at frequent intervals, about initial/renewal and surveillance audits being conducted under Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme.

7.3 The CB shall ensure to inform and provide information to NCCF about certificates issued on a quarterly basis

7.4 Directory of certified clients: CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012

## VI. Structural Requirements

### 1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND TOP MANAGEMENT

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 5.1

### 2. MECHANISM FOR SAFEGUARDING IMPARTIALITY

2.1 The CB shall not engage with the clients in any activity other than third party conformity assessment in relation to the Scheme. The CB must act impartially and avoid any potential conflicts of interest that could jeopardise its ability to make impartial decisions.

2.2 If the CB is part of a larger organization, it shall ensure that no conflict of interests exists between its verification/certification activities and the functions of other parts of the organization.

2.3 If the CB has related bodies, the CB shall ensure that no conflict of interest exists between its verification/certification activities and the functions of the related bodies.

2.4 The CB shall ensure that no relationship exists between it and its personnel (internal and external) that may be a threat to its impartiality.

2.5 The CB shall ensure that the organization's policy on safeguarding impartiality is understood and implemented at all levels of the organization.

2.6 As part of the CB's accreditation process, the CB shall allow NCCF assessment team, upon request, to observe meetings of the impartiality committee.

**Note:** *Impartiality committee shall be free from any commercial, financial and other pressures that might influence decisions.*

2.7 The CB shall establish, document, implement and maintain a procedure for analyzing potential threats against impartiality.

2.8 The CB shall develop, document, implement, and maintain a procedure for mitigation of threats against its impartiality.

2.9 The CB shall require all of its personnel, both internal and external, to disclose any potential conflict of interest that they are aware of. This information shall be used by the CB to identify threats to impartiality posed by the activities of such personnel or the organisations that employ them;

2.10 The CB's personnel involved in verification/certification activities shall also be bound by the CB's impartiality policy and act impartially in their work through contractual or employment conditions and assignment conditions for each verification/certification

### **3. Integrity of Certification Body**

3.1 The CB must maintain its integrity at all times and shall work in a credible, impartial, non-discriminatory, and transparent manner.

3.2 The CB shall ensure that there are no constraints that might influence its judgement or jeopardise its independence of judgement in relation to its verification/certification activities, *inter alia*, by having sufficient human resources (internal or external), financial resources, and stability.

### **4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

4.1 All data and information relevant to impartiality (such as the conflict of interest analysis, mitigation strategies and actions taken, any non-conformity raised regarding impartiality and corrective actions taken to correct the non-conformities) shall be analysed and reviewed by the CB at least once a year.

4.2 Based on the above data/information, the CB shall carry out an analysis, once a year, of the process to safeguard impartiality and a review of its effectiveness.

4.3 The top management of the CB shall be informed about the recommendations of actions resulting from the review of the process of safeguarding impartiality. The CB shall keep a record of the same.

## VII. Resource Requirements

### 1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 6.1.1

### 2. MANAGEMENT OF COMPETENCE FOR PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 6.1.2

### 3. CONTRACT WITH THE PERSONNEL

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 6.1.3

### 4. REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITOR(S) INVOLVED IN THE CERTIFICATION ACTIVITIES

4.1 The auditor shall have the following educational and professional experience:

- i Tertiary education (college or university qualification) in environmental sciences/ natural resource management/ chemistry/or any other similar discipline, relevant to scheme;
- ii Successful completion of ISO 19011 based auditor training (this includes Auditor training by NCCF);
- iii Knowledge of NCCF Safeboards Certification Scheme;
- iv Minimum two years of work experience including at least one year in relevant industry **OR**  
ten mandays of audit in relevant industry **OR**  
consulting of three clients relating to quality in relevant industry;
- v Two audits in Safeboards certification scheme as trainee auditor under supervision of a Qualified auditor;

**OR**

Auditing experience of minimum two audits in the California Air Resources Board (CARB)/Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Title VI or other emission-based certification schemes for composite wood industry or any other indoor air quality related certification scheme will directly qualify as auditor under SBCS.

- 4.2 For keeping the auditor well-informed and update on the latest developments in sector, maintaining the qualification of auditor, the CB shall ensure to witness auditor once in a year.
- 4.3 CB shall be responsible both for ensuring that the training programme remains up-to-date with scheme updates as needed, to improve its effectiveness.
- 4.4 The CB shall ensure that auditor(s) is competent and have ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:
- i. Requirements of the Safeboards Standards, as applicable;
  - ii. Audit principles, procedures and techniques: to enable the auditor to apply those appropriate to different audits and ensure that audits are conducted in a consistent and systematic manner.
  - iii. Technical aspects and technology used during the production process – to allow the auditor to grasp the activities of the client organization audited and their effects on the certification.
- 4.5 CB shall review the performance of auditor(s) and maintain a record of annual monitoring of auditor(s) applying methods such as audit witnessing, reviewing audit reports or client organisations' feedback, *etc.*, based on the frequency of their usage and the level of risk linked to their activities.
- 4.6 CB shall also review the competence of its other personnel in the light of their performance in order to identify training needs.

## VIII. Management System Requirements

### 1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 8.1

### 2. GENERAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DOCUMENTATION

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 8.2

### 3. CONTROL OF DOCUMENTS

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 8.3

**4. CONTROL OF RECORDS**

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 8.4

**5. MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 8.5

**6. INTERNAL AUDITS**

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 8.6

**7. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 8.7

**8. PREVENTIVE ACTIONS**

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 8.8

**9. RECORDS**

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 7.12

**10. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

CB shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Section 7.13

**IX. Supplementary Requirements**

1. The CB shall comply with the additional requirements of NCCF for accreditation such as Logo Usage of Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR LABORATORIES

- Laboratories shall conform with ISO/IEC 17025
  - I. The conformity assessment body [testing laboratory] shall conduct its testing activities in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025, as applicable, as well as NABL specific criteria and policies, whichever applicable.



## **Annexures**

Annexes to this document provide requirements for or guidance on issues that are not enforced through the accreditation process.

### **Annexure 1 – Accreditations accepted by the NCCF**

- i. NCCF requires that Safeboards Standards and certification Scheme shall be carried out by certification bodies who are accredited by National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) (a member signatory of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) for product certification). The scope of the accreditation shall explicitly cover the NCCF Safeboards Standards in its valid version and/or with reference to any future changes and amendments adopted by the NCCF and presented at the NCCF official website ([www.nccf.in](http://www.nccf.in)). The scope of accreditation shall also explicitly state ISO/IEC 17065, this document and other requirements against which the certification body has been assessed.
- ii. The Safeboards certificates issued by the NABCB accredited Certification Body (and its affiliates) shall bear the (NABCB) accreditation body logo/symbol.
- iii. In case needed, NCCF may recognize any other accreditation body provided it is an IAF MLA signatory for ISO 17065 for which NCCF may prescribe a procedure.

## **Annexure 2 – Notification of certification bodies**

- i. The Safeboards scheme owner notification fee is INR 10,000 per client (legal entity)
- ii. For performing the certifications against NCCF Safeboards Standards and Certification Scheme (SBCS), the Certification Bodies shall be notified by the NCCF and its certificates, recognised by the NCCF (refer NCCF procedures notification to certification bodies)
- iii. In order to ensure the independence of certification bodies, NCCF notification conditions decided by the NCCF shall only cover:
  - a. administrative conditions (*e.g.* communication of the CB with the NCCF Council, transfer of information, etc.)
  - b. financial conditions (fees imposed on certified entities),
  - c. compliance with requirements for certification bodies verified through accreditation as described in this standard.

The NCCF notification conditions shall not discriminate against certification bodies or create trade obstacles.

### **Annexure 3 – Examples of Documentation and Records**

**Note:** *This is not a complete list nor is the certification body required to inspect all documents listed here. Document review process may vary based on product and production process*

- Copies of applicable laws
- Quality Control Manual or any document showing internal quality control/assurance system
- Training Record
- Record of Outsourcing units/organizations
- Complaint Records
- Incoming Material records
- Supplier Documents
- Sales and Purchase documents
- Production Logbook
- Emission Logbook
- Resin Logbook and test reports
- Annual Volume Summary
- Sample Test Reports
- Correlation data
- Label

