

# ECO PLATFORM

## **Audit Requirements for ECO EPD Programme Operators** (hereafter Audit Requirements)

Version 2.0 (December 2024)

Table 1: Version of this document

Version Number	Date	Summary of changes
V1.0	20.06.2024	First version of separated ECO Platform Audit Requirements
V2.0	20.12.2024	Update in line with updated requirements in the ECO Platform QM Guidelines; minor audit process adjustments to enhance audit efficiency

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## 1 SCOPE

This document is addressed to the ECO Platform auditors and refers to the latest released version of the following documents that are part of the ECO Platform Standards:

- the ECO Platform Verification Guidelines
- the ECO Platform LCA Calculation Rules and Specifications for EPDs
- the ECO Platform Tool Verification Guidelines
- the ECO Platform Quality Management Guidelines
- the ECO Platform Digital Data Requirements
- the ECO Platform Requirements for publishing digital data in ECO Portal

It covers the required auditors' competencies, general audit requirements, related documents, and process descriptions to be audited as well as responsible contact persons at the audited PO (hereafter applicant).

The document moreover includes the latest version of the audit checklists that must be used in the audit procedure.

## 2 GENERAL AUDITORS' COMPETENCIES AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITORS

### 2.1 General Knowledge

The ECO Platform audits have the role to ensure compliance with the requirements defined in the ECO Platform Standards.

In general, the ECO Platform audit team shall have knowledge and skills in the areas of audit principles, procedures and methods, management systems and the ECO Platform Standards documents.

The minimum requirements on the audit teams' competences are continuously defined and documented in a job description through collaboration between the QM Manager, the TEWOG & TOOLWOG Convenors and the Board.

### 2.2 International Standards

The auditors must be familiar with the following international standards in their latest version:

**ISO 17021-1. Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems —Part 1: Requirements:**

ECO Platform refers to this standard and gives special attention to clause 4 which provides general principles, clause 9.4 as a general framework for audits, and definition 3.3 as a guide to the boundaries of consultancy.

**ISO 19011. Guidelines for auditing management systems:**

ECO Platform also refers to ISO 19011 which provides guidance on auditing management systems, including the principles of auditing, managing an audit programme and conducting management system audits, as well as guidance on the evaluation of competence of individuals involved in the audit process, including the person managing the audit programme, auditors and audit teams.

ISO 19011 is applicable to all organizations that need to conduct internal or external audits of management systems or manage an audit programme.

Special attention is given to clause 4 which provides general principles, clause 6 – especially sub-clauses 6.4 - as a general framework for conducting an audit and clause 7.2.3 in which generic knowledge and skills of auditors as well as audit team leaders are described.

### 3 “THE DOSSIER”

The following documents and/or details (“the dossier”) must be sent by the applicant to the audit team approx. two weeks before the kick-off meeting in English language (as a PDF or via link to be downloaded).

The applicant will be informed of this obligation and all details in an audit plan as part of the introductory email.

A list of all EN15804+A2 EPDs published within the last 6 months - out of which the audit team chooses the example EPD - needs to be provided separately together with the signed audit plan within one week after the send-out of the introductory email. Same applies for the list of currently valid, verified tools used to generate EPD for the programme (if applicable).

#### Audit Part GPI, Verification, LCA Calc. Rules, Tool Verification, Quality Management:

1. Completed compliance table (following auditors’ checklists)
2. General Program Instructions (GPI)
3. PCR review procedure
4. Management system manual, or individual procedures covering at least PO independence and impartiality, document control, complaint handling and data confidentiality management with evidence of management review.
5. Procedures for selection of verifiers and PCR review panel, including qualification criteria
6. Evidence that the latest released version of the ECO Platform verification checklist provided in the ECO Platform Verification Guidelines serves as basis for verification of ECO EPD → applicant to provide an English version of its checklist and to show matching of this checklist with ECO Platform checklist
7. Evidence that the requirements for Tool Verification provided in the latest released version of the Tool Verification Guidelines are included → applicant to provide English version of its Tool Verification Requirements and to show matching with ECO Platform requirements
8. Project report template if the applicant uses one
9. EPD template if the applicant uses one
10. Example EPD with verification checklist and verification report
11. Verification documentation related to the example Tool(s) according to the valid ECO Platform Tool Verification Guidelines
12. Name and contact details of contact persons that have the responsibility to interface with the audit team

#### Audit Part Digital Data Requirements & Connection to ECO Portal:

1. The example EPD in ILCD + EPD format (on the PO node or via .zip-file)
2. Evidence that the applicant is connected to the ECO Portal incl. reliable operations with proper monitoring (e.g. via configuration files, screenshots, other documents)

## 4 DETAILS ON RECURRING AUDITS

Recurring audits, as defined in the ECO Platform standards, refer to planned assessments that are carried out at a fixed interval after an initial audit. These audits are designed to uphold compliance with ECO Platform Standards and ensure the continued adherence of the PO to specified criteria.

Fundamentally, the process of recurring audits follows the same steps as the initial audit. The scope or areas to be examined are communicated to the PO as part of the preparatory measures.

The scope of recurring audits is defined by the ECO Platform Quality Manager and the audit team taking into account relevant changes in the ECO Platform standards since the last audit and the latest audit report. Provisions are made to prevent redundancy between ECO Platform audits and external certifications or accreditations held by the PO.

The time spent by the audit team on a recurring audit should not exceed two man-days. In case pre-defined timeframes are exceeded, potential extra costs may be invoiced with prior agreement.

## 5 AUDITORS CHECKLIST “PROCEDURES & QUALITY MANAGEMENT”

This checklist covers procedural aspects, including those listed in ISO 14025. For each issue, the auditor must identify evidence that there is a mechanism (e.g. procedure) to deliver the requirement, evidence that it is applied, and that its functioning is checked by some form of review process. Note the sources of evidence in the “Comment” column along with any non-conformities and/or comments.

	issue	Comment by auditor (include source of evidence)	Reply by applicant	Result
<b>1.</b>	<b>PO independence &amp; impartiality</b>			
1.1	Is there evidence of top management commitment to impartiality in policies or equivalent documents?			
1.2	Is there evidence that a mechanism for safeguarding the PO’s impartiality exists and is actively used? (The mechanism should provide input on, and coverage of, aspects listed in ECO Platform QM Guidelines item 2.1)			
<b>2.</b>	<b>Verifier Independence</b>			
2.1	Mechanism for appointment of verifiers ensures that verifiers shall not have been engaged in conducting the LCA or crafting the declaration and shall be devoid of conflicts of interest.			



3.	<b>Verifier Approval</b>			
3.1	Do the programme rules include an appointment and registration procedure for verifiers?			
4.0	<b>Verifier Competence</b>			
4.1	Have competence requirements been established?			
4.2	Are these in line with ISO 14025 8.2.2?			
4.3	Knowledge and experience of the verifier or verification team is available and up to date at the time of verification?			
5.	<b>Communication of Updates</b>			
5.1	Does the PO have a process for communicating updates in its rules, including ECO Platform standards?			
6.	<b>GPI</b> - contains all items from ISO 14025 6.4 (some may be in a “PCR Part A”) In particular:			
6.1	- Are EPD programme owner and operator, type of institution described?			
6.2	- Are Scope, commitment to ISO 14025, EN 15804+A2, responsible parties and intended audiences determined?			
6.3	- Procedure for definition of product categories available?			
6.4	- GPI review / revision process established?			

7.	<b>PCR development &amp; review</b>			
7.1	- procedure exists for PCR development /adoption?			
7.2	- procedure exists for PCR review, including provision for taking account of new developments?			
7.3	- procedure & criteria for assembling PCR review panel exists?			
8.	<b>Involvement of interested parties</b>			
8.1	- consultation for programme development in line with ISO14025 5.5?			
8.2	- consultation for PCR development in line with ISO 14025 6.5?			
8.3	- names of organization participating in PCR developing?			
9.	<b>Complaint Procedure</b>			
9.1	- does one exist?			
9.2	- complaint procedure: -is there evidence of follow-up, resolution and management review of complaints to inform improvement?			
9.3	- complaint procedure: does it include a procedure and timeline for suspension and withdrawal of non-compliant EPD?			
10.	<b>Documentation</b>			
10.1	- Do procedures exist for data confidentiality management?			

10.2	- is a procedure in place for issue, approval, registration and update of documents relating to programme operation (i.e. document control)?			
10.3	- is there a mechanism to safeguard the consistency of data within the programme? (ISO 14025 6.3 d)			
<b>11.</b>	<b>EPD &amp; Verification</b>			
11.1	- Is the procedure of verification determined?			
11.2	- Are the requirements for tool verification available according to the scope of the programme?			
11.3	- Are handling of changes or revisions to EPD determined?			

## 6 AUDITORS CHECKLIST “FORMS AND TEMPLATES, VERIFICATION GUIDELINES & CALCULATION RULES”

<i>PART 1 Forms &amp; Templates</i>				
	issue	Comment by auditor (include source of evidence)	Reply by applicant	Result
<b>12.</b>	<b>Format of EPD, reporting and publication</b>			
12.1	Are the formatting rules available? Is there an EPD template? If so, does the content align with requirements on ECO EPDs?			

12.2	Does the sample EPD reference ISO 14025?			
12.3	Is the ECO Platform-compliant verification checklist available?			
12.4	Are the ECO Platform-compliant guidelines for tool verification followed?			

**PART 2: Verification checklist / documentation; example ECO EPD; if applicable: tool verification**

	issue	Comment by auditor (include source of evidence)	Reply by applicant	Result
<b>13.</b>	<b>Verification Checklist</b>			
13.1	Are all items of the ECO Platform verification checklist addressed?			
13.2	Is the EPD complete as in “content of the EPD”?			
13.3	Did the applicant provide a “proof of matching” of its checklist with the ECO Platform checklists?			
13.4	Verification report available? Does the report refer to the ECO Platform verification checklist?			
13.5	Does the verification report include a statement on verification results (e.g. non-compliances, corrective actions)?			
13.6	Is the verification report for the tool available (if applicable)? Does it fulfil the ECO Platform requirements?			

13.7	Are the example EPDs for tool verification available to the auditor (if applicable)?			
13.8	Are there any known non-compliances in the sample EPD or tool that have not been addressed in the verification report?			

## 7 AUDITORS CHECKLIST “DIGITAL DATA REQUIREMENTS”

<b>Digital Data Requirements</b>				
	issue	Comment by auditor (include source of evidence)	Reply by applicant	Result
<b>14.</b>	<b>Digital Data</b>			
14.1	GPI or other relevant documentation includes details on digital data format of EPDs?			
14.2	Is the EPD published in a digital data format according to the ECO Platform Digital Data Requirements?			

## 8 AUDITORS CHECKLIST “PUBLISHING DIGITAL DATA IN ECO PORTAL”

The technical specifications for publishing data digitally via the ECO Portal are part of the ECO Platform Audit, however, they are verified by a third-party provider (“the ECO Platform Validator”). The findings of the validation process will be considered in the audit approval process.

The different steps of the process are listed below:

1. The applicant applies at ECO Platform (Head Office) for connection of their node to ECO Platform.
2. ECO Platform appoints a person or entity to verify the compliance of the node and the data thereon (“the ECO Platform Validator”).
3. The applicant will grant access to their node to the ECO Platform Validator.
4. The ECO Platform Validator will perform
  - a. A compliance check on the node to verify compatibility with ECO Portal
  - b. A compliance check on the entire data
5. Any issues that are found will be reported to the applicant in order for them to be able to correct them.
6. The validation ends when one of the following conditions are met:
  - a. Both node and data are found to be fully compliant.
  - b. The allocated time period for the audit (including any possible extensions that have been granted) has elapsed.
  - c. The application is withdrawn by the applicant.
7. The ECO Platform Validator reports their findings to the ECO Platform Board along with a recommendation for either approval or rejection of the application.
8. If the Board approves the application, the applicant’s node will be connected to the ECO Portal.

## 9 ANNEX 1: DRAFT ECO PLATFORM AUDIT PLAN

**Programme Operator:** *Name of organization*

**Responsible contact person:** *Name, email address*

**Audit**

**Reference Standard:** ECO Platform Standards

**Audit Team:** *Name of lead auditor*

*Name of co-auditor*

Step	Start Date	Completion Date	Activities	Note
1			Preparatory Measures, up to signature of the Audit Plan and submission of the list of recent EPD / available tools <sup>1</sup>	Within one week
2			Payment of audit Fee by applicant	
3			Selection of sample EPD and tool (if applicable) by the auditors	Within one week
4			Submission of documents (dossier) by applicant	
5			Check of completeness of submission by audit team	
6			Kick-off meeting	
6.1			Validation of Digital Data and ECO Portal Connection	
7			Document checks according to audit requirements and checklists by audit team	
8			Comments from audit team to applicant	
9			Feed-back meeting	
10			Reply to comments and completion of tasks by applicant	
11			Final audit report by audit team	
12			Approval or Rejection of Application by ECO Platform Board of Management	
13			Audit documentation	

The entire audit process is scheduled for a maximum period of 4 months from the date of submission of documents by the applicant (step 3). A further delay caused by the applicant during the audit process can lead to increased costs for the audit. In case of justified rejections, the costs will not be reimbursed to the applicant (refer to Audit Guidelines for details on requirements).

By signing this document, the applicant agrees to the presented timelines and confirms that there are no conflicts of interest with the lead or co-auditor.

<sup>1</sup> A list of all EN15804+A2 EPDs published within the last 6 months out of which the audit team chooses the example EPD needs to be provided together with the signed audit plan; for this EPD, the verification checklist and verification report must then be provided as part of the dossier. Same applies for the list of currently valid, verified tools used to generate EPD for the programme (if applicable).