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# HKCAS Supplementary Criteria No. 13

## Accreditation of Greenhouse Gas Verification Bodies – Verification of Carbon Footprint of a Product Study Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 HKAS accreditation for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) verification bodies (VBs) is provided under Hong Kong Certification Body Accreditation Scheme (HKCAS) and is open for voluntary application from any GHG VB that undertake a third-party verification of carbon footprint of a product (CFP) study reports in respect of a CFP communication programme that satisfies the criteria set out in Appendix A of this document.
- 1.2 The accreditation criteria for GHG VBs include HKAS 002, HKCAS 020-1:2013, HKCAS 020-2, HKCAS 020-3, the relevant HKAS and HKCAS Supplementary Criteria, and the current edition of this document which serves to amplify the accreditation requirements in the related documents.
- 1.3 The normative documents listed in Appendix B form part of the accreditation requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest editions (including any amendments) apply.
- 1.4 A HKAS assessment team may, at its discretion, carry out an observation on an applicant or accredited VB while it is performing GHG verification activities for which it is accredited or accreditation is sought. The VB shall seek consent from and shall explain to its clients and responsible parties concerning the presence of the assessment team in such GHG verification activities. The VB shall further assure its clients and responsible parties that the presence of the assessment team during the GHG verification activities will not affect the outcome of the verification.
- 1.5 The accreditation procedure is described in accordance with Annex AA of HKCAS 020-1: 2013. Applicant or accredited VB should also take note of the procedure applicable to them.
- 1.6 Details of the HKCAS accreditation for an accredited VB are given in its current

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scope of accreditation. The details include identification of the CFP communication programme and the programme operator, and a description of the accredited VB's capabilities.

- 1.7 Clause 9 of ISO/TS 14067: 2013 specifies requirements and guidelines for CFP communication. However, it is entirely the decision of the organisations on whether to communicate their CFP quantification results externally and the options of communication. As such, the CFP communication activities, if any, carried out by the organisations or any other parties (e.g. GHG communication programme operator) are not covered under this HKAS accreditation.
- 1.8 Other than the third-party verification of CFP study reports as stipulated in clause 8.1(a) of ISO/TS 14067: 2013, clause 8.1(b) specifies another route of CFP communication (i.e. CFP communication shall be supported by a CFP disclosure report). As the third-party verification is not involved, clauses 8.1(b) and 8.2 (which specifies requirements for the CFP disclosure report) are not covered under this HKAS accreditation.
- 1.9 Fees for application, assessment and other accreditation services are charged in accordance with HKCAS 006. All HKCAS accredited VBs shall pay annual subscription fee. However, for the fee charged per certification with HKCAS accreditation, this is not applicable to accredited VBs as verification of CFP study report is not ongoing certification.
- 1.10 An applicant GHG VB shall maintain complete integrity at any point in the application and assessment process. If there is evidence of fraudulent behaviour, if the applicant GHG VB intentionally provides false information or if the applicant GHG VB conceals information, HKAS Executive shall reject the application or terminate the assessment process. Under this circumstance, the resulting application and assessment fees paid are not refundable.

## **2 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/TS 14067: 2013, HKCAS 020-1: 2013, HKCAS 020-2 and HKCAS 020-3 apply.

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2.2 The term “shall” is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions which are mandatory. The term “should” is used to indicate guidance which, although not mandatory, is provided by HKAS as a recognised means of meeting the requirements.

### **3 COMPETENCIES (HKCAS 020-1: 2013 Clause 6)**

#### **Verification Team Leader and Verifier**

3.1 An applicant or accredited VB shall have at least one competent verifier or verification team in conducting verification of CFP study reports in respect of every CFP communication programme for which it has applied or is holding current accreditation.

3.2 Verification team leaders and verifiers shall have:

- (a) obtained a degree or above in an engineering or science discipline from a recognised education institute in Hong Kong, or equivalent qualification;
- (b) successfully completed relevant education programmes or training courses on life cycle assessment and CFP quantification; and
- (c) successfully completed appropriate training on verification of CFP study reports which includes ISO 14064-3.

3.3 A verification team collectively shall have following knowledge:

- (a) knowledge of relevant sector, product and product-related GHG emissions and removals;
- (b) process and product knowledge of the product category;
- (c) knowledge of life cycle assessment;
- (d) knowledge of ISO/TS 14067: 2013;
- (e) knowledge of the regulatory framework within which requirements of the CFP communication programme have been prepared; and
- (f) knowledge of the CFP communication programme.

#### **Technical Expert**

3.4 A technical expert may be included in a verification team. He/she may provide technical support to the team. A technical expert needs not be trained on verification

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techniques but shall have sufficient knowledge in his/her technical area. During verification, he/she shall work with a qualified verification team leader or verifier.

### **Verification Statement Reviewer**

- 3.5 An applicant or accredited VB shall ensure that personnel carrying out the independent review of the verification statement have all necessary competence. If a VB uses a committee to review verification statements, it shall have documented procedures for the committee to make sound conclusions and to ensure that the committee members are conversant with the reviewing criteria. It may be necessary to provide appropriate training to committee members. Performance of the committee shall be monitored.

## **4 COMMUNICATION AND RECORDS (HKCAS 020-1: 2013 Clause 7)**

- 4.1 Product-specific data are often confidential because of competitive business requirements, proprietary information covered by intellectual property rights, or similar legal restrictions. Such confidential data shall not be made public. Business data identified as confidential that is provided during verification process shall be kept confidential, in accordance with clauses 7.3 and 7.1.C of HKCAS 020-1: 2013, and the CFP communication programme instructions, if any.

## **5 VALIDATION OR VERIFICATION PROCESS (HKCAS 020-1:2013 Clause 8)**

- 5.1 When a CFP communication is intended to be publicly available, CFP quantification has to be undergone an external critical review according to Clause 6 of ISO 14044: 2006. An applicant or accredited VB shall ensure that the external critical review was completed before verification. If the external critical review was not completed before verification, the VB shall undertake the review and verification at the same time.

*Note: The external critical review can be undertaken by an expert or panel of interested parties independent of CFP quantification other than the VB.*

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5.2 A responsible party may comprise one or more facilities. During verification process, an applicant or accredited VB shall include on-site visits at the responsible party's facilities which are included in the scope of verification. When the VB desire not to visit all those facilities, a site sampling plan shall be developed. The VB should take into account potential risks to the verification for the site sampling development. Potential risks include but not limited to the following:

- (a) GHG sources, sinks and/or reservoirs cannot be checked on site;
- (b) Organisation's boundaries, physical infrastructure, production process and technologies cannot be verified on site;
- (c) Any change occurred cannot be notified; and
- (d) GHG information system and its control cannot be checked on site.

5.3 An applicant or accredited VB shall determine the verification time needed for each on-site verification activity. The VB shall ensure that a verification team has sufficient time to carry out a complete and effective verification and cover all essential elements. In determining the verification time, the VB should at least consider the following factors:

- (a) proposed level of assurance, materiality, criteria, objectives and scope;
- (b) type and number of GHG sources, sinks and/or reservoirs;
- (c) complexity of responsible parties' structure and production process;
- (d) number, size and location of facilities;
- (e) complexity of GHG information system and its control;
- (f) size of GHG data;
- (g) complexity of the CFP study report;
- (h) results of internal verification of responsible parties;
- (i) type and amount of field work necessary for verification; and
- (j) the CFP communication programme instructions;

The verification time determined by an accredited or applicant VB, and the justification for the determination, shall be recorded.

5.4 A verification team shall verify GHG data and information from CFP quantification process and confirm at least the following:

- (a) conformance with the CFP-PCR;
- (b) conformance with the ISO/TS 14067: 2013;
- (c) conformance with the CFP communication programme instructions;

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- (d) that data evaluation includes coverage, precision, completeness, representativeness, consistency, reproducibility, sources and uncertainty;
- (e) the plausibility, quality and accuracy of the LCA-based data;
- (f) the quality and accuracy of additional GHG information; and
- (g) the quality and accuracy of the supporting information.

The verification findings shall be recorded.

- 5.5 An applicant or accredited VB shall issue a verification statement to the client upon completion of the verification. The verification statement shall include all items listed in Clause 4.9 and A.2.9.1.1 of Annex A of HKCAS 020-3. In addition, the VB shall describe the whole verification process in the verification statement.

## **6 USE OF HKAS ACCREDITATION SYMBOLS AND CLAIMS OF ACCREDITATION STATUS**

- 6.1 Every VB accredited under HKCAS shall be awarded with a distinctive HKCAS accreditation symbol.
- 6.2 The form, size, colour and usage of the HKCAS accreditation symbol shall be in accordance with the HKAS SC-01.
- 6.3 An accredited VB may issue HKCAS endorsed verification statements which bear its HKCAS accreditation symbol in accordance with the applicable requirements specified in HKAS 002 and HKAS SC-01 to responsible parties that their CFP study reports have been verified.
- 6.4 An accredited VB shall keep an exact copy of every HKCAS endorsed verification statement it has issued for at least 3 years.
- 6.5 An accredited VB shall provide to HKAS Executive an up-to-date list of countries in which the VB has issued verification statements under HKCAS accreditation.
- 6.6 An applicant or accredited VB shall provide the format of its proposed HKCAS endorsed verification statement format to HKAS Executive for approval before use.

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- 6.7 An accredited VB shall not use the HKCAS accreditation symbol on any document unless such document relates in whole or in part to an accredited activity of the VB. However, the VB is allowed to print the accreditation symbol on its pre-printed letterhead paper.
- 6.8 An accredited VB shall not use the HKCAS accreditation symbol on any stationery, documents, publications and advertisements unless those stationery, documents, publications and advertisements are related in whole or in part to the VB's scope of accreditation.
- 6.9 An accredited VB shall ensure that the HKCAS accreditation symbol would not be used by any organisations including those responsible parties whose CFP study reports were verified under HKCAS accreditation and related CFP communication programme operators.
- 6.10 An accredited VB shall not use its accreditation status in a way that may be interpreted by any person that any CFP study report verified by it VB has been approved by HKAS or HKAS Executive.
- 6.11 If the accreditation in relation to any activity under the scope of accreditation of an accredited VB is suspended or terminated (voluntarily or by HKAS Executive), the VB shall immediately cease to use and to distribute any stationery, document, publication or advertisement which bears its accreditation symbol, save for those which relate in whole or in part to activities having valid accreditation.

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## **Appendix A**

(normative)

### **HKAS Policy on CFP Communication Programmes**

- A.1 This appendix details HKAS policy on CFP communication programmes that HKAS Executive grants accreditation under HKCAS. HKAS grants accreditation to VBs only for those CFP communication programmes that satisfy the criteria set out in this appendix.
- A.2 An applicant VB shall ensure that a CFP communication programme it uses for seeking HKCAS accreditation satisfies the criteria set out in this document. To apply for accreditation, the applicant VB shall provide details of the CFP communication programme and submit all relevant supporting documents to HKAS Executive. HKAS Executive will accept accreditation applications if the CFP communication programme satisfies the criteria set out in this document.
- A.3 An accredited VB shall ensure that a CFP communication programme it is accredited for continues to satisfy the criteria set out in this document. The accredited VB shall inform HKAS Executive in writing immediately of any changes or proposed changes of the CFP communication programme that may affect its continuing conformity with the criteria set out in this document. Though it may be outside its reach, the accredited VB shall make every effort to discuss with the parties concerned and come up with an action plan proposing measures to resolve the non-conformity or anticipated non-conformity. Normally, accredited VBs shall resolve any non-conformity arising from the changes within 6 months. Accreditation may be suspended or terminated when the CFP communication programme no longer satisfies the criteria set out in this document.
- A.4 A CFP communication programme shall be maintained and operated by a CFP communication operator. The CFP programme operator is responsible for the administration of the CFP communication programme.
- A.5 A CFP communication programme shall manage and maintain Carbon Footprint of a Product – Product Category Rules (CFP-PCR) to ensure that CFPs are calculated consistently within product groups or sectors. The CFP communication programme



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shall adopt relevant CFP-PCR or develop CFP-PCR for use. The CFP-PCR used shall

- (a) be developed in accordance with ISO 14025: 2006, ISO/TS 14067: 2013 or any other relevant sector-specific ISO standard;
- (b) comply with the requirements of clauses 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 9.5.2 and 9.5.3 of ISO/TS 14067: 2013; and
- (c) be considered proper (e.g. for system boundaries, modularity, allocation and data quality) by the relevant industry and are in accordance with the principles in clause 5 of ISO/TS 14067: 2013.

A.6 An applicant or accredited VB shall conform to all accreditation criteria listed in 1.2 of this document. A CFP communication programme may contain additional requirements to VBs provided that these requirements do not deviate from the accreditation criteria.

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## **Appendix B**

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### **NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS**

- B.1. HKAS 002, Regulations for HKAS accreditation
- B.2. HKAS SC-01, Use of HKAS accreditation symbols and claims of accreditation status
- B.3. HKAS SC-02, Non-conformities and their grading
- B.4. HKAS SC-04, Intervals between reassessments and surveillance visits
- B.5. HKAS SC-06, Code of Conduct
- B.6. HKCAS 020-1: 2013, Technical criteria for accreditation of greenhouse gas validation and verification bodies – Part 1
- B.7. HKCAS 020-2, Technical criteria for accreditation of greenhouse gas validation and verification bodies – Part 2
- B.8. HKCAS 020-3, Technical criteria for accreditation of greenhouse gas validation and verification bodies – Part 3
- B.9. ISO 14025: 2006, Environmental labels and declarations – Type III environmental declarations – Principles and Procedures
- B.10. ISO 14044: 2006, Environmental management – Life cycle assessment – Requirements and guidelines
- B.11. ISO/TS 14067: 2013, Greenhouse gases – Carbon footprint of products – Requirements and guidelines for quantification and communication