ASSURANCE PROTOCOLS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES, CLIENTS, AND OVERSIGHT BODY

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The CRSB is not liable for any costs, or any potential, real or estimated loss of earnings resulting from any actions taken by a person or entity related to their participation in the program, including, without limitation, any actions taken prior to applying to become a program participant or Certification Body.

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DEFINITIONS

Approval – a third-party assessment to determine whether the management system of Certification Bodies interested in conducting CRSB certification services meet the CRSB's requirements. Bodies that meet the CRSB requirements will be recommended to the CRSB by the Oversight Body to conduct CRSB certification services. CRSB approves Certification Bodies.

Assessment - The combined processes of audit/full records assessment/partial records assessment/self-declaration, review, and decision of a Client's conformity with the requirements of the applicable CRSB Standard or Chain of Custody Requirements.

Assurance - Demonstrable evidence that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled (aka: certification, verification) (adapted from ISO 17000).

Assurance Provider - An Assurance Provider (AP) has an agreement with the CRSB to deliver certification services on behalf of the CRSB in accordance with the requirements defined in the Assurance Protocol and Delivery Contract. Assurance providers may be categorized as a second-party or third-party assessment body in relationship to the Client, as defined in ISO/IEC 17000 International Standard: Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles. See second-party and third-party definitions for additional information.

Audit - Systematic, documented process for obtaining records, statements of fact or other relevant information and assessing them objectively to determine the extent to which specified requirements are fulfilled (aka: inspection, evaluation, verification). (adapted from ISO 17000)

Audit Checklist – a tool used by an auditor to complete and record findings from an audit.

Audit Manual – a tool used to guide audits.

Audit Report – report prepared by the auditor to summarize the findings from the audit and recommendation for certification to the Certification Body.

Auditor – an auditor who is qualified to conduct audits following the requirements set out in the CRSB audit manual or approved equivalent. An auditor works for a Certification Body.

Auditor Expectations Manual – a document that provides guidance for auditors auditing to the CRSB Standard(s) or Chain of Custody Requirements.

Assurance Protocol - the rules and procedures to be followed by Certification Bodies in order to carry out CRSB certification services.

Beef Producers: cow-calf, backgrounding, feedlot and dairy beef operations are in scope for a certification audit.

Calibration - The process by which different auditors and other personnel involved in assurance exchange knowledge and learn from each other to achieve more consistent interpretation and application of the Standard.

Certificate - document indicating that an operation meets the applicable CRSB Standard or Chain of Custody Requirements.

Certification - is a process through which the Certification Body assesses conformance with the applicable CRSB Standard or Chain of Custody Requirements via an on-site audit.

Certification Body – an organization approved by the CRSB, recommended by the Oversight Body, to conduct certification services on the CRSB's behalf, may be an Assurance Provider or a Delivery Agent.

Certification Report – document provided to Client's indicating their performance on the audit and overall conformity with the Standard.

Client - The person or enterprise that is seeking assurance of their conformity with the CRSB Standard(s). This includes Beef Producers and Primary Processors. Participating Operators (see definition below) are also referred to as Clients for the purposes of this document.

Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) - The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, a division of the Canadian Cattleman's Association, who is the Certified Sustainable Beef Framework owner and sets the minimum requirements.

Certified Sustainable Beef Framework – created by the CRSB, which includes Standards, Chain of Custody Requirements, Assurance Protocols, Requirements for Certification Bodies and Communications and Claims Policy. Also referred to as "the Framework".

Chain of Custody Requirements - the technical and administrative requirements for tracking beef and claims about beef sourced from CRSB certified operations.

CRSB Sustainable Beef Production Standard – a set of outcome-based indicators, goal(s) and requirements against which Beef Producers are certified, as conducted through the audit and assessment process.

CRSB Sustainable Beef Processing Standard – a set of outcome-based indicators, goal(s) and requirements against which Primary Processors are certified, as conducted through the audit and assessment process.

Delivery Agent (DA) - an existing program with full equivalency, has an agreement with the CRSB to conduct certification services on behalf of the CRSB in accordance with the requirements defined in the Assurance Protocol and Delivery Contract.

Delivery Contract - a document that outlines which activities the CRSB is responsible for delivering and which activities a Certification Body (Delivery Agent or Assurance Provider) is responsible for delivering in regard to the CRSB Certified Sustainable Beef Framework.

Education – refers to a process whereby subject matter is presented with the intent that it will be understood.

Full records assessment – a full evaluation of a Client's records by the Certification Body to demonstrate continued conformance with the CRSB Standard(s) or Chain of Custody Requirements.

Internal Audit - a systematic and documented process for obtaining and evaluating evidence to determine the extent to which the CRSB requirements are being met.

Internal Auditor - An individual who is qualified to conduct internal management system audits.

Multi-site Operation - an enterprise with multiple production sites that are centrally managed and are assessed as one Client.

On-site audit - conducted by a Certification Body auditor to assess conformance to the CRSB Standard or approved equivalent.

Oversight Body - the organization that reviews and regularly assesses the conformance of approved Certification Bodies with the CRSB's requirements.

Participating Operator – an entity or organization seeking certification to the CRSB Chain of Custody Requirements.

Partial records assessment – a partial evaluation of a Client's records by the Certification Body to demonstrate continued conformance with the CRSB Standard.

Primary Processor - a facility where live cattle are slaughtered and processed for human consumption.

Random audit - a sampling of certified operations selected by the Certification Body and reported to CRSB to enhance rigour or used to check on specified aspects of an auditor or Client's performance.

Second-Party Conformity Assessment – Assessment activity that is performed by a Certification Body that has a user interest in the product, process or system that is being evaluated for conformity assessment to a set of specified requirements. (adapted from ISO 17000)

Self-declaration – a formal statement made by a Client based on their own determination and review that their operation conforms to the applicable CRSB Standard.

Shadow audit – an on-site audit during which a qualified auditor is observed by a trainee for the purpose of learning how to conduct an audit.

Standards – the CRSB Sustainable Beef Production Standard and CRSB Sustainable Beef Processing Standard, each individually a Standard.

Third-Party Conformity Assessment: Assessment activity that is performed by a Certification Body that is independent of the organization that provides the product, process or

system that is being evaluated for conformity assessment to a set of specified requirements. (adapted from ISO 17000)

Training – refers to a process whereby participants are presented with subject matter information on which they are evaluated (e.g. tested).

Trigger audits – an audit that is triggered by: alert of a high-risk situation, flagged by a complaint, or changes that would affect a client's existing certification to the applicable CRSB Standard or Chain of Custody Requirements.

Withdrawal – process by which a Client's certificate is removed.

Witness audit – an on-site audit during which an auditor is observed for the purpose of evaluating his/her performance of conducting an audit.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) is a multi-stakeholder organization focused on advancing sustainability efforts within the Canadian beef industry. The CRSB's mission is that through leadership, science, multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration, continuous improvement of sustainability of the Canadian beef value chain will be achieved and recognized.

The CRSB has developed the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework* for stakeholders in the value chain to produce or source beef from CRSB certified operations. The **purpose** of the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework* is multi-faceted due to a number of factors. Consumer interest in supporting sustainable food systems is growing, the agriculture supply chain is interested in sharing scientifically robust information with an increasingly removed consumer, and retail and food service companies are grappling with balancing consumer interest, marketing needs, corporate social responsibility and investor expectations. At the same time non-governmental organizations are keenly interested in supporting sustainable agriculture systems and ensuring high standards of animal care are being attained. Given these numerous factors, the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework* was developed with multiple purposes in mind as outlined below:

- Advance beef sustainability in Canada
- Recognize leadership and best practice within the industry
- Ensure a consistent, robust and meaningful definition of sustainable production in Canada
- Avoid duplicating efforts to define and verify sustainable operations
- Support supply chains interested in making meaningful sustainable sourcing commitments and subsequent communications
- Enable consumers to purchase sustainably sourced product
- Support the understanding of sustainable beef production in Canada

Guiding principles

Through all levels of implementation of the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework* the CRSB will be led by the following principles:

- **Credible** to all stakeholders securing trust through robust assurances, transparency, inclusivity and vigorous scientific review
- **Effective** in driving the advancement and understanding of sustainable beef production
- **Economically viable** for the CRSB to manage and stakeholders to use
- **Valuable** to industry participants and consumers
- **Aligned** with the Five Principles of Sustainable Beef as set by the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef

Note there is no significance in the order of the principles
Wherever possible, the CRSB has followed the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Codes of Good Practices are followed throughout the framework development process.

Objectives

Certification is the process by which a Certification Body determines that a Client meets all the requirements in the applicable CRSB Standard or Chain of Custody Requirements. For CRSB certification, this requires undertaking regular Assessments (see section 9.0 - audit cycle) from a Certification Body (approved by the CRSB, recommended by the Oversight Body) against the Standard(s), Requirements or approved equivalent.

Participation

To advance sustainability efforts in the Canadian beef industry, the CRSB developed two Standards: the Sustainable Beef Production Standard and the Sustainable Beef Processing Standard. Eligible Beef Producers and Primary Processors who would like to contribute to the certified supply chain must be certified by a Certification Body to conform to the applicable Standard(s).

The CRSB also developed Chain of Custody Requirements for Primary Processors as well as those entities higher in the supply chain (e.g. further processors and retail and food service companies) that would like to source beef from CRSB certified operations. These entities are referred to as a Participating Operator. The Participating Operator must be certified by a Certification Body to the Chain of Custody Requirements in order to make a sourcing claim.

This Assurance Protocol provides a detailed overview of the certification process. The items outlined in this document are applicable to all Certification Bodies performing CRSB certification Assessments or approved equivalent. All parts of this manual are considered normative for Certification Bodies. Certification Bodies are categorized into two types:

1. **Delivery Agent** (i.e. an existing program that attains full equivalency that is approved to perform CRSB certification services under the CRSB certification framework), and
2. **Assurance Provider** (i.e. organizations approved to perform CRSB certification services under the CRSB certification framework).

Client participation is voluntary and application is open to all Beef Producers and Primary Processors and Participating Operators (hereafter called Clients).

The protocols in this document demonstrate that the CRSB strives to ensure consistency in assessments and seeks to achieve equitable access to certification services across Canada.

Interpretation of the Standards is at the sole discretion of the CRSB, unless a full equivalency is being offered, in which case, these need to be negotiated between the equivalent program and the CRSB.

Auditors will assess Clients against the appropriate CRSB or equivalent Standard (see the website for the most recent version of the Standards). Certification Bodies must follow the interpretation (e.g. audit manual) provided by the CRSB, unless equivalency and permission has been granted by the CRSB.

The CRSB has overall control of the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework*, including the Standards, Chain of Custody Requirements and Assurance Protocols, and therefore any decisions relating to the Framework are made by the CRSB.

The Oversight Body will review, assess and recommend and the CRSB will approve Certification Bodies. The Oversight Body will assess approved Certification Bodies annually to ensure the requirements set out by the CRSB are being met. This assessment is required for Certification Bodies to continue conducting CRSB certification services. The Oversight Body will share and review the assessments from the approval assessment and annual reviews with the CRSB. A meeting between the Oversight Body, CRSB and each Certification Body (with at least the individual responsible for the CRSB file) will take place following each assessment and subsequent review.

CRSB reserves the right to itself, or through third party agents, carry out supplementary audits for the purposes of verifying ongoing compliance with the Framework and/or to determine that, where relevant, agreed upon actions have taken place. Reporting from Certification Bodies will be standardized and must be submitted electronically.

The CRSB also reserves the right to modify any component of the Framework. A reasonable amount of time will be given to Certification Bodies to accommodate the changes.

The full onus of responsibility for compliance with the requirements of the applicable CRSB Standard or Chain of Custody Requirements rests solely with the Client. For greater certainty, in no event shall the CRSB, its employees or agents, the Oversight Body, any Certification Body, Auditor, or Certification Body employee, or any other third party engaged by CRSB, bear any responsibility or liability for a Client's compliance with any CRSB Standard(s) or Chain of Custody Requirements.

2.0 HOW CLIENTS ARE CERTIFIED (Beef Producers, Processors, Chain Of Custody)

The procedure for certification ensures that assessments of conformance with the applicable CRSB Standard(s) or Chain of Custody Requirements or equivalent are conducted in a consistent manner by qualified auditors, and describes how Certification Bodies assess and grant certificates to Clients. These procedures may be modified from time to time to reflect best management practices for conducting such certifications.
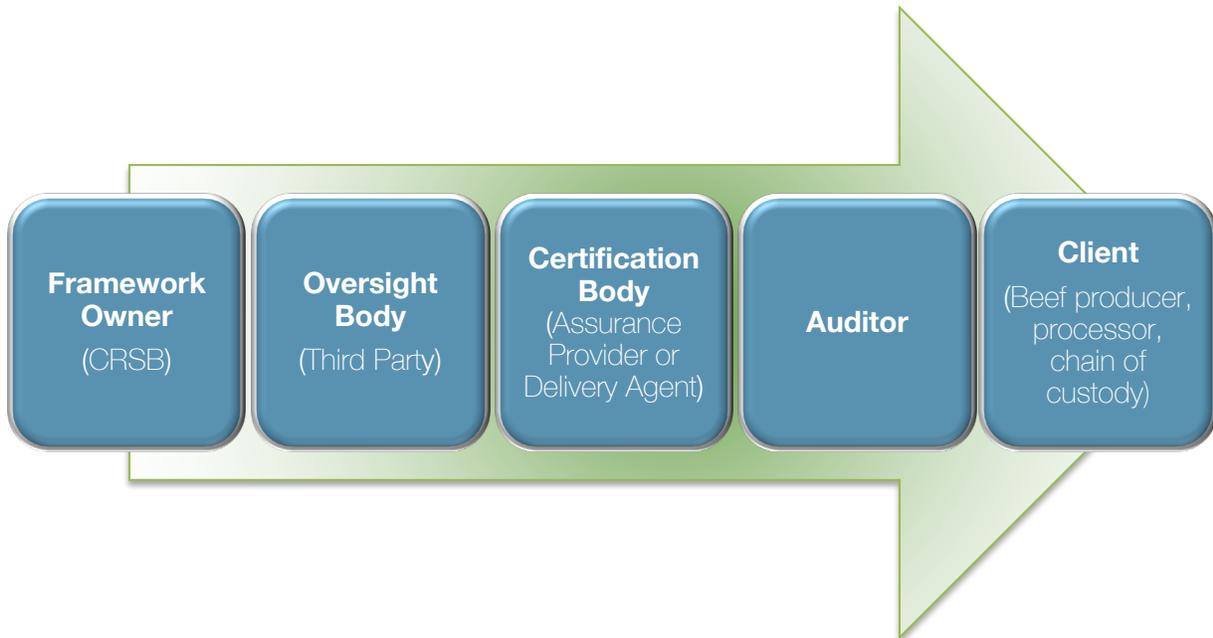
Figure 1: Stakeholders involved in the certification process

The specific responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the certification process are (see Figure 1):

1. **Framework owner** – the CRSB is the owner of the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework*. It is responsible for the correct interpretation of its Standards, Chain of Custody Requirements, and adherence of its Certification Bodies to the Assurance Protocols.
2. **Oversight Body** – the third-party organization hired by the CRSB to provide approval to Certification Bodies and conduct oversight to ensure Certification Bodies are meeting CRSB Requirements for Certification Bodies.
3. **Certification Bodies** – the bodies approved (Assurance Provider or Delivery Agent) to conduct certification services on behalf of the CRSB.
4. **Auditors** - are responsible for assessing a Client's conformance to the applicable CRSB Standard, Chain of Custody Requirements or approved equivalent.
5. **Clients** – Beef producer, Primary Processor or Participating Operator seeking certification or re-certification against the applicable CRSB Standard or Chain of Custody Requirements via a CRSB-approved Certification Body.

Process to Become Certified

The certification process is expected to evolve with the needs of the beef industry; therefore, the CRSB will monitor these needs and incorporate any modifications as required.

3.0 PREPARATION AND TRAINING FOR CLIENTS (Beef Producers, Processors, Chain Of Custody)

A Client may complete a self-assessment, if offered by the Certification Body, prior to an audit. Interpretation guidance will be made available on the *Certified Sustainable Beef Framework* website. Certification Bodies may have additional preparation and training requirements and tools available.

The website is also a valuable tool to direct Client's to appropriate resources and training. The CRSB will explore developing further Client training.

4.0 AUDIT COSTS TO CLIENTS (Beef Producers, Processors, Chain Of Custody)

Ideally, audit costs are mitigated through preparedness by the Client and auditor.

The following entities are responsible for paying the costs of each type of audit:
- Full on-site audits – Client pays
- Random audits – Certification Body pays
- Trigger audits – Client pays or CRSB (if conducting spot checks)
- Partial records assessment – Client pays
- Full records assessment – Client pays
- Self-declaration – Client pays

5.0 CERTIFICATION AND USE OF CERTIFICATE

Clients are granted a CRSB Certificate by the Certification Body after a successful audit, or approved equivalent. The complete list of certificate and certification procedures and requirements can be found in: Auditor Expectations Manual and Requirements for Certification Bodies. The latter document is located on the Framework website.

6.0 CLIENT CERTIFICATION RENEWALS AND WITHDRAWALS

Certification Bodies are responsible for ongoing assessments of Clients in accordance with the applicable audit cycle. Following each assessment, the Certification Body is responsible for determining if the certificate will be renewed or withdrawn. The CRSB also reserves the right to withdraw certificates at their sole discretion. Additional information on audit cycles and the conditions and process for withdraws is detailed in the Requirements for Certification Bodies document. This document is located on the Framework website.

7.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

This section provides a general overview of the requirements for Certification Bodies to become approved to deliver CRSB certification services. The complete list of requirements

can be found in: Requirements for Certification Bodies. This document is located on the Framework website.

Criteria for Certification Bodies

Organizations or individuals interested in becoming Certification Bodies should contact the CRSB. The CRSB will refer Certification Bodies to the Oversight Body, who will complete the review, assessment and approval process. The Certification Body must meet all requirements to the satisfaction of the CRSB and the Oversight Body and enter into a Delivery Contract with the CRSB before offering any CRSB certification services.

Certification Bodies that are approved will assign one individual who is the contact person and responsible for the CRSB file within their organizations.

The CRSB may undertake periodic checking of a Certification Body's and/or individual auditor's compliance with the CRSB's requirements in this regard.

Delivery Contract for Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies operate according to a Delivery Contract with the CRSB and in accordance with this Assurance Protocol. The Delivery Contract gives the Certification Body authority to provide CRSB Certification and Assessment services to Clients, which includes assigning auditors to conduct on-site certification audits, administering annual certification assessments, reviewing audit reports and recommendations, making certification decisions, issuing and handling certification documents, and managing appeals and complaints associated with their certification services. Certification Bodies are permitted to use customized documents for their programs, but they must be approved by the CRSB.

Certification Bodies will audit using the CRSB's Audit Manual unless otherwise approved by the CRSB (e.g. a program will full equivalency).

Client Certification and Certification Body Responsibilities

If a Client is certified, the Certification Body issues a CRSB Certificate to the Client. The CRSB provides each Certification Body with a range of certificate numbers to choose from. Certificate numbers follow the format of: 2 letter Provincial Code, 4-digit year, five digit number, e.g. AB2005#####, where ##### can be any number from 0001 to 99,999 inclusive.

The Certificate is the official document that shows conformance with the applicable CRSB Standard, Chain of Custody Requirements or equivalent. The Certificate remains the property of CRSB and may be withdrawn at any time by the Certification Body or CRSB if any non-conformity with the Standard or with any other requirements of the CRSB Standard is found to exist.

When Clients are certified, they enter into a commitment (via the Communications and Claims Policy) to continue to comply with the Standard and any subsequent assessments that are required to maintain certified status. The Client shall notify their respective Certification Body in writing prior to any changes that would affect their certification to the applicable CRSB

Standard(s). This may include, but is not limited to, process changes and organizational changes.

Standard Scheme Owner Review

The CRSB will conduct a management review of the Framework in three years (2021) to evaluate the effectiveness in meeting the CRSB's objectives and to review the Framework.

Oversight Body Responsibilities - Approval and Annual Reviews

The Oversight Body will conduct the approval process and annual reviews of Certification Bodies on behalf of the CRSB and share these results with the CRSB. Annual reviews will include the management system of the Certification Body in meeting the CRSB's requirements, the competence of assurance personnel (discussion with individual assigned to the CRSB file), Assessment review (review of a sample of audit reports to assess consistency) and at least one on-site appraisal to review the performance of auditors in the field.

A meeting among the Oversight Body, Certification Body and CRSB will also take place annually to discuss the approval review or the annual review; the latter will include feedback and opportunities for CRSB Framework refinement. Minutes of meetings are documented, distributed and kept as a record of the review, along with the annual review report, and any action items to be undertaken in order to address deficiencies in the process or review. The Certification Body is responsible for ensuring all deficiencies are addressed within the timeframe set out by the Oversight Body. The action items resulting from the annual review will be checked at the following review to ensure all deficiencies have been addressed.

Certification Bodies must have a documented process for selecting auditors, monitoring and evaluating auditor competence, ensuring consistency in assessment and calibration, according to the requirements in the Requirements for Certification Bodies document. In addition, they must also report regularly to the CRSB.

8.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITORS

This section provides a general overview of CRSB's general requirements for auditors.

Auditor Training and Calibration

The CRSB will work with the Certification Body to train assurance personnel and auditors on Standard-related subject matter. This training will be offered via webinar, wherever possible, to reduce costs. Auditors must take an exam and achieve a passing grade to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the CRSB Standard.

Continuing Education for Auditors and Assurance Personnel

Certification Bodies are required to monitor assurance personnel and auditors to ensure they continue to maintain the requirements set out by the CRSB. The complete list of requirements can be found in: Requirements for Certification Bodies. This document is located on the Framework website.

Evaluation and Monitoring of the Certification Body

The CRSB designates the Oversight Body to review the Certification Body's auditor training and monitoring system as part of the annual review. The complete list of requirements can be found in: Requirements for Certification Bodies. This document is located on the Framework website.

9.0 AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR CLIENTS (Beef Producers, Processors, Chain Of Custody)

The CRSB has defined minimum requirements for assessment to ensure all Clients, regardless of auditor selected, are evaluated using the same methods.

The complete list of requirements can be found in the Standards, Chain of Custody Requirements and forthcoming interpretation guides located on the CRSB website.

Audit Cycle (frequency and intensity) for Clients (beef producers, processors, chain of custody)

Certification Bodies shall adhere to the following audit cycle for their Clients.

The audit cycle shall be risk-based. Certification Bodies shall conduct a risk assessment based on a Client's initial audit findings and shall place the Client in the appropriate audit cycle category (i.e. standard, low or high risk). The following shall be considered and used to provide rationale as to the risk categorization:

- performance and number of corrective actions on the critical indicators (for Beef Producers and Primary Processors)
    - Risk to watershed health, manure control, food safety, worker health and safety, animal care, crop input use
- performance on previous assessments (if applicable)

Notes for further guidance:
- The risk categorization can change within the audit cycle after three years of consecutive exemplary performance
- Random audits may be conducted as necessary at the discretion of the Certification Body and related to program risk.
- Trigger audits are based on high-risk incidence(s) contrary to expected program outcomes, regulatory infraction, negative legal action, significant change in management system or complaints that can be substantiated.
- Audit cycle plus 2 months (60 days) between audit and re-certification audit maximum.

Box 1. Audit Cycle

    a. <u>**Standard audit cycle (5 years)**</u>
- Year 1: full on-site audit

The following years must consist of:
- 1 partial records assessment (on-site/desktop, optional)
- 3 self-declarations (not all consecutive)

    b. <u>**Low risk (6 years)**</u>

- Year 1: full on-site audit

The following years must consist of:
- 2 partial records assessment (on-site/desktop, optional)
- 3 self-declarations (not all consecutive)

    c. <u>**High risk (5 years)**</u>

- Year 1: full on-site audit

The following years must consist of:
- 3 full records assessments (on-site/desktop, optional)
- Additional full on-site audit
- No self-declarations

Description and purpose of different types of Assessments:

Type of Audit		Involved Parties
On-site	**Definition:** On-site audit conducted by a Certification Body auditor to assess conformance to the CRSB standard or approved equivalent. An onsite audit can also be triggered by a change in management or ownership. **Occurrence:** See audit cycle for detail based on risk category.	**Pays:** Client **Conducted by:** Certification Body
Partial Records Assessment	**Definition:** The Client must provide select records to the Certification Body by email, video conference, or mail by a particular date specified. This can also be provided on-site if requested by the Client. This is a cost efficient way to provide second or third-party assurance on an annual basis, while reducing the time burden and cost to the Client. **Occurrence:** See audit cycle for detail based on risk category.	**Pays:** Client **Conducted by:** Certification Body
Full Records Assessment	**Definition:** The Client must provide all records required for CRSB certification to the Certification Body by email, video conference, or mail by a particular date specified. This can also be provided on-site if requested by the Client. This is a cost efficient way to provide second or third-party assurance on an annual basis, while reducing the time burden and cost to the Client. **Occurrence:** See audit cycle for detail based on risk category.	**Pays:** Client **Conducted by:** Certification Body
Self Declaration	**Definition:** The Client must complete a self-declaration and submit by electronically or by mail by the date specified by the Certification Body to maintain certified status. **Occurrence:** See audit cycle for detail based on risk category.	**Pays:** Client **Conducted by:** Certification Body

Random Audit	**Definition:** A sampling of certified operations selected by the Certification Body and reported to CRSB to enhance rigour or used to check on specified aspects of an auditor or Client's performance. Random audits do reset the cycle timing and are used to enhance credibility of the conformance system. Random audits add to the integrity of the CRSB Framework. **Occurrence:** A random audit can occur at any time, and may or may not be unannounced.	**Pays:** Certification Body **Conducted by:** Certification Body
Trigger Audit	**Definition:** an audit that is triggered by: alert of a high-risk situation, flagged by a complaint, or changes that would affect a Client's existing certification to the applicable CRSB standard(s). Trigger audits do not reset the cycle timing; the Certification Body must report all trigger audits to CRSB bi-annually. Trigger audits add to the integrity of the CRSB Framework. **Occurrence:** A trigger audit can occur at any time.	**Pays:** Based on scenario (Client or CRSB) **Conducted by:** Certification Body or CRSB

Client Audit Scope

The audit scope will be determined based on the information collected when the Client requests the certification audit. Certification Bodies must collect the information necessary to appropriately determine scope.

Sampling within the Client Audit

Multi-site operations with the same management system require just one site to be audited; a different site will be audited at the next on-site visit.

Use of Translators

The auditor or audit team should have the necessary language skills (English or French) to avoid the use of translators.

Information from Other Sources

Information may be obtained from other sources provided by the Client so long as they are relevant for the assessment.

Exceptions

Any exceptions must be approved by the CSRB.

Decision Making Mechanism

Auditors make recommendations to the Certification Body regarding certification. Each Certification Body must have a dedicated individual (i.e. technical reviewer) who reviews these recommendations and makes consistent decisions about granting certificates. This person must be knowledgeable in the CRSB Standard(s) or approved equivalent.

Beef Producers certified to the CRSB Sustainable Beef Production Standard and Primary Processors certified to the CRSB Sustainable Beef Processing Standard must meet Achievement level in all indicators that are scored. Participating Operators certified to the CRSB Chain of Custody Requirements must meet all requirements.

Both the CRSB and the Client have the right to appeal a decision made by the Certification Body.

10.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES AND AUDITORS

The Conflict of Interest Policy and Guidelines document can be found on the Framework website. All Certification Bodies must require their employees and auditors involved in CRSB certification services to sign an acknowledgement of having read and understood the Conflict of Interest Policy and Guidelines document, or an equivalent document as approved by the CRSB, to be kept on file by the Certification Body.

11.0 APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

The appeals and complaints process is managed through the Certification Body and the CRSB.

The appeals and complaints procedure is not intended to verify legal compliance or endorse any activity as meeting any legal requirements that may apply to an individual operation. Complaints and appeals will only be reviewed by the CRSB, Certification Bodies, and related auditors where the issues involved are directly related to a specific requirement found in the CRSB's Standards. The procedures and process for appeals and complaints is detailed in the Requirements for Certification Bodies document. This document is located on the CRSB website.

The following organizations are responsible for appeals and complaints:

CRSB - responsible for managing and resolving appeals and complaints that cannot be resolved by the Certification Body, and complaints that are received directly by the CRSB. The CRSB also manages appeals and complaints related to the CRSB certification mark(s) and Communications and Claims Policy.

- Contact: info@CRSBcertified.ca

Certification Body – responsible for managing and resolving appeals and complaints associated with their certification services. Certification Bodies may consult with the CRSB on decisions and must report all appeals and complaints to the CRSB.

Clients, Auditors- Any client or auditor who has an appeal or complaint is responsible for reporting appeals and complaints to the Certification Body, Oversight Body or CRSB.

 The Public - Members of the public may report appeals and complaints to the Certification Body, Oversight Body or CRSB.

12.0 REQUEST FOR INTERPRETATION OF THE STANDARD(S)

Procedure

Interpretation of a Standard, or any portion thereof, is at the sole discretion of the CRSB. In the event that a Standard does not address a specific circumstance, and further interpretation of the Standard is required, the requester shall complete the CRSB Request for Interpretation of the Standard form and submit it to CRSB. A requester can be any individual. The CRSB shall review all interpretation requests and provide a final decision in writing to the requester. The CRSB will notify the requester in writing of the final decision within 30 days of receipt of the request. The CRSB will post all interpretation decisions on the CRSB website. These interpretation decisions will be evaluated during the next revision cycle of the Standard(s).

Process for Requesting Interpretation of the Standard:

1. Anyone can complete the CRSB Request for Interpretation of the Standard form (See Appendix A: Forms) and submit the form to CRSB at info@CRSBcertified.ca.
2. CRSB confirms receipt of the interpretation request within a reasonable timeframe, provides the requester an estimated timeline for resolution, not to exceed 30 days from receipt of request, and submits the request to the CRSB for resolution. If necessary, a CRSB meeting may be scheduled to review and resolve the request.
3. The CRSB will review, investigate, identify a resolution and notify the requester of the resolution within the 30-day timeframe.
4. If the requester is dissatisfied with the interpretation, the requester may file a CRSB Request for Revision form (see section 12.0 Request for Revision to the Standard) for further consideration of the matter by the CRSB.
5. CRSB records the interpretation decision and posts the decision on the CRSB website.
6. Interpretation decisions are evaluated during the next revision cycle of the Standard(s).

13.0 REQUEST FOR REVISON TO THE STANDARD(S)

Procedure

Revisions to a Standard are at the sole discretion of the CRSB. In the event that a Standard does not address a specific circumstance, or further clarification within a Standard is required, anyone can complete the *CRSB Request for Revision to the Standard form* and submit it to CRSB. The CRSB shall review all revision requests and may update the Standard if they determine an update is appropriate. The final decision on the request for revision will be documented in CRSB meeting notes or via electronic vote. Revision requests will be handled in a timely manner based on the three to five year review cycle policy of the CRSB.

A revision requester may be asked to provide additional information and/or present their revision to the CRSB. It is the responsibility of the requester to respond or participate in any meetings they are invited to. Failure to respond to such a request may result in the revision being rejected without further consideration.

Process for Requesting Revision to the Standard:

1. Anyone can complete the *CRSB Request for Revision to the Standard form* (See Appendix A: Forms) and submit the form to CRSB at info@CRSBcertified.ca.
2. CRSB confirms receipt of the request for revision within a reasonable timeframe, provides the requester an estimated timeline for resolution, not to exceed CRSB's three to five year review cycle. If necessary, the CRSB may schedule a meeting to review and consider the request. The requester may be invited to present at a CRSB meeting.
3. CRSB confirms receipt of the request for revision within a reasonable timeframe, provides the requester an estimated timeline for resolution, not to exceed CRSB's three to five year review cycle, and submits the request to the CRSB for consideration. The requester may be asked to provide additional information, or invited to present to the CRSB.
4. The CRSB will review, investigate and determine whether a revision to the affected Standard is needed. The final decision will be noted in the meeting notes or via an electronic vote.

References

ISO/IEC 17000:2004 - Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles.

Appendix A: Forms

There are two types of forms: (1) Customizable forms that the AP/DA develop, but must include specific information detailed below; and (2) Controlled forms developed by CRSB.

<div style="background-color:green;color:white;">**List of forms:**</div>

1. Application Form for Assurance Providers (Oversight Body – contact CRSB)

2. Application Form for Delivery Agents seeking Full Equivalency (Oversight Body – contact CRSB)

3. Conflict of Interest Policy – for Certification Bodies and Auditors to sign (see Framework website)

4. Delivery Contract – Developed by CRSB in consultation with legal counsel and customized for every Certification Body. (CRSB)

5. Request for Interpretation of the Standard(s) Form (see below in this document)

6. Request for Revision to the Standard(s) Form (see below in this document)

7. CRSB Certificate - The CRSB Certificate is a controlled document. CRSB certification numbers are as assigned and tracked by CRSB. (CRSB to provide to certification bodies)

CRSB Request for Interpretation of the Standard Form

A request for interpretation of a Standard, or any part thereof, may be submitted at any time. The CRSB will respond within 30 days of receipt of the interpretation form advising whether the submitted interpretation reflects the intention of the CRSB. If dissatisfied with the interpretation, the requester may file a request for revision for further consideration of the matter by the CRSB.

Title of CRSB Standard(s) Impacted: _____

_____

Section of the Standard Requiring Interpretation:
Provide the reference for the specific section(s) of the Standard(s) for which interpretation is requested.

Requestor's Interpretation of the Section:
Provide the proposed interpretation of the section listed above. You may also want to provide an example of the situation in which you are applying this section of the Standard.

Signature*: _____

Company: _____

Telephone Number: _____   E-mail: _____

Submission Date: _____

Type written name will suffice as signature

Email completed form to CRSB: info@CRSBcertified.ca

CRSB Internal Use ONLY
Is the Interpretation consistent with the intent of the Standard?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Explanation of the Interpretation Decision:
CRSB provides an explanation for their decision regarding the Interpretation, which references any specific section(s) of the Standard(s) that are related to the issue, as appropriate.

CRSB: _____   Date: _____

CRSB Request for Revision to the Standard Form

Background:

Provide a brief background statement indicating the cause and nature of concern, the impacts identified and any other reason why the revision should be considered by the CRSB. Reference as appropriate any specific section(s) of the Standard(s) that are related to the issue.

Recommendation:

Clearly state what action is needed: e.g., recommended changes to the standard(s) including the current text of the relevant section(s).

Supplementary Materials (photographs, diagrams, reports, etc.):

Submit electronically with your form.

Signature*: _____

Company: _____

Telephone Number: _____   E-mail:_____

Submission Date: _____

*Type written name will suffice as signature

Please submit to: info@CRSBcertified.ca