



Launching of ISO 14065 for accrediting greenhouse gas verification bodies

by Geoff Visser and Kevin Boehmer

ISO has launched ISO 14065:2007, an important new standard that completes its initial climate change standards architecture.

In March 2006, ISO launched its greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting and verification standards – ISO 14064:2006 – as a contribution to the international effort to combat climate change.

The complementary new standard, ISO 14065:2007, *Greenhouse gases – Requirements for greenhouse gas validation and verification bodies for use in accreditation or other forms of recognition*, was published on 15 April 2007. It details requirements for GHG validation or verification bodies for use in accreditation or other forms of recognition.

While ISO 14064 provides requirements for organizations or persons to quantify and verify GHG emissions, ISO 14065 specifies accreditation requirements for organizations that validate or verify resulting GHG emission assertions or claims.

Objective assessment

GHG validation or verification bodies are responsible for completing an objective assessment of GHG assertions and providing a formal written declaration which provides assurance



on the statements contained in the assertion.

The aim of GHG validation or verification is to give confidence to parties that rely upon a GHG assertion or claim, for example regulators or investors, that the bodies providing the declarations are competent to do so, and have systems in place to manage impartiality and to provide the required level of assurance on a consistent basis.

ISO 14065 provides requirements for bodies that undertake GHG validation or verification using ISO 14064 or other relevant standards or specifications.

ISO 14065 principles include impartiality, competence and confidentiality

The need for an International Standard that would allow for the accreditation or recognition of GHG validation or verification bodies was jointly identified by ISO's Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) and technical committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*.

Operating in accordance with ISO's sector-specific conformity assessment policy, the joint ISO/CASCO-ISO/TC 207 Working

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Group 6, *GHG validation or verification bodies*, was established in September 2004 to undertake this work.

Considerable achievement

Working Group 6 was comprised of some 70 international experts from 30 countries and several liaison organizations, including the International Accreditation Forum. The group completed the development and publication of ISO 14065 in 31 months (September 2004 to April 2007) – a considerable achievement in reaching international consensus in this complex technical and political area.

The purpose of the ISO 14064 and ISO 14065 standards are to:

- develop flexible, regime-neutral tools for use in voluntary or regulatory GHG schemes;
- promote and harmonize best practice;
- support the environmental integrity of GHG assertions;
- assist organizations to manage GHG-related opportunities and risks; and
- support the development of GHG programmes and markets.

ISO 14065 articulates a number of principles that GHG validation or verification bodies need to demonstrate and that shape subsequent technical requirements. Principles include impartiality, competence and confidentiality.

General technical requirements include standard provisions related to legal, governance, management, liability and financing matters. Impartiality requirements include stipulations for a GHG validation or verification body's commitment to impartiality, avoidance of conflict of interest and mechanism for oversight of impartiality.

Competencies

Specific technical requirements include those that define personnel competencies, including management and GHG validators or verifiers. ISO 14065 requires that GHG validation or verification teams – as opposed to individuals – have a specific set of competencies in environmental, GHG technology and auditing areas.

Additional requirements are provided for GHG validation or verification team leaders. Other clauses detail provisions for information sharing and access, communication of responsibilities, confidentiality and record keeping.



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ISO 14065 includes process requirements through various phases of GHG validation or verification, including pre-engagement, planning, validation or verification and the issuance of a validation or verification statement components.

Normative reference to ISO 14064-3:2006, *Greenhouse gases – Specification with guidance for the validation or verification of greenhouse gas assertions* is made through respective process steps. Attributes of appeals and complaints processes are standardized and management system requirements are articulated.

ISO 14065, like its companion ISO 14064, recognizes that voluntary and mandatory climate change programmes have or are being developed in many jurisdictions and that there is a need for consistency in GHG quantification, verification and accreditation approaches to reduce duplication, minimize costs and provide for comparability. In response, the ISO standards:



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- are GHG policy neutral;
- can be applied across organization and project types, sizes and sectors;
- satisfy an important market need;
- involve a wide range of stakeholders;
- act as a common “building block” to initiatives or GHG programmes;
- are auditable (ie, validation/verification, accreditation).

ISO 14065 provides to GHG programme administrators, regulators and accreditors a basis for assessing and recognising the competence of GHG validation and verification bodies. It can also be used in other ways, such as in peer assessment within, or between, groups of GHG validation or of verification bodies.

ISO 14064 and ISO 14065 are not in themselves a GHG programme or scheme, instead they are discrete GHG quantification, verification and accreditation tools for use by organizations, project proponents or GHG programmes.

ISO 14065, with ISO 14064-3, represents an architecture for conformity assessment applicable to the validation or verification of GHG assertions or claims. Such application of ISO standards will add confidence, consistency and certainty to the GHG market.

Ensuring credibility

ISO Secretary-General Alan Bryden recently commented: “Claims made about reductions of the greenhouse gas emissions

widely held responsible for climate change may have political and financial implications, in addition to environmental and technical ones. Ensuring their credibility is thus vital.

“ISO is combining its environmental and conformity assessment expertise to develop tools for measuring, validating and verifying such claims. This is a striking example of how ISO’s work can help to provide practical tools for meeting the global challenges that the international community is wrestling with.”

Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Mr. Richard Kinley, further adds: “Like standards in any other market these ISO standards will provide frameworks for assessing and verifying greenhouse gases at different levels.

“Applied broadly, they lessen the transaction costs to companies, for example, for those operating in several countries, the costs of understanding different rules and regulations would vanish.

“The ISO standards provide guidelines for various market-based schemes ... and thereby contribute to the integration of greenhouse gas reduction into the decision making of economic actors. They may also provide a basis for facilitating connection of different trading schemes by ensuring that the commodity, in our case carbon, is considered equivalent.” •