Policy on principles of GreenSign Standard GmbH

Purpose and scope

This document describes the principles to which GreenSign Standard GmbH is committed. The objective is to ensure confidentiality and data security, combat bribery and corruption, guarantee impartiality and competence, and prevent discrimination against applicants in accordance with the guidelines and requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17067 and DIN EN ISO 17065 for authorized certification bodies. These principles are binding for all parties involved with GreenSign Standard GmbH (owners, management, employees), contractors, and partners (including, but not limited to, certification bodies and employees of certification bodies), as well as customers and their partners.

Confidentiality and data security

The objective is to prevent the disclosure of confidential information and to ensure the integrity and credibility of GreenSign Standard GmbH's conformity assessment programs, as well as that of the certification processes conducted by the authorized certification bodies. At the same time, the objective is to ensure public access to and the disclosure of accurate and timely information regarding the conformity assessment programs and the certification processes under these programs, as well as the certification status.

All organizations and individuals have the right to have any confidential information they have provided protected, unless the law or the certification program for which an application has been submitted requires the disclosure of confidential information. All information held by a certification body regarding a product or service that is subject of evaluation and/or a certification should be made available upon request by the person or organization that has engaged the certification body.

The principle of least privilege is applied, whereby employees and external partners are granted access only to the data necessary for their work. Sensitive information is classified according to its confidentiality level and made available exclusively to authorized persons. The disclosure of sensitive information is permitted only with the express approval of management and the affected party.

In the event of a security incident, an external IT service provider is notified immediately to determine the cause and initiate appropriate measures. Management is responsible for promptly informing the external data protection officer and affected parties of the incident. Security incidents are analyzed and documented within 48 hours to ensure transparency and traceability.

Electronic documents are backed up regularly to prevent data loss. Documents are archived for at least 6 years. Sensitive data that is no longer needed is securely deleted in accordance with legal requirements.

Regular reviews of security measures by the external IT service provider and the data protection officer are an integral part of data management to ensure continuous improvement.

Ensuring the fight against bribery and corruption

The goal is to ensure a consistent understanding and approach to consistently prevent bribery and corruption.

GreenSign Standard GmbH pursues a strict zero-tolerance policy toward bribery and corruption. It is not permitted to pay, offer, demand, or accept bribes. All business decisions must be based on objective criteria and must not be influenced by improper factors. Gifts, invitations, or other benefits are permitted only within reasonable limits and must not give rise to the intention or the appearance of unduly influencing decisions.

GreenSign Standard GmbH acknowledges that gifts and hospitality may be customary in business relationships. However, such gifts must be appropriate and transparent. They must never give the impression that they imply an expectation of receiving something in return. It is prohibited to accept or offer cash or gifts of equivalent value. All gifts and invitations must be documented. Employees may only accept small gifts with a maximum value of 20 euros.

Donations and sponsorship activities by GreenSign Standard GmbH are conducted exclusively in accordance with the company's values and must not be used to obtain improper advantages. Political donations are strictly prohibited, as they could create the appearance of conflicts of interest or undue influence.

Impartiality

GreenSign Standard GmbH is committed to ensuring impartiality during all certification activities, both for itself and for the authorized certification bodies.

GreenSign Standard GmbH is committed to maintaining impartiality in the development and refinement of its conformity assessment programs and related activities. Commercial, financial, or other influences that could jeopardize impartiality will not be tolerated.

GreenSign Standard GmbH also continuously identifies risks that could compromise impartiality through a risk management system. These risks may arise from the organization's own activities, from relationships, or from the structure of the organization. They include self-interest, self-assessment, advocacy, undue familiarity, intimidation, or competition. If risks are identified, appropriate measures are taken to eliminate or minimize them.

All parties involved in GreenSign Standard GmbH's conformity assessment programs are not permitted to engage in any activities that could compromise impartiality. These include:

- Developing, implementing, operating, or supporting companies certified according to GreenSign Standard GmbH standards;
- Providing, distributing, or offering consulting services to companies certified according to GreenSign Standard GmbH standards;
- Engaging in bribery and corruption

GreenSign Standard GmbH requires all authorized certification bodies for its conformity assessment programs to have established an independent committee to ensure impartiality, comprising relevant interested parties.

All employees and all service providers or external personnel commissioned by GreenSign Standard GmbH must adhere to GreenSign Standard GmbH's rules for ensuring impartiality. Before commencing their work, potential conflicts of interest, lack of objectivity, familiarity with involved parties, or intimidation must be disclosed. All employees, and in the case of certification bodies, the respective appointed auditors involved in certification processes according to the standards of GreenSign Standard GmbH, must disclose any past (within the last 24 months) and/or current connections to a company to be certified.

The following are considered connections:

- Employment relationships
- Consulting activities
- Family ties

with companies to be certified according to one of the standards of GreenSign Standards GmbH, and, additionally, for certification bodies, employees and/or appointed auditors to be assigned to a certification. It may occur that, within a period of two years following certification, employees of the certification body who were involved in the certification process (for example, in the audit or certification decision) work with a company as employees, contractors, or consultants. In such cases, GreenSign Standards GmbH reviews the certification process and all resulting decisions to ensure that no conflict of interest existed at the time of certification and/or the certification decision.

Authorized certification bodies must provide evidence to GreenSign Standard GmbH that impartiality is ensured throughout all certification activities and that compliance with the DIN EN ISO 17065 standard is maintained. Furthermore, the guidelines described herein regarding the principles of GreenSign Standard GmbH equally apply to authorized certification bodies and must be documented in their company principles.

Competence

GreenSign Standard GmbH ensures that its employees and the personnel it engages possess the competence to continuously develop the certification programs and standards. Furthermore, GreenSign Standard GmbH requires all authorized certification bodies to ensure that the personnel engaged by the certification bodies possess the competence to carry out certification activities

Non-discrimination of applicants

The goal is to ensure a fair, transparent, and impartial certification process conducted by the authorized certification bodies, in which all applicants have equal access and are assessed solely on the basis of objective criteria.

GreenSign Standard GmbH is committed to the following principles and expectations regarding applicants, to which the authorized certification bodies are also committed: GreenSign Standard GmbH and the certification bodies conduct their activities on a fair and impartial basis. Their procedures and regulations do not disadvantage any applicants. GreenSign Standard GmbH and the certification bodies do not deny individual applicants access to the certification process without a valid reason. Discrimination is prohibited. Rejections of applications must be justified on objective grounds.

All applicants whose activities fall within the scope of GreenSign Standard GmbH's conformity assessment have the opportunity to apply for certification from one of the authorized certification bodies. The requirements and processes for obtaining certification must be clear and transparent to all parties involved.

The decision to accept a certification application must not be contingent on whether a company is of a certain size, is a member of an association or group, or has already received a certain number of certifications. GreenSign Standard GmbH imposes no unfair financial or other conditions. The same applies to the authorized certification bodies.

GreenSign Standard GmbH authorizes a certification body to reject an application or revoke an existing certification if there are valid and verifiable grounds for such rejection or revocation. A rejection or revocation may occur, for example, if an applicant is involved in illegal activities or has repeatedly violated certification requirements and conditions. Such decisions must be based on objective and documented criteria.

GreenSign Standard GmbH ensures that its requirements, procedures for evaluation/verification, assessment, decision-making, and monitoring are transparent. This ensures that the entire certification process is fair, traceable, and accessible to all applicants under the same conditions.

Reporting and consequences for violations

GreenSign Standard GmbH encourages all interested parties to report potential violations of these guidelines. Reports may be submitted confidentially and anonymously, ensuring that the identity of the reporting person remains protected. All reports are carefully reviewed, and appropriate measures are taken to address violations and prevent future incidents. There is full protection against retaliation for anyone who submits a report in good faith.

Any person who violates this policy may face disciplinary action, warnings, termination of employment, and criminal consequences, depending on the severity of the violation. GreenSign Standard GmbH is committed to ensuring clear and consistent enforcement of this policy.