

## Guideline for Certification Bodies, Auditors, Evaluators and Certifiers

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Note: Note: For easier readability, the male form is used in the text for personal designations. Nevertheless, the information refers to members of all genders.

This Guideline describes the requirements that must be met by certification bodies and auditors, evaluators and certifiers for purposes of VLOG auditing and certification.

VLOG certificates will only be recognised if the requirements of this Guideline are met by the auditors, evaluators and certifiers and the certification body, and the certification body is recognised by VLOG.

In addition to the requirements to be met by certification bodies, auditors, evaluators and certifiers, this Guideline also details the approval process for certification bodies.

The list of recognised certification bodies is posted on the VLOG homepage **website** (<https://www.ohnegentechnik.org/zertifizierer>)

changed

# 1 Certification Bodies

## Requirements for Certification Bodies

### 1.1 Accreditation

The certification body must provide proof of valid accreditation according to ISO/IEC 17065 in at least one standard for the food industry and feed industry/agriculture each.

**Alternatively, in consultation with VLOG, accreditation documents under other ISO standards (e.g., ISO/IEC 17021) can be submitted, if appropriate. VLOG will then determine whether VLOG recognition is possible.**

added

If the certification body only has valid accreditation for the food industry sector, it will receive VLOG recognition only for the qualification area ~~Food Processing, Logistics (Food) and Retail~~.

changed

If the certification body only has valid accreditation for the feed industry/agriculture sector, it will receive VLOG recognition only for the qualification areas of ~~Agriculture, Agricultural Group Organisation as well as Logistics (Feed)~~, **and** ~~Feed Manufacturing and Matrix Organisation~~.

changed

Table added

Accreditation area		
Feed Industry/Agriculture	Food Industry	
VLOG recognition for Qualification Areas		
Agriculture	Feed	Food
Auditing or Certification at the VLOG Stages		
Agriculture Group Organisation Agriculture	Feed manufacturing Logistics (Feed) Matrix organisation	Food processing Logistics (Food) Retail

Figure 1: Overview of accreditation and qualification areas

### 1.2 Quality Management System

The certification body's quality management system must describe, ensure, implement and document the following items with respect to VLOG certification/the VLOG Standard:

- **Organisation and responsibility within the certification body**
  - The head of the certification body and the contact person for VLOG and at least one deputy for each must be listed by name.
- **Independence and objectivity of the certification body and the auditors for the activity**
  - The certification body must ensure the independence and objectivity of its certification activities.
  - The certification body must provide sufficient staff to ensure independence and objectivity.  
The business and staff must act independently and have had no family/private ties to the businesses to be audited (for at least the last 2 years preceding the audit). Staff members may not have any business relationship with the business to be audited.

- **Auditing and certification**

- The performance, documentation and evaluation of the audits and **certifications and the withdrawal of VLOG certificates** must follow the procedure described in the VLOG Standard. In the event that a VLOG-certified business is suspected to be at fault, the certification body will perform additional unannounced audits addressing the suspected problem<sup>1</sup> ~~and will notify the VLOG Head Office.~~ | added and deleted
- **Sampling during the audit and subsequent GMO testing, if required by the certification body, shall be done by a VLOG-certified laboratory in accordance with the procedures prescribed in the Guideline for Laboratories.** | added
- **With respect to incidents reported to certification bodies by a business, the certification body shall confirm to the business the suitability of the measures proposed or implemented by the business (e.g. restarting the minimum feeding conversion period).** | added

- **Handling of complaints and protests**

- A documented procedure for handling internal and external complaints and objections from customers, standard owners, authorities or other third parties has been introduced, which incorporates VLOG certification **and the VLOG penalty procedure for certification bodies and auditors.** | added
- A documented procedure for handling deviations and suspicious activities with respect to VLOG-certified businesses has been introduced.

- **Crisis management**

- A documented crisis management system has been set up, which incorporates VLOG certification.
- The Crisis Management Officers for VLOG are listed by name.

- **Qualifications of auditors/evaluators/certifiers**

- The staff employed by the certification body must have the qualifications, **auditing experience, auditor training and training** described in Chapter 2. **The certification body must maintain documented proof of staff training and participation in the necessary training. Upon request by other VLOG -recognised certification bodies, the certification body shall transmit relevant information regarding VLOG qualification/qualification of non-exclusive or former auditors.** | added
- The certification body shall ensure that **auditors, evaluators and certifiers possess valid training certificates (cf. VLOG training concept) at the time of the audit, evaluation and certification.** | moved from 2.1.4 and 2.2.4

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<sup>1</sup> The following suspicious activities may constitute grounds for an audit:

- Information from the industry
- Discrepancies noted during certificate monitoring at the business
- Cross-checks
- current food scandals
- Information from VLOG

- The certification body must describe the requirements for qualification as an auditor/evaluator/certifier in its quality management system and in the relevant training and professional qualification documents.
- The certification body must review and confirm the technical qualifications and expertise of the auditors/evaluators/certifiers, and only use qualified and trained staff in accordance with **Chapter 2**. | added
- ~~As part of this review, the certification body must conduct at least one witness audit of auditors in each qualification area<sup>2</sup> within five years. This witness audit can also be conducted as part of a combined audit with other quality standards.~~ | moved
- **Auditor training in the VLOG audit procedure provided by the certification body**
- **Evaluator/certifier training on the VLOG audit procedure provided by the certification body** | Content moved

## Staff Registration with VLOG

### ~~Initial recognition of the certification body~~

~~For the initial recognition of a certification body, the latter must report all VLOG auditors, evaluators and certifiers to VLOG (with notification sheet).~~ | moved, content already in 4.4

### ~~Maintaining the recognition of the certification body~~

~~Following the recognition, the certification body must provide an overview of the personnel (auditors, evaluators and certifiers) to be assigned to VLOG certifications in the following year (see reporting sheet) by the end of the respective year (i.e. 31 December xxxx).~~

## 1.3 Contract with Non-Exclusive Auditors

The certification body must sign a contract with all non-exclusive or independent auditors, in which auditors agree to the terms of the VLOG Integrity Programme and the penalty procedure and to inclusion under them.

## 1.4 Four-Eyes Principle

The “four-eyes” principle must be used for audits and certification according to the VLOG Standard. Auditors are not permitted to make final decisions on certification for audits they performed in person.

The certification body must have sufficient staff for evaluating and certifying VLOG audits. Evaluation and certification may be performed by the same person.

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<sup>2</sup>The following 3 qualification areas exist:

- Agriculture, Agricultural Group Organisation
- Logistics (Feed), Feed Manufacturing, Matrix Organisation
- Food Processing, Logistics (Food), Retail

## 1.5 Handling of Documents

All documents, including training materials, which prove the qualifications of the certification body's personnel and the auditors must be available at the certification body and provided to VLOG upon request.

The certification body must retain all documents and records documenting the certification decision-making process so they can be submitted to VLOG upon request.

If documents are not available in English or German, they must be conveyed to VLOG in English or German, upon request by VLOG. The translation costs shall be borne by the certification body.

### Internal Training

~~Before participating in VLOG-approved initial training, the relevant auditors, evaluators and certifiers must participate in an internal VLOG training<sup>3</sup> course provided by the certification body.~~

deleted because of duplication

~~The certification body must consistently provide internal VLOG training to all VLOG auditors, evaluators and certifiers at least once per calendar year and on an "as-needed" basis.~~

deleted because of duplication

~~The internal training must at least cover the relevant general and stage-specific requirements of the VLOG Standard, the requirements for auditors and certification bodies, the use of the "VLOG geprüft" and "Ohne GenTechnik" seals and the sequence of the VLOG certification process. These topics may also be integrated into other ISO/IEC 17065-based training courses.~~

moved

~~The certification body must create a training programme to qualify auditors, evaluators and certifiers and must maintain documentation of their participation in an internal training course. This is the prerequisite for participating in a VLOG-approved external initial or advanced training course.~~

deleted because of duplication

~~For auditors, evaluators and certifiers operating in more than one qualification area in the VLOG system and attend stage-specific external VLOG training, the certification body shall ensure that the content of the other relevant stages that are not covered by the external training is communicated to staff.~~

deleted because of duplication

### Transmission of Audit Documents to VLOG

chapter moved

## 1.6 Participation in the VLOG Certification Bodies' Meeting

The certification body must participate in the annual VLOG certification bodies' meeting. For this purpose, the certification body must delegate a decision-maker (e.g. certifier) to the VLOG certification bodies' meeting.

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<sup>3</sup>-Training may consist of individual instruction.

## 1.7 Disclosure of information VLOG to be informed

**The certification body shall provide the information and send VLOG the documents referred to in Chapter 3 on its own initiative.**

added

The certification body shall give VLOG written notice within five business days on its own initiative if:

moved

- a VLOG certificate is withdrawn from a business or if a VLOG certification is suspended. This shall not apply to reporting the termination of a VLOG certificate according to the VLOG Standard (e.g., based on a KO evaluation), which must be reported to VLOG within two business days.
- the agreement between the certification body and a business certified according to the VLOG Standard expires or is terminated.
- the requirements for certification bodies under the Recognition Guideline are no longer met.
- there are any significant changes relating to the contractual agreement between VLOG and the certification body (e.g., a change of the VLOG contact person).

### Recognition of Certification Bodies

The application for VLOG recognition and the supporting documents must be submitted directly to VLOG in German or English<sup>4</sup>. VLOG will examine the documents submitted and inform the applying certification body of the result of the examination. In the event of recognition, VLOG will issue a certification-body-specific VLOG recognition number and include the certification body in the list of VLOG-recognised certification bodies.

chapter  
moved

### Documents to be Submitted for Initial Recognition

The certification body must submit the following documents for initial recognition by VLOG:

- Accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 (certified translation<sup>5</sup> into German or English if the certificate was issued in a different language)
- Application for VLOG recognition of certification bodies (master data sheet)
- Notification sheet for auditors, evaluators and certifiers<sup>6</sup>
- Training certificate indicating successful completion of VLOG-approved VLOG training for at least one auditor and one evaluator/certifier
- Signed Recognition Agreement

### Maintenance of Recognition

Recognition of the certification body will be maintained under the following conditions:

- Submission of the current accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 on the certification body's own initiative within four weeks of (re-)issuance

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<sup>4</sup>VLOG or the service provider assigned by VLOG will request any missing or incomplete documents/evidence from the applying certification body. If the documents are incomplete after a second follow-up request, the application may be rejected.

<sup>5</sup>The certification body must cover the translation costs.

<sup>6</sup>Either one notification sheet per person or an overview of all persons must be submitted as notification of auditors, evaluators and certifiers

- Notification of changes to the master data for the certification body (e.g. contact person) on the certification body's own initiative
- Participation in the annual VLOG certification bodies' meeting
- Submission by the end of the year (i.e., 31 December xxxx) of an overview of the planned VLOG personnel assignments for the following year (auditors, evaluators and certifiers)

### Documents to be Submitted for Renewing Recognition as a Certification Body

The certification body must submit the following documents to renew its recognition by VLOG:

- Accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 (certified translation<sup>7</sup> into German or English if the certificate was issued in a different language)
- Application for VLOG recognition of certification bodies (master data sheet)
- Proof of implementation of the corrective measures established by VLOG and the certification body for purposes of recognition renewal
- Signed Recognition Agreement
- Additional documents and/or evidence, if necessary
- Consent to a fee-based integrity audit within six months after recognition renewal

## 2 Auditors, Evaluators and Certifiers

### 2.1 Requirements for Auditors

The following chapters describe the requirements that must be met by auditors for purposes of VLOG auditing and certification. Figure 2 explains the chronological order of the requirements and the initial approval procedure<sup>7</sup> for auditors.

added

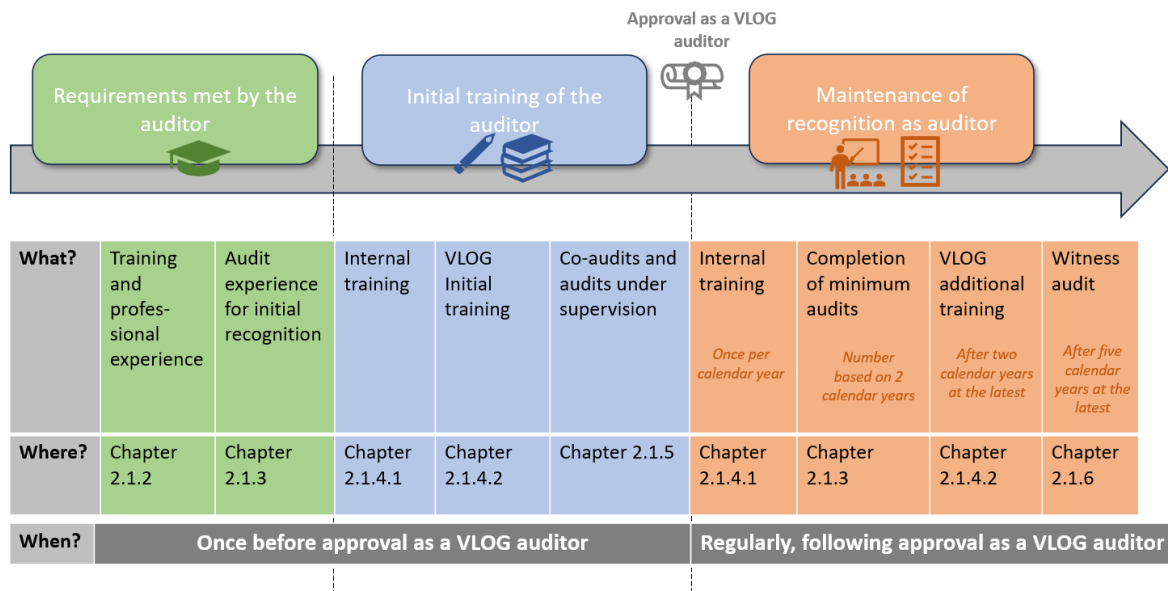


Figure added

Figure 2: Chronological order of the requirements and the initial approval procedure for auditors

<sup>7</sup> Procedure for the subsequent addition of qualification areas. Chapter 2.1.5



### **2.1.1 General Requirements**

- Non-exclusive or independent auditors must sign an agreement with the respective certification body in which they agree to the terms of the VLOG Integrity Programme and to inclusion in the penalty procedure. Non-exclusive or independent auditors must sign an agreement with the respective certification body.
- Auditors must comply with the audited business's and the certification body's procedures for confidential treatment of information and records.
- Auditors must provide the certification body with all relevant information regarding their qualifications.
- Auditors must comply with the Code of Conduct and the auditing principles of DIN EN ISO 19011.
- Auditors may not conduct audits of businesses, producers or producer groups for which they provided consulting services within the last two years or with which they have and/or had a business, personal and/or family relationship.
- Auditors may not carry out routine audits (incl. initial audits) in the same business on more than three sequential occasions.

### **2.1.2 Training and Professional Experience**

The auditors assigned to VLOG certification must have the training or technical qualifications related to agriculture, feed or food as specified in Table 1 below. Credit may be given for at least  $\geq 1$  year of relevant professional experience at the respective stage or sub-stage, irrespective of the qualifications listed in Table 1. The certification body will decide whether to recognise the professional experience of its personnel and justify its determination in writing.

changed

				Logistics (Feed), Feed Manufacturing, Matrix Organisation Feed		Agriculture, Agricultural Group Organisation		Food Processing, Logistics (Food), Retail			
		Logistics		Feed manufacturing		Matrix organisation	Agriculture	Group Organisation Agriculture	Food processing Food preparation	Retail - Sale of bulk food of animal origin	
Qualification	Stage/sub-stage	Trading, handling, storage, drop shipping, private labelling of feed	Trading, handling, storage, drop shipping of food	Feed manufacturing	Mobile grinding and mixing facilities	Matrix organiser	Animal farming and plant-based production	Animal transport/livestock trade	Group Organiser	Food processing, preparation	Retail group certification
		Graduate engineering/ Bachelor's/ Master's degree in agricultural sciences or equivalent	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*
	Degree from a two-year agricultural college	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*	
	Completion of a master craftsman's exam in agriculture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*	
	Professional training in an agriculture-related business (including miller, compound feed technician)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*	

				Logistics (Feed), Feed Manufacturing, Matrix Organisation Feed		Agriculture, Agricultural Group Organisation		Food Processing, Logistics (Food), Retail							
		Logistics		Feed manufacturing		Matrix organisation		Agriculture		Group Organisation Agriculture		Food processing Food preparation		Retail - Sale of bulk food of animal origin	
Qualification	Stage/sub-stage	Trading, handling, storage, drop shipping, private labelling of feed	Trading, handling, storage, drop shipping of food	Feed manufacturing	Mobile grinding and mixing facilities	Matrix organiser	Animal farming and plant-based production	Animal transport/livestock trade	Group Organiser	Food processing, preparation	Retail group certification				
		+ special knowledge													
	Veterinarian + special knowledge	X	X				X	X	X	X	X				
	Graduate engineering/ Bachelor's/Master's degree in food technology/chemistry, food technologist	X	X					X	X	X	X				
	Graduate engineering/ Bachelor's/Master's degree (univ./college) in ecotrophology	X	X					X	X	X	X				
	Graduate engineering/ Bachelor's/Master's degree in biology (+ special knowledge in each area)	X					X	X	X						

				Logistics (Feed), Feed Manufacturing, Matrix Organisation Feed		Agriculture, Agricultural Group Organisation		Food Processing, Logistics (Food), Retail			
		Logistics		Feed manufacturing		Matrix organisation	Agriculture	Group Organisation Agriculture	Food processing Food preparation	Retail - Sale of bulk food of animal origin	
Qualification	Stage/sub-stage	Trading, handling, storage, drop shipping, private labelling of feed	Trading, handling, storage, drop shipping of food	Feed manufacturing	Mobile grinding and mixing facilities	Matrix organiser	Animal farming and plant-based production	Animal transport/livestock trade	Group Organiser	Food processing, preparation	Retail group certification
		Professional training in the food processing industry	X	X					X	X	X

Table 1: Necessary qualifications for VLOG auditors, evaluators and/or certifiers

X\* only includes auditing, evaluation and certification of packing centres, dye works **and oil mills**

added

### 2.1.3 Audit experience

#### For Initial Recognition:

For each reported qualification area (~~agriculture/agricultural group organisation, logistics (feed)/feed manufacturing/matrix certification, logistics (food)/food manufacturing/retail~~) **(see Figure 1)**, the auditor must have conducted at least 10 complete audits in at least one quality standard accredited under ISO/IEC 17065 (e.g., QS, GLOBAL G.A.P, IFS, GMP+, Öko, etc.) in the past two years at various businesses/facilities.

changed

**In consultation with VLOG, audits under non-accredited quality standards (e.g., GMP+, ITW) can be taken into account for initial recognition.** Auditors must have acted as lead auditor or co-auditor in at least five of these **10** audits. Training audits according to Chapter 2.1.5 can be taken into account here.

added

**Alternatively, auditors who have no auditing experience can prove participation in 10 complete co-audits in at least one quality standard accredited according to ISO/IEC 17065 (e.g., QS, GLOBAL G.A.P, IFS, Öko, etc.) In consultation with VLOG, audits under non-accredited quality standards (e.g., GMP+, ITW) can be taken into account for initial recognition. Training audits according to Chapter 2.1.5 can be taken into account here.**

added

#### For Maintenance of Recognition:

The VLOG auditor must complete at least 10 VLOG routine audits<sup>8</sup> in the ~~agriculture/group organisation agriculture~~ qualification area in two consecutive calendar years (Note: QS audits with the VLOG supplementary module also count in this regard).

changed,  
footnote  
added

The VLOG auditor must complete at least 5 VLOG routine audits each **in the feed and food** qualification areas of ~~Logistics (Feed)/Feed Manufacturing/Matrix Certification, Logistics (Food)/Food Production/Retail~~ in two consecutive calendar years (Note: QS audits with the VLOG supplementary module also count in this regard).

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<sup>8</sup> Once the required 5 audits in the food qualification area have been completed, the auditor can also perform audits of group organisers without satisfying the minimum number of 10 audits. If the auditor only performs audits in the food qualification area, the auditor must additionally undergo internal training for the agriculture qualification area (see Chapter 2.1.4).

In addition to VLOG audits, full audits or routine audits under the following certifications recognised by VLOG as equivalent can also be credited to maintain recognition. At least half of the audits per qualification area must still be VLOG audits:

Parts in table changed,  
footnote added

	<b>Qualification area of Agriculture/Agricultural Group Organisation</b>	<b>Qualification area of Logistics (Feed), Feed Manufacturing/Matrix organisation</b>	<b>Qualification area of Food Production/ Processing/Logistics (Food)/ Retail</b>
<b>Minimum number of audits</b>	at least 10 VLOG routine audits in 2 consecutive calendar years <i>(Note: QS audits with the VLOG supplementary module also count in this regard).</i>	at least 5 VLOG routine audits in 2 consecutive calendar years <i>(Note: QS audits with the VLOG supplementary module also count in this regard).</i>	at least 5 VLOG routine audits in 2 consecutive calendar years <i>(Note: QS audits with the VLOG supplementary module also count in this regard).</i>
<b>Maximum number of creditable audits of other certifications</b>	5 <sup>9</sup> <del>Routine audits of group organisers according the following recognised Standards are not creditable.</del>	2 <sup>9</sup> <del>Routine audits of matrix organisers according the following recognised Standards are not creditable.</del>	2
<b>Creditable certifications/quality standards</b>	ARGE Gentechnikfrei, BEZ GMO Standard as of Version 2.0, Reg. (EU) 2018/848), <b>QZBW, QZRP</b>	ARGE Gentechnikfrei, BEZ GMO Standard as of Version 2.0, Donau Soy/Europe Soy, GMP+ + Modul MI 105/MI 5.4, Oqualim + STNO, Reg. (EU) 2018/848)	ARGE Gentechnikfrei, Reg. (EU) 2018/848), <b>QZBW, QZRP</b>

Table 2: Crediting audits of other certifications to maintain recognition

<sup>9</sup> Routine audits of group organisers and matrix organisers are not creditable under the GLAS Standard referred to in Table 2.

## 2.1.4 Training

### 2.1.4.1 Internal Training

Before participating in **an external** VLOG-approved initial training course, auditors must participate in an internal VLOG training course<sup>10</sup> provided by the certification body (cf. ~~Chapter 1.1.7~~).

New sub-chapter  
changed,  
footnote added

**On an ongoing basis**, the auditor must participate in an internal VLOG training course provided by the certification body at least once per calendar year (cf. ~~Chapter 1.1.7~~).

The internal training must at least cover the relevant general and stage-specific requirements of the VLOG Standard, the requirements for auditors and certification bodies, the use of the "VLOG geprüft" and "Ohne GenTechnik" seals and the sequence of the VLOG certification process. These topics may also be integrated into other training courses.

moved from  
1.1.7

If an auditor is in the VLOG system for more than one qualification area (e.g., agriculture and feed) and attends an external stage-specific initial or additional VLOG training course (e.g. agriculture), the auditor receives the contents of the other relevant qualification areas that are not part of the external training (e.g. feed) from the certification body.

### 2.1.4.2 External Training

**Before independently performing a VLOG audit, the auditor must successfully participate in an external initial training course.**

new sub-chapter

added

**After VLOG approval, the auditor must successfully participate in additional training on a regular basis to obtain valid training certificates for additional external training to conduct VLOG audits** hold a valid VLOG training certificate (cf. VLOG training concept).

changed

## 2.1.5 Auditor training

**The certification body must provide auditor training to auditors on the VLOG auditing procedure in accordance with the following items:**

moved from  
1.1.2 (new  
chapter)

- Participation in an internal VLOG training course
- Participation in a VLOG-approved initial training course

### **Auditor training in a qualification area**

added

Before independently conducting complete VLOG audits:

- Every auditor must accompany an experienced and qualified VLOG auditor during at least 2 VLOG routine audits and
- must perform at least 2 VLOG routine audits under the supervision and guidance of an experienced and qualified VLOG auditor.

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<sup>10</sup> Training may also be individual.

These audits must be conducted in the qualification areas in which the auditor will conduct VLOG audits.

### **Auditor training in additional qualification areas**

**For each additional** ~~if the qualification area is expanded~~ **in which** the Auditor **is to conduct VLOG audits:**

added  
and  
changed

- ~~Every auditor must complete at least three VLOG routine audits in the new qualification area and be assisted by an experienced and qualified VLOG auditor in at least one audit~~ **must accompany an experienced and qualified VLOG auditor during at least 1 VLOG routine audit and**
- **must perform at least 1 VLOG routine audit under the supervision and guidance of an experienced and qualified VLOG auditor**
- **if the Auditor is trained for the qualification area in an internal or external training course unless the new qualification area was part of a prior, currently valid training course (internal or external).**

The certification body must promptly discuss all training audits with the attending auditor, document and evaluate them, and devise any appropriate measures.

- ~~If the qualification area is expanded, the auditor must complete at least three VLOG routine audits in the new qualification area and be assisted by an experienced and qualified VLOG auditor in at least one audit.~~

deleted

After **Once auditor** training has been completed, the certification body will decide whether the auditor is authorised to conduct VLOG audits independently **and, if so, approve him as VLOG Auditor**. This decision must be documented.

added

#### **2.1.6 Witness audits**

~~As part of this review~~ **After the auditor's approval as VLOG Auditor**, the certification body must conduct at least one witness audit of auditors in each qualification area<sup>11</sup> within five years. This witness audit can also be conducted as part of a combined audit with other quality standards.

moved from 1.1.2,  
reworded (new chapter),  
footnote deleted

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<sup>11</sup> ~~The following 3 qualification areas exist:~~

- ~~— Agriculture, Agricultural Group Organisation~~
- ~~— Logistics (Feed), Feed Manufacturing, Matrix Organisation~~
- ~~— Food Processing, Logistics (Food), Retail~~



Figure added

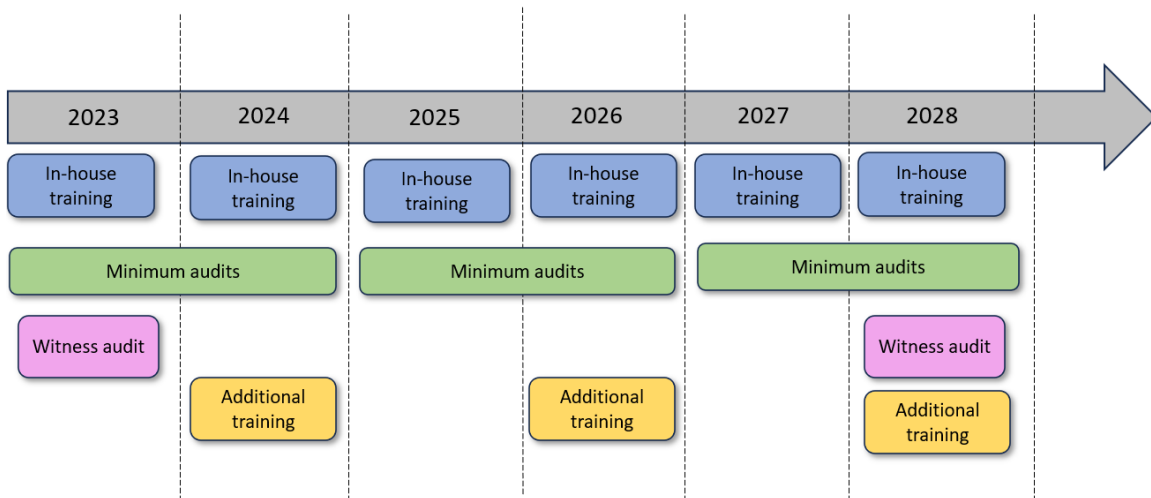


Figure 3: Exemplary chronological order of the requirements for maintenance of recognition as auditor

## 2.2 Requirements for Evaluators/Certifiers

The following **chapters describe the** requirements apply to for certification body personnel who carry out the evaluation of auditing documents and/or make certification decisions. **Figure 4 explains the chronological order of the requirements and the approval procedure for evaluators and certifiers.**

Figure added

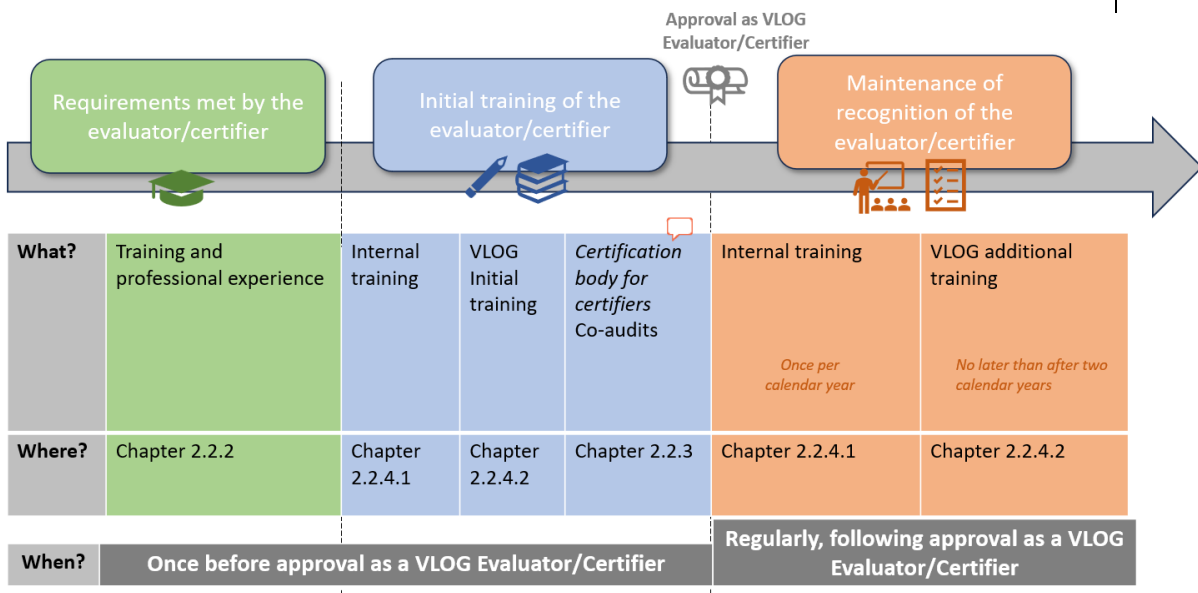


Figure 4: Chronological order of the requirements and the approval procedure for evaluators/certifiers

### 2.2.1 General Requirements

- Evaluators/certifiers must comply with the audited business's and the certification body's procedures for confidential treatment of information and records.
- Evaluators/certifiers must comply with the Code of Conduct and the auditing principles of DIN EN ISO 19011.
- Evaluators/certifiers may not evaluate/certify businesses, producers or producer groups for which they provided consulting services within the last two years or with which they have and/or had a business, personal and/or family relationship.

### 2.2.2 Training and Professional Experience

Evaluators/certifiers assigned to VLOG certification must have the training or technical qualifications related to agriculture or food specified in Table 1.

Credit may be given for at least ~~2 years~~ **6 months** of relevant professional experience at the respective stage or sub-stage, irrespective of the qualifications listed in Table 1. The certification body will decide whether to recognise the professional experience of its personnel and justify its determination in writing.

changed

### 2.2.3 Evaluator/certifier training ~~on the VLOG Auditing Procedure by the Certification Body~~

The certification body must ~~train~~ **provide evaluator/certifier training to** evaluators/certifiers ~~on~~ in the VLOG auditing procedure in accordance with ~~chapter 1.1.2~~ the following items:

moved from 1.1.2 and changed

#### **Before independently conducting VLOG routine audits:**

- every certifier must attend at least five VLOG routine audits or five routine audits under a recognised quality standard (e.g., QS, GLOBALG.A.P, IFS, GMP+, Öko, etc.) ~~before independently certifying VLOG routine audits.~~ **In consultation with VLOG, audits under non-accredited quality standards (e.g., GMP+, ITW) can be taken into account.**

changed

#### ~~• Evaluator/certifier training on the VLOG audit procedure provided by the certification body~~

deleted

- ~~Participation in an internal VLOG training course~~
- ~~Participation in a VLOG-approved initial training course~~

**Once evaluator/certifier** After training has been completed, the certification body will decide whether the evaluator/certifier is authorised to evaluate/certify VLOG audits independently **and, if so, will approve him as a VLOG Evaluator/Certifier.** This decision must be documented.

added

## 2.2.4 Training

new sub-chapter

### 2.2.4.1 Internal Training

Before participating in an **external** VLOG-approved initial training course, evaluators/certifiers must participate in an internal VLOG training course<sup>12</sup> provided by the certification body (cf. chapter 1.1.7).

changed,  
footnote  
added

**On an ongoing basis**, the evaluator/certifier must participate in an internal VLOG training course provided by the certification body at least once per calendar year (cf. chapter 1.1.7).

The internal training must at least cover the relevant general and stage-specific requirements of the VLOG Standard, the requirements for evaluators/certifiers and certification bodies, the use of the “VLOG geprüft” and “Ohne GenTechnik” seals and the sequence of the VLOG certification process. These topics may also be integrated into other ISO/IEC 17065-based training courses.

moved  
from  
1.1.7

Evaluators/certifiers must hold a valid VLOG training certificate (cf. VLOG training concept).

deleted

If an evaluator/certifier is in the VLOG system for more than one qualification area (e.g., agriculture and feed) and attends an external stage-specific **initial or additional** VLOG training course (e.g. agriculture), the evaluator/certifier receives the contents of the other relevant qualification areas that are not part of the external training (e.g. feed) from the certification body.

changed

### 2.2.4.2 External Training

**Before independently evaluating/certifying a VLOG audit, the evaluator/certifier must successfully participate in an external initial training course.**

new sub-chapter

added

**After VLOG approval, the evaluator/certifier must successfully participate in additional training on a regular basis to obtain valid training certificates for additional external training to evaluate/certify VLOG audits.**

## 3 Communication with VLOG

new chapter

### 3.1 Disclosure of Information

**Without being solicited to do so, the certification body shall give VLOG written notice within two business days in the following cases:**

moved from 1.1.10  
and reworded

- **Withdrawal of the VLOG certificate because of KO evaluation**
- **Suspicious activities on the part of a VLOG-certified business (cf. Chapter 1.2).**

**Without being solicited to do so**, the certification body shall give VLOG written notice within five business days ~~on its own initiative if~~ **in the following cases:**

- **Withdrawal or suspension of the VLOG certificate or the VLOG certification of a business.** ~~a VLOG certificate is withdrawn from a business or if a VLOG certification is suspended. This shall not apply to reporting the termination of a VLOG certificate~~

reworded

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<sup>12</sup> Training may consist of individual instruction.

according to the VLOG Standard (e.g., based on a KO evaluation), which must be reported to VLOG within two business days.

**In that case, the certification body must deactivate the relevant VLOG certificate in the VLOG database in accordance with the User Guide. In consultation with VLOG, the deactivation can also be done by VLOG.**

added

- **Termination of** the agreement between the certification body and a business certified according to the VLOG Standard ~~expires or is terminated~~ **with notice of the date of termination**<sup>13</sup>.

footnote added

- **In addition, the certification body must inform VLOG if there has been no final audit.**

added

**In that case, the certification body must deactivate the relevant VLOG certificate in the VLOG database in accordance with the User Guide, if necessary. In consultation with VLOG, the deactivation can also be done by VLOG.**

- **Noncompliance with** the requirements for certification bodies under this the Recognition Guideline ~~are no longer met.~~
- ~~there are any~~ Significant changes relating to the contractual relationship between VLOG and the certification body (e.g., a change of the VLOG contact person).

### 3.2 Transmission of Audit Documents to VLOG

The certification body must upload the audit results/audit documents designated in Table 3 to the VLOG database in German or English no later than eight weeks after the VLOG audit.

chapter moved from 1.1.8

Instructions regarding the VLOG certification body portal, including the annexes, are available at the following link: <https://www.ohnegentechnik.org/zertifizierungsstellenportal>. **Here is where the obligatory audit information is specified, which must be sent to the database in addition to the documents to be submitted.**

added

Audit type/Stage	Audit Documents to be Submitted
Individual certification (initial or routine audits) <b>of individually certified businesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current facility description</li> <li>• completed <b>final</b> VLOG checklist(s)<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• VLOG certificate</li> <li>• other certification-related annexes, if necessary (e.g., list of raw materials or products, <del>summary of traceability etc.</del>)</li> </ul>
Group certifications (initial and routine audits) <b>of group organisers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current group description</li> <li>• completed <b>final</b> VLOG checklist of the group organiser<sup>14</sup></li> </ul>

parts changed in table, footnote added

<sup>13</sup> Here, the five-day period relates to the date the termination is confirmed or the date the termination takes effect

<sup>14</sup> Also applies to routine audits that were not passed due to a KO grade.

Audit type/Stage	Audit Documents to be Submitted
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VLOG certificate</li> <li>• Upon request by VLOG, the certification body must promptly make available to VLOG the following documents in German or English<sup>15</sup>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anonymised audit documents of the group members</li> <li>- current reduced list of members</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Matrix certification (initial and routine audits) of <b>matrix organisers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current matrix description</li> <li>• completed <b>final</b> VLOG checklist of the matrix organiser<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• VLOG certificate</li> <li>• site list</li> <li>• Upon request by VLOG, the certification body must promptly make available to VLOG the following documents in German or English<sup>15</sup>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anonymised audit documents of the matrix members and matrix sites</li> <li>- current list of sites</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>expansion audit/follow-up audit/audits for cause <b>(excluding group and matrix members):</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>completed final</b> VLOG checklist</li> <li>• VLOG certificate, if applicable</li> <li>• other certification-related annexes, if necessary</li> </ul>
<p>document audit (expansion certification in agriculture)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VLOG certificate</li> </ul>
<p><b>Only for separately recognised certification bodies:</b> Document inspection for agricultural micro-businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VLOG certificate</li> </ul>

Table 3: Overview of the Audit Documents to be Submitted to VLOG

**In addition to the aforementioned documents, the certified areas of application, the certificate number, data regarding validity and the certification decision, the audit date and, for mobile grinding and mixing facilities, the licence plate, must be included when the certificate is transmitted.**

added

<sup>15</sup> The certification body shall bear the translation costs.

## 4 Recognition Process for Certification Bodies

The application for VLOG recognition and the supporting documents must be submitted directly to VLOG in German or English<sup>16</sup>. VLOG will examine the documents submitted and inform the applying certification body of the result of the examination. In the event of recognition, VLOG will issue a certification body-specific VLOG recognition number and include the certification body in the list of VLOG-recognised certification bodies.

footnote  
changed

### 4.1 Documents to be Submitted for Initial recognition

The certification body must submit the following documents for initial recognition by VLOG:

changed

- Accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 (certified translation <sup>17</sup> into German or English if the certificate was issued in a different language). **Alternatively, in consultation with VLOG, accreditation documents under other ISO standards (e.g., ISO/IEC 17021) can be submitted, if appropriate. VLOG will then determine whether VLOG recognition is possible.**
- Application for VLOG recognition of certification bodies (master data sheet)
- Notification sheet for auditors, evaluators, certifiers **and clerks who need access to the VLOG database**<sup>18</sup>
- Training certificate indicating successful completion of VLOG-approved **external** VLOG training for at least one auditor and one evaluator/certifier
- Signed Recognition Agreement

added,  
footnote  
changed

added,  
footnote  
deleted

### 4.2 Maintenance of Recognition

Recognition of the certification body will be maintained under the following conditions:

- ~~Submission~~ **Uploading, without solicitation**, of the current accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 ~~on the certification body's own initiative~~ **to the VLOG database** within four weeks of (re-)issuance
- ~~Notification of changes to the master data for the certification body (e.g. contact person) on the certification body's own initiative~~
- Participation in the annual VLOG certification bodies' meeting
- ~~Submission by the end of the year (i.e., 31 December xxxx) of an overview of the planned VLOG personnel assignments for the following year (auditors, evaluators and certifiers).~~ **Uploading, without solicitation, of the notification sheet to the VLOG database by 31/01/yy. This overview indicates the VLOG staff intended to be used in the current year (auditors, evaluators, certifiers and clerks). In addition, staff who are no longer**

changed

deleted

changed

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<sup>16</sup> If documents/proofs are missing or incomplete, VLOG ~~or the service provider assigned by VLOG~~ will request them from the applying certification body. If the documents are incomplete after a second follow-up request, the application may be rejected.

<sup>17</sup> The certification body shall bear the translation **and authentication** costs.

<sup>18</sup> ~~Either one notification sheet per person or an overview of all persons must be submitted as notification of auditors, evaluators and certifiers~~

**active must be identified on the notification sheet once the following year (e.g., for deactivation in the database by VLOG).**

#### **4.3 Documents to be Submitted for Renewing recognition as of a Certification Body**

**If VLOG has withdrawn recognition under a penalty procedure,** the certification body must submit the following documents to renew its recognition by VLOG:

- accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 (certified translation<sup>17</sup> into German or English if the certificate was issued in a different language). **Alternatively, in consultation with VLOG, accreditation documents under other ISO standards (e.g., ISO/IEC 17021) can be submitted, if necessary. VLOG will then determine whether VLOG recognition is possible.**
- application for VLOG recognition of certification bodies (master data sheet)
- **notification sheet for auditors, evaluators, certifiers and clerks who need access to the VLOG database**
- signed Recognition Agreement
- proof of implementation of the corrective measures established by VLOG and the certification body for purposes of recognition renewal
- **written** consent to a fee-based integrity audit within six months after recognition renewal
- additional documents and/or evidence, if necessary

#### **4.4 Registration of Auditors, Evaluators and Certifiers and Clerks**

Certification bodies must register their staff directly with VLOG in accordance with Chapter 4.1 (**initial recognition**) and 4.2 (**annual report**).

VLOG will check the submitted documents for completeness and inform the relevant certification body of the results of its examination.

It is not necessary to send notification sheets for **to register** new auditors, evaluators, certifiers and clerks added during the year. **They can be added to the notification sheet the following year. However, if new auditors, evaluators, certifiers and clerks added during the year use the certification body portal, they can be registered directly at [zs.portal@ohnegentechnik.org](mailto:zs.portal@ohnegentechnik.org).**

At the request of VLOG or for inspection at VLOG Integrity Audits, the certification body must submit a current **overview** notification sheet, and the following documents or the documents must be viewed by VLOG:

- CV of auditor/evaluator or certifier
- Proof of technical qualifications/professional training
- Proof of internal VLOG training course(s)

Additional documentation for auditors:

- List of audits<sup>19</sup> (list of at least 10 audits in at least one recognised quality standard (e.g., QS, GLOBAL G.A.P, IFS, GMP+, Öko, etc.) within the last two years)
- Proof of training in the VLOG auditing procedure (List of all VLOG co-audits and lead audits<sup>19</sup>)
- list<sup>19</sup> of all successfully completed VLOG audits

additional documentation for evaluators/certifiers:

- Proof of internal VLOG training course(s)
- proof of training in the VLOG auditing procedure (list of all VLOG co-audits)

## 5 Costs

The recognition of a certification body and the maintenance thereof is subject to fees in accordance with the VLOG Fee Schedule.

The recognition fee is payable even if the application is rejected.

## 6 Other Applicable Documents

- The current version of the [“Ohne Gentechnik” Production and Certification Standard](#)
- [VLOG training concept programme](#) in their current version
- Recognition Agreement
- [Application](#) for VLOG recognition of certification bodies in the version valid at the time
- [Notification sheet](#) for auditors, evaluators and certifiers in the version valid at the time
- [Guideline for Laboratories and GMO Tests](#)
- [User Guide for the VLOG certification body portal](#)
- [VLOG Guideline for dealing with violations](#) in the version valid at the time
- The current version of the [VLOG Fee Schedule](#) of the Verband Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik e.V. for recognitions and registrations

changed

added

## 7 Glossary

All terms not defined in this Guideline can be found in the Glossary for the “Ohne Gentechnik” Production and Certification Standard.

**Co-Auditor:** Auditor who does not has the lead function in the audit or who acts as an observer.

**Non-exclusive auditor:** VLOG auditor who works for more than one VLOG-recognised certification body.

**Clerk: Certification body employees who upload documents to the VLOG database and do not perform audits, evaluations or certifications.**

added

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<sup>19</sup> Must at a minimum include the following information on the audited business: name, address, site and site address, if applicable, audit date and VLOG stage



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**Witness audit:** Audit in which the auditor is monitored by the relevant VLOG-recognised certification body.