

Environmental Commitment Certification Scheme



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1. Introduction

1.1 Issue status

Version: 4
Issued: October 2023

This version of the ECCS requirements is subject to review and comments by invited interested parties.

1.2. Background

Welcome to the ECCS Requirements, henceforward referred to as the Requirements.

In 2018, ECCS developed the ECCS Requirements which sets out criteria for small to medium organisations choosing to demonstrate their environmental commitment through independent audit and certification. These Requirements, when certified by ECCS, allow organisations to demonstrate to their interested parties, and prospective customers, that they have been independently assessed to a set of industry-specific core values relating to the organisation's environmental commitments, including their commitment to achieving net zero by at least 2050.

The Requirements have been developed by a multi-stakeholder group including retailers, transport companies, industry trade associations, independent experts and certification bodies.

The ECCS Requirements document is designed to reflect best practices and facilitate a process of continuous improvement through well-designed risk-based approaches and environmental systems. The objective is to ensure that environmental performance and compliance are maintained and that customer confidence is upheld through audit and certification.

1.3 Principles of the Standard

An organisation must have a full understanding of the activities and operations and have systems in place to develop, approve and achieve environmental targets; and demonstrate that it complies with applicable environmental legal requirements.

2. Terms and definitions

Applicable: relevant or appropriate

Conformance: compliance with standards, rules, or laws

Demonstrate or demonstrable: clearly show the existence or truth of (something) by giving proof or evidence

Develop: grow or cause to grow and become more mature, advanced, or elaborate

Documented: information required to be controlled and maintained by an organisation and the medium on which it is contained

Effective: extent to which planned activities are realised and planned results are achieved

Evaluation: assessment of progress made on achievement of the targets

Implement: put (a decision, plan, agreement, etc.) into effect

Improvement: activity to enhance performance

Interested party (or parties): person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

Legal compliance: obligatory requirement specified by an authority mandated by a legislative body

Maintain: cause or enable (a condition or situation) to continue as planned

Net zero: means that any carbon emissions created are balanced by taking the same amount out of the atmosphere.

Organisation: an organized group of people with a particular purpose, such as a business or government department

Resources: a stock or supply of money, materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by an organization in order to function effectively

Review: a formal assessment of something with the intention of instigating change if necessary

Senior management: the highest level of management in an organisation having ultimate decision-making authority

Shall: a mandatory requirement

Targets: an objective or result towards which efforts are directed

3. Format and Exclusions

3.1 The format of Requirements

Organisations seeking ECCS certification shall demonstrate conformance to the requirements of Section 4 of this document. Organisations shall also demonstrate that they have considered the guidance information set out in Section G of this document.

In Section 4, each clause of the ECCS requirements begins with a highlighted paragraph in bold text, the 'statement of intent', which sets out a summary of each mandatory requirement.

Below the statement of intent are requirements which together specify the criteria against which the audit will be carried out.

The requirements within the ECCS requirements shall be applied to all organisations seeking certification to ECCS.

3.2 Exclusions

Exclusions to clauses of ECCS requirements by organisations seeking certification are not permitted.

4. General requirements for certification

4.1 Senior management commitment

Senior management shall demonstrate that they are fully committed to the implementation of the ECCS requirements, set out in this document. This shall include the provision of adequate resources, effective communication, systems of review and actions taken to identify and effect opportunities for improvement.

- 4.1.1 Senior management shall develop and document a Statement of Intent (or policy) which states the intentions for the safe and legal operation of its environmental targets. This statement or policy shall include a commitment to achieving net zero by at least 2050.
- 4.1.2 Senior management shall provide the human, financial and other resources required to achieve the environmental targets.

4.2 Environmental targets

Senior management shall develop, implement and maintain environmental targets to reduce the environmental impact based on its organisational operations and activities and achieve net zero by at least 2050.

- 4.2.1 Environmental targets shall be approved by top management and published so as to be viewed by applicable interested parties.

NOTE: Examples of publishing environmental targets include: company website, general notices to interested parties, advertisements and marketing, etc.

- 4.2.2 Environmental targets shall be documented and maintained up to date and aligned with the Statement of Intent (or policy) as defined in Cl. 4.1.
- 4.2.3 Environmental targets shall include:
- a) Significant environmental impacts (based on the organisational operations and activities);
 - b) Compliance with all applicable environmental legal requirements;
 - c) Specified and achievable targets for each impact to demonstrate reduced environmental impact performance for each impact;
 - d) Monitoring and measurement factors for each environmental target;
 - e) Identified responsibilities for each environmental target;
 - f) Specified timescales which clearly outline when each environmental target will be achieved.
- 4.2.4 Environmental targets shall be subject to planned evaluation and review. A documented record shall be maintained for each planned evaluation and review, including details of any decisions and/or changes.

4.3 Legal compliance and evaluation

Senior management shall demonstrate its commitment to comply with all applicable environmental legislation.

4.3.1 A documented legal register shall be maintained which shall include:

- a) a list of all applicable environmental legislation based on the organisational operations and activities;
- b) the revision status and date of issue;
- c) method of review to ensure continued applicability;
- d) control measures to ensure effective compliance.

4.3.2 Responsibility for the maintenance, review and update of the legal register shall be defined.

4.3.3 An effective method of identifying all applicable environmental legal requirements, including updates, shall be defined and implemented.

NOTE: the organisation should consider applicable environmental legislation in all countries in which it operates.

5. Certification process

When an organisation (which must be a legal entity within the country of origin) believes it meets the requirements specified in this document, it may choose to be assessed and, if successful, become a certified ECCS company.

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the organisation to maintain certification.
- 5.2 Only ECCS may issue certificates and/or certify organisations to the requirements of this ECCS Requirements document.
- 5.3 Initial application for ECCS certification

Organisations choosing to be assessed and if successful, become ECCS certified, must first complete and submit to ECCS a Certification Application (download on the ECCS website: www.atlascertification.com/eccs).

Using the application information, ECCS will produce Terms of Business which contains an audit programme and associated costs.

If the organisation agrees to the ECCS Terms of Business, it must complete the appropriate section to confirm its agreement and submit to ECCS, prior to any assessment taking place.

It is essential that the organisation seeking certification to the ECCS Standard clearly defines the scope of their operational activities to assist assessment planning and ensure the appropriate assessment time is allocated.

- 5.4 Assessment

ECCS certification is a programme in which businesses are certified upon completion of a satisfactory assessment conducted by an assessor approved by ECCS (approved assessors are displayed on the current ECCS Register of Approved Auditors).

Approved ECCS assessors shall determine an organisation's conformance based on the requirements set out in Section 4 of this document. Conformance is confirmed by ECCS assessors through objective evidence being demonstrated by the organisation choosing to be certified.

5.5 Assessment reporting and recommendation

Following each assessment, a fully documented report shall be prepared in the agreed format (see ECCS website).

The audit report includes the following sections:

- Audit details and criteria
- Audit executive summary and conclusions
- Issues summary
- Checklist of compliance for each clause

Assessment reports shall be produced in English language.

The report shall confirm either of the following:

- The organisation has demonstrated conformance to ECCS requirements;
- The organisation has not yet demonstrated conformance to ECCS requirements;

If the organisation has not yet demonstrated conformance to ECCS requirements, then corrective action is necessary to address the issues raised (see Issues).

5.4 Certification

Organisations that have demonstrated conformance to ECCS requirements (see 5.3) will be considered by ECCS for certification.

ECCS certification is valid for one year from the approval date.

Certified clients shall be confirmed in the following ways:

- Issue of a one-year ECCS certificate;
- Listing on the ECCS Register of certified organisations;

ECCS certification is valid for one year and is renewed by way of a renewal audit which must take place and be approved prior to the expiry of the previous certificate.

A certificate shall not be released until the registration and certification fees are received from the organisation, irrespective of the outcome of the certification process.

5.5 Issues

During audits and at any point during the certified period (one-year from the approval date), ECCS may raise an Issue. The organisation must address issues by demonstrating root-cause and corrective action within three months of the Issue being raised by demonstrating documented evidence to the satisfaction of ECCS.

If the organisation fails to address an Issue, ECCS certification may be suspended or withdrawn without notice and associated registration removed.

NOTE: An Issue may be identified during audits; also during the certification period through receipt of complaints, incidents or breaches of legislation.

G.1 Guidance: Senior management commitment

Statement of Intent

Senior management should develop a document which outlines their commitment to comply with this ECCS document; the document may be printed or other appropriate media. The Statement of Intent or Policy should bear document controls to ensure that the correct and up-to-date version can be verified, i.e. version number and/or issue date.

The Statement of Intent or Policy should include sections which include:

- A commitment to comply with this document
- A commitment to provide adequate resources, including: human resources, financial investment, equipment, materials, software, etc.
- Effective communication, including: circulation of the Statement of Intent or Policy to interested parties, application training to internal personnel to ensure their understanding of top management's commitments
- Systems established to ensure that the Statement of Intent or Policy are achieved. These could include a management system, procedures or instructions.
- A commitment to improve the performance of environmental impacts based on its identified targets.
- A commitment to achieve net zero by at least 2050.

Human resources

Senior management should demonstrate that it has identified human resources that are capable of delivering the identified targets.

Examples of demonstrable evidence could include:

- Job descriptions
- Organisation charts (if sufficiently detailed)
- Training records

Financial resources

Senior management should demonstrate that has identified the cost and made available financial resources to ensure that the identified targets are achievable and ultimately achieved.

Examples of demonstrable evidence could include:

- Business plans
- Budget information
- Project plans which are approved and implemented

G.2 Guidance: Environmental targets

Environmental targets – basic requirements

Top management should design a set of targets which outline how they intend to achieve net zero by at least 2050.

The identified environmental effects should reflect the main activities of the organisation, so for example (but not limited to):

| Example activity | Example effect on the environment |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Construction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposal of general refuse to landfill • Disposal of printed papers • Disposal of waste oil • Energy consumption-Electricity. • Exhaust emissions • Fossil fuel consumption • Impact on local community • Leakage of chemicals/fuel • Noise emission • Runoff from vehicles bearing toxic protective coatings • Rust contamination from corrosion • Solder/welding fume emission • Statutory Nuisance • Use of stationery • Water consumption |
| Cleaning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidental discharge of chemicals to land • Discharges of contaminants to ground water • Discharges of ink/solvent waste to sewer • Disposal of cleaning materials (detergents) • Disposal of general refuse to landfill • Disposal of hazardous waste • Emission of dust (organic, fibres) • Emission of particulates from process • Energy consumption-Electricity. • Heavy Metals • Leachates discharges from domestic waste • Odour • Statutory Nuisance • Surface water pollution • Use of chemicals • Washdown chemical water. • Water consumption • Windblown dust from aggregate |
| Consulting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposal of electronic waste • Disposal of general refuse to landfill • Disposal of printed papers • Energy consumption-Electricity. • Use of paper and paper products • Use of stationery |

Documented environmental targets

The environmental targets should be maintained as a document. The environmental targets should bear controls which confirms that it is up to date, such as: version number of issue date. The environmental targets may be a printed document, spreadsheet or database.

Environmental impact

The organisation should consider its activities and the associated impact which each activity has on the environment. This might be demonstrated as a list of impacts for each activity.

Compliance

For each identified activity, the organisation should review its compliance based on applicable environmental legal requirements in each country of operation. Targets should demonstrate that legal obligations have been considered and confirmation of compliance confirmed.

Specified and achievable targets

For each environmental impact, the organisation should consider how it intends to achieve net zero by at least 2050. A measurable commitment should be specified which might include percentage reductions with timeframes, targeted graphs, etc.

Monitoring and measurement

For each environmental target, the organisation should outline how it will monitor and measure them to ensure that the organisation's target or objective is on course. This could be demonstrated by way of scheduled reviews whereby the actual performance is compared based on the ultimate objective or target.

Responsibilities

For each environmental target, the organisation should identify the responsible person or persons for the general lead of the target of objective.

Timescales

For each environmental target, a specified timeframe or target date should be specified. Timeframes or target dates may change over time so long as justified reasons are recorded.

Evaluation and review of targets

The targets should be subject to planned and documented evaluation and review. The evaluation and review may be a record of a meeting or analysis. Ultimately there should be an output of the evaluation and review which confirms the status of the environmental targets in terms of:

- Whether they are on target to be achieved; or
- Adjustments are needed to achieve the intended target or objective.

Either outcome should demonstrate a continued senior management commitment to improve the environmental performance based on its activities.

G.3 Guidance: Legal compliance and evaluation

Applicable environmental legislation

Senior management should ensure that an effective system is in place to ensure that the organisation remains compliant to all applicable environmental legal requirements. Applicable environmental legal requirements mean those legal requirements that affect the organisation's operations and activities. Senior management should develop a procedure, spreadsheet or type of effective document which shows that all applicable environmental legislation has been considered.

Legal register

The legal register should be a document which confirms the applicable environmental legal requirements in each country of operation. The register should bear controls which confirms that it is up to date, such as: version number of issue date. The register may be a printed document, spreadsheet or database.

The legal register should include the following information:

- A list of all applicable environmental legislation and to which organisational operation or activity it applies
- A record of review status which includes: date of review, who reviewed it and information relating to any changes that were necessary to ensure continued compliance
- Control measure information which shows how the applicable environmental legal requirement is complied with in the organisation
- Defined responsibility or responsibilities for each environmental legal requirement (including decision making information for those legal requirements which are deemed to be not applicable by the organisation)

The organisation should demonstrate an effective method of identifying applicable environmental legal requirements and an associated method to ensure the legal register and controls remain compliant. This might include:

- Appointment of a competent person (with suitable and sufficient knowledge, subscriptions and/or qualifications relating to applicable environmental legal requirements)
- Subscription to an environmental website which provides up to date applicable environmental legislation information and updates

If the organisation operates in multiple countries, then all of the above guidance applies for each country.