

**SRI LANKA  
CLIMATE FUND**

SAMPATHPAYA, NO.82,  
RAJAMALWATTA ROAD  
BATTARAMULLA

# Remote Assessment Policy for Organization and Product Level GHG Verification

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Doc No	: SLCF-GHG-PLC-004
Issue No.	: 02
Date of Issue	: 04.05.2020
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## 1. Introduction

Sri Lanka Climate Fund (Pvt) Ltd., a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) accredited by Sri Lanka Accreditation Board (SLAB) for organizational level GHG statement verification under the accreditation scope of ISO 14064-1:2018 and ISO 14067:2018. The organization has a long evolving expertise in the service and been maintaining a dynamic management system sensitive to the change of time, technologies and client operations.

It is highly evident that traditional assessment methodologies are not always feasible within the highly transient industry environments, extraordinary events and circumstances. As advanced information and communication technologies are available, the most of industries desire to get their assessment done in a remote or virtual environment. The management of SLCF viewed this as an opportunity to improve the verification process and resolved to adopt remote assessment as an alternative way for the physical office assessment.

It should be noted that policy elements described in this document over the remote assessment is only for the information of client and other interested parties. In any means, provisions of policy do not compel client to conduct or accept a remote assessment or part thereof. However it is expected that in course of time, clients will see the advantages of remote assessment and adopt them to complement traditional assessment techniques.

## 2. Scope

This policy is applicable to verification assessments of parties who have prepared their GHG statement in accordance with the 14064-1:2018 and ISO 14067:2018 and requested verifications against the criteria provided in respective standards.

## 3. Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) / Quality Manager/ Verification Manager / authorized officers of client/ Outsourced GHG consultant by client.

## 4. References

- 4.1 AC-RG (P) - 20 - SLAB Policy on management of extraordinary events or circumstances affecting SLAB accredited bodies and their customers
- 4.2 IAF ID 3:2011 Informative Document for Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations
- 4.3 IAF MD 4:2018 IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes
- 4.4 IAF ID 12:2015 - Principles on Remote Assessment

## 5. Definition

### 5.1. Extraordinary Event or Circumstance

A circumstance beyond the control of the organization, commonly referred to as “Force Majeure” or “act of God” They include war, strike, riot, political instability, geopolitical tension, terrorism,

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crime, pandemic, flooding, earthquake, malicious computer hacking, other natural or man-made disasters.

## **5.2. Remote Assessment**

The facilitation of assessment of a conformity assessment body from a location other than that being physically present

## **5.3. Information & Communication Technology (ICT)**

ICT is the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, and others. The use of ICT may be appropriate for assessment both locally and remotely

## **6. Policy Element**

### **6.1. Applicability of remote assessment**

Remote assessment is used by SLCF to establish the level of confidence in the Conformity Assessment Body's certification process by direct observations carried out through an electronic medium. Remote assessments provide the opportunity for increased efficiency, increased safety, better timing, inclusion of client representatives that may not be easily accessible, and avoidance of travel delays and restrictions.

6.1.1. The remote assessments are considered for use by SLCF when:

- I. Travel to a client facility or specific location is not possible (i.e., for safety reasons, social distancing, travel restrictions caused by extraordinary events and circumstances etc.).
- II. There are unavoidable changes in scheduling for the client or verifier (i.e., personal issues, change in business priorities, etc.).
- III. The number of sites to be assessed is difficult for the verifier to completely fulfil within its timeframe.
- IV. The client has systematic implementation of its management system where records, data, etc. can be reviewed at any site, despite where the work is being performed.
- V. The assessment is for an additional evidence gathering purpose.
- VI. The client has a proven track record of conformance at the location of the remote assessment.
- VII. The risk level of the assessment is of low concern to the verifier.
- VIII. An activity or activities planned for the on-site assessment could not be completed and extending the on-site assessment is not the best resolution.
- IX. The verification team has a verifier/ verifiers already familiar with the Management System and its practices and who have visited the client's relevant premises.

6.1.2. Remote assessments are not favourable in the following scenarios:

- I. When the client has a history of non-conformance at the location being assessed.
- II. During initial assessment activity of a new client.
- III. Significant change of a facility and scope of an existing client

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IV. When no on-site assessment has taken place for an extended period of time

## **6.2. Remote Assessment Approaches**

SLCF offers two main approaches for remote verification assessments,

### **6.2.1. Full Remote Assessment (FRA)**

The entire verification process is planned, conducted and managed remotely. Under this approach, the verifier do not physically observe any facility, operation or process of the client. Instead, all verification process related activities are performed at a designated location of client, SLCF Office or Verifier's home office. The verification activities undertaken through this approach relatively bears higher verification risk. Therefore FRA is considered to be applied in situations where travelling is completely impossible due to a circumstance specified in above 6.1.1, I.

### **6.2.2. Partial Remote Assessment (PRA)**

The verification activities are conducted applying both remote and on-site (physical) assessment techniques. The segment of on-site assessment primarily includes document review and site visit. The rest of assessments (i.e. Pre-Assessment and Initial Assessment. and activities pertaining to verification are conducted remotely as deemed appropriate by the verifier. The part of remote assessment are performed at a designated location of client, SLCF Office or Verifier's home office

## **6.3. Planning and Scheduling of Remote Assessment**

- 6.3.1. Client preference is essential for the use of remote assessment techniques in the verification. This is confirmed through the engagement application forwarded to client at the pre-engagement stage of verification. The application is provided with options to indicate preference for FRA, PRA and Non-Remote Assessment (General on-site assessment).
- 6.3.2. Prior to indication of preference for a FRA or PRA, following should be considered by the client
  - I. Authorization from top management
  - II. Systematic implementation of management system where records, data, etc. can be reviewed at any site, despite where the work is being performed.
  - III. Required ICT infrastructure to support remote assessment
  - IV. Competent personnel for facilitating the assessment
  - V. Measures available to assure confidentiality of data and information
- 6.3.3. The expression of preference for remote assessment is not mandatory, if client is more confident and convenient with general verification procedures, client is free to request non-remote or the general assessment.
- 6.3.4. Following the receipt of client confirmation, an eligibility criteria evaluation is conducted by SLCF to determine the feasibility of using remote assessment for the client. The evaluation basically examines;

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- I. Level of assurance, materiality, frequency of verification etc. (i.e., as per the Management System, initial verification of a new clients are required to be assessed on-site).
- II. The results of verification risk assessment conducted by verifier
- III. Whether there is a conflict of interest with the clients being assessed remotely.
- IV. Whether the client is able to provide a representative that is capable of communicating in the same language as the verifier.
- V. Whether the verifier has the capability and aptitude to conduct the remote assessment in the chosen medium/forum of the remote assessment.
- VI. Whether a list of activities, areas, information and personnel to be involved in the remote assessment is available.

6.3.5. ICT is a pivotal component in the execution of remote assessment. Prior to the assessment, the use of ICT for assessment purposes should be mutually agreed upon by the client being assessed and SLCF in accordance with information security and data protection measures and regulations. The agreed upon measures should at least include;

- I. Viable communication platform (i.e., Go-To-Meeting, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and Facetime etc.) for hosting the assessment
- II. Procedures for testing platform compatibility between the verifier and client

6.3.6. The remote or virtual assessment deals with exchange of data and information in enormous scale. The security and confidentiality of electronic or electronically-transmitted information should be safeguarded by both parties being in compliance with the agreed means and ways.

6.3.7. Legally enforceable agreement entering into between SLCF and client at the pre-engagement stage, includes provisions for the remote assessments. Once agreement is signed, SLCF is obligated to proceed with the remote assessment techniques whereas client is obligated to provide followings to the verifiers,

- I. Designated individual(s) that will facilitate, manage and coordinate the arrangements of the assessment on behalf of the clients. This should include translators, when necessary.
- II. Applicable files, projects, reports, etc.
- III. Client procedure(s) and documents for process (es) being assessed. Some information, such as project report files, may need to be sent to the verifiers for review prior to the remote assessment.
- IV. Credentials to access virtual based data and information.
- V. Other evidence deemed essential and necessary.

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#### **6.4. Conducting Remote Assessment**

- 6.4.1. The assessment should be facilitated in quiet environments whenever possible to avoid interference and background noise (i.e., speakerphones).
- 6.4.2. Facilitation of the assessment should follow normal assessment plans and processes.
- 6.4.3. Both parties should make their best effort to confirm what was heard, stated and read throughout the assessment.
- 6.4.4. All remote assessments should be concluded with a summary, review of the day(s)'s events, issues of concern, clarification of issues, non-conformances and expectations.
- 6.4.5. There should be allowance for the verifier to terminate the assessment prior to schedule due to an inability to maintain satisfactory connections or conditions during the scheduled time. This should be recorded in the assessment report.
- 6.4.6. Both parties need to take appropriate measures to safeguard confidentiality of data in any format.

#### **6.5. Post Assessment Activities**

- 6.5.1. Findings (Non-conformances, corrective actions, Opportunities for Improvement, etc.) need to be drafted by the Remote Assessment team members and passed on to the client in a timely manner for each session for review and acknowledgement, prior to closure of non-conformances.
- 6.5.2. The findings must be posted in writing and the client needs to be encouraged to provide additional information to be included in the text of its response.
- 6.5.3. The assessment report should include the details of the records reviewed and any findings. Both parties should make their best efforts to confirm what was heard, stated and read throughout the assessment.
- 6.5.4. Communication between the verifier and client for sending documents or clarification on issues and corrective action management shall be pre-defined and communicated.
- 6.5.5. The verifier should confirm deletion of any confidential documents, images, recordings, etc.
- 6.5.6. The treatment of non-conformances should follow the same processes that are utilized for on-site assessments

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