

Global Solar Certification Network
Working Rules



Annex A. Requirements for Certification Bodies and their subcontracted laboratories, inspection bodies and inspectors

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1 Scope

This document describes the requirements and procedures for Certification Bodies and their subcontracted Inspection Bodies and Testing Laboratories to obtain and maintain recognition by the Global Solar Certification Network.

2 Normative References

The following referenced documents are the basis of recognition. The latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 17065	Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
ISO/IEC 17020	Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection
ISO/IEC 17025	Conformity assessment – General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories
ISO/IEC Guide 28	Conformity assessment – Guidance on a third-party certification system for products
ISO 9806	Solar energy – Solar thermal collectors – Test methods
ISO/IEC 17011	Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
GSC-N0001	Global Solar Certification Network – Working rules (including all annexes)

3 Requirements for Certification Bodies and their subcontracted Laboratories, Inspection Bodies and Inspectors

In order for a Certification Body (CB) to obtain and maintain recognition by the GSCN, the following requirements shall be met:

- The CB shall have a Certification Scheme for solar thermal collectors that includes in its scope testing according to ISO 9806. An updated version of the complete set of certification scheme rules shall be available for the GSCN in the English language.
- The CB shall be accredited according to ISO/IEC 17065 with clear traceability in its Accreditation Certificate to its Certification Scheme or applicable Product Standard(s).
- Its Accreditation Body shall be a member of IAF (International Accreditation Forum) and a signatory of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Agreement. Therefore, its accreditation must be in compliance with ISO/IEC 17011.
- The CB shall have defined in its Scheme Rules or internal working documents, and shall have implemented the use of the following harmonized annexes of the GSCN rules:
 - Requirements for factory production control defined in Annex C1
 - Test report template defined in Annex B1
 - Inspection report template defined in Annex B2
- The CB shall enforce the procedures defined in section 6 for accepting inspection and test reports previously completed by another GSCN recognized member

- The CB shall facilitate compliance with section 7 for the surveillance procedure(s) of its licence holder(s) that have been granted a Certificate by another GSCN Certification Body

Inspection requirements may fall into one or both of the following categories:

1. Where Certification Bodies qualify or approve inspectors and integrate this activity within the scope of their accreditation according to ISO/IEC 17065, the requirements are:

- There shall be an updated list of qualified or approved inspectors
- There shall be a procedure for qualifying or approving inspectors and maintaining such qualifications or approvals (available in the English language)
- At least one inspector of the certification body shall be recognized by at least one other member certification body within one year from when the CB became a member.

2. Where Certification Bodies subcontract inspectors in such a way that this activity is not integrated within their ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation, the requirements are:

- The inspection body shall be accredited according to ISO/IEC 17020
- Its accreditation body shall be a member of IAF (International Accreditation Forum) and a signatory of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Agreement
- There shall be an updated list of qualified inspectors
- There shall be a procedure for qualifying inspectors and maintaining such qualifications (available in the English language)
- The inspection body shall be recognized by at least two certification bodies within one year of becoming member

To become an active member a testing laboratory shall comply with the following:

- A. A valid accreditation¹ showing compliance with the provisions of ISO/IEC 17025 with the scope of the current version of ISO 9806.
- B. ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation for the last 5 years for one of the following Standards (EN 12975-1&2, ISO 9806, SD 100 or equivalent).
- C. Minimum 5 years of experience in solar collector testing according to the above standards.
- D. Minimum 10 certificates (for solar thermal collectors) issued from one or more certification bodies which are accredited² according to ISO/IEC 17065 and based on test reports prepared by the test lab – or - recognition by at least 2 certification bodies - from different countries - meeting the ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation criteria stated just above.
- E. Commitment to have recognition by at least 2 certification bodies within one year of becoming a member

As an alternative to B through D an assessment by the QAC can be done, and a recommendation from the QAC to the board to recognize the test lab can be given. Final decision is done by the board.

¹ The accreditation of the testing laboratory must be awarded by a signatory to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement: <http://ilac.org/ilac-mra-and-signatories/>

² The accreditation of the certification body must be awarded by a signatory to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement: <http://ilac.org/ilac-mra-and-signatories/>

4 Procedure for becoming recognized by the GSCN

4.1 Application

A Certification Body seeking recognition by the GSCN shall fill out the corresponding template defined in Annex G and submit it to the GSCN Manager together with the following information:

- Copy of Accreditation Certificate according to ISO/IEC 17065 in English
- Evidence of its Accreditation Body's membership in the IAF and of it being a signatory to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Agreement.
- Copy of Scheme Rules or internal documents that show evidence of using the GSCN harmonized Inspection Report Template and harmonized Factory Production Control procedures, in the English language
- Copy of Scheme Rules that show evidence of using EN ISO 9806 in the Certification Scheme (in the original language and in English translation)
- List of recognized testing laboratories
- List of qualified or approved inspectors
- Where inspections are subcontracted to an external Inspection Body, a copy of its Accreditation Certificate according to ISO/IEC 17020, together with a list of qualified inspectors

An Inspection Body seeking recognition by the GSCN shall fill out the corresponding template defined in Annex G and submit it to the Manager together with the following information:

- A copy of its Accreditation Certificate according to ISO/IEC 17020
- List of qualified or approved inspectors
- Proof of recognition by at least 1 certification body

A test lab seeking recognition by the GSCN shall fill out the corresponding template defined in Annex G and submit it to the Manager together with the following information:

- A copy of its Accreditation Certificate according to ISO/IEC 17025
- Proof of recognition by at least 1 certification body
- Documentation for requirements B through D in section 3 fulfilled

The GSCN Manager will send an acknowledgement of receipt to the applicant, and will review the application to ensure the documentation is complete. Once complete, applications will be submitted to the GSCN Board for final review.

4.2 Decision

The QAC will confirm the validity of submitted information, and within four weeks of receiving the application will submit its recommendation to the Board, which will then give its decision to the Manager.

If the decision is positive, then the GSCN Manager will inform the Certification Body or Inspection Body and the recognized members will be updated in the GSCN Website.

If the decision is not positive, the Board will give the reasons and may ask for more information, or may ask for an assessment. If the applicant agrees to an assessment, it will take place within a period of one month.

4.3 Assessment due to a negative decision by the Board

The Assessment shall be performed by auditor(s) selected by the Board. It shall consist of a desk audit that shall, at minimum, check the following:

- The Accreditation Certificates
- The most recent Accreditation Inspection Report
- The most recent inspection report(s) completed by the qualified inspectors to show evidence of the use of harmonized templates
- The most recent accreditation report that shows evidence that the inspector was audited during an inspection visit by the accreditation body
- Evidence that testing standard ISO 9806 is being used in the Certification Scheme
- Any other issues that the auditor(s) may consider relevant

The result of the assessment will be submitted to the Board. The Board will review the assessment report and within four weeks of receipt will send its decision to the Manager.

5 Procedure for maintaining recognition of Certification Bodies and Inspection Bodies by the GSCN

In order to maintain recognition by the GSCN, all of the requirements defined in Chapter 3 shall be met continuously. Once a year, the GSCN Manager will ask the Certification Body and the Inspection Body and test lab to communicate any update in the status of the following documents:

- Accreditation Certificates
- Scheme Rules or internal documents that show evidence of compliance with GSCN Requirements (testing according to ISO 9806, using harmonized Inspection Template and applying harmonized Factory Production Control)

In addition to this, the Certification Bodies shall submit evidence of:

- Maintenance of qualification of their inspectors
- Evidence of audit of inspectors during an on-site inspection by the accreditation body at least once every five years

In case of non-compliance with any of these requirements, the Manager will inform the Board, which may determine the need for an assessment according to the procedure defined in clause 4.3.

6 Request from a GSCN recognized IB or LAB to a GSCN recognized CB for recognition within the CB Certification Scheme

A GSCN recognized CB may receive a request from other GSCN recognized inspectors, Inspection Bodies or Test Labs to become authorized or recognized in accordance with the CB's Certification Scheme. In order to harmonize GSCN activities, and encourage networking among its members, the objective of the GSCN is to facilitate such requests. Each CB shall comply with the following procedures:

- Each CB shall have a specific procedure for qualifying, authorizing or recognizing GSCN members
- A response to each request for qualification, authorization or recognition by a CB in accordance with its own scheme shall be provided by the CB
- Information on the procedure shall be provided to the inspector, inspection body or laboratory
- The final outcome of the process shall be communicated to the interested parties

Where the CB fails to recognize the laboratory, or fails to qualify or authorize the inspector/IB under its own procedure within 3 months, the CB shall notify the GSCN Manager. The Manager will inform the GSCN Board in order to study the situation and possibly take a decision. The decision taken may be:

- Modification of internal rules to harmonize requirements better
- Sanction against a member that is not complying with the GSCN rules

7 Acceptance by a GSCN recognized CB of Test and Inspection Reports that have been previously performed by other GSCN recognized members

A GSCN recognized CB may receive an application by a manufacturer for the granting of a Certificate that may include inspection and testing activities that have been previously performed by other GSCN recognized members. Normally, the application by the manufacturer is received first, and the inspections and tests are carried out afterwards, at the discretion and control of the CB. However, the objective of the GSCN is to facilitate and optimize this recognition process in order to harmonize GSCN activities and increase networking among its members.

CBs may have different criteria or procedures for accepting test reports or inspections that have taken place before a manufacturer applies to a CB. The main steps of these procedures are described on the GSCN website. There are two main cases:

Case 1: The activities of inspection and testing have been performed after the qualification, authorization or recognition by the CB

- The CB shall have a specific procedure to facilitate accepting previously completed inspections and tests from GSCN recognized members that the CB also recognizes in order to avoid repetition of work that has already been performed. This procedure is set forth on the GSCN website.
- Upon receipt of an application, the CB will enforce its own procedure for certification, which may include activities that have not previously been performed (such as other tests in its scheme or an inspection with requirements that have not been checked).
- Once the certification process is finished, the CB will communicate the decision to the manufacturer, following its own procedures, and also to the GSCN Manager

Case 2: The activities of inspection and testing have been performed before the qualification, authorization or recognition by the CB

- The CB shall have a specific procedure explaining how to proceed when the activities are performed before recognition. There may be circumstances where it will not be possible to accept these test and inspection reports depending on the age of the reports and the status of the test lab / inspector when completed.
- The main outline of this procedure will be available on the GSCN website.
- Where the CB determines that previous tests or inspections can be used, the CB will proceed as in case 1.

8 Surveillance of a manufacturer that is a licence holder of two different GSCN recognized Certification Bodies

When the GSCN agreement has been successful in avoiding repetition of tests and inspections, it will occur that a manufacturer will have been granted two Certificates from two different Certification Bodies for the same product. When this occurs, both Certification Bodies will have their own surveillance procedures, and both may require periodic inspections to take place at the same manufacturing plant. However, the objective is to avoid the repetition of annual inspections in the same manufacturing plant for two different certification Bodies. In order to achieve this goal, one inspector may perform the inspection on behalf of two different Certification Bodies at the same time.

Certification Bodies may have different criteria for follow-up inspections. For example, a CB may ask for a change of inspector according to a pre-determined schedule in order to avoid repeatedly sending the same inspector to a given manufacturing plant. In accordance with the GSCN agreement, each recognized Certification Body shall comply with the following procedures:

- When a license holder of a recognized CB for a given product is also the license holder of another recognized CB for the same product, there shall be an understanding in order to avoid the repetition of inspections during surveillance activities needed to maintain the Certificates
- Under the GSCN agreement, both CBs have already relied upon the same GSCN recognized inspector for the granting of the Certificate, therefore this same inspector may perform surveillance inspections for both CBs
- Each CB shall have a specific procedure explaining any requirements regarding the frequency of change of inspectors for the same manufacturer. This information shall be declared on the GSCN website

Where manufacturers introduce changes in their certified products that may require retesting, it is the responsibility of the manufacturer to follow the procedures of each of the Certification Body's Scheme Rules and immediately inform the CBs that sample taking and retesting will be necessary, in order to organize the activities properly and avoid double inspections and testing.

9 Withdrawal of Membership or recognition and Right to Use the logo

The membership or recognition by GSCN and right to use the mark can be withdrawn if:

- the GSCN logo is misused (see GSCN001 for rules of use of logo)
- the requirements laid down in the working rules or its accompanying documents are not fulfilled,
- the fees to GSCN are not paid on the due date,