

Global Solar Certification Network

Working Rules



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1 Preface

This document is prepared by Harald Drück, GSCN Chairman with comments / input from Eileen Prado, GSCN Treasurer and Executive Director Solar Rating & Certification Corporation (SRCC), USA; Jan Erik Nielsen, GSCN Manager and manager of SolarKey Int., Denmark; Jaime Fernández González-Granda, Member of GSCN Internal Quality Committee and Product Officer, AENOR, Spain; Les Nelson, GSCN Vice Chair and Vice President IAPMO Solar Heating & Cooling Programs, USA and other distinguished colleagues.

The basic work for the elaboration of this document was performed within the Task 43 (Solar Rating and Certification) of the Solar Heating and Cooling Program (SHC) of the International Energy Agency (IEA).

2 Role and functions

The overall mission of the Global Solar Certification Network (GSCN) is to act as a framework for – and give support to - the harmonization of testing and inspection procedures and certification programmes for solar thermal products.

The aim of the GSCN activities is to facilitate worldwide cross-border trading for manufacturers of solar thermal products and minimize the need for re-testing and re-inspection in different countries.

The Global Solar Certification Network is the experience exchange circle of all parties involved in Global Solar Certification activities.

The key activity of the Global Solar Certification Network (GSCN) is to harmonize procedures for certification, testing and inspection of solar thermal products.

To achieve this goal the GSCN may:

- recommend and define requirements for certification bodies, testing laboratories, inspectors and inspections bodies participating in certification schemes to be recognized by the GSCN
- assist in cases of complaints, disputes and appeals, related to the harmonized procedures
- definition of guidelines how to proceed in cases where the available standards are unclear, outdated, limited in scope, inappropriate or not detailed enough
- assist in development of improved and/or new standards
- assist in improving and further developing certification schemes for solar thermal products
- perform activities to assure quality of work performed by testing laboratories, inspectors and inspection bodies as well as certification bodies
- may organise peer assessment activities and round robin activities
- exchange of experience concerning certification, testing and inspection of solar thermal products

Administrative activities shall include:

- operate the GSCN web site
- promote GSCN, international standards and harmonization of certification schemes
- maintenance of working rules for the GSCN
- organise meetings of the GSCN
- set fees for the participation in the GSCN

3 Participation in the GSCN

In principle, the GSCN is open to all parties interested in harmonizing, improving and further developing global certification of solar thermal products.

Members are divided into two main groups:

- Active members: Operating bodies and industry members utilizing the concept of re-using test and inspection reports
- Passive members: Observers and others

An updated list of active and passive members shall be kept by the GSCN manager.

3.1 Active members

3.1.1 Operating bodies

Representatives from the following groups can be members in the GSCN:

- accredited certification bodies recognized by the GSCN
- accredited testing laboratories, inspectors and inspection bodies recognized by the GSCN

All operating bodies shall participate in at least every second regular meeting of the GSCN.

Accreditation certificates for certification bodies, inspection bodies and test labs shall be published at the website of the Global Solar Certification Network (WWW.GSCN.SOLAR) - alternatively a link to a website on that the accreditation certificate is directly available can be used.

All operating bodies shall sign up for membership using the template given in Annex E "Template for signing up for the Global Solar Certification Network".

3.1.1.1 Certification bodies

Certification bodies participating in the GSCN shall be recognised by the GSCN Board based on Annex A "Requirements for Certification Bodies and their subcontracted laboratories, inspection bodies and inspectors".

The certification body shall recognize at least one test lab and one inspection body also recognized by another certification body within 1 year from becoming a member. The GSCN will make available to the member, assessments done by the QAC on test labs and inspection bodies. The certification body should take into account the result of assessments done by the QAC when applying their own assessment procedures for test labs and inspectors. Test labs and inspectors / inspection bodies that are positively assessed by the QAC and fulfil requirements in Annex A should in general be accepted by the certification body. If the acceptance is not granted by the CB, this decision shall be documented.

3.1.1.2 Testing laboratories

Test labs participating in the GSCN shall be recognised by the GSCN Board based on Annex A "Requirements for Certification Bodies and their subcontracted laboratories, inspection bodies and inspector".

Test labs shall have recognition from at least two certification bodies within 1 year from becoming member.

The recognition of the test lab by a certification body should not be based on the collection of fees.

3.1.1.3 Inspectors and Inspection bodies

Inspectors and Inspection bodies participating in the GSCN shall be recognised by the GSCN quality assurance committee (QAC) based on Annex A "Requirements for Certification Bodies and their subcontracted laboratories, inspection bodies and inspectors".

Inspectors and Inspection bodies shall have recognition by at least two certification bodies within 1 year from becoming member.

The recognition of the Inspectors and Inspection bodies by a certification body should not be based on the collection of fees.

3.1.2 Industry members

Any manufacturer and industry association can join the network – only requirement is paying the annual fee.

Industry members can utilize the concept of re-using of test and inspection reports from one member certification body to another.

3.2 Passive members

Any interested party may participate as non-voting passive member with reduced fee (and services). This could be:

- certification bodies considering becoming active members
- testing laboratories considering becoming active members
- inspection bodies considering becoming active members
- manufacturers considering utilizing the system
- industry associations wanting to gather information
- other associations
- authorities
- ...

4 Board and infrastructure of GSCN

4.1 General infrastructure

The GSCN will have a number of internal committees or working groups and a board to facilitate the work and assure a harmonized way of working and a fair competition among its members.

4.2 Board

The board will have the responsibility of assuring that the policies of the GSCN are executed by the manager.

Board members are chosen among members of the GSCN in the following way:

- 2 test laboratory members per continent
- 2 certification body members per continent
- 2 industry representative per continent

Note: In this context the following regions are considered as a continent: Europe, North America, South America, Africa including Middle East, Asia, Oceania

Within the board there will be four officers with relevant responsibilities: Chairman, vice chairman, treasurer and secretary.

Officers of the GSCN may be proposed by any member.

The officers of the GSCN shall be related to at least one of the GSCN member categories and be elected as an individual.

The chairman and treasurer will be appointed for a period of 2 years and may be re-elected for further terms.

The vice chairman and secretary will be appointed initially for one year, then for a period of 2 years and may be re-elected for further terms.

In the absence of the chairman the vice chairman chairs the meeting.

In order to conduct a vote at board meetings there must be at least half of the board members present and at least three officers present and at least one representative from each of the three sectors (laboratories, certification bodies, and industry). An officer can represent a sector.

If a board member misses 3 consecutive meetings (without being excused by the chair), he/she can be removed from the board.

Voting can be done electronically between meetings, 10 days shall be allowed for the voting.

In order to keep a balanced representation, the officers must, at the time of election, have at least one member from each of the three sectors (laboratories, certification bodies, and industry) and there may be no more than two officers from the same continent.

4.2.1 Composition of the Board

4.2.1.1 Board member sector and qualifications

The board shall be composed of at least ten (10) and not more than thirty (36) voting members. Each board member shall represent a single organisation and no organisation shall be represented by more than one board member. Board members shall be chosen from the following three (3) stakeholder sectors:

- Industry Sector representatives, who shall be individuals employed or authorised by a GSCN Participant in good standing, and be involved in the manufacture, production, distribution, sale or installation of components or whole goods relating to certified products and services;
- Testing Laboratory Sector representatives, who shall be individuals employed or authorised by a GSCN Testing Laboratory Participant in good standing; and,
- Certification Body Sector representatives, who shall be individuals employed or authorised by a GSCN Certification Body Participant in good standing

Testing Laboratory Sector and Certification Body Sector representative shall not own, or be employed by, any solar energy product industry entity, nor shall they derive any significant direct income or other financial benefit from such solar energy industry activities. The Board shall establish policies regulating testing laboratory and certification body board members disclosure requirements, and the procedures for the review of board members disclosure statements.

4.2.1.2 Additional board member requirements

No more than 49% of the board shall be comprised of any one of the three sectors described previously at the time of elections. In addition, no more than 49% of the board shall be employed in or reside in the same continent at the time of elections. The Board may include the GSCN Immediate Past Chair, or another recent Past Chair if the Immediate Past Chair is unavailable or unwilling to serve. The Board shall establish policies to ensure that each Stakeholder Sector is represented appropriately on the Board with voting privileges, consistent with Board conflict of interest policies.

4.2.1.3 Qualification of board members

All board members shall possess appropriate experience, education, or training related to solar thermal energy, non-profit administration, or corporate and business operations, and shall be otherwise qualified according to requirements in this document and applicable corporate policies. The board may, in its discretion, determine additional qualifications for board members consistent with the requirements in this document.

4.2.1.4 Use of alternates (substitutes) in the GSCN Board meetings.

Use of alternates for board officers is not possible.

For other board members it is possible if the alternate present to the GSCN manager and the Chairman (at least one day before the board meeting) a letter or an email from the elected board member stating that:

- <name of alternate> will represent and vote on behalf of <name of board member> at the board meeting <date>
- <name of alternate> will have full authority to speak and vote on behalf of <name of board member> in matters dealt with in the agenda for the board meeting <date> and other related matters
- no board member or alternate shall have more than one vote

Note: Resolutions and decisions made in the presence of alternates have the same binding character as if they had been made in the presence of ordinary board members

4.2.2 Duties and functions of the Board

4.2.2.1 General Authority

GSCN shall be governed by the board, which shall carry out the purposes and objectives of the Network. The board shall manage, control, and supervise the business, activities, property, funds, and other affairs of the Network. The board shall, if appropriate and possible: uphold and execute the purposes of the Network; appoint and remunerate agents and employees; disburse funds of the Network; purchase, sell, transfer and establish and adopt such policies, rules, and regulations for the conduct of its business or any other lawful activities deemed necessary to further the purposes of the GSCN, in accordance with these working rules, in their present or amended form, and with any applicable law.

4.2.2.2 Conduct and Limitations of the Board

The board shall be granted the authority to establish policies and procedures specifying board limitations and conduct, including, but not limited to, the following:

4.2.2.2.1 Compensation for GSCN activities

Unless authorized by applicable law, board members, including officers, shall not receive any compensation, or other tangible or financial benefit from any element or activity of, or related to, the GSCN, except as reimbursement for actual, reasonable expenses directly associated with such GSCN element or activity, when authorized by the board.

4.2.2.2.2 Confidentiality and conflict of interests

The board shall establish a Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Policy and Agreement to be accepted and signed by all GSCN board members, Staff, and other representatives, contractors, and agents as a condition of service to the Network.

4.2.3 Manager

The manager will be responsible for technical work and administration in the GSCN and in its different working groups, communication and marketing activities including the web page WWW.GSCN.SOLAR.

4.2.4 Standing Committees and Working Groups

- Certification bodies working group
- Testing Laboratories working group
- Inspector and Inspection bodies working group
- Industry working group
- Quality assurance committee. Will do the assessment for recognition of operating bodies and make recommendation to the board. Will be responsible for assuring a harmonized level of quality and may organize peer auditing. This committee may deal with any appeals or complaints.

For each group there will be a chair. The manager should participate in all meetings of the committees and working groups.

4.2.5 Ad-hoc Working Groups

In order to solve any issues, specific working groups may be created. In this case, there will always be a leader or chair of the group and the manager should participate.

5 Meetings

5.1 Preparation of meetings

GSCN meetings are organised by the GSCN **manager** and performed by the GSCN chairman on behalf of the GSCN board.

Meeting documents shall be sent out by electronic means.

Deadlines for circulation of the main documents (invitation to the meeting and the first draft agenda) for in person GSCN meetings shall be made available 2 months before the meeting by the GSCN manager. For web meetings one week.

Input to the draft agenda (proposals for decisions/resolutions or any item to be added) shall be sent to GSCN manager at least 3 weeks before the in person meetings. Final draft agenda shall be circulated at least 2 weeks before the meeting by the GSCN manger.

5.1.1 Guests

The GSCN Chairman and the GSCN Manager may invite experts from industry or other institutions to give relevant input on issues on the meeting agenda – can include:

- the chairman or a representative of ISO TC 180
- the chairman or a representative of the IEA Solar Heating and Cooling Program
- official representatives of consumers

Any member of the GSCN can propose to the GSCN Chairman and Manager to invite experts for specific items related to the meeting agenda.

5.2 Resolutions and decisions

Resolutions are decisions concerning changes in GSCN working rules.

All proposals for resolutions shall be attached to a proposal for how to include / implement the resolution in the related document, i.e. a revised document showing tracked changes. Proposals for resolutions can be made simply giving a reference to the revised document with the changes implemented.

All proposals for resolutions and decisions shall be sent to GSCN manager at least 3 weeks before a meeting to consider the changes.

5.3 Reporting

The minutes shall be a proper record of all decisions and resolutions of the meeting.

All resolutions are reported in the GSCN meeting minutes and shall be marked:

“Resolution Mx.Ry.year -Title”, with

x = number of meeting,

y = number of resolution,

year = year when the resolution was taken;

Title = the title of the resolution.

The related document shall be revised according to agreed proposal and should be published within two weeks.

The draft minutes of the meeting shall be circulated not later than 4 weeks after the meeting.

The minutes will be considered as approved if there are no significant comments sent to the GSCN Manager and Chairman within 30 days after having been sent out. Final approval of the minutes will be done formally at the following GSCN meeting.

A list of all principle decisions of the GSCN - which are not resolutions according to 5.2 - will be made available via the GSCN decision list in the public accessible area of the website of the Global Solar Certification Network.

The approved minutes of the meetings and all other official GSCN documents (documents with a GSCN number) will be made available in the restricted area of the website of the Global Solar Certification Network.

6 Voting and voting rights of the GSCN

6.1 General

In all cases where a decision or resolution is required, every effort shall be made to reach consensus.

When necessary, a decision or resolution may be reached by voting: either by a show of hands and/or using an electronic ballot system during the meeting or by correspondence (within specified time) after the meeting in combination with an electronic ballot system.

6.2 Voting preconditions

Voting at meetings is only possible

- at ordinary meetings if more than 33 % of the members are present (physically or electronically) and representation of all sectors
- if the items (together with supporting documentation) were mentioned on the final draft agenda

When a resolution or decision is taken by vote, only GSCN active members in good standing may vote. Passive members and invited guests have no voting rights.

Each member of the GSCN attending the meeting personally or electronically has **one** vote. The formal vote can be made by showing hands and / or using an electronic ballot system.

In case of a formal voting all votes (positive, negative and abstentions) shall be counted.

The GSCN Chairman does not vote unless there is a tie and a tie-breaking vote is necessary.

Abstentions shall not be counted as a vote for the determination of the majority.

Every participant is considered as member of one (1) of the following “sectors”. Nobody is allowed to be member of more than one sector.

- Certification bodies (20%)
- Testing laboratories (20%)
- Industry representatives (40%)
- Inspectors and Inspection bodies (20%)

Number in brackets indicates the weighting of the sector votes – each sectors voting is multiplied with this factor.

6.3 Voting rules at the GSCN meetings

For all resolutions and decision, a simple majority of all the voters is required.

6.4 Voting rules between GSCN meetings

In between the meetings decisions may be taken by electronic vote using an internet based electronic ballot system. However, no Electronic Vote Procedure may be initiated if the closing date of the vote may fall within less than two month before a scheduled GSCN meeting.

Electronic votes, initiated by the GSCN Chairman will be conducted and managed by the GSCN manager.

7 Use of logo

The logo (see fig.1) is use in the following way:

- All active members i.e. recognized operating bodies plus manufacturers having active membership, can show the logo together with company name at company web sites and in other company promotional material
- GSCN web site and other GSCN promotional material can show the logo
- Any use of the logo, which could indicate that the logo is a product certification mark is not allowed. Hence, it is not allowed to use logo on products nor in connection with description/promotion of products
- The GSCN logo is given in latest version of GSC_N0019. GSCN logos shall be based on direct copies of GSC_N0019. The logo may be resized, but the text shall still be legible/readable. Latest versions of the logo from the GSCN manager
- Complaints on incorrect use of logo shall be given to the manager in written form including an illustration how the logo is used. The manager will put the issue on a board meeting together with a proposal for a decision



Figure 1. Logo of the Global Solar Certification Network. (Note: New logo being prepared with "Member of" included and also a TM to be connected to the "GSCN" if possible)

8 Confidentiality

All parties involved in the GSCN shall maintain confidentiality of the information obtained in the course of conformity assessment procedures and from test and inspection reports, unless written consent is given by the manufacturer and by the certification bodies involved.

9 Financing of GSCN

The participation in the Network may involve a fee to be paid annually to the Network as given in Annex D "Fees for the Global Solar Certification Network".

Listing on the GSCN website of certification bodies, test labs and inspectors may involve a fee to be paid annually to the Network.

The payments are to be transferred – based on invoices – to the GSCN treasurer.

The income from these fees shall cover the activities of the GSCN.

It will be possible to have other income from projects and sponsorships on the condition that the Board approves these conditions.

Fees for the next financial year are determined at the annual GSCN meeting.

The GSCN manager shall be paid from the fees and other income.

The GSCN treasurer will prepare annual financial reports to be distributed to the voting members.

10 Annexes

10.1 Annex A: Requirements for certification bodies and their inspection bodies and test labs

see separate document

10.2 Annex B1: Template for test results / data sheet

see separate document

10.3 Annex B2: Template for inspection report

see separate document

10.4 Annex C1: Requirements for the factory production control

see separate document

10.5 Annex D: Fees for the Global Solar Certification Network

see separate document

10.6 Annex E: Template for signing up for the Global Solar Certification Network

see separate document