




PROTOCOL FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF **LIFE** CERTIFICATION BODIES

LIFE-IN-MP01-1.2- ENGLISH

Version 1.2 International - English

(MAY/2018)

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OBJECTIVE

This procedure establishes the process of accreditation of Certification Bodies by the LIFE Institute.

APPLICATION

This document applies to Certification Bodies interested in being accredited for LIFE Certification.

APPROVAL

Document approved by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors.

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1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION

1.1 General Requirements

1.1.1 Regulatory Compliance

The Certification Body must be separate legal entity, so as to be legally responsible for all its certification activities.

The minimum supporting documentation to be presented to the LIFE Institute is found in Appendix II. The LIFE Institute may request further information and evidence for the purpose of assessing compliance with all requirements of this document.

1.1.2 Impartiality and Exemption

The Certification Body shall not provide consultancy services or even be commercially dependent and/or in commercial relationships that are not related to the certification processes.


1.1.3 Tertiarization

The Certification Body shall not tertiarize the certification processes to other companies.

In the event of the contracting of auditors and external technical specialists, whether autonomous or linked to consultancy companies, this shall occur through an agreement in writing committing the contracted professional to carry out the applicable procedures, thus protecting them from possible conflicts of interest.

The professionals contracted shall sign and deliver to the Certification Body a term of responsibility containing at minimum the following information:

- a) The existence of any direct or indirect employment link with the company to be audited, current or in the three years prior to the auditing, and shall state the type and object of the link;
- b) A signed declaration of responsibility for the absence of any conflict of interest with the company to be audited.

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1.1.4 Financial Capacity

The Certification Body shall demonstrate a financial capacity sufficient to ensure that market pressures shall not result in commercial conflicts of interest. The minimum supporting documentation to be presented to the LIFE Institute is found in Appendix II.

1.2 Requirements for Structure and Operational Sufficiency

1.2.1 Human Resources


The Certification Body shall have (within its own workforce or in a database of external auditors) at least two auditors with the LIFE Certification Training Certificate issued by the LIFE Institute; one of whom shall have both a degree and experience in environmental management, and the other a degree and experience in nature conservation. Both persons' qualifications shall follow the recommendations of the ISO 19011 standard.

The Certification Body shall have up-to-date records of qualified staff, including curricular information which contains: qualification; courses and training attended; and professional experience. The records must permit the identification of the professionals who are qualified to undertake auditing using the LIFE Certification system.

1.2.2 Operational Management

Policies, procedures and documents which describe the internal management processes, containing at minimum:

- a) Document containing a description of the internal management system;
- b) Internal procedure for holding audits;
- c) Procedure for controlling internal and external documents related to the certification processes;
- d) Policy for safeguarding the confidentiality of information obtained during the audits;
- e) Policy to ensure the exemption of conflicts of interest.

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1.2.3 Qualifications

Accreditation¹ by official bodies at a national and/or international level for undertaking auditing of environmental management systems and/or forest management systems.

2 PROCESS OF ACCREDITATION

2.1 Requesting Accreditation

To initiate the accreditation process, the Certification Body interested in undertaking LIFE Certification audits shall fill out the Accreditation Form (Appendix I) and send it to the LIFE Institute, along with the required documentation (Appendix II) and with the proof of payment of the fee referent to the accreditation process.

2.2 Analysis of the Required Documentation

The LIFE Institute shall receive and analyze the Accreditation Form and the documentation sent by the Certification Body applying for accreditation. The conformity of the information and documents sent will be verified in this analysis.

2.3 Approval of Required Documentation


Should the LIFE Institute not approve the documentation, it shall communicate the reason to the Certification Body applying for accreditation and await the complementary documentation necessary for the accreditation process to continue.

Should the documentation be accepted, the LIFE Institute shall inform that the Certification Body is to continue in the accreditation process, and shall arrange the evaluation in its facilities.

2.4 Evaluation of the Certification Body Applicant

The LIFE Institute shall undertake an *in loco* evaluation in the premises of the Certification Body applying for accreditation. This evaluation's objectives are: the confirmation of the information given in the Accreditation Form; the verification of the internal management procedures; and the verification of the capacity to undertake the auditing for LIFE Certification, taking into account the physical structure, quantity and qualification of the technical team.

¹ The accreditation for systems of organic farming or for other systems shall be evaluated by the LIFE Institute.

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The Certification Body is responsible for paying the costs of transport, accommodation and meals for this evaluation to be undertaken.

2.5 Final Decision on the Evaluation of the Applicant Certification Body.

Once the final stages of the analysis of the documentation and *in loco* evaluation have been concluded, the LIFE Institute shall send the final decision to the Certification Body applicant.

2.6 Approval for Accreditation

Should the LIFE Institute approve the accreditation, the Contract of Accreditation shall be sent to the Certification Body for signing.

2.7 Denial of Accreditation

Should the LIFE Institute not approve the accreditation of the Certification Body, a decision notice containing the reasons for the non-approval shall be sent.

2.8 Formalization of the Accreditation by the LIFE Institute


The Certification Body shall sign the Accreditation Contract, with the due legally-recognized signature. The Accreditation Contract shall be signed in two copies, one of which is to remain with the LIFE Institute, and the other in the Certification Body's facilities. From that moment on, the Certification Body passes automatically to be recognized as Accredited for undertaking audits using the LIFE Certification system.

2.9 Issuance of the Accreditation Certificate

After receiving the signed Accreditation Contract and the proof of payment of the annual fee, the LIFE Institute shall send the Certification Body the Accreditation Certificate, which shall be mandatorily kept in the Certification Body's facilities.

3 USE OF THE LIFE LOGO

All the conditions for the use of the LIFE logo, along with the messages associated with LIFE Certification, are described in the procedure LIFE-IN-MP03 (Policy for use of the logo). Whether the Certification Bodies meet the criteria for use of the LIFE logo is auditable by the LIFE Institute.

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4 MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION

4.1 Annual Evaluation

For accreditation to be maintained, the LIFE Institute annually undertakes an evaluation of the Certification Body by analyzing documentation and Witness Audit.

Analysis of the documentation: the Certification Body shall annually update and re-send the required documentation (Appendix III) to the LIFE Institute, taking the anniversary of its accreditation as the deadline for this.

Should the necessity be identified, the LIFE Institute may request clarification or the sending of additional information. The LIFE Institute also reserves the right to re-evaluate annually the Certification Body's premises, should it judge this to be necessary.

Witness Audits: the LIFE Institute shall annually undertake audits in which it will accompany the Certification Body's auditors in official LIFE Certification audits. One such Witness Audit shall take place in each Certification Body per year, this occurring during Certification Audits, Follow-up Audits, or Re-certification Audits. In the event of denunciations or other external requests relevant to the process, the LIFE Institute reserves itself the right to realize additional auditings, termed Verification Audits.


The following are objects of analysis during the Witness Audits:

- a) Meeting all the requirements of the Guide for LIFE Certification Auditing (LIFE-IN-MP02);
- b) Correct interpretation of the methodology of the LIFE Certification system.

All the Witness Audits shall be arranged by the LIFE Institute beforehand with the Certification Body.

At the end of each Witness Audit the LIFE Institute shall send the Certification Body an evaluation report. If non-conformities are detected, these shall be described in the report and shall result in corrective actions.

The Certification Body is responsible for meeting all the costs of the Witness Audits undertaken by the LIFE Institute, involving the auditors, consultants' and specialists' daily rates, as well as transport, accommodation and meal costs.

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5 RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

The accreditation of each Certification Body is valid for five years from the date of the Certificate of Accreditation. After this period, the renewal of Accreditation must be carried out following the same process as the initial Accreditation, and it is up to the LIFE Institute to assess the need to carry out a new on-site visit.

During the accreditation renewal process, the documents listed in Appendix IV should be submitted.

Witness audits are mandatory for the year of renewal of Accreditation.

6 COSTS OF THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The LIFE Institute charges the Certification Body for the fees and expenses directly related to the use of specialized personnel in the accreditation process. The expenses for travelling, meals and accommodation are the responsibility of the Certification Body.

The costs and accreditation fees in each country will be defined according to the best market practices.

In the event of an extraordinary evaluation being necessary due to a complaint or denunciation the Certification Body shall be responsible for all the resulting expenses.

7 WARNING, SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION OF ACCREDITATION

7.1 Certification Body Warning Process


The LIFE Institute may issue a warning to the Certification Body at any moment in the event of the following situations:

- a) Failure to comply with clauses in the Accreditation Contract;
- b) In the verification of the misuse of the Accreditation Certificate or the LIFE logo;
- c) Insolvency.

7.2 Process of Suspension of Accreditation

Failure to undertake corrective actions resulting from the Witness Audits or insolvency can result in the suspension of accreditation with the LIFE Institute. The total period of suspension can vary from three months to one year.

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During this period, the Certification Body may not undertake audits using the LIFE Certification system and shall provide the LIFE Institute with all information requested for the necessary clarifications.

The deadlines for undertaking corrective actions shall not exceed six months. The corrective actions shall be formulated so as to obtain all clarifications necessary for the analysis of the suspension process. The LIFE Institute shall evaluate all information received referent to the corrective actions, so as to the decide whether or not to maintain the suspension of the Certification Body.

7.3 Cancellation of the Accreditation

The LIFE Institute may cancel the accreditation, should the clarifications provided by the Certification Body be insufficient, the corrective actions not be made within the stipulated time-limit, or the insolvency persist after the final deadline stipulated by the LIFE Institute.

7.4 Request for Cancellation of the Accreditation

The Certification Body may request the LIFE Institute for cancellation of accreditation at any time.

In such a case, the Certification Body shall obligatorily transfer the processes of certification which are under its custody to another Certification Body accredited by the LIFE Institute, and return the Certificate of Accreditation.

This process shall be monitored and authorized by the LIFE Institute, as detailed in the Accreditation Contract.


8 NOTIFICATIONS OF CHANGES

The Certification Body shall immediately and formally notify the LIFE Institute when it effects any significant change in the requirements listed below:

- a) Legal or commercial constitution;
- b) Organization, management and responsibilities;
- c) Facilities.

9 ALTERATIONS IN THE ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS


In the event of changes in this Accreditation Protocol, the LIFE Institute shall inform the Certification Bodies, specifying the time limits such that these may adapt.

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10 REFERENCES


ISO/IEC 17011:2017 - Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies


ISO/IEC 17021:2015 - Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems


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11 APPENDICES

Appendix I – Form for Requesting LIFE Institute Accreditation

	Form for Requesting LIFE Institute Accreditation	
	Date / /	
1. Name of Institution:		
2. Company tax identification number - CNPJ:		3. Legal representative:
4. Applicant:		
5. Telephone:		6. e-mail:
7. Address:		
8. Company's time in the market National: International:		
9. Number of certificates in custody::		
10. International Offices:		
11. Information on the Technical Team		
11.1 Direct employees: - Total: - Number of auditors: - Number of lead auditors: - Number of staff trained for LIFE Certification:		
11.2 Registered auditors: - Total: - Number of lead auditors: - Number trained for LIFE Certification:		
12. Is the organization have accredited nationally or internationally? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
12.1 Name of accrediting organization(s):		
12.2 Scope of Accreditation:		


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	Form for Requesting LIFE Institute Accreditation Date / /
	12.3 Expiry Date of Validity: 13. Does the company have another request for Accreditation in process of analysis: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 13.1 Name of Accrediting Organization(s): 13.2 Scope of Accreditation requested: 13.3 Date of request:

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Appendix II – List of documents necessary for the LIFE Certification Accreditation Process.

- a) Proof of fiscal regularity before: Federal Treasury; State Treasury; Municipal Treasury; Social Security; Guarantee Fund for Time of Service;
- b) Statute or social contract of the entity with the latest alteration and minute, duly recorded;
- c) Copy of Company tax identification number (CNPJ);
- d) Master List of management system documents;
- e) Document with description of the internal management system;
- f) Internal procedure for undertaking audits;
- g) Procedure for control of internal and external documents related to certification processes;
- h) Policy for protecting the confidentiality of information obtained during audits;
- i) Policy to ensure the exemption of conflicts of interest – Master List of management system document (should there be any);
- j) Organizational structure: organizational chart, identifying the Senior Management and all management structures, their duties and responsibilities;
- k) List of organization’s own and/or external auditors and technical specialists with profile for evaluation of the LIFE Certification requirements;
- l) Copy of valid certificates of Accreditation;
- m) Report of clients;
- n) List of valid certificates issued in organization’s name.


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Appendix III - Listing of documents required for the Maintenance of Accreditation

- a) Proof of fiscal regularity before: Federal Treasury; State Treasury; Municipal Treasury; Social Security; Guarantee Fund for Time of Service;

When there is change in relation to the previous year:

- a) Organizational structure: organizational chart, identifying the Senior Management and all management structures, their duties and responsibilities;
- b) List of organization's own and/or external auditors and technical specialists with profile for evaluation of the LIFE Certification requirements;
- c) Report of clients;
- d) List of valid certificates issued in organization's name.

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Appendix IV - List of documents required for the Renewal of Accreditation

- a) Proof of fiscal regularity before: Federal Treasury; State Treasury; Municipal Treasury; Social Security; Guarantee Fund for Time of Service;

When there is change in relation to the previous year:

- b) Statute or social contract of the entity with the latest alteration and minute, duly recorded;
- a) Copy of Company tax identification number (CNPJ);
- b) Master List of management system documents;
- c) Document with description of the internal management system;
- d) Internal procedure for undertaking audits;
- e) Procedure for control of internal and external documents related to certification processes;
- f) Policy for protecting the confidentiality of information obtained during audits;
- g) Policy to ensure the exemption of conflicts of interest – Master List of management system document (should there be any);
- h) Organizational structure: organizational chart, identifying the Senior Management and all management structures, their duties and responsibilities;
- i) List of organization's own and/or external auditors and technical specialists with profile for evaluation of the LIFE Certification requirements;
- j) Copy of valid certificates of Accreditation;
- k) Report of clients;
- l) List of valid certificates issued in organization's name.