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RSB Requirements for Accreditation Bodies

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Introduction

ISO/IEC 17011: 2004 (E) Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies is widely recognized as the most appropriate international standard for accreditation bodies implementing accreditation systems.

Due to its extended use and acceptance, compliance with ISO/IEC 17011:2004 (E) by accreditation bodies is a major requirement of a credible, international certification scheme. The RSB certification scheme has several particular characteristics that are important for the operation of an accreditation body. Therefore, this procedure is presented as a complement to ISO/IEC 17011:2004 (E), which specifies certain aspects in addition to the ISO standard, clarifies and interprets some requirements, based on the needs of the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*. This procedure defines and addresses the basic elements of an accreditation system compliant with *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*.

In order to comply with general requirements for accreditation bodies, accreditation bodies shall demonstrate full compliance with the ISO/IEC 17011:2004 (E) **and** the procedure detailed below.

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A. Intent of this procedure

The intent of this procedure is to ensure that accreditation bodies operating schemes for the accreditation of certification bodies take into account the specific features and requirements of the *RSB standards* and *RSB certification systems* and operate in a consistent, reliable and credible manner thereby facilitating their acceptance on a national and international basis. This procedure intends to ensure compliance by accreditation bodies in the *RSB certification systems* with ISO requirements for accreditation bodies (ISO/IEC 17011:2004 (E)). This standard shall furthermore ensure that the specific features of the *RSB certification systems* are taken into account and that *RSB recognized certification bodies* provide services and achieve outcomes which are consistent, comprehensive, transparent, reliable and credible, thereby facilitating the credibility and legitimacy of the *RSB* and so furthering international trade in biomass/biofuels and promoting social and environmental compliance.

B. Scope of this procedure

This procedure specifies the general requirements for all accreditation bodies operating under the *RSB certification systems*.

This procedure is applied at the level of the accreditation body, which has entered into an agreement with and recognized by the *RSB SOE* for the delivery of accreditation services in the *RSB certification scheme*.

C. Status and effective date

Version 3.0 of this procedure on *General requirements for accreditation bodies* shall be effective on 1 September 2016 .

D. Note on use of this procedure

This procedure is for use by all accreditation bodies operating schemes for the accreditation of certification bodies under the *RSB certification systems*.

In order to comply with this procedure, accreditation bodies shall demonstrate full compliance with ISO/IEC 17011: 2004 (E) **and** this procedure.

All aspects of this procedure are considered to be normative, including the intent, scope, standard effective date, note on the use of this procedure, references, terms and definitions, and requirements, unless otherwise stated. Users implementing this procedure shall ensure that the intent of this procedure is met. To ensure that the intent of this procedure is met, users shall implement all of the requirements specified in this procedure, and all additional measures necessary to achieve the intent of this procedure.

In the absence of *RSB* requirements or guidance users shall follow IAF guidance on the interpretation of ISO/IEC 17011: 2004 (E).

E. References

See RSB-DOC-10-001 RSB List of documents and references

F. Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this procedure, the terms and definitions given in *RSB-STD-01-002 RSB Glossary of Terms* shall apply.

G. Requirements

1. Conformity with ISO/IEC 17011:2004 (E)

1. 1. The *accreditation body* shall comply with the generic requirements of ISO/IEC 17011¹ and with the additional requirements specified in this procedure.
1. 1. 1. The *accreditation body* shall implement all requirements of the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*.
1. 1. 2. The *accreditation body* shall demonstrate to the *RSB Secretariat* that all requirements and the intent of this procedure are met.
1. 2. In the event of any conflict between requirements specified in ISO/IEC 17011 and *RSB standards*, the *RSB standards* shall prevail.
1. 3. The *accreditation body* shall ensure that its activities and the activities of its related bodies do not compromise the confidentiality, objectivity and impartiality of its *accreditation services*. The *accreditation body* and/or any related body shall not offer consultancy or provide those conformity assessment services the *accreditation body* accredits.

2. Accreditation activity

2. 1. The *accreditation body* shall clearly describe and make publicly available its accreditation activities relating to the implementation of the *RSB certification systems*.

3. Accreditation body management

3. 1. The *accreditation body* engaged by the *RSB Secretariat* shall use the *risk management approach* to steer its respective operation(s) to minimize associated *risks* and ensure that *certification bodies* accredited verify *participating operators* with substantially equivalent outcomes and levels of assurance.
3. 2. The *accreditation body* shall operate a risk management system to ensure comprehensive, consistent, transparent and credible
 1. implementation of the *RSB standards*;
 2. implementation of the *RSB certification systems*;
 3. provision of *accreditation services*; and

¹ ISO/IEC 17011: ISO/IEC 17011: 2004 (E) Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

4. performance of *conformity assessment* bodies accredited to perform *conformity assessment* services under the *RSB certification systems*.
3. 3. The *accreditation body* shall develop its *accreditation* services and activities based on the results of its *risk assessment* relating to the operation of its accredited *certification* bodies.
3. 4. The *accreditation body* shall use the results of its *risk assessment* as input for its management reviews.
3. 5. The *accreditation body* shall use the outputs of its periodic management review to improve its risk management system.
3. 6. The *accreditation body's* operations manual and associated documents shall include an Auditor Code of Conduct and Ethics, aimed at ensuring high standards of ethical conduct in *accreditation* auditing.
3. 7. The *accreditation body's* executive management shall appoint a representative of management to be responsible for the implementation of *RSB standards* and *RSB certification systems*.
3. 8. The *accreditation body* shall base its operation(s) related to the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems* and all aspects thereof on documented systems including but not limited to all operational procedures and associated instructions to be followed in order to evaluate conformity with *RSB standards* within the scope of the *certification body's RSB accreditation*.
3. 9. The *accreditation body* shall document any and all aspects related to the implementation of the *RSB standards* and *RSB certification systems* and shall maintain these record for a period of at least 10 years.
3. 10. The *accreditation body* shall ensure that all documentation including any and all documentation related to evaluation of *certification bodies* is available in English language.
3. 11. The *accreditation body* shall make the documentation of its systems available to the personnel involved in the *accreditation body's* office(s) and operation(s), and at the level of its *related bodies*.

3. 12. The *accreditation body* shall conduct its *accreditation* operation(s) in full conformity with its documented systems.
3. 13. In case the *accreditation body* operates as part of and/or is controlled by another body (i.e. government body or private organization) the *accreditation body* shall make publicly available this fact and sufficient information to clearly explain the relationship between the *accreditation body* and the other body.
3. 14. The *accreditation body* shall make available its organizational structure to stakeholders upon request.
3. 15. *Accreditation body's* procedures for resolving disputes shall follow procedures analog to those outlined in *RSB-PRO-65-001 RSB Grievance Procedure*.

4. Accreditation body's human resources

4. 1. *Accreditation body's auditors* shall adhere formally and in writing to the *accreditation body's Auditor Code of Conduct and Ethics*.
4. 2. The *accreditation body* shall ensure that *auditors, experts* and other parties engaged to provide accreditation services and/or parts thereof have successfully completed a comprehensive training program on the implementation of all aspects of the *accreditation body's* systems, and all aspects of the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*.
4. 3. The *accreditation body* shall ensure that *auditors, experts* and other parties engaged to provide accreditation services and/or parts thereof have successfully gained substantial, comprehensive practical experience on all aspects of the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*, before being involved in the provision of *accreditation* services.
4. 4. The *accreditation body* shall inform the *RSB Secretariat* about all management representatives, personnel, *auditors, experts*, other parties and related bodies engaged in provision of *accreditation* services under the RSB certification systems and/or any and all parts thereof.
4. 5. The *accreditation body* shall ensure that all personnel contributing to the *accreditation* process including decision making, disclose in writing to the *accreditation body* all interests which could possibly be perceived as, constitute and/or result in a conflicts of interest as soon as they become evident.

4. 6. The *accreditation* body shall establish documented procedures for determining timely and appropriate responses to such declarations of interests as they arise, to ensure that the declared interests neither influence, nor are perceived to influence, the *accreditation* process and/or *accreditation* decision making.
4. 7. The *accreditation body* shall record any and all real, perceived and potential conflicts of interest related to *accreditation* under the *RSB certification systems*, and the actions taken to address, mitigate, manage, neutralize and/or avoid them.
4. 8. The *accreditation body* shall include in its policies and procedures for maintenance of confidentiality a written confidentiality agreement to be signed by all personnel who have access to confidential information. Such personnel shall include, but not be limited to administrative staff, lead auditors, auditors, technical experts, audit observers, consultants, subcontractors, members of the *accreditation decision entity*, peer reviewers, other committee members and management representatives.

5. Accreditation decision-making

5. 1. The *accreditation body* shall define the *accreditation decision entity*.
5. 2. The *accreditation decision entity* shall:
 5. 2. 1. have and follow clear rules for membership, including requirements for qualification, experience and impartiality;
 5. 2. 2. consist of individuals with no financial or other commercial interest in the outcome of the *accreditation decision*;
 5. 2. 3. not include individuals who have taken part in provision of *accreditation* services.
5. 3. The *accreditation decision entity* shall not include individuals who employees and/or management representatives of the *RSB recognized accreditation body*.
5. 4. All individuals involved in the *accreditation decision entity* shall be knowledgeable of the *RSB standards* and *RSB certification systems*, and all relevant aspects of *conformity assessment* and *accreditation*.
5. 5. The accreditation decision making entity shall take accreditation decisions by consensus, where consensus is understood as the absence of sustained opposition.

6. Responsibilities of the accreditation body

6. 1. The *accreditation* body shall require *certification bodies* to refrain from use of the *RSB trademarks* and any claims regarding their accreditation to *RSB standards* and under the *RSB certification systems*, unless and until the *accreditation* body has issued a valid *accreditation* certificate for the *RSB certification systems*.
6. 2. The *accreditation* body shall require *certification* bodies to refrain from *RSB trademarks* and any claims regarding their accreditation to *RSB standards* and under the *RSB certification systems*, in cases where the accreditation has been suspended, withdrawn, terminated or otherwise invalidated.

7. General requirements for subcontracting

7. 1. The *accreditation body* may subcontract (outsource) work related to *accreditation* to an external bodies or persons. Subcontracting shall also refer to arrangements related to the *accreditation* process between the *accreditation* body and its affiliated or related bodies (e.g. subsidiaries, parent companies, etc.)
7. 2. All aspects and requirements of the *RSB standards* and *RSB certification systems* shall apply without exception to the external body or person subcontracted by the *accreditation body*. This shall include without limitation any additional condition imposed on the *accreditation* body by the *RSB Secretariat*.
7. 3. The *accreditation body* shall take full responsibility, accountability and liability for ensuring that the external bodies or persons subcontracted comply with the applicable requirements of the *RSB standards* and *RSB certification systems*.
7. 4. Any and all subcontracting of the aspects of the *accreditation* process shall be based on a written contract between the accreditation body and the external body or person. The contract shall include an explicit agreement by the external bodies or persons granting the *RSB Secretariat*, and their duly designated representatives unlimited and unconditional access to any and all aspects of their respective operation(s) and premises as well as access to all documentation and information, which are related to the implementation of the *RSB standards* and *RSB certification systems* and as deemed necessary by the *RSB Secretariat*.
7. 5. The *accreditation body* shall ensure that the external bodies or persons subcontracted for work related to the *accreditation* process do not subcontract this work any further.
7. 6. The *accreditation body* shall ensure that the *RSB trademarks* are not use by affiliated or related bodies, or by external bodies or persons subcontracted for work related to

the *accreditation* process.

7. 7. The *accreditation body* shall not outsource decisions on granting, maintaining, renewing, suspending, reinstating, refusing or withdrawing *accreditation*.

8. Accreditation process

8. 1. The *accreditation body* shall include in its *accreditation* agreement with *certification bodies* operating under the *RSB certification systems* the following:
 8. 1. 1. agreement by the *certification body* to complying with any condition set by the *accreditation body*;
 8. 1. 2. agreement by the *certification body* to informing the *accreditation body* without delay of any condition which could affect compliance with the *RSB standards* and/or the *RSB certification systems*, and the continued validity of the *RSB certificate*;
 8. 1. 3. agreement by the *certification body* to submitting to evaluation proceedings, and any and all related activities as determined by the *accreditation body*, including the *accreditation body's* right to carry out unannounced evaluation proceedings;
 8. 1. 4. reference to the *RSB standards* and *RSB certification systems* in their most recent version as an integral part of the agreement;
 8. 1. 5. agreement by the *certification body* to granting to the *RSB recognized accreditation body* and the *RSB Secretariat*, and their duly designated representatives unlimited and unconditional access to any and all aspects of the *participating operator's* operation(s), respective premises as well as access to all documentation and information, which are related to the implementation of the *RSB standards* and *RSB certification systems*.
 8. 1. 6. state clearly the right of the *accreditation body* to suspend and/or withdraw the *accreditation* with immediate effect if, in the sole opinion of the *accreditation body*, the *certification body* is not in compliance with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*, and with any condition set by the *accreditation body*.
 8. 1. 7. agreement by the *certification body* in case of suspension or withdrawal of the *RSB accreditation*, to;
 8. 1. 7. 1. immediately ceasing any and all use of the *RSB trademarks*;
 8. 1. 7. 2. identifying all clients and external third parties affected, and notify them of the suspension or withdrawal of the *RSB accreditation*.;
 8. 1. 8. agreement by the *certification body* to complying with revisions of and/or changes to the requirements of accreditation and/or any other condition by the *accreditation body*.
8. 2. The *accreditation body* shall develop and implement detailed audit procedures and related systems and documents based on ISO/IEC 17011:2004 (E), and the *RSB standards*, and the *RSB certification systems*.

8. 3. The *accreditation body* shall plan and conduct its *evaluations* at the premises of *certification bodies* and at premises of *certification bodies'* clients as witness audits, according to the recommendations of the ISO/IAF Accreditation Auditing Practice Group.
8. 4. The *accreditation body* shall issue *RSB accreditation* only if the *certification body* comprehensively, consistently and transparently complies with the applicable requirements of the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems* and with any condition set by the *accreditation body*, and if no *major non-compliances* with applicable requirements of the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems* are outstanding (i.e. have been identified and not been corrected at the time of evaluation).
8. 5. The *accreditation body* shall without delay inform the *RSB Secretariat*, about any issuing, suspension or withdrawal of *RSB accreditation*, specifying the effective date, and make the *accreditation report available to the RSB Secretariat*.

9. Stakeholder consultation

9. 1. The *accreditation body* shall develop, document and conduct *stakeholder consultations* as part of its *accreditation* evaluation for compliance with the requirements of the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*.
The *accreditation body* shall ensure that:
 9. 1. 1. a representative range of *stakeholders* is consulted;
 9. 1. 2. *stakeholders* have the opportunity to present their comments to the auditor(s) in local language;
 9. 1. 3. *stakeholders* have the opportunity to present their comments to the auditor(s) under terms of confidentiality and that their identity, privacy and personal integrity are protected;
 9. 1. 4. *stakeholders* have the opportunity to present their comments prior to peer review of the *accreditation* report and *accreditation decision* making;
 9. 1. 5. *stakeholder* consultation shall be designed to solicit direct, factual observations with regard to compliance of the *certification body* with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*.
 9. 1. 6. information and opinions given by consulted *stakeholders* are investigated, evaluated and verified objectively and meaningfully, and affect the *accreditation* decision only in so far as they provide evidence of *compliance* or *non-compliance* with the applicable requirements of the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*.
9. 2. The *accreditation body* shall document the evaluation process, evaluation findings and

conclusions prior to peer review and decision making in an *accreditation report*.

9. 3. The *accreditation body* shall submit *accreditation reports* to peer review prior to *accreditation* decision making.
9. 4. The peer review shall be conducted according to clear terms of reference, which include at least a review of the adequacy of :
 9. 4. 1. evaluation work and collection of objective evidence to verify compliance with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*;
 9. 4. 2. evaluation work and collection of objective evidence as basis for *accreditation* decision making;
 9. 4. 3. clarity of presentation of observations and evidence as basis for *accreditation* decision making;
 9. 4. 4. whether the proposed *accreditation* decision is justified by the observations and evidence presented.
9. 5. The *accreditation body* shall submit the *accreditation* report together with the peer review report to the *accreditation body's decision making entity*.

10. Accreditation evaluation

10. 1. The *accreditation body* shall evaluate the *certification body's* competence, including its overall systems and procedures, its staffing levels, competence and experience, and its reporting ability to provide *conformity assessment services* under the *RSB certification systems*, at minimum at the following sites:
 10. 1. 1. *certification body's* office, including offices of related bodies
 10. 1. 2. *participating operators* certified for primary production
 10. 1. 3. *participating operators* certified for *biomass/biofuels* processing and *chain of custody tracking*.
10. 2. The *evaluation* of the *certification body* shall include *evaluation* of the central management office and management systems of the *certification body*.
10. 3. The *evaluation* of the *certification body* shall include *evaluation* of all subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, and operational activities where and/or about which *non-compliances* or *major non-compliances* related to the *RSB certification systems* were issued at the preceding *evaluation*.

10. 4. The *evaluation of the certification body* shall include *evaluation* of all subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, and operational activities where and/or about which disputes related to the implementation of the *RSB standards* and/or the *RSB certification systems* were raised.
10. 5. The *evaluation of the certification body* shall include *evaluation* of all changes to the operational structures and management systems of the *certification body*.
10. 6. In addition to the *evaluations* identified under points 10.2., 10.3., 10.4. and 10.5. of this standard, the *evaluation of the certification body* shall include *evaluation* of a representative sample of the *certification bodies'* subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, and operational activities related to the implementation of the *RSB standards* and/or the *RSB certification systems*.

The representative sample shall be sufficient in extent to enable to the satisfaction of the *RSB recognized accreditation body* identification of *compliance* or *non-compliance* with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems* of any and all aspects of the services provided by the *certification body* under the *RSB certification systems*.

The representative sample of the operations of the *certification body* shall according to *risk class* of the *certification body* at minimum include the percentage of the *certification bodies'* subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, and operational activities as listed in the following table:

risk class	minimum percentage of subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, and operational activities of the <i>certification body</i>
1	10 %
2	20 %
3	30 %

10. 7. In addition to the *evaluations* identified under points 10.2., 10.3., 10.4. 10.5. and 10.6. of this standard, the *evaluation of the certification body* shall include *evaluation* of a representative sample of *participating operators* including their respective subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, and operational activities as engaged by the *certification body*.

The representative sample shall be sufficient in extent to enable to the satisfaction of the *RSB recognized accreditation body* identification of *compliance* or *non-compliance* with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems* of any and all aspects of the services provided by the *certification body* under the *RSB certification systems*.

The representative sample shall according to *risk class* of the *certification body* at minimum include the percentage of *participating operators* including their respective

subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, and operational activities as listed in the following table:

risk class	minimum percentage of <i>participating operators</i> including their respective subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, and operational activities as engaged by the <i>certification body</i>
1	3 %
2	6 %
3	9 %

10. 8. In addition to the *evaluations* identified under points 10.2., 10.3., 10.4. 10.5., 10.6. and 10.7. of this standard, the *evaluation* of the *certification body* shall include *evaluation* of a representative sample of the *RSB compliance claims* made by the *participating operators* engaged by the *certification body*.

The representative sample of these *RSB compliance claims* shall be sufficient in extent to enable to the satisfaction of the *RSB recognized accreditation body* identification of *compliance* or *non-compliance* with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*.

The representative sample of these *RSB compliance claims* shall according to *risk class* of the *certification body* at minimum include the percentage of all *RSB compliance claims* made by the *participating operators* engaged by the *certification body* as listed in the following table:

risk class	minimum percentage of the <i>RSB compliance claims</i> made by the <i>participating operators</i> engaged by the <i>certification body</i>
1	10 %
2	15 %
3	25 %

10. 9. The *accreditation body* shall identify any *non-compliance* with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems* of the *certification body's* operation(s).
10. 9. 1. The *accreditation body* shall identify as a *major non-compliance* if the management systems implemented by the *certification body* are not applied comprehensively and consistently to all subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, operational structures, sites, facilities, operated and/or contracted by and/or affiliated to the *certification body*.
10. 9. 2. The *accreditation body* shall identify any *non-compliance* which has the potential to compromise the *RSB*, *RSB standards*, the *RSB certification systems*, the *RSB trademarks* and/or the good name of the *RSB* as a *major non-compliance*.
10. 9. 3. The *accreditation body* shall identify any *non-compliance* which has the potential to affect and lead to *non-compliances* of *participating operators* and/or other *certification bodies* as a *major non-compliance*.

10. 9. 4. The *accreditation* body shall identify any *non-compliance* issued in the preceding *evaluation* and which has not been corrected, rectified or otherwise brought into compliance with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems* prior to the *evaluation* as a *major non-compliance*.
10. 9. 5. The *accreditation* body shall identify any *non-compliance* which is systematic in nature as a *major non-compliance* – i.e. a *non-compliance* which will continue to result in further *non-compliances* until it has been corrected, rectified or otherwise brought into compliance with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*.
10. 9. 6. The *accreditation* body shall identify as a *major non-compliance* if one or more non-compliances were identified at more than 10% of the certification bodies' subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, operational structures, sites, facilities, processing and production units, and supply chain structures included in the representative sample evaluated as per point 10.6. of this procedure.
10. 9. 7. The *accreditation* body shall identify as a *major non-compliance* if one or more non-compliances were identified in more than 10% of the *participating operators* including their respective subsidiaries, branch offices, affiliated entities, external third parties contracted or otherwise engaged, and operational activities included in the representative sample evaluated as per point 10.7. of this standard.
10. 9. 8. The *accreditation* body shall identify as a *major non-compliance* if one or more non-compliances were identified in more than 10% of the *RSB compliance claims* included in the representative sample evaluated as per point 10.8. of this procedure.
10. 10. For each *non-compliance* identified the *RSB recognized accreditation* body shall evaluate and document the internal and external impacts which could potentially result from *non-compliance* with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*, and whether the non-compliance could result in compromising the *RSB*, the *RSB certification systems*, the *RSB trademarks* and/or any other constituent of the *RSB* and/or the *RSB certification systems*.
10. 11. The *RSB recognized accreditation body* shall ensure that *non-compliances* are corrected, rectified or otherwise brought into compliance with the *RSB standards* and the *RSB certification systems*.