

# Description of the BRCGS ETRS certification procedure



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If you should require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be please to help you.

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# Description of the BRCGS ETRS certification procedure



The **BRCGS Ethical Trade and Responsible Sourcing Standard** (hereafter referred to as the BRCGS ETRS) provides the framework for an evaluation of a site's management system and its capability and effectiveness in delivering against the principles of ethical trade and responsible sourcing.

Within the BRCGS ETRS Standard, fundamental requirements relate to the essential components of an effective ethical trade and responsible sourcing management system.

These 11 fundamental components are:

- Senior management commitment and continual improvement,
- Internal audits,
- Corrective and preventive actions,
- Freely chosen employment,
- Child labour,
- Wages,
- Working hours,
- UN guiding principles on business and human rights,
- Forced and bonded labour,
- Human trafficking,
- Business ethics and integrity.

Each component includes more specific and detailed requirements (clauses) that help to achieve the stated objective of the section.

The auditors are selected by the Head of the Certification Body of TÜV NORD CERT GmbH in accordance with their approvals for the particular industry/service sector and their qualification.

## 1 CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

### 1.1 Audit Preparation

Following the signing of the contract, the site and TÜV Nord agree on an audit programme, the audit scope and objectives. TÜV Nord selects the audit team and determines the audit length. The site completes the self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) against the requirements and sends it to TÜV Nord 4 weeks before the agreed audit date of stage 1. TÜV Nord draws an audit plan that forms the basis for the audit and sends it to the site two weeks before the stage 1 audit to help the site to prepare.

### 1.2 Audit Stage 1

The Stage 1 audit can take place on-site or remote on a mutually agreed date.

During this stage, TÜV Nord:

- reviews the site's ETRS management system,
- evaluates the site's location-specific conditions,
- undertakes management interviews,
- reviews the site's status and understanding of the BRCGS ETRS standard,
- confirms the ETRS management system scope.

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Once completed, TÜV Nord releases the Stage 1 audit report explaining the areas of concern and/or confirming the site's readiness for Stage 2. TÜV Nord determines a minimum interval of 14 days between Stage 1 and Stage 2 to allow the site to resolve any areas of concern arising from Stage 1.

### 1.3 Audit Stage 2 – Certification Audit

The Stage 2 audit will take place unannounced, within a pre-determined 28-day window. The audit will be on-site and conducted (wherever possible) by the same audit team who conducted Stage 1 and be completed within 6 months from the end of the Stage 1 audit.

The site receives an audit plan no less than 14 days before the start of the 28-day audit window. TÜV Nord does not disclose the actual audit date of the on-site audit.

It is also expected that the opening and closing meeting shall be held with the site's senior management and, where appropriate, those responsible for key functions relating to the ethical trade and responsible sourcing management system.

At the site, the audit team:

- conducts an opening meeting to confirm the scope and process of the audit,
- is taken on a site tour to review implementation of ETRS management system,
- conducts a document review, including ETRS documentation and worker records,
- interviews workers, including individuals and groups,
- undertakes management interviews to confirm site practice and legal compliance,
- conducts a final review of its findings, and
- holds a closing meeting to review the findings with the site.

After the audit, TÜV Nord will issue a report within 104 calendar days from the last day of the initial certification audit.

### 1.4 Award of Certificate

TÜV Nord will issue the certificate within 104 calendar days of the audit.

Where a certificate is reconfirmed, TÜV Nord will issue it within 42 calendar days of the audit.

The site obtains also login details for the BRCGS Directory and can share audit reports with any required customers and use the BRCGS logo.

## 2 SURVEILLANCE AUDIT

The certificated site has two unannounced annual surveillance audits before a full recertification audit.

The date of the first surveillance audit shall not be more than 12 months from the initial certification decision date. TÜV Nord will notify the site within 104 days - from the last day of the previous audit - about the 28-day window during which the surveillance audit will take place at any point. This window may occur at any point from 9 months before the surveillance audit due date (defined by the anniversary of the certification decision), but it will typically be within the last 4 months.

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TÜV Nord will establish and send an audit plan. This plan provides a basis for the scheduling and conducting of the audit activities. The purpose of the annual surveillance audit is to reconfirm compliance with the requirements of the BRCGS ETRS standard and the site's ongoing certification.

The surveillance audit will include:

- the 11 "fundamentals" of the BRCGS ETRS Standard and other sampled aspects (so that all the requirements of the Standard are covered across the two annual surveillance audits),
- actions taken on non-conformities identified during the previous audit,
- complaints handling,
- effectiveness of the ethical trade and responsible sourcing management system with regard to achieving the certificated site's objectives and policy commitments,
- progress of planned activities aimed at continual improvement,
- continuing operational control,
- review of any changes,
- use of BRCGS logos.

After the audit, TÜV Nord shall issue a report within 42 calendar days from the last day of the surveillance audit.

### 3 RECERTIFICATION AUDIT

Certificated sites shall be subject to a recertification audit in year 3 of the audit programme. It shall be on site and unannounced, taking place within a 28-day audit window before the certification expiry date. TÜV Nord will establish and send an audit plan.

The recertification audit shall address:

- the ongoing effectiveness of the ethical trade and responsible sourcing management system in its entirety in the light of internal and external changes and its continued relevance and applicability to the scope of certification,
- demonstrated commitment to maintain the effectiveness and improvement of the etrs management system to enhance overall performance,
- the effectiveness of the ethical trade and responsible sourcing management system in achieving the certificated site's objectives and policy commitments.

After the audit, TÜV Nord shall issue a report within 42 calendar days from the last day of the recertification audit.

### 4 EXTENSION OF SCOPE AUDIT

N/A

#### 4.1 Short Notice Audits

N/A

### **5 TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATION FROM OTHER CERTIFICATION BODIES**

TÜV Nord shall take account of certification already granted to the site and audits performed by other certification bodies. TÜV Nord will obtain and retain audit reports and documentation on corrective actions and will then justify and record any adjustments to the existing audit programme.

### **6 CERTIFICATION OF COMPANIES WITH MULTIPLE LOCATIONS (MULTI-SITE)**

The audit scope is site-specific. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where activities that are undertaken at more than one location can be included within a single audit report. This includes the audit of a head office to review procedures or systems controlled from that office or other functions such as payroll records. Another possibility is the audit of more than one location, where workers perform activities related to those on the audited site. If exceptional circumstances apply to a site, TÜV Nord shall include this information in all audit plans.

### **7 MANAGEMENT OF NON-CONFORMITIES**

The process for 'closing out' non-conformities depends upon the level of non-conformity and the number identified.

In case of an initial certification audit, the site provides corrective actions and preventive action plans related to the non-conformities identified by TÜV Nord within 90 days. TÜV Nord reviews this evidence within 14 days. If all major and minor non-conformities are closed, certification is granted to the site.

Where non-conformities cannot be closed within 90 days, the site achieves a graded but uncertificated report. The Site may request a further on-site visit within 6 months to confirm that non-conformities are closed, so that certification can be granted.

In the case of surveillance or recertification audits for certificated sites, objective evidence of corrective and preventive actions shall be submitted within 28 days of audit completion.