Certificate management and monitoring of the Standards GreenSign Standard GmbH

Purpose and scope

- These processes describe the management and monitoring of GreenSign Standard GmbH certificates issued by authorized certification bodies.
- The objective is to ensure a structured, transparent, and compliant management and monitoring of certificates by the certification bodies.
- These processes are primarily intended for the certification bodies, but also for the employees and management of GreenSign Standard GmbH.

General provisions

- Management and monitoring begin after a certificate has been granted by the certification body.
- The certification bodies inform GreenSign Standard GmbH about certificates granted, as well as about expired and withdrawn certificates.
- GreenSign Standard GmbH maintains a directory of all certificates granted and publishes the directory on the GreenSign Standard GmbH website.
- GreenSign Standard GmbH requires the authorized certification bodies to monitor the validity of certificates granted, including through the handling of complaints and the reporting of changes.
- GreenSign Standard GmbH requires the authorized certification bodies to store certification results in compliance with legal requirements.

Notification of certification-related changes by companies

- A company is obliged by contract to inform the respective certification body of any changes that affect the certification decision. These changes are forwarded through the certification body to the responsible lead auditor, who performs an assessment of their impact on the certification decision and reviews the statements and verification documents provided by the company.

No certification-relevant changes identified

- The review by the certification body of the declarations and verification documents reveals that no changes relevant to the certification decision have occurred.
- The lead auditor documents the result of the finding and informs the company of the finding.

Identification of changes relevant to certification

- The review by the certification body of the declarations and verification documents reveals that changes relevant to the certification decision have occurred.
- The certification body conducts an assessment of the changes reported by the company and decides whether the company’s certificate will remain granted or will be withdrawn.
    - The certificate is retained:
        - The certification body informs the company of the decision and documents the completion of the review of the changes.
    - The certificate is withdrawn: see Withdrawal of the certificate.

Notification of program changes by GreenSign Standard GmbH

- GreenSign Standard GmbH informs authorized certification bodies of changes to the requirements in its conformity assessment programs and publishes these changes on the

GreenSign Standard GmbH website. In particular, companies that are preparing for recertification are informed about the changed requirements by the certification body.
- The revised requirements will be applied during recertification.

Restriction of certification
- GreenSign Standard GmbH excludes the restriction of a certificate´s scope.

Suspension of certification
- GreenSign Standard GmbH excludes the suspension of a certificate.

Termination of certification
- Certification expires upon expiration of a certificate's validity date, unless recertification has taken place before the certificate's validity date expires. In the directory of certified companies of the certification body, the status will change to "Certification expired" as soon as a certificate's validity date expires.
- The company will therefore no longer be listed in the directory of certified companies on the certification body's website, nor in the directory of certified companies on the GreenSign Standard GmbH website.

Withdrawal of certification
- A certificate may be withdrawn if
  - the company no longer meets the requirements of the conformity assessment program;
  - the company fails to comply with payment requests from the certification body or violates relevant provisions of the certification body´s General Terms and Conditions.
- Once the responsible certification body has withdrawn the certificate, it will no longer be listed in the directory of certified companies of the certification body and will therefore no longer be published on the GreenSign Standard GmbH website.
- The responsible certification body documents the withdrawal of the certificate.
- The responsible certification body informs the company that its certificate has been withdrawn and refers to the applicable General Terms and Conditions of the respective certification body and to the Agreement on the issuance and use of the certificate and logo of GreenSign Standard GmbH.
- The responsible certification body shall request the company in question to
  - immediately cease any communication regarding the certification, including through the certificate, the GreenSign sign, the widget, and any other symbols;
  - return the GreenSign sign and any other symbols provided to the responsible certification body.
- The responsible certification body will verify after the 10-business-day period whether
  - all references to the certification, including the certificate, the GreenSign logo, the widget, and any other symbols, have been removed, and
  - the GreenSign logo and other symbols have been returned to the certification body.
- If the review after 10 business days reveals that the company has not fulfilled its obligations, the responsible certification body will again request that all communication regarding the certification be ceased immediately.

- If a review after a further 10 business days determines that communication regarding the certification has still not been discontinued, the responsible certification body may pursue legal action.

Handling of incorrect references or misleading use of the certification

- The handling of the certification and the use of the certificate and logo of GreenSign Standard GmbH are governed by a contract between each certified company, the certification body, and GreenSign Standard GmbH.
- GreenSign Standard GmbH receives a notification or determines the following:
  - an incorrect reference to the certification system or the conformity assessment program;
  - a misleading use of the certification suggesting that a company is certified, found in publications or other materials.
- The reporting party reports an incorrect reference or misleading use of the certification to GreenSign Standard GmbH verbally, by telephone, in writing, or via the GreenSign Standard GmbH complaint form.
- The reporter receives a systematic confirmation of receipt by GreenSign Standard GmbH.
- GreenSign Standard GmbH reviews the report to determine its validity, involving the relevant certification body, if necessary.

No incorrect reference or misleading use of the certification is found

- GreenSign Standard GmbH finds no incorrect references or misleading use of the certification.
- GreenSign Standard GmbH will, if necessary, inform the reporter of the incorrect reference or misleading use of the certification.
- The process ends.

Incorrect reference or misleading use of the certification has been identified

- The responsible certification body identifies an incorrect reference to or misleading use of the certification.
- The responsible certification body notifies the company within 48 hours of the warning regarding the determination of an incorrect reference to the certification system or the conformity assessment program, or the misleading use of the certification.
- The responsible certification body shall require the company to immediately cease any unauthorized or incorrect reference to the certification system or the conformity assessment program, or any misleading use of the certification, noting the possible consequences of continued misuse:
  - withdrawal of the certificate and
  - assertion of claims for damages.
- The responsible certification body will verify after 10 business days whether the unauthorized or incorrect reference to the certification system or the misleading use of the certification has been discontinued.

Incorrect reference or misleading use of the certification has been discontinued

- The company has ceased the incorrect reference or misleading use of the certification.
- The responsible certification body confirms to the company that the incorrect reference to or misleading use of the certification has been resolved.

Incorrect reference or misleading use of the certification has not been discontinued

- The company has not ceased the incorrect reference to or misleading use of the certification.
- The responsible certification body decides on the next steps and implements its decision. Legal action may be taken for trademark infringement.