Cooperation with other Certification Systems

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	Cooperation with other Certification Systems
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Content

1   Introduction

Different certification systems operate within the value chain for sustainable biomass. In the future, with increasing impact and more comprehensive scopes in other sectors besides bio-energy production, the number of certification systems is supposed to grow. This might affect the whole value chain as well as just parts of it (e. g., sustainable crop cultivation).

For the avoidance of multiple certifications and excessive burden of the elements of the supply chain ISCC offers appropriate possibilities for cooperation to other certification systems (under the preconditions that these are recognized by the respective authority). Here there are two stages of cooperation.

The first stage contains the so called "Gap Certification". Here cooperation with other systems comes about automatically, if the recognition by the competent authority of the cooperating system is available. Further requirements do not exist. If this requirement is met, during the ISCC certification audits (and also during the following surveillance audits) only the elements of the ISCC standards, which are not already covered by the standard of the other certification system, are audited.

The second stage permits the use of the ISCC logo to the respective elements of the supply chain, although the audit has been conducted according to the requirements of a cooperating certification system. Since the ISCC system exceeds the legal requirements, the cooperation partner also has to provide evidence that his requirements are equivalent to those of the ISCC system. The relevant examination takes place in a benchmarking process. If an element of the supply chain is already certified according to a system, which has passed through the ISCC benchmarking process and is recognized by the competent authority, then during the ISCC certification audits (and also during the following surveillance audits) only the elements of the ISCC standards, which are not covered by the standard of the other certification system, are audited.

2   Scope

This document is addressed to certification systems which are recognised by the competent authority respectively intend to undergo the benchmarking process of the ISCC and describes the requested process for this benchmarking (recognition by the competent authority is again a precondition).

3   Normative references

As a basic principal, all relevant ISCC documents are valid for the scope.

4 Requirements on the equivalency of other certification systems

4.1 Minimal requirements by the ISCC

ISCC assesses the degree of equivalence of other certification systems. Four alternatives are possible:

(1) Equivalency of a certification system for the sustainable biomass cultivation (agricultural production units)

(2) Equivalency of a certification system for the chain of custody sector (other elements of the supply chain)

(3) Equivalency of a certification system for the GHG Emission Calculation

(4) Equivalency of a certification system for several or all sectors

According to these alternatives, at least equivalent regulations for the standards and processes of other certification systems, described in the following documents, shall be available:

a) **Irrespective of scope**

- ISCC 103 Quality Management

- ISCC 207 Risk Management

- ISCC 252 Regulations to carry out Audits

- ISCC 253 Complaints, Appeals and Arbitration

- ISCC 300 Country-specific Advice and Guidelines

b) **For certification systems which aim for equivalency in the crop cultivation sector**

- Sustainability requirements for the production of biomass, documented in ISCC 202 Sustainability Requirements

- All Audit Procedures that are relevant to the sector

- ISCC 251 Requirements on Certification Bodies, general requirements and Requirements on certification bodies operating in agricultural companies

c) **For certification systems which aim for equivalency in the Chain of Custody sector or the GHG Emission Calculation**

- ISCC 203 Requirements for Traceability

- ISCC 204 Mass Balance Calculation Methodology

- ISCC 205 GHG Emission Calculation Methodology and GHG Audit

- All Audit Procedures that are relevant to the sector

- ISCC 206 Regulations to issue Proof of Compliance with Sustainability Requirements

- ISCC 251 Requirements on Certification Bodies.

Certification Systems which aim equivalency in several or all sectors, shall fulfil the accordant requirements.

4.2 Benchmarking process

4.2.1 The process at a glance

The benchmarking process contains six important steps. The most significant principles are:

- Transparent and uniform proceeding

- independent technical review by both the ISCC and the applying system

- Involvement of the stakeholders

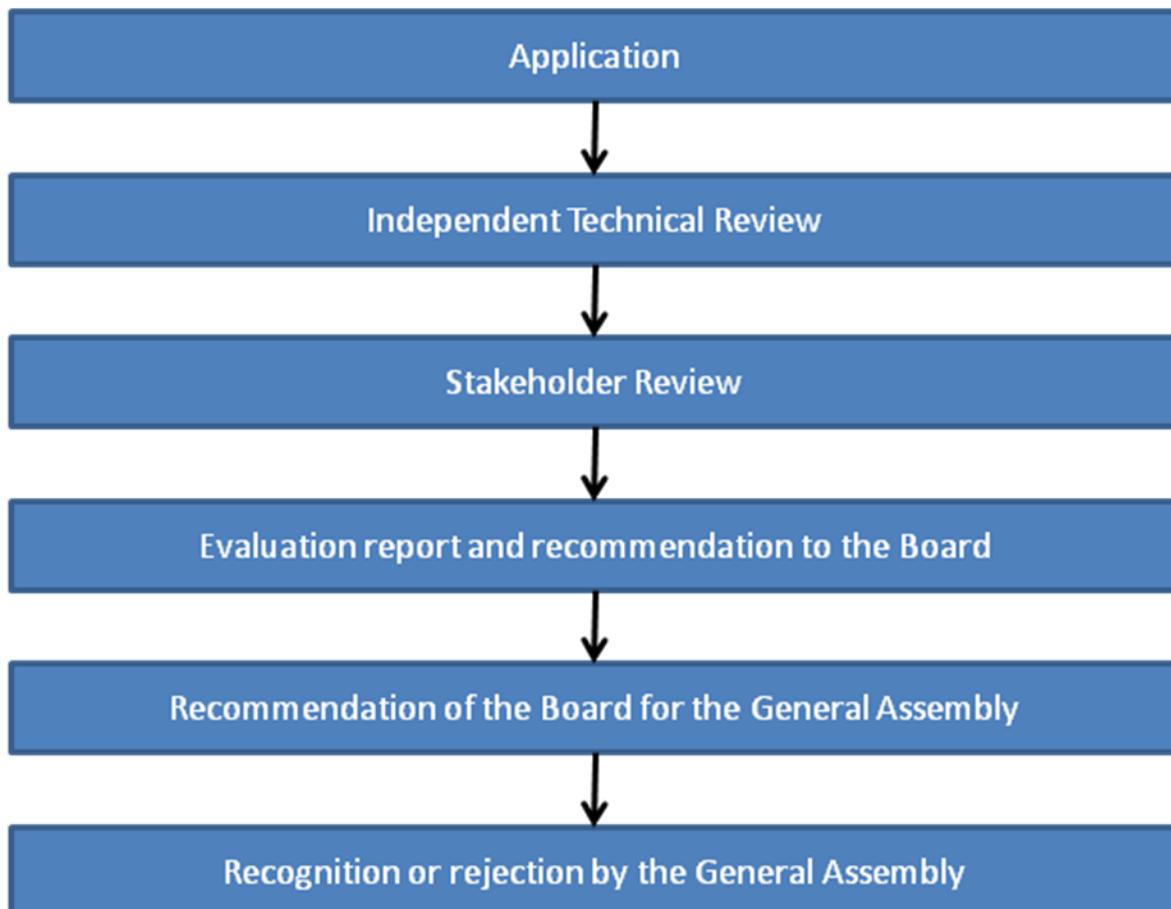- Final decision by the General Assembly of the ISCC.

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                    Application
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                         v
           Independent Technical Review
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                         v
                  Stakeholder Review
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                         v
     Evaluation report and recommendation to the Board
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                         v
   Recommendation of the Board for the General Assembly
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                         v
      Recognition or rejection by the General Assembly
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Figure 1: The benchmarking process at a glance

4.2.2 Process steps in detail

(1)   Application

A certification system that aims for equivalency with ISCC (a precondition is its recognition by the competent authority) shall send an application, containing the following details, to the Board:

- Application in written form, naming the scope

- Description of the certification system, including all documents relevant for the system, particularly the certification criteria

- Description and documentation of the latest process of the standard setting

(2)   Independent Technical Review

In an independent Technical Review, the equivalent of the standards and the processes of the applying system and the ISCC system are reviewed.

The review is carried out by an independent expert, authorised by the Board. The appropriate expert is determined by the Board in a transparent tendering and assessment procedure.

By using the ISCC checklists and other relevant ISCC documents, it is inspected whether the applying system meets the requirements of the ISCC minimum requirements.

(3)   Stakeholder Review

The results of the Technical Review are published on the ISCC website for a Stakeholder Review, together with the rules and regulations of the applying system. Within a period of 30 days, the results of the review, comments and principal notes concerning the equivalence of the systems can be submitted by the Stakeholders.

(4)   Evaluation report and recommendation to the Board

The submissions of the Stakeholder Review and the results of the Technical Review are abstracted by the independent expert. The abstract is addressed to the Boards and contains a recommendation whether or not the system is equivalent with ISCC requirements and shall be recognised by ISCC.

(5)   Recommendation of the Board for the General Assembly

Based on the evaluation paper, a recommendation for the General Assembly for equivalency or rejection of a system is provided by the Board.

(6)   Declaration of equivalency or denial by the General Assembly

The members of the General Assembly receive the draft of the recommendation of the Board per email and thereupon have the opportunity to enter an objection within 30 days. If no objection is taking place, the recommendation of the Board is accepted. The regular arrangements concerning decisions of the General Assembly are followed. The applicant is informed of the decision of the General Assembly by the management.

4.3   Validity of the declaration of equivalency

4.3.1 Principal Validity

The declaration of equivalency is normally granted for five years. After the expiration of this term, an application for extension of the declaration shall be filed.

4.3.2 Validity at changes within the equivalent system

The system recognised as equivalent by ISCC commits to inform ISCC of any changes in standards and regulations. Documents, recording the changes in the system, shall be submitted to the ISCC Board.

The ISCC Board decides whether the change is significant or insignificant. In case of an insignificant change, a Technical Committee of ISCC may analyze via a simplified procedure, whether the recognised system still meets the ISCC requirements and whether the declaration of equivalency persists. In case of significant changes, the regular benchmarking process described in this document, is initiated.

5 Requirements on data exchange

If cross-system goods deliveries should take place within the supply chain, then the data exchange between ISCC, the cooperation partners and certification bodies involved and the relevant authorities must be guaranteed.

5.1 Minimum requirements on the cooperation partners

For the following scopes cooperation partners must commit themselves to data exchange, to disclosure respectively to common activities:

(1) Exchange of basic data of plants, to whom a certificate was assigned for the avoidance of double certification to the purpose of "double counting"

(2) Information about the scope of recognition by the competent authority (individual requirements, electronic data base, all requirements)

(3) Forwarding of electronic data for the purpose of application and issuance of partial proofs of compliance with sustainability requirements

(4) Information about the validity of certificates

(5) Information about the correctness of a proof of compliance with sustainability requirements

(6) Inducement of the deletion of proofs of compliance with sustainability requirements if the issuing interface was not the last interface

(7) Exchange of information regarding misuse and deception by participants

(8) Support in clarifying of contradictions respectively ambiguities between different data, which were emerging during data synchronization

(9) Support in common solutions of compatibility problems, which are not yet possible to anticipate. This especially applies to problems arising during the delivery of interfaces, enterprises or plants, using different certification systems, to a subsequent element of the supply chain. This element may not be constrained thereby in the practice of important in-plant activities (e.g. production of a mass balance).

The requirements of the German Data Protection Act have to be met at all times.