



# ACCREDITATION PROTOCOL FOR CERTIFYING BODIES

LIFE-IN-MP01-2.0-EN

Version: 2.0

Language: English

Applicability: International

Title: Accreditation Protocol for Certifying Bodies

Code: LIFE-IN-MP01-2.0-EN

Applicability: International

Type: Management Procedure (MP)

Version: 2.0

Status: Final

Language: English

Approval: LIFE Institute Board of Directors

Date: 08/31/2023

*In case of doubt and/or inconsistency between versions, the original document must be consulted (Portuguese version).*

Contact:

LIFE Institute

Rua Victor Benato, 210 – Bosque Zaninelli – Pilarzinho

ZIP Code: 82.120-110 – Curitiba – PR – Brasil

Phone: +55 41 3253 7884

[www.institutolife.org](http://www.institutolife.org)

[contato@institutolife.org](mailto:contato@institutolife.org)

2023 LIFE Institute

Rights reserved by copyright law in Brazil and according to the terms defined in the Brazilian and foreign legislation relevant to the subject when abroad. Any form of reproduction of this document or part of its content requires express written permission of LIFE Institute.

**OBJECTIVE**

This document establishes the procedure applied by the LIFE Institute for accrediting Certifying Bodies.

**APPLICATION**

This document applies to Certifying Bodies interested in carrying out audits of the LIFE Certification System.

**INDEX**

**1. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION ..... 5**

**2. ACCREDITATION PROCESS..... 5**

2.1 REQUESTING ACCREDITATION ..... 5

2.2 ANALYSIS OF THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION ..... 6

2.3 APPROVAL OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION ..... 6

2.4 IN LOCO EVALUATION OF THE CERTIFYING BODY APPLICANT ..... 6

2.5 FINAL DECISION ON THE EVALUATION OF THE APPLICANT CERTIFYING BODY ..... 6

2.6 APPROVAL FOR ACCREDITATION..... 7

2.7 DENIAL OF ACCREDITATION ..... 7

2.8 FORMALIZATION OF THE ACCREDITATION BY THE LIFE INSTITUTE ..... 7

2.9 ISSUANCE OF THE ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATE ..... 7

**3. ACCREDITATION MAINTENANCE ..... 8**

3.1 ANNUAL EVALUATION ..... 8

**4. ACCREDITATION RENEWAL ..... 9**

**5. WARNING, SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION OF ACCREDITATION ..... 9**

5.1 CERTIFYING BODY WARNING PROCESS..... 9

5.2 PROCESS OF SUSPENSION OF ACCREDITATION ..... 10

5.3 CANCELLATION OF THE ACCREDITATION ..... 10

5.4 REQUEST FOR CANCELLATION OF THE ACCREDITATION..... 10

**6. FEES ..... 11**

**7. HUMAN RESOURCES..... 11**

**8. COMMUNICATION AND USE OF THE LIFE’S BRAND ..... 11**

**9. ALTERATIONS IN THE ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS ..... 11**

**10. REFERENCES ..... 12**

**APPENDIX I – ACCREDITATION REQUEST FORM..... 13**

**APPENDIX II – DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FROM THE CERTIFYING BODY..... 14**

**NOTES ON DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT ..... 15**

## 1. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION

The Certifying Body must meet the following minimum requirements to start the accreditation process:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** the Certifying Body must be separate legal entity, so as to be legally responsible for all its certification activities.
- **Financial Capacity:** the Certifying Body shall demonstrate a financial capacity sufficient to ensure that market pressures shall not result in commercial conflicts of interest.
- **Operational Management:** the Certifying Body must have policies, procedures and documents which describe the internal management processes.
- **Qualifications:** the Certifying Body must have accreditation by official bodies at a national and/or international level for undertaking auditing of environmental management systems and/or forest management.
- **Impartiality and Exemption:** the Certifying Body must conduct its activities in such a way as to guarantee the impartiality and confidentiality of the certification processes.
- **No outsourcing:** the Certifying Body must be responsible for the certification processes and cannot outsource the service to other companies.

These requirements are verified by the LIFE Institute, according to documents submitted by the Certifying Body. The list of required documents can be found in Appendix II.

## 2. ACCREDITATION PROCESS

### 2.1 REQUESTING ACCREDITATION

To initiate the accreditation process, the Certifying Body interested in carrying out audits of the LIFE Certification System shall fill out the Accreditation Form (Appendix I) and send it to the LIFE Institute, along with the required documentation (Appendix II) and with the proof of payment of the fee for document analysis.

## **2.2 ANALYSIS OF THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

The LIFE Institute shall receive and analyze the Accreditation Form and the documentation sent by the Certifying Body applying for accreditation. The conformity of the information and documents sent will be verified in this analysis.

## **2.3 APPROVAL OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

Should the documentation be accepted, the LIFE Institute shall inform that the Certifying Body is to continue in the accreditation process.

Should the LIFE Institute not approve the documentation, it shall communicate the reason to the Certifying Body applying for accreditation and await the complementary documentation necessary for the accreditation process to continue.

## **2.4 IN LOCO EVALUATION OF THE CERTIFYING BODY APPLICANT**

The LIFE Institute may carry out in loco evaluation at the applicant Certifying Body's, in order to verify the facilities and information presented.

The Certifying Body will be responsible for covering LIFE Institute's evaluators fees for carrying out this analysis, as well as transportation, accommodation and food expenses.

## **2.5 FINAL DECISION ON THE EVALUATION OF THE APPLICANT CERTIFYING BODY**

Once the stages of documentation analysis and in loco evaluation (where applicable) have been completed, the LIFE Institute will forward the final decision to the Certifying Body applicant.

## **2.6 APPROVAL FOR ACCREDITATION**

Should the LIFE Institute approve the accreditation, the Contract of Accreditation shall be sent to the Certifying Body for signing.

## **2.7 DENIAL OF ACCREDITATION**

Should the LIFE Institute not approve the accreditation of the Certifying Body, a decision notice containing the reasons for the non-approval shall be sent.

## **2.8 FORMALIZATION OF THE ACCREDITATION BY THE LIFE INSTITUTE**

After signing the Accreditation Contract, the applicant Certifying Body will be recognized as accredited to carry out audits of the LIFE Certification System, and must pay the fee for registration and authorization to use the accreditation.

## **2.9 ISSUANCE OF THE ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATE**

The LIFE Institute will send the Accreditation Certificate to the Certifying Body after the Accreditation Contract has been signed and the fee for registration and authorization to use the accreditation has been paid.

The Accreditation Certificate attests to the registration of the Certifying Body and authorization to use the accreditation to carry out audits of the LIFE Certification System. It is valid for five years, as long as compliance with the requirements of this document is maintained.

---

### 3. ACCREDITATION MAINTENANCE

#### 3.1 ANNUAL EVALUATION

Annually, the Certifying Body must pay the LIFE Institute the fee for maintaining the registration and authorization to use the accreditation, considering the anniversary of the accreditation (date of issue of the certificate) as the deadline.

The LIFE Institute will carry out evaluations of the Certifying Body, through documentation analysis and Witness Audits, for the purposes of maintaining accreditation.

Documentation analysis: the Certifying Body must annually forward the required updated documentation (Appendix II) to the LIFE Institute, considering the accreditation anniversary as the deadline, and pay the fee for this procedure.

Witness Audits: the LIFE Institute may carry out annual assessments to accompany the Certifying Body's auditors in official audits of the LIFE Certification System (Certification, Follow-up or Recertification Audits). The following are objects of analysis during the Witness Audits:

- a) Compliance with the requirements of the Audit Guide;
- b) Correct interpretation of the LIFE Methodology.

All Witness Audits will be scheduled in advance with the Certifying Body.

Witness Audits can be applied as soon as the Certifying Body obtains its first LIFE Certification System client.

The Certifying Body will be responsible for covering the costs of the Witness Audits, which involve the payment of LIFE Institute's evaluators fees, as well as transportation, accommodation and food expenses.

After carrying out the Witness Audit, the LIFE Institute will send the Certifying Body an opinion on the assessment. If non-conformities are detected, they will be described and communicated to the Certifying Body, resulting in corrective actions.



If the need arises, the LIFE Institute may request clarifications or additional information.

The LIFE Institute also reserves the right to reassess the Certifying Body's premises on an annual basis, if deemed necessary. Costs involving the payment of LIFE Institute's evaluators fees, as well as transportation, accommodation and food expenses must be covered by the Certifying Body.

In the event of complaints or other external demands related to the process, LIFE Institute reserves the right to carry out additional audits, known as Verification Audits. The costs and expenses must be covered by the Certifying Body.

#### **4. ACCREDITATION RENEWAL**

The accreditation of each Certifying Body is valid for five years from the date of the Certificate of Accreditation. After this period, the renewal of accreditation must be carried out following the same process as the initial accreditation.

#### **5. WARNING, SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION OF ACCREDITATION**

##### **5.1 CERTIFYING BODY WARNING PROCESS**

The LIFE Institute may issue a warning to the Certifying Body at any moment in the event of the following situations:

- a) Failure to comply with clauses in the Accreditation Contract;
- b) Improper use of the Accreditation Certificate or the LIFE's brand;
- c) Non-payment of fees;
- d) Failure to comply with the requirements presented in this document;
- e) Failure to correct the non-conformities identified in the evaluation processes.

## **5.2 PROCESS OF SUSPENSION OF ACCREDITATION**

If the Certifying Body fails to address the situations identified in the warning process, the LIFE Institute may suspend accreditation.

During the suspension period, the Certifying Body may not undertake audits using the LIFE Certification System and shall provide the LIFE Institute with all information requested for the necessary clarifications.

The LIFE Institute shall evaluate all information received in order to decide whether or not to maintain the suspension of the Certifying Body and will communicate its decision.

## **5.3 CANCELLATION OF THE ACCREDITATION**

If the clarifications provided by the Certifying Body during the suspension period are not sufficient, and/or the corrective actions are not complied with within the stipulated period, and/or the clauses of the contract are not complied with, and/or the non-payment of fees persists after the stipulated deadline, LIFE Institute may cancel the accreditation.

If this occurs, the LIFE Institute will notify the Certifying Body of the cancellation of accreditation, formalizing the disqualification.

## **5.4 REQUEST FOR CANCELLATION OF THE ACCREDITATION**

The Certifying Body may request the LIFE Institute for cancellation of accreditation at any time.

In such a case, the Certifying Body shall obligatorily transfer the processes of certification which are under its custody to another Certifying Body accredited by the LIFE Institute, and the Accreditation Certificate will be canceled.

This process must be conducted as established in the Accreditation Contract and in the document relating to the transfer of LIFE Certification.

## **6. FEES**

The LIFE Institute will charge the Certifying Body annual fees for registration and authorization to use accreditation to carry out third-party audits of the LIFE Certification System, as well as costs and expenses related to the use of technical team to carry out evaluations, according to the Accreditation Fees document.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Certifying Body shall have up-to-date records of qualified staff, including curricular information which contains: qualification; courses and training attended; and professional experience. The records must permit the identification of the professionals who are qualified to undertake auditing using the LIFE Certification System.

Audits must be conducted by the Certifying Body according to the criteria presented in the Audit Guide, which also includes the auditor's necessary technical training applied to each type of certificate in the LIFE Certification System.

## **8. COMMUNICATION AND USE OF THE LIFE'S BRAND**

The conditions for communication and use of the LIFE's brand, as well as messages associated with certification, are described in the LIFE Institute documents relevant to the subject and can be audited by the LIFE Institute.

## **9. ALTERATIONS IN THE ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS**


In the event of changes in this Accreditation Protocol, the LIFE Institute will inform the Certifying Bodies, specifying the time limits such that these may adapt.

## 10. REFERENCES

ISO/IEC 17011:2017 - Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.

ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 - Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.

**APPENDIX I – ACCREDITATION REQUEST FORM**

	<p><b>Accreditation Request Form</b></p> <p>Date:     /     /</p>
<b>1. Name of the Certifying Body:</b>	
<b>2. Company tax identification number - CNPJ:</b>	
<b>3. Address:</b>	
<b>4. Legal representative:</b>	
<b>5. Name of applicant:</b>	
<b>6. Contact of the applicant (phone/email):</b>	
<b>7. Certifying Body's time in the market:</b>	
National:	
International:	
<b>8. Does the Certifying Body have offices in other countries? Which countries?</b>	
<b>9. What national and/or international accreditations does the Certifying Body have? For which standards?</b>	
<b>10. Information on the technical team of the Certifying Body:</b>	
- Total number of direct employees:	
- Total number of auditors:	
- Number of lead auditors:	

---

**APPENDIX II – DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FROM THE CERTIFYING BODY**

- a) Proof of fiscal regularity before: Federal Treasury; State Treasury; Municipal Treasury; Social Security; Guarantee Fund for Time of Service;
- b) Statute or social contract of the entity with the latest alteration and minute, duly recorded;
- c) Company tax identification number (CNPJ);
- d) Organizational structure: organizational chart, identifying the Senior Management and all management structures;
- e) List of auditors registered to carry out LIFE Certification System audits;
- f) Policy to ensure the exemption of conflicts of interest;
- g) Policy for protecting the confidentiality of information obtained during audits;
- h) Document with description of the internal management system;
- i) Internal procedure for undertaking audits;
- j) Master list of management system document;
- k) Procedure for control of internal and external documents related to certification processes;
- l) Copy of Accreditation Certificates in other methodologies

**NOTE:**

**Accreditation Process and Accreditation Renewal:** all documents must be submitted.

**Maintenance of Accreditation:** submission of the documents mentioned in items "a" to "e" is mandatory.

## **NOTES ON DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT**

Version 1.0: approved on 01/28/2013, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Initial issue of the document.

Version 1.1: approved on 12/01/2016, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Layout update and content revision.

Version 1.2: approved on 05/17/2018, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Layout adjustment and content revision.

Version 2.0: approved on 08/31/2023, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Revision of content, change of document layout and insertion of the new LIFE Institute logo.