Description of the verification procedure for SLCP

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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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This document has been approved according to CERT-401-VA-007. Details are available from the QM-Department.

Description of the verification procedure for SLCP

*The **Social and Labor Convergence Program*** (SLCP) is a non-profit multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to eliminate audit fatigue in global supply chains. SLCP provide tools and system for a high-quality comparable data set on working conditions that can be used by all industry stakeholders. This increases transparency in supply chains, reduces the need for social audits and ultimately allows users to redeploy resources into improving working conditions.

SLCP is developer of the *Converged Assessment Framework* (CAF) and a data hosting and sharing process. The CAF is a descriptive tool and verification methodology that collects relevant and essential data with the intent to objectively assess industry labor conditions.

The CAF consists of three elements: 1. Data Collection Tool, 2. Verification Protocol, and 3. Verifier Guidance.

Element 1 consists of a "Questionnaire" used to gather data on social and labor conditions in the facility. It contains all the assessment questions that a facility must answer through a self- or joint assessment (SA/JA).

Element 2 refers to the "Verification Protocol", a document that contains verification procedures and requirements for TÜV NORD Cert and verifier.

Element 3 is the "Facility Guidance", a document that contains manuals for facilities and verifiers, to understand the assessment process and complete the Self-Assessment and report.

The facility can choose between the verification of the following scopes:

Step 1 = questions about key social & labour compliance, mostly connected to International Labor Standards (ILS) and National Labor Law, making it well suited for the majority of stakeholders.

Step 2 = questions which focus on management systems and additional/supportive social and labor compliance questions but less critical. These questions can often be found in social industry and certification standards.

Step 3 = questions which go above and beyond social responsibility industry standards, are not required by national or international law, and seek to evaluate workplace well-being and community impact.

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

1 VERIFICATION PROCEDURE

The following description is based on the requirements of the latest document: "*SLCP Verification Protocol, Version 1.4-1.1*".

Conforming to the SLCP involves a three-stage process:

1. A self-assessment conducted by the facility itself (or a joint assessment in conjunction with external assistance, f.e. a consultant)
2. An independently verification of the data by SLCP-approved verifier(s), which includes an on-site visit at the facility.
3. The upload of this verified data to a secure gateway and accredited host where authorized stakeholders can further review the data with the facility's permission.

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1.1   Verification Preparation

To start, the facility needs to register on the e-learning platform www.slconvergence.org/training to enroll in the facility course and certificate. After having received a certificate with a code, the facility can register within two weeks on the Gateway.

Once the Gateway account has been approved, the facility is able to connect to one of the Accredited Hosts (either Higg or FFC) and to create an account.

The facility can accesses the Data Collection Tool through the Accredited Host (HIGG or FFC) to initiate the Self-Assessment (online or per download into Excel). As early as in the Self-Assessment stage, the facility should start contacting TÜV NORD as verifier body to arrange a verification.

At least 95% of the Data collection Tool questions belonging to the chosen scope has to be filled in and uploaded/send at least 10 working days prior to scheduled virtual and/or onsite visit.

Furthermore, the facility must determine if the Verification will be announced or semi-announced within a 10-day window. In addition, the facility can decide to include virtual activities to reduce the time Verifiers spend onsite.[1]

The Verifier reviews the Self-Assessment in detail to prepare for verification, which includes facility background check and determination of correct person-day requirements. Also, the Verifier provides pre-verification communication to the facility, including a verification plan that must be send to the facility at least 5 working days before the start of the virtual / onsite verification.

1.2   Verification

The Verification needs to take place within 2 months of completing the SA.

After the selection of TÜV Nord as Verifier Body on one of the Accredited host platform, the (virtual and) onsite verification activity must take place within an 8 calendar day period. Therefore, the Verifier obtains access to non-editable/ locked self-assessment data on the Accredited Host platform along with documents the facility uploaded.

The role of the Verifier is to check the completeness and correctness of the assessment data in the Data Collection Tool by looking at the facility response and checking to see if that response is accurate or inaccurate. If the facility has provided inaccurate answers, the Verifier must correct the response and explain what supporting evidence was reviewed. If the facility has not provided an answer, the Verifier must provide the correct response and explain why the facility did not answer. The verifier must answer 100% of the Data Collection Tool questions.

There is no further judgment made on the data collected through the SLCP process and the CAF does not provide corrective action plans or engage in other follow-up actions, as this is out of the scope of SLCP.

Users can use the data to come to their own conclusions and proceed with any applicable corrective action, remediation efforts or capacity/ capability building.

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[1] Possible virtual verifications activities: pre-virtual verification meeting, opening meeting, documentation review, virtual interviews, virtual walk-through, wage and hours records review.

1.3   Verification Assessment Report

The facility will get a complete and accurate Verification Summary together with the Verified Assessment Report for review and final approval 10 calendar days after the onsite verification. The Verification Summary is an automated output containing all "Inaccurate" and "legal non-compliance" items from each section of the tool. It contains useful information such as the Accuracy Index, which compares the number of inaccurate answers against the total number of facility responses.

Within 14 calendar days, a facility needs to approve, or dispute the verified assessment on the Accredited Host.

2   VERIFICATION OF COMPANIES WITH MULTIPLE LOCATIONS (MULTI-SITE)

The facility name must match the facility name on business license(s) associated with this address. There may be multiple business licenses under one facility name, but if they are associated with multiple addresses, then the facility has to create multiple profiles.

3   INACCURATE ANSWERS

If the facility has provided inaccurate answers or does not respond to a question, it is the Verifier's responsibility to answer the question by choosing a "Corrected Response" in the Data Collection Tool. The Verification Data entered must support the Verifier's Corrected Response by describing the types of evidence they reviewed.

If the facility has not provided an answer, the Verifier must provide the correct response and explain why the facility did not answer.