

Guideline for Certification Bodies, Auditors, Evaluators and Certifiers

Table of Contents

1	<i>Certification Bodies</i>	3
	Requirements for Certification Bodies	3
1.1	Proof of competence	3
1.2	Quality Management System	3
1.3	Contract with Non-Exclusive Auditors	5
1.4	Four-Eyes Principle	5
1.5	Handling of Documents	5
1.6	Participation in the VLOG Certification Bodies' Meeting	5
1.7	VLOG to be informed	5
2	<i>Auditors, Evaluators and Certifiers</i>	6
2.1	Requirements for Auditors	6
2.1.1	General Requirements	6
2.1.2	Training and Professional Experience	6
2.1.3	Audit experience	9
2.1.4	Training	10
2.1.5	Auditor training	11
2.1.6	Witness audits	11
2.2	Requirements for Evaluators/Certifiers	12
2.2.1	General Requirements	12
2.2.2	Training and Professional Experience	12
2.2.3	Evaluator/certifier training	13
2.2.4	Training	13
3	<i>Communication with VLOG</i>	14
3.1	Disclosure of Information	14
3.2	Transmission of Audit Documents to VLOG	14
4	<i>Recognition Process for Certification Bodies</i>	16
4.1	Initial recognition	16
4.2	Maintenance of Recognition	16
4.3	Renewing recognition of a Certification Body	17
4.4	Registration of Auditors, Evaluators and Certifiers and Clerks	17
5	<i>Costs</i>	18
6	<i>Other Applicable Documents</i>	18
7	<i>Glossary</i>	18
	<i>Annex 1 - Requirements for sector-specific quality standards that do not require accreditation or approval/recognition</i>	19

Annex 2 – Disclosure of information to VLOG in case of ZKHL-Audits _____ 20

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 website (<https://www.ohnegentechnik.org/en/for-businesses/certification/recognised-certifiers>).

1 Certification Bodies

Requirements for Certification Bodies

1.1 Proof of competence

The certification body must meet at least one of the following requirements and thereby prove its competence in the areas of Feed Industry/Agriculture and/or Food Industry:

- A 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.
- A valid approval/recognition for at least one sector-wide quality standard per competence area, e.g., QS, GMP+.
- Adequate auditing/certification experience in a sector-specific quality standard per competence area that does not require accreditation or approval/recognition and meets the requirements of Annex 1

If the certification body proves competence only in the food industry sector, it will receive VLOG recognition only for the qualification area Food.

If the certification body proves competence only in the feed industry/agriculture sector, it will receive VLOG recognition only for the qualification areas of Agriculture and Feed.

Competence areas		
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 competence and qualification areas

1.2 Quality Management System

The certification body's quality management system fulfils the requirements of the standard ISO/IEC 17065:2013, which describes, ensures, implements and documents the following points in particular with regard 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 problem¹.
- If the certification body carries out remote audits, the procedure description specifies that the requirements of the German General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) or, in the case of VLOG audits abroad, the respective national data protection requirements are complied with.
- 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](#).
- 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).

- **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.
- 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.

¹ 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 shall ensure that auditors, evaluators and certifiers possess valid training certificates (cf. VLOG training concept) at the time of the audit, evaluation and certification.
 - 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.
- 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

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 sanctions 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.

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.

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.

1.7 VLOG to be informed

The certification body shall provide the information and send VLOG the documents referred to in Chapter 3 – and if applicable: in Annex 2 – on its own initiative.

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 procedure² for auditors.

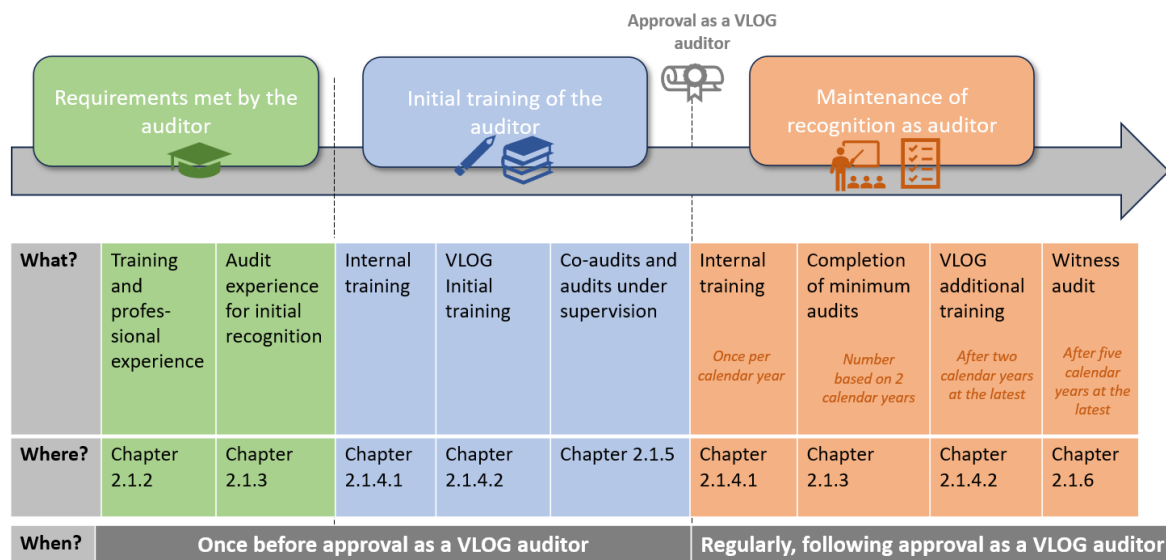


Figure 2: Chronological order of the requirements and the initial approval procedure for auditors

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 sanctions 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.

² Procedure for the subsequent addition of qualification areas. Chapter 2.1.5

Credit may be given for at least 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.

				Feed		Agriculture		Food			
		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) + special knowledge	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*	
	Veterinarian + special knowledge	X	X				X	X	X	X	X

			Feed			Agriculture			Food	
	Logistics		Feed manufacturing		Matrix organisation	Agriculture		Group Organisation Agriculture	Food processing, Food preparation	Retail - Sale of bulk food of animal origin
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		
Professional training in the food processing industry	X	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

2.1.3 Audit experience

For Initial Recognition:

For each reported qualification area (see Figure 1), the auditor must have conducted at least 10 complete audits in the past two years at various businesses/facilities in accordance with:

- quality standards accredited under ISO/IEC 17065, e.g., GLOBAL G.A.P, IFS, Öko;
- the following quality standards that are not accredited under ISO/IEC 17065: QS, GMP+, ITW

In consultation with VLOG, audits according to standards that are not accredited under ISO/IEC 17065 might be taken into account under certain circumstances. Auditors must have acted as lead auditor or co-auditor in at least five of the 10 audits. Induction audits according to Chapter 2.1.5 might be taken into account as well.

Alternatively, auditors who have no auditing experience yet can prove participation in at least 10 complete co-audits at various businesses/facilities in accordance with:

- quality standards accredited under ISO/IEC 17065, e.g., GLOBAL G.A.P, IFS, Öko;
- the following quality standards that are not accredited under ISO/IEC 17065: QS, GMP+, ITW

In consultation with VLOG, audits according to standards that are not accredited under ISO/IEC 17065 might be taken into account under certain circumstances.

For Maintenance of Recognition:

The VLOG auditor must complete at least 10 VLOG routine audits³ in the agriculture qualification area in two consecutive calendar years (Note: QS audits with the VLOG supplementary module also count in this regard).

The VLOG auditor must complete at least 5 VLOG routine audits each in the feed and food qualification areas in two consecutive calendar years (Note: QS audits with the VLOG supplementary module also count in this regard).

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 (see Table 2). At least half of the audits per qualification area must still be VLOG audits:

³ 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).

	Qualification area Agriculture	Qualification area Feed	Qualification area Food
Minimum number of audits	at least 10 VLOG routine audits in 2 consecutive calendar years <i>(Note: QS audits with Add-on module VLOG also count in this regard).</i>	at least 5 VLOG routine audits in 2 consecutive calendar years <i>(Note: QS audits with Add-on module VLOG also count in this regard).</i>	at least 5 VLOG routine audits in 2 consecutive calendar years <i>(Note: QS audits with Add-on module VLOG also count in this regard).</i>
Maximum number of creditable audits of other certifications	5 ⁴	2 ⁴	2
Creditable certifications/ quality standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARGE Gentechnikfrei, • BEZ GMO Standard, • Reg. (EU) 2018/848), • QZBW, • QZRP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARGE Gentechnikfrei, • BEZ GMO Standard, • Donau Soy/Europe Soy, • GMP+ + Modul MI 105/MI 5.4, • Oqualim + STNO, • Reg. (EU) 2018/848) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARGE Gentechnikfrei, • Reg. (EU) 2018/848, • QZBW, • QZRP

Table 2: Crediting audits of other certifications to maintain recognition

2.1.4 Training

2.1.4.1 Internal Training

Before participating in an external VLOG initial training course, auditors must participate in an internal VLOG training course⁵ provided by the certification body.

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.

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"/"VLOG verified" and "Ohne GenTechnik"/"Non GMO" seals and the sequence of the VLOG certification process. These topics may also be integrated into other training courses.

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.

⁴ Routine audits of group organisers and matrix organisers are not creditable under the GLAS Standard referred to in Table 2.

⁵ Training may also be individual.

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.

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:

Auditor training in a qualification area

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.

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 qualification area in which the Auditor is to conduct VLOG audits:

- Every auditor 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 and
- 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.

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.

2.1.6 Witness audits

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

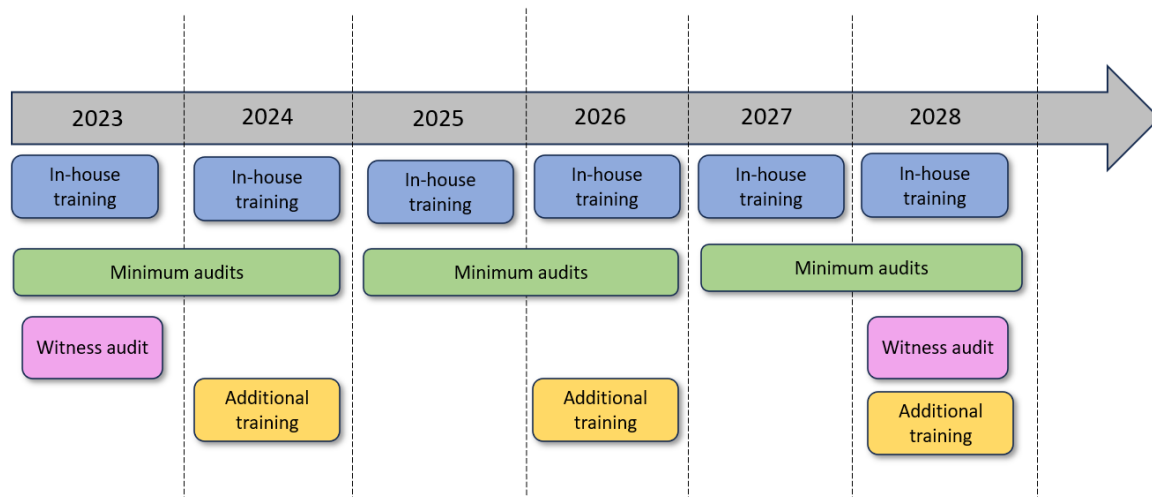


Figure 3: Exemplary chronological order of the requirements for maintenance of recognition as auditor

2.2 Requirements for Evaluators/Certifiers

The following chapters describe the requirements 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.

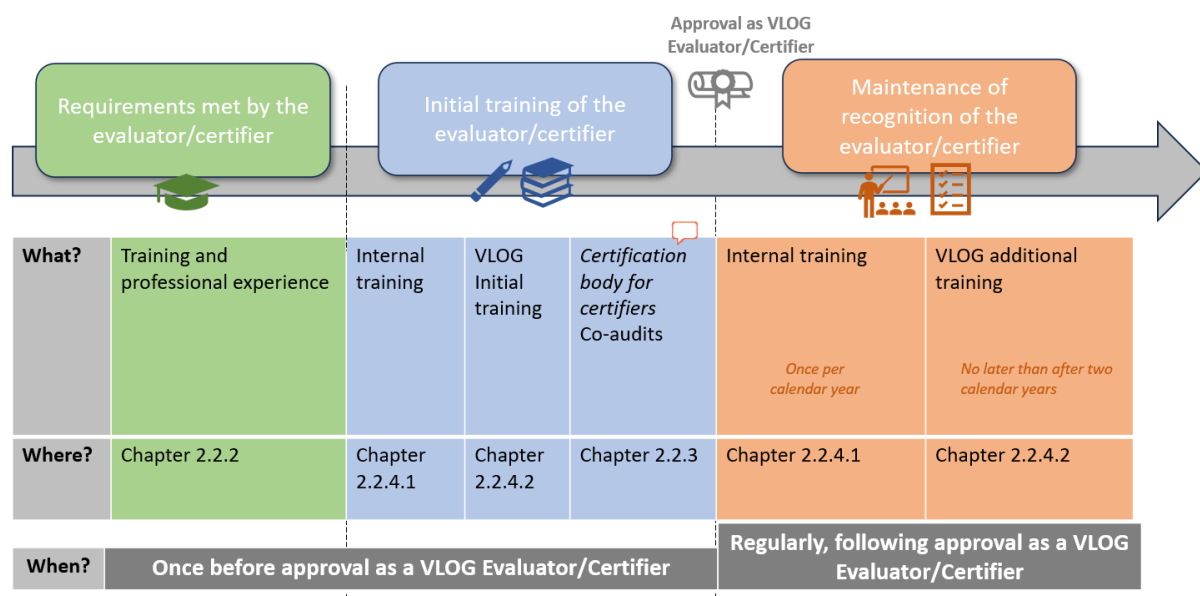


Figure 4: Chronological order of the requirements and the approval procedure for evaluators/certifiers

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 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.

2.2.3 Evaluator/certifier training

The certification body must provide evaluator/certifier training to evaluators/certifiers on the VLOG auditing procedure in accordance the following items:

Before independently certifying VLOG routine audits, each evaluator/certifier must have co-audited at least five complete audits in accordance with:

- the VLOG Standard;
- quality standards accredited under ISO/IEC 17065, e.g., GLOBAL G.A.P, IFS, Öko;
- the following quality standards that are not accredited under ISO/IEC 17065: QS, GMP+, ITW

In consultation with VLOG, audits according to quality standards that are not accredited under ISO/IEC 17065 might be taken into account under certain circumstances.

Once evaluator/certifier 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.

2.2.4 Training

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 course⁶ provided by the certification body.

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.

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"/"VLOG verified" and "Ohne GenTechnik"/"Non GMO" seals and the sequence of the VLOG certification process. These topics may also be integrated into other ISO/IEC 17065-based training courses.

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.

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.

⁶ Training may consist of individual instruction.

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

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:

- Withdrawal of the VLOG certificate because of KO evaluation
- Failed audit due to insufficient score (<75%); not necessary in the event of failed initial audits and (routine) audits of group or matrix members
- 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 in the following cases:

- Withdrawal or suspension of the VLOG certificate or the VLOG certification of a business. In that case, the certification body must deactivate the relevant VLOG certificate in the VLOG database in accordance with the [User Guide](#)⁷.
- Termination of the agreement between the certification body and a business certified according to the VLOG Standard with notice of the date of termination⁸. In that case, the certification body must deactivate the relevant VLOG certificate in the VLOG database in accordance with the [User Guide](#), if necessary⁷.
- Noncompliance with the requirements for certification bodies under this Guideline
- 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 – and if applicable: in Annex 2 – to the VLOG database in German or English in accordance with the [User Guide](#) no later than eight weeks after the VLOG audit.

Below is the obligatory audit information specified, which must be sent to the database in addition to the documents to be submitted.

Audit type/Stage	Audit Documents to be Submitted
Initial or routine audits of individually certified businesses based on the VLOG-Checklist or QS-Checklist Add-on module VLOG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current facility description • completed final VLOG checklist(s)⁹ • VLOG certificate • other certification-related annexes, if necessary (e.g., list of raw materials or products)

⁷ In consultation with VLOG, the deactivation can also be done by VLOG.

⁸ Here, the five-day period relates to the date the termination is confirmed or the date the termination takes effect

⁹ Also applies to routine audits that were not passed due to a KO grade.

Audit type/Stage	Audit Documents to be Submitted
Initial and routine audits of group organisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current group description • completed final VLOG checklist of the group organiser⁹ • VLOG certificate • Upon request by VLOG, the certification body must promptly make available to VLOG the following documents in German or English¹⁰: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anonymised audit documents of the group members - current reduced list of members
Initial and routine audits of matrix organisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current matrix description • completed final VLOG checklist of the matrix organiser⁹ • VLOG certificate • site list • Upon request by VLOG, the certification body must promptly make available to VLOG the following documents in German or English¹⁰: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anonymised audit documents of the matrix members and matrix sites - current list of sites
expansion audits/ follow-up audits/ audits for cause (excluding group and matrix members):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed final VLOG checklist • VLOG certificate, if applicable • other certification-related annexes, if necessary
document audits (expansion certification in agriculture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOG certificate
<i>Only for separately recognised certification bodies:</i> Document inspections for agricultural micro-businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLOG certificate

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.

After uploading a new follow-up certificate, the previous certificate must be deactivated by the certification body.

¹⁰ 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 English¹¹. 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.

4.1 Initial recognition

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

- Relevant proof of competence according to chapter 1.1:
 - Accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 (certified translation¹² 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.
 - Confirmation of approval/recognition for sector-wide quality standard(s)
 - Provide the following information on sector-wide quality standards that do not require accreditation or approval/recognition: Identification of the quality standard(s) and linking of the standard documents; if applicable, sending of the current version; start of auditing/certification activities; number of audits/certifications per qualification area for the last three years.
- 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
- Training certificate indicating successful completion of VLOG-approved external VLOG training for at least one auditor and one evaluator/certifier
- Signed Recognition Agreement

4.2 Maintenance of Recognition

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

- Depending on the relevant proof of competence according to chapter 1.1:
 - Uploading, without being solicited, of the current accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 to the VLOG database within four weeks of (re-)issuance
 - Uploading, without being solicited, of updated confirmations of approval/recognition for any sector-wide quality standard(s) to the VLOG database within four weeks of (re-)issuance
 - Inform VLOG of relevant changes to auditing/certification activities for sector-specific quality standards that do not require accreditation or approval/recognition within four weeks of becoming aware thereof.
- Participation in the annual VLOG certification bodies' meeting

¹¹ If documents/proofs are missing or incomplete, 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.

¹² The certification body shall bear the translation and authentication costs.

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

4.3 Renewing recognition 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:

- Relevant proof of competence according to chapter 1.1:
 - Accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 (certified translation¹² 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.
 - Confirmation of approval/recognition for sector-wide quality standard(s)
 - Provide the following information on sector-wide quality standards that do not require accreditation or approval/recognition: Identification of the quality standard(s) and linking of the standard documents; if applicable, sending of the current version; start of auditing/certification activities; number of audits/certifications per qualification area for the last three years;
- 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).

It is not necessary 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 are registered directly at zs.portal@ohnegentechnik.org.

At the request of VLOG or for inspection at VLOG Integrity Audits, the certification body must submit a current overview, 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 audits¹³ (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 audits¹³)
- List¹³³ 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](#) 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 Breaches](#) in the version valid at the time
- The current version of the [VLOG Fee Schedule Recognition and Registration](#) of the Verband Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik e.V.

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.

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

¹³ 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

Annex 1 - Requirements for sector-specific quality standards that do not require accreditation or approval/recognition

General Requirements for the Standard:

- Certification bodies as service providers for third-party audits
- Requirements for Auditor Qualification: professional experience, familiarisation, regular training sessions
- Criteria to be checked: risk management, crisis management, traceability, separation of goods flows with differing qualities in the business

Requirements for Certification Bodies regarding adequate auditing/certification experience:

- At least 2 auditors/evaluators/certifiers qualified for this standard to ensure the four-eyes principle
- Minimum auditing experience for auditors according to Chap. 2.1.3 Audit experience
- Minimum number of completed certifications depending on the qualification area and verification by the VLOG Head Office

Annex 2 – Disclosure of information to VLOG in case of ZKHL-Audits

VLOG is a co-operating inspection system for the award of the "[Gutes aus deutscher Landwirtschaft](#)" (Good from German Agriculture) label of origin. The ZKHL add-on module can be checked as part of a VLOG audit.

The certification body must upload the final ZKHL-checklist to the VLOG database no later than eight weeks after the audit.