

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AUTHORISATION OF VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION BODIES

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Documents related to this Form:

1. Application Form for the Authorisation of Validation and Verification Bodies
 2. CERCARBONO Voluntary Certification Protocol
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Prologue

This document describes the requirements of the CERCARBONO Certification Programme for Validation and Verification Bodies (VVBs) to obtain the authorisation to operate under the Programme and the procedures they must comply with in the development of the validation and verification stages, including:

- The criteria and procedure under which a VVB is authorised (and maintains authorisation) as a VVB.
- The fundamental principles underpinning the validation and verification processes.

To create a transparent and consistent approach to standards and certification of Climate Change (CC) mitigation projects, the requirements and procedures presented here are complemented by those outlined in the CERCARBONO Voluntary Certification Programme Protocol.

This document is approved by the CERCARBONO Board of Directors. Each modification or update must also be approved by the CERCARBONO Board of Directors.

1.2 Scope

This document is addressed to VVBs, as an application guide to the CERCARBONO certification programme to be included in the CERCARBONO list of approved VVBs. This document may also be useful to project holders, developers, other carbon market actors and society in general who are interested in learning about the approval processes of VVBs under CERCARBONO.

The requirements and procedures described in the document must be fully applied and complied with by VVBs carrying out validation or verification processes of CC mitigation projects under CERCARBONO.

1.3 Transition

VVBs that have been authorised under the CERCARBONO Programme may continue to operate as long as they comply with the requirements and procedures set out herein; if they do not comply with any of the requirements, they will have one year from the date of publication of this document to adopt these requirements and procedures.

VVBs that have not yet been authorised by CERCARBONO must comply with the requirements and procedures set out in this document.

2 REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL AS A VVB UNDER CERCARBONO

This section of the document describes the requirements and procedures to be fulfilled for a validation and verification body to be approved by the CERCARBONO Voluntary Certification Programme.

2.1 General requirements

- All VVBs authorised by CERCARBONO must comply with the requirements described in this document and with any other guidelines or requirements defined in the certification protocol.
- The results obtained in the validation and verification processes must be performed under ISO 14064-2:2019 and 14064:2013.
- VVBs must not have any pending legal proceedings for malpractice or fraud at any time.
- VVBs must ensure that for the entire duration of their authorisation they will have sufficient resources and technical staff to ensure the necessary competence to fulfil their operations related to the validation and verification processes.
- Final decisions related to the approval, suspension or cancellation of the authorisation status of VVBs will always be taken by the CERCARBONO Board of Directors.

2.2 Eligibility

The Validation and Verification Bodies (VVBs) authorised by CERCARBONO must fulfil at least one of the following conditions:

First condition

Be accredited by an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) signatory member accreditation body, which has in its service offering the GHG Emission Validation or Verification Body accreditation programme under the requirements of ISO 14065:2013.

Second condition

To be accredited under the United Nations Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as a Designated Operational Entity (DOE).

Bodies in the process of achieving authorisation may carry out a validation or verification process as a witness audit during their accreditation process with a member of the IAF.

In the event that a VVB has its accreditation cancelled, modified or not renewed by the aforementioned bodies, it must immediately notify the CERCARBONO programme at info@cercarbono.com. The VVB must provide all information related to the projects with

which they are related at the moment; in the cases of projects with pending validation and verification processes, the CERCARBONO Board of Directors will decide on any additional conditions or actions required.

CERCARBONO will have a record of the accreditation dates of each of the authorised VVBs for the programme, together with the list of auditors. Authorised VVBs are obliged to provide the programme with updated accreditation information and a list of auditors. In case of evidence of expiry without renewal of accreditations or the performance of any process with an unauthorised technician, the authorisation of the VVB will be suspended.

2.2.1 Necessity to change the VVB

In order to guarantee the transparency of the validation and verification processes, as well as to prevent situations that generate conflicts of interest, it is necessary that the VVBs attending the validation and subsequently the verifications is changed after three of these consecutive events.

In cases where it can be demonstrated that, due to sectoral or technical scope or for any other reason deemed relevant by the programme, the project has no other choice of authorised VVB to carry out the verification, it will not be necessary to change the VVB after a third consecutive verification has been carried out.

2.3 Processes

CERCARBONO authorised VVBs must comply with the following steps (Figure 1):

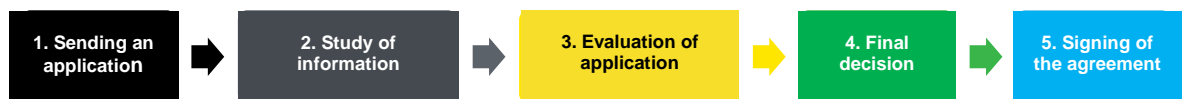



Figure 1. Summary of the steps to be fulfilled by VVBs in order to be authorised by CERCARBONO

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1. At this stage, the representative of the VVB must send an email to info@cercarbono.com with the subject “Application for approval of a VVB”, in which the following supports or documents must be attached:
 - ✓ VVB authorisation application form.
 - ✓ Documentary evidence referenced in Section B of the form (VVB accreditations). This document or support must be clear, specifying the sectors that are within the scope of the authorisation of the VVB.
 2. At this stage, CERCARBONO generates a response to the VVB representative acknowledging receipt of the information and subsequently starts the study of the documents submitted by the VVB and verifies the integrity of the documents provided. This stage is in charge of the secretariat area, which, if at the moment of reviewing the information contained in the documentation, considers it incomplete, will make the corresponding notification or request to the organisation. The evaluation process of the VVB application does not continue until the information and documentation is complete.

The duration of this stage, provided the documentation is complete, is 3 to 4 days. Otherwise, the time is extended until completion.
 3. Once the secretariat has verified that the application documentation is complete, the evaluation of the application starts with a notification to the CERCARBONO Board. The duration of this stage is approximately 2 weeks, as long as the Board does not make additional requests to the agency. Otherwise, the time is extended until such requests are dealt with by the VVB.
 4. At this stage, CERCARBONO will communicate to the VVB the decision taken by the Board of Directors on the approval or rejection of the application. Where the decision of the Board is approval, the following information regarding the application shall be included in the response:
 - a) Authorised sectors.
 - b) Authorised auditors per sector.
 5. The last step is the signing of the collaboration agreement where the relationship between the VVB and CERCARBONO is formalised.

2.3.1 Processes for the developer or project owner

1. The project developer or project holder must choose the VVB with which he wishes to carry out the validation and verification processes based on the list of
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VVBs authorised by CERCARBONO and after having verified that the project is within the scope of accreditation of the selected VVB.

2. Before starting the processes, it is necessary that the project holder or developer is aware of the validation and verification plan of the VVB, where sampling requirements, field visits, internal and external data audits, among others, are specified.
3. In the course of the validation and verification of the projects, it is necessary to ensure compliance with this document, as the contractual relationship between the project holder/developer and the VVB is direct and the decision to choose the VVB rests solely with the project holder.
4. The project holder/developer must identify whether the dates on which the validation or verification processes are to be carried out are within the timeframe covered by the accreditation of the VVB.

2.3.2 VVB approval statuses

CERCARBONO will assign a section on its website to make publicly available the VVBs that are authorised by the programme, including their authorised sectoral scope and CERCARBONO's approval status, among which are:

- Active: when the VVB is found with updated accreditation supports and does not present non-compliance faults that have not been duly resolved.
- Inactive: in cases where an inconsistency was identified by CERCARBONO regarding the validity of the accreditation or the technical team, and has not been resolved.

2.4 Formation of validation/verification team

The knowledge and conformation requirements of the audit teams carrying out validation and verification processes in CERCARBONO are described below, with the understanding that the VVBs must ensure compliance with them.

2.4.1 Audit team

VVBs must have at least two persons per accredited sector: one person as validator/verifier and one person as technical expert reviewer. CERCARBONO allows personnel to be directly linked to the company or external persons to be appointed, as long as they have a contractual link between the parties. In cases of external validators, the VVB assumes full responsibility for the work performed.

2.4.2 Skills of the audit team

The knowledge and capacities that VVBs must have to carry out activities under the CERCARBONO Certification Programme are listed below:

Capacities needed in the audit of methodological content

- a) Understanding of the guidelines of the certification programme.
- b) Selected methodologies and establishment of the baseline.
- c) Assessment of additionality.
- d) Quantification of GHG reduction or removal.
- e) Monitoring system.
- f) Assessment of legal compliance and environmental and social requirements.

Capacities needed in auditing measurements

- a) Collection of information by different means.
- b) Verification of accuracy and veracity of collected data.
- c) Data and systems auditing procedures and techniques.
- d) Risk analysis procedures and techniques.

2.5 Non-compliance of the VVB

The technical management of CERCARBONO will be in charge of monitoring the performance of the VVBs that have already been authorised under the programme, through reviews of the integrity of the documents and procedures developed by the VVBs, in order to verify compliance with the requirements established by CERCARBONO.

The procedures to be implemented with the VVBs in case of faults or inconsistencies are defined according to the seriousness of the fault and its repetition.

MISCONDUCT OR INFRACTION	OCCURRENCE	PENALTY
Intentionally providing false information.	First time	Written notification and request for clarification of the information. During the process, the VVB will no longer be able to carry out validations or verifications.
	Second time	Cancellation of the VVB's authorisation and disqualification from carrying out validations and verifications under CERCARBONO.
Incursion of conflict of interest.	First time	Written notification and request for clarification of information.
	Second time	Cancellation of VVB's authorisation and disqualification from carrying out validations and verifications under CERCARBONO.
Persistent underperformance.	First time	Written or verbal notification of the inconsistencies presented.
	Second time	The VVB must present a plan aimed at avoiding the occurrence of the problems detected.
Failure to follow up findings in validation or verification processes.	First time	The error or omission is communicated and correction is requested.
	Second time	Request for review of internal processes to prevent this type of misconduct.

2.5.1 Conflicts of interest

All VVBs must have procedures within their internal policies to ensure that persons involved in the validation and verification processes, senior management or board members or associates do not have financial, commercial or functional conflicts of interest in the provision of the service. They should also have procedures in place to ensure that in cases where such conflicts arise, they are declared and adequately addressed.

VVBs must submit a conflict of interest declaration prior to the validation procedure and another one for the verification of the projects as a prerequisite of the program. The template of this declaration is available on the CERCARBONO website.

