



LIFE CERTIFICATION RULES FOR GROUPS

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OBJECTIVE

Establishing rules to apply the LIFE Methodology of Business and Biodiversity for Groups.

APPLICATION

Applicable to LIFE certified organizations or producers, those undergoing the certification process, seeking certification, and other stakeholders.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Group Certification can be a strategic solution for organizations and producers - including business groups, distributors, and other corporate arrangements - seeking to obtain LIFE Certification in a more efficient and coordinated manner. It is a unified process in which several organizations and/or producers can have their business units share a single license using the LIFE Key software.

This model allows for the division of costs and responsibilities for the certification stages, which is especially advantageous in contexts with many units and/or members involved. The standardization of the process contributes to greater agility and control in audits and compliance maintenance.

Due to the volume of data and the possible heterogeneity of organizational structures - such as groups of organizations comprising the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors - this type of certification requires a differentiated process. It is essential to consolidate information from different sources into a single technical-administrative flow, which requires methodological rigor and integration between the parties.

In addition, the system allows for the grouping of several units under the same structure, facilitating the management and traceability of information.

2. GROUP CERTIFICATION

Group Certification is a structured modality designed to serve organizations composed of several business units that may have different levels of similarity between them. The model covers both homogeneous configurations - in which the units share activities, location in the same ecoregion, and hydrographic region - and heterogeneous arrangements, operating in the primary, secondary, and/or tertiary sectors.

Regardless of the degree of uniformity, all units must be formally linked under the same management, in addition to complying with the guidelines established in this document.

Organizations that opt for the Group Certification model are not eligible for sampling during the audit. This requirement increases the traceability of the system, reinforces the consistency of assessments, and ensures equitable treatment among certified units. All other instructions for the Group audit process must follow the rules established in the Audit Guide.

Figure 1, presented below, illustrates the composition of a certified group, highlighting the possible coexistence of homogeneous and heterogeneous units.

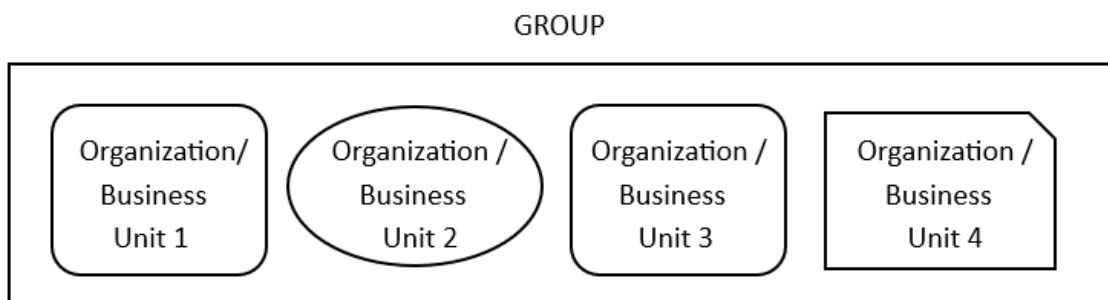


Figure 1- Group Certification

2.1 GROUP BIODIVERSITY PRESSURE INDEX (BPI) AND BIODIVERSITY MINIMUM PERFORMANCE (BMP)

Units belonging to one or more organizations seeking group certification - whether considered homogeneous or heterogeneous - must report their environmental data/aspects and gross revenue individually for each property/business unit within the scope of certification.

Guidelines for obtaining environmental data are provided in the **LIFE Technical Guide 01** document.

Therefore, each business unit will have its **Biodiversity Pressure Index (BPI)** and **Biodiversity Minimum Performance (BMP)** values calculated individually. The MBP values for each business unit will be added together, generating a total minimum performance value for the group.

2.2 GROUP BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES ACTION PLAN (BAP) AND BIODIVERSITY POSITIVE PERFORMANCE (BPP)

The **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Action Plan (BAP)** is assessed at Group level.

Therefore, **Biodiversity Positive Performance (BPP)**, referring to the score obtained from the **BAP**, must be equal to or greater than the group's **Biodiversity Minimum Performance**. The rule of a minimum of 30% to be compensated in the same ecoregion of each business unit evaluated must also be followed, as in the individual LIFE certification process.

2.3 LIFE STANDARD AND MANAGEMENT INDICATORS APPLICABLE FOR GROUP CERTIFICATION

The LIFE Management Indicators must also be met at the Group level, although their records are shared by the business units that comprise it.

The status of compliance with the indicators corresponds to the group, considering all the units that make it up. Issues specific to each business unit must be reported and described when filling in the comments and evidence fields for each indicator in the LIFE Key software.

3. CLUSTER OF MEMBERS

Cases involving organizations or producers with a considerable number of homogeneous members, whose structure justifies collective treatment - such as agricultural or forestry areas, animal production, franchises, cooperatives, or holding company distribution centers - the formation of a **Cluster of Members** is permitted, that **will form a Business Unit per Cluster** and use the same LIFE Key software license.

In this model, units with standardized processes and under the same management - such as the examples mentioned above - are treated in an integrated manner, allowing for sampling audits within each homogeneous group.

A **limiting factor** for the composition of groups is that **the gross annual revenue of each member must not exceed \$1 million (USD)**. This definition aims to avoid the grouping of larger businesses, which should be responsible for their own certification processes.

Exception: this limiting factor **does not apply** to clusters composed of **members from the same organization**.

In addition, **each cluster** (or business unit) **must consist exclusively of homogeneous members**, i.e., those that perform similar activities and are in the same ecoregion and the same hydrographic region. This composition can be seen in Figure 2 below.

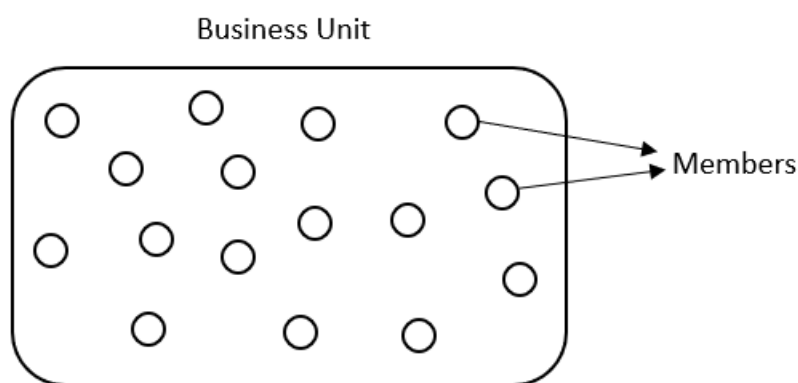


Figure 2- Cluster of members

Finally, in situations where an organization brings together different business units formed by a Cluster of Members, a Group can be structured, even if these units/groups are heterogeneous among themselves.

Provided that each unit is composed of homogeneous members (with similar activities, located in comparable environmental contexts), sampling audits at the member level are permitted. This configuration combines flexibility with the levels of control and traceability required by certification.

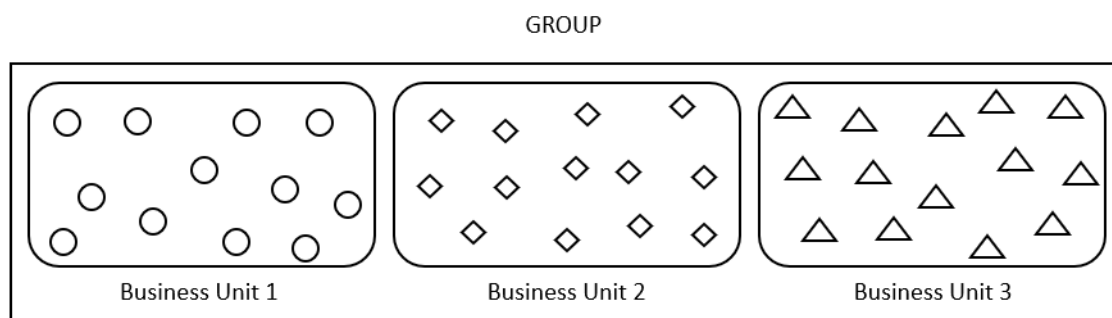


Figure 3 - Group formed by 03 Business Units/Clusters of Members

3.1 CLUSTER OF MEMBERS BIODIVERSITY PRESSURE INDEX (BPI) AND BIODIVERSITY MINIMUM PERFORMANCE (BMP)

To calculate the **Biodiversity Pressure Index (BPI)**, environmental data and gross annual revenue (using a spreadsheet or similar) for each member of the group/business unit must be compiled and presented, covering each environmental aspect assessed (water consumption, energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation, and land use).

In cases where it is difficult to obtain environmental data, as well as the gross revenue of a member, the data may be presented as an average estimate, obtained from a clear and described rationale.

In the case of organizations/producers where the gross revenue of the organization/producer is not separated by member, it should be apportioned among the members in proportion to the productive area(s).

The sum of each environmental data and annual gross revenue presented by each member must be entered into the LIFE Key software, which will calculate the **Pressure Index (PI)** for each environmental aspect and, subsequently, the final value of the **BPI** and **BMP** for the group.

Example of data compilation per cluster of members/ business unit:

Cluster/ Business Unit	LOCATION		MEMBERS		ANNUAL AVERAGE PER CLUSTER OF MEMBERS					
	Hydrographic Region	Ecoregion	Sub-cluster (opcional)	Number of members	Revenue (U\$)	Water (m ³ / year)	Energy (tep/ year)	GGE (tCO ₂ / year)	Waste (ton/year)	Area (ha)
1										
2										
...

3.2 CLUSTER OF MEMBERS BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PLAN (BAP) AND BIODIVERSITY POSITIVE PERFORMANCE (BPP)

The **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Action Plan (BAP)** is evaluated at the Cluster level.

Therefore, **Biodiversity Positive Performance (BPP)**, referring to the score obtained from the PABS, must be equal to or greater than the **Biodiversity Minimum Performance** of the established group(s)/business unit(s). However, it must also follow the rule of a minimum of 30% to be compensated in the same ecoregion of each group/business unit, as in the individual certification process.

Certification of a group composed of a cluster of members/business units with regional distribution must carry out at least 30% of conservation actions in the largest biome, preferably in the priority ecoregion(s) for the conservation of that biome.

3.3 LIFE STANDARD AND MANAGEMENT INDICATORS APPLICABLE FOR CLUSTER OF MEMBERS CERTIFICATION

Management Indicators must be met at the Cluster level, although their records are shared by the members that constitute it (business unit).

The status of compliance with the indicators corresponds to the group. Issues specific to each member must be reported and described when filling in the comments and evidence fields for each indicator in the LIFE Key software.

4. GROUP/CLUSTER OF MEMBERS STRUCTURE AND OPERATION

To formalize the creation of the Group and/or the Member Cluster a bylaw – or a similar document - must be drafted, containing the following information:

- requirements for joining the Group/Cluster;
- hierarchy and member's responsibilities within the Group and/or Cluster;
- document listing all responsibilities related to the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Action Plan (BAP);
- periodic training - whether it is internal or external – of Group/Cluster members about LIFE Certification;
- planned activities, such as:
 - meeting about LIFE Certification;
 - periodic participating in internal audits;
 - actions required to maintain the certificate;
 - maintenance schedule of activities linked to the Biodiversity Minimum Performance (BMP), agreed with the person responsible for the BAP;
- clear definition of actions that are detrimental to the maintenance of the certificate and may result in members having to leave the Group/Cluster.

5. GROUP/CLUSTER OF MEMBERS' ADMINISTRATION

It is necessary to appoint an administrator (whether individual or legal entity) to manage the Group or Cluster.

5.1 ADMINISTRATOR'S PRE-REQUISITES AND RESPONSABILITIES

- Have a structure that ensures certified member's data control and management;
- Periodically carry out internal auditing activities, on a sample basis, within the Group and/or Cluster;
- Ability to centralize and manage all Group and/or Cluster information;
- Maintain good relationship with Group and/or Cluster members, given continuous interface is necessary;
- Take charge of contact with the responsible Certifying Body, acting as the group's focal point for scheduling audits and other dealings with the CB.

NOTES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT

Version 1.0: approved on 05/17/2018, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Initial issue resulting from document separation “Scope Rules and Group Certification for LIFE Certification”.

Version 1.0-R1: approved on 08/31/2023, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Update of terms of the methodology, change of document layout and insertion of the new LIFE Institute logo.

Version 1.0-R2: approved on 09/01/2025, by the LIFE Institute Board of Directors. Revision of text and document structure. Insertion of information on the use of the LIFE Key software license. Reorganization of items and summary. Redefinition of terms related to LIFE Certification for Groups and Member Groupings. Inclusion of a limiting factor for forming a member grouping. Transfer of information related to the audit process and issuance of certificates to the External and Independent Audit Guide document.