



**Australasian Certification
Authority for Reinforcing and
Structural Steels Ltd (ACRS)**

**ACRS Sustainable Constructional Steel
(SCS) Certification Scheme Rules**
Version 1.0



DOCUMENT CONTROL

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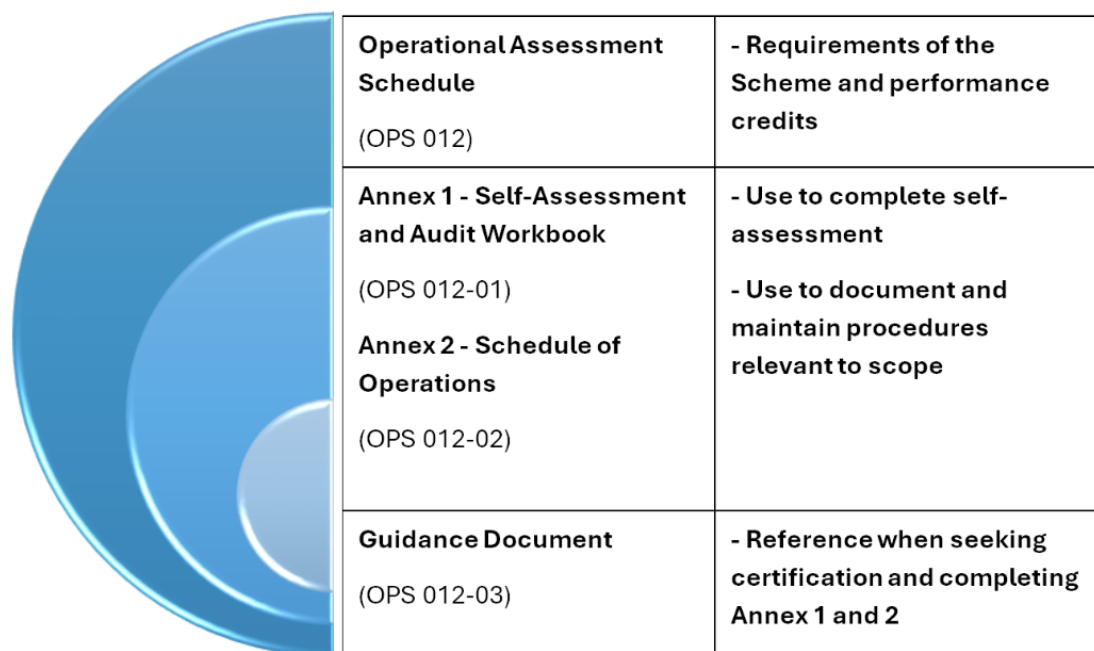
1 INTRODUCTION

These Scheme Rules provide for the establishment and operation of the Sustainable Constructional Steel (SCS) manufactures, processors and traders certification activities of the Australasian Certification Authority for Reinforcing and Structural Steels Ltd (“ACRS” or the “Authority”).

These ACRS SCS Scheme Rules are to be read in conjunction with the associated ACRS Certification Agreement. Applicant Firms and Certified Firms accept that the Authority provides SCS certification services to them only under the terms and conditions of these Scheme Rules and the Certification Agreement.

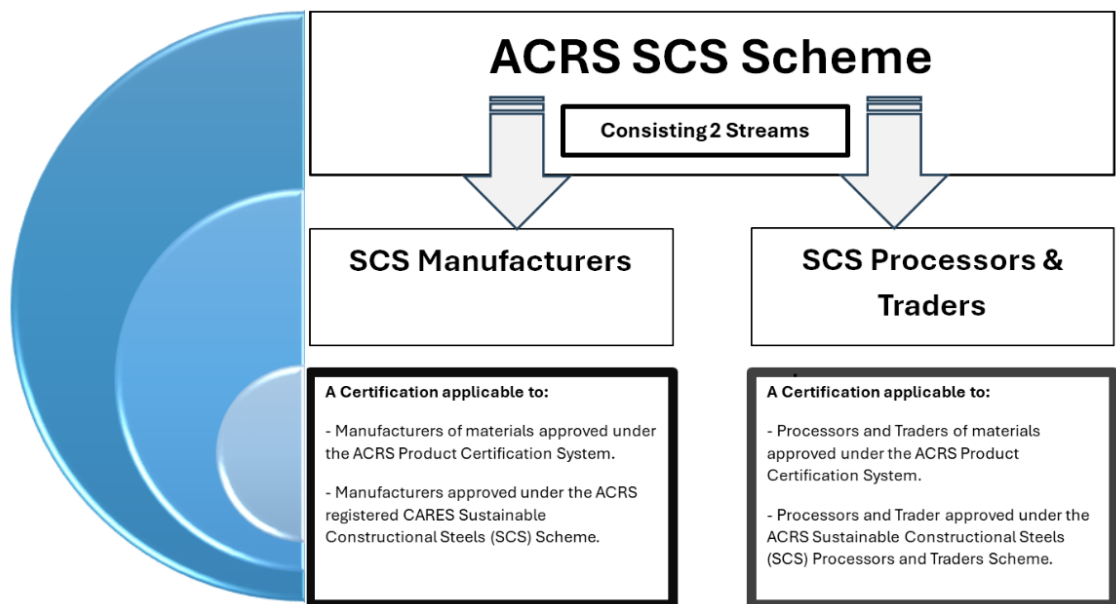
This Scheme covers SCS certification for Firms that manufacture, process or trade/supply reinforcing steel, structural steel, general steel, and similar constructional products.

This Scheme is designed and operated in accordance with the Operational Assessment Schedule (OPS 012), and associated Annex 1 (OPS 012-01) plus Annex 2 (OPS 012-02) to demonstrate compliance with the Scheme. The Guidance document (OPS 012-03) is provided as a reference document for clarity. The relationship of the documents is as shown below.



The Scheme provides a framework for approved Firms in the construction steel supply chain to declare product sustainability and disclose organisational management practices alignment with responsible sourcing, environmental stewardship, and ethical conduct—promoting healthy materials, positive social impact, circularity, and continuous improvement toward internationally recognised standards across the sustainability value chain.

The ACRS SCS Scheme consists of two components: the ACRS SCS Manufacturers Scheme (ACRS-CARES SCS Scheme); and the ACRS SCS Processors and Traders Scheme. As depicted in the Scheme coverage diagram below, both components/streams collectively deliver exceptional rigour to ensure manufacturers, processors/fabricators, and traders/suppliers can economically comply with the minimum Scheme requirements.



The Scheme allows approved Firms that process or trade/supply construction steel products to label them with the ACRS Sustainability logo.

The Scheme enables ACRS to collate information and publish a constructional steel sector sustainability report at least annually that demonstrates continuous improvement of the constructional steel supply chain against the relevant issues and sustainability principles.

The Audit and Accreditation Committee (AAC), a subcommittee of the ACRS Board, reviews the Scheme Rules and all its elements and arranges for revised versions to be issued as necessary. Each revision of any documents within the schedule bears the date of issue.

The ACRS SCS Scheme was created and is endorsed by the members of the Authority. These members include:

- a) specifiers, engineers and designers;
- b) regulators and inspectors;
- c) purchasers and users;
- d) steel processors;
- e) steel importers;
- f) construction industry associations; and
- g) professional, academic and research bodies.

A full list of the current members is available on the Authority's website (www.steelcertification.com). The Authority began operation in 2001 and issued its first product certification certificates in 2003. The first ACRS SCS Scheme certificate was issued in 2025.



2 DEFINITIONS

The terminology used throughout accords with AS ISO 14050:2020 Environmental Management – Vocabulary, AS ISO 20400:2017 – Sustainable Procurement – Guidance and AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17021.1:2015, *Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Requirements* and the following apply:

- (a) “ACRS Management System” – the internal processes, policies, procedures and associated evaluation and audit plans, forms and templates, used by the Authority in its role as a certification scheme owner, and in its role as a certification body, which reflects the requirements of relevant international standards and guides for certification;
- (b) “Applicant Firm” – a Firm that has submitted an application;
- (c) “Assessable Location” – any facility of the Firm that manufactures, processors, or trades Assessable Materials;
- (d) “Assessable Materials” – all materials manufactured by the Firm, processes/transformed by the Firm, or otherwise supplied within the Firm, or to a 3rd-party by the Firm, or processed (transformed) or supplied (traded) by any other entity of the Firm, that are eligible for Certification under the Scheme;
- (e) “Audit and Assessment Committee” – a committee of the Authority that reviews evaluations and makes certification decisions (with any conditions attached thereto) on behalf of the Authority;
- (f) “Audit” – activities undertaken by the Authority to confirm the Firm’s compliance with the Scheme;
- (g) “Authority” – the Australasian Certification Authority for Reinforcing and Structural Steels Ltd, ACN 096 692 545 (or, “ACRS”);
- (h) “Board” – The Board established as the governing body of the Authority under the constitution and which may, under the constitution, delegate certain of its powers to an Executive Committee and other Subsidiary Committees. The Board comprises the Executive Director, nominated Members to the Board and invited individuals, as required;
- (i) “Certificate Number” – a unique number which is indicated on each Certificate;
- (j) “Certificate” – the statement of conformity issued by the Authority which attests that the Firm:

conforms to the SCS Scheme Rules and the relevant Requirements; and

is subject to Audit by the Authority.
- (k) “Certification Agreement” – the binding agreement between the Applicant or Certified Firm and ACRS for the provision of ACRS certification services;



- (l) “Certification” – the procedures by which the Authority undertakes auditing to determine whether the Firm’s systems fulfil the requirements of the ACRS SCS Scheme, and in which the Authority attests this conformity in the form of a Certificate;
- (m) “Certification Material” – all material created for the purposes of evaluation, audit or certification activities, or is provided to ACRS as part of this Certification Agreement, and includes, without limitation:
 - all notes, data, correspondence, documentation, presentations, emails;
 - rules, procedures, evaluation and audit tools, plans and checklists;
 - sustainable calculations, evaluation results and reports; and
 - all certification documents and marks of conformity.
- (n) “Certified Firm” – a Firm whose product sustainability and organisational-level management practices and performance, in relation to environmental, social and ethical standards and responsible sourcing practices have been certified by the Authority as meeting the Certification Requirements of the Scheme and to whom a Certificate is issued;
- (o) “Certified Location” – a facility of the Certified Firm holding a Certificate;
- (p) “Client” – an Applicant or a Certified Firm responsible to the Authority for demonstrating that the Certification Requirements, including Product Requirements are fulfilled;
- (q) “Communication Media” – all the Certified Firm’s external communications media, including but not limited to advertisements, displays, posters, TV advertisements, promotional videos, websites, emails, social media statements, brochures; outdoor advertisements (such as billboards and signs); stationery (such as sales and contractual documents, letterheads, business cards, invoices, compliment slips, delivery slips);
- (r) “Firm” – any organisation or Group engaged in the manufacture, processing, stocking, distribution, supply or trade (or any combination thereof) of Assessable Materials;
- (s) “Group” – any subsidiary holding, associated company or subsidiary undertaking of all such holding companies that manufactures, processors, stocks, distributed, supplies or trades for the production of Approved Materials. For this purpose “subsidiary”, “holding company” and “subsidiary undertaking” shall have the meaning set out in the Corporations Law of New South Wales and as amended from time to time; “associated company” shall mean body corporate in which the relevant party has a direct or indirect 20% beneficial interest in the share capital of that body corporate;
- (t) “Intellectual Property” - all intellectual property rights and rights to data, including but not limited to:
 - patents, copyright, registered designs, trademarks, know how, trade secrets and any right to have confidential information kept confidential; and
 - any application or right to apply for registration of any of the rights referred to in paragraph (i.).



- (u) "Nonconformity" – any material, process, practice, test result or record not meeting a specific requirement of the appropriate Certification Requirement and/or the Scheme;
- (v) "Producer" – A Firm currently manufacturing or Transforming Assessable Materials for supply to Certification Requirements;
- (w) "Product Requirement" – requirement that relates to a product specified in Standards or in other normative documents or specifications adopted by the Authority;
- (x) "Representative" – a person or entity that carries out specific tasks and activities for the Authority and whom the Authority may appoint or remove as it may deem necessary, and any observers agreed to by the Authority;
- (y) "Rules" – the rules under which this Scheme is operated and as amended by the Authority from time to time;
- (z) "Scheme" – the scheme for the Sustainable Constructional Steels (SCS) Certification of Applicant or Certified Firms in accordance with these Rules and associated documents;
- (aa) "Trader" - A Firm currently supplying or stocking Assessable Materials for supply to Certification Requirements;
- (bb) "Transform" – (also Transformation, Transforming) the alteration of Approved Materials to a modified form for supply to the Product Requirements. For the sake of clarity, the term "Transform" includes (but is not limited to) materials processing, fabrication, or any other alteration of Approved Materials from the originally approved form;
- (cc) "Use" – the lawful, authorised, restricted, non-exclusive, limited and revocable right to use the Certification Mark; and
- (dd) "Year" – 1 July of one calendar year to 30 June of the following calendar year.

Interpretation:

In this document, unless the context requires otherwise, or it is specifically stated otherwise, the singular includes the plural and vice versa.



3 SCHEME OWNERSHIP, ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Authority (ACRS) as a not-for-profit organisation owns or administers third-party sustainable certification schemes covering reinforcing steels, structural steels and other products, that are supplied in accordance with the ACRS Product Schemes.

The policies and procedures of the Scheme are contained in these Scheme Rules and the associated Certification Agreement and are administered through the ACRS SCS Scheme. Through the membership of the Authority, and associated stakeholder groups, all parties associated with the scheme have continued input into these policies and procedures.

The policies and procedures under which the Authority and the Scheme operate are non-discriminatory and are administered in a non-discriminatory manner. The Authority does not use its procedures to impede or inhibit market access for compliant products.

The Authority makes its ACRS SCS Scheme certification services accessible to all applicants anywhere in the world that have already either applied for, or hold, either an ACRS product certification (including product certification in the form of a technical approvals) pursuant to the ACRS Product Certification Scheme Rules (see ADM 002), or Traceability Scheme certification pursuant to the ACRS Traceability Certification Scheme Rules (see ADM 017).

There are no undue financial or other conditions for participation in the Scheme. Access is not conditional upon the size of the supplier or membership of any association or group, nor is certification conditional upon the number of sustainable system certificates already issued.

The criteria against which the sustainable system of a Client are audited are those outlined in Certification Requirements listed in Section 4.

The Authority confines its requirements, evaluations and decisions on certification to those matters specifically related to the scope of the Certificate being considered.

The Authority shall:

- (a) operate the Scheme in accordance with these Rules, the Certification Agreement and the requirements of relevant international standards and guides, which shall be applied fairly to all, irrespective of Client geographical location, or any other relevant distinction;
- (b) maintain confidential records relating to the evaluation, auditing and approval of Client Firms. Such confidential records may include intellectual property of the Applicant;
- (c) notify the Client of any changes in the Authority's procedures and requirements and give the Client such time as is, in the sole opinion of the Authority, a reasonable period in which to adjust its processes and relevant procedures to meet the revised requirements;
- (d) notify the Client at its discretion of customer complaints known to the Authority relating to the compliance of such materials, processes or services to which the Certificate applies;
- (e) hear any appeals from Certified or Applicant Firms in regard to the operation of the Scheme; and
- (f) subject to requirements of applicable laws, not disclose any information of a confidential nature concerning the Client without the permission of the Client.



4 CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

4.1 General

The assessment and certification system employed in the Scheme has been developed around the following principles, which seek to improve alignment of product sustainability and organisational management practices in relation to responsible sourcing, environmental stewardship, and ethical conduct, so as to promote healthy materials, positive social impact, circularity, and continuous improvement across the sustainability value chain.

Category		Criterion
4.1 Responsible Practices		Approved firms operate to highest quality business standards, engaging in responsible business practices, while assessing risk remaining open and transparent.
	4.1.1	<i>Accountability</i>
	4.1.2	<i>Responsible Business Conduct</i>
	4.1.3	<i>Stakeholder Engagement</i>
	4.1.4	<i>Communications, competence and training</i>
	4.1.5	<i>Risk based approach to responsible business conduct</i>
	4.1.6	<i>Transparency and reporting</i>
4.2 Environmental Responsibility		Approved firms focus on managing the controllable environmental conditions, focusing on decarbonisation of the business and reporting measurable carbon footprint using recognised standards.
	4.2.1.1	<i>Environmental Management System</i>
	4.2.1.2	<i>Environmental Management System certification</i>
	4.2.2.1	<i>Decarbonisation strategy</i>
	4.2.2.2	<i>Renewable energy use</i>
	4.2.3.1	<i>Transport impacts</i>
	4.2.3.2	<i>Transport impacts reporting</i>
	4.2.4.1	<i>Environmental Product Declaration (EPD)</i>
	4.2.4.2	<i>Carbon footprint</i>
	4.2.4.3	<i>Carbon footprint Verification</i>
4.3 Health		Approved firms prioritise health and safety at all levels, including those in the direct employ and supply chain, as well as possible implications downstream.
	4.3.1.1	<i>Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Management System</i>
	4.3.1.2	<i>OHS Management System certification</i>
	4.3.1.3	<i>Worker compensation</i>
	4.3.1.4	<i>Safety Reporting</i>
	4.3.2	<i>Paints and coatings</i>
	4.3.3.1	<i>Chemicals disclosure</i>
	4.3.3.2	<i>Chemicals substitution</i>
	4.3.4	<i>Health impacts declaration</i>
	4.3.5	<i>Socially accountable</i>
4.4 Positive		Approved firms examine the upstream supply chain to minimise social impacts, as well as monitor downstream to ensure end



	user and customers are provided with a compliant product procured in a sustainable manner.	
	4.4.1	<i>Customer service</i>
	4.4.2	<i>Responsible sourcing and traceability</i>
	4.4.2.1	<i>Product conformity</i>
	4.4.2.2	<i>Traceability</i>
	4.4.2.3	<i>Provenance</i>
	4.4.3	<i>Supplier management systems and approvals</i>
	4.4.3.1	<i>OHS management systems</i>
	4.4.3.2	<i>Certified OHS management systems</i>
	4.4.3.3	<i>Environmental management systems</i>
	4.4.3.4	<i>Certified Environmental management systems</i>
	4.4.3.5	<i>Labour and human rights management systems</i>
	4.4.3.6	<i>Modern Slavery</i>
	4.4.3.7	<i>Anti-bribery and corruption</i>
	4.4.3.8	<i>Certified Anti-bribery and corruption system</i>
4.5 Circular	The approved firms recognise the circular principles and are implementing and monitoring resource use and waste reduction.	
	4.5.1.1	<i>Circularity principles</i>
	4.5.1.2	<i>Resource management plan</i>
	4.5.1.3	<i>Resource reporting</i>
	4.5.1.4	<i>Waste reduction</i>
	4.5.2	<i>Recycled content</i>



4.2 Recognised Sustainability Scheme Requirements

The Scheme has been specifically developed for the construction steel supply chain using the most relevant performance indicators, and the objectives of the Scheme are as follows:

- (a) to provide a means by which construction clients can be assured that approved firms have produced and processed the product in line with the sustainability principles captured in the Scheme Requirements;
- (b) to provide a means by which approved firms in the constructional steel supply chain can declare product sustainability and organisational-level management practices and performance, in relation to environmental, social and ethical standards and responsible sourcing practices;
- (c) to undertake a review, at least biennially, of the constructional steel supply chain's contribution towards continuous improvement against the most relevant issues and compliance of internationally recognised standards across the sustainability value chain;
- (d) to undertake regular and relevant public reporting, at least annually, to ensure continual improvement of the constructional steel supply chain against the relevant issues and sustainability principles;
- (e) to facilitate sustainable procurement in accordance with the requirements of BS 8903:2010 Principles and framework for procuring sustainably – Guide and/or AS ISO 20400:2017 Sustainable procurement – Guidance, and
- (f) to provide the means to enable others in the Firms supply chain to improve their assessment and management of sustainability aspects and issues.



5 CERTIFICATION PROCESS

5.1 Overview of the Certification Process

The ACRS SCS Scheme certification process undertaken by ACRS is as prescribed ADM 020-01 - *Operational Assessment Schedule*, ADM 020-02 *Annex 1 – Self Assessment and Audit Workbook*, and ADM 020-03 *Annex 2 – Schedule of Operations*.

5.2 Certification Agreement and Commitments of Applicant Firms and Certified Firms

Under this Scheme, at the time of submission of an application, or re-application the Client must enter into a legally enforceable agreement (the Certification Agreement) for the provision of certification services between that Firm and the Authority.

Through the Certification Agreement the Client commits itself to adhere to these Scheme Rules from the date of application, and meets the relevant requirements applicable for level of certification outlined in Annex 1.

5.3 Applications

5.3.1 New applications

An Applicant Firm shall make its application in writing to the Executive Director of the Authority. The following should be submitted;

- (a) a completed Certification Agreement, signed by the Chief Executive, Managing Director, or other manager with appropriate authority;
- (b) the Authority shall invoice the Applicant Firm and the Applicant pay the invoice in full prior to any initial site assessment;
- (c) the application shall be finalised and all necessary documents supplied within 12-months of the date of receipt by the Authority of the original complete application. Should the application process take longer than 12-months, the Applicant Firm shall submit a new application with such additional application fees payable as may be determined by the Authority, unless any variation is advised to the Applicant Firm in writing by the Authority; and
- (d) during the 12-month maximum application period, the Authority may mandate such additional site visits where, at its sole discretion, it deems them necessary to validate the Applicant Firm's application & declaration and its performance to the certification Requirements contained therein. Such additional visits shall be at the Applicant Firm's cost.

5.3.2 Extension of Certification

Where a Certified Firm intends:

- (a) to open, or to acquire a new Assessable Location, or;



- (b) to adjust the manufacturing or supply process that is outside its existing scope that may impact certification;

it shall inform the Authority in writing prior to any substantive changes to the operation that impacts directly on the sustainability credentials of the certificate holder.

5.3.3 Merger or Acquisition of a Firm

In the case of a take-over or merger, written permission from the Authority is mandatory in order to transfer the rights to Use the Certification Mark to the merged entity.

5.3.4 Improper conduct by a Client

The Authority is committed to maintaining the integrity of the Scheme to the highest standard possible. To avoid any lack of confidence by the public, or other authorities, in the integrity of the Scheme, the Authority may refuse to grant, suspend, or terminate a Certificate in circumstances where the Executive Director is reasonably satisfied that a Representative has been bullied, harassed, intimidated, or coerced by a Client into providing a favourable Evaluation, or in any other performance of the Representative's duties.

5.3.5 Re-application for Certification

5.3.5.1 After Withdrawal by the Authority

Where the Authority withdraws a Certificate, a Firm may reapply for approval after a period of three calendar months.

5.3.5.2 After Voluntary Relinquishment by the Firm

Where a Certified Firm has voluntarily relinquished its certification, a Firm may reapply for approval. Any such reapplication shall be considered to be an entirely new application, with no connection to any previous certification held by the Firm.

5.3.5.3 Outstanding accounts

Consideration of any reapplication will be contingent upon the Applicant Firm having paid in full all outstanding accounts from previous application or certification.

5.3.6 Secondary Locations

The Firm shall identify all Locations listing which are Primary, Secondary or Depot Locations. For each Secondary and Depot Location the Firm shall indicate the Primary Location to which the Location is responsible.

Any change in operation or reporting shall be communicated to the Authority in writing and the details of the Certificate amended accordingly.

The Authority retains sole discretion to determine whether a location is a Primary Location or Secondary Location, or Depot Location.



The Primary Location of each Certified Firm in each State or Territory, or any Location undertaking manufacturing Assessable Materials, shall be certified individually, unless notified otherwise by the Authority.

5.4 Nonconformities

A Nonconformity is an identified shortfall in performance that, when assessed in relation to other audit outcomes, indicates a risk of the Firm not meeting the requirements of the Scheme. A Nonconformity shall be corrected by the due date set by the Representative. Documentary evidence of rectification is required.

Any identified Nonconformity shall be reported to the Audit and Assessment Committee for its information and review.

Verification of Nonconformity closeout may, at the sole discretion of the Authority, require an addition audit and site visit.

5.5 Decision

The Board is the sole authority by which Certificates may be granted or withdrawn, and acts through the Audit and Assessment Committee, subject to such conditions that the Board may impose from time to time.

After review of the audit evidence by the Authority, the Authority may issue Certificates with or without conditions.

5.6 Certificates

5.6.1 Ownership of Certificate

A Certificate shall at all times remain the property of the Authority and shall be returned to the Authority immediately upon request, together with any and all copies of that Certificate made by the Firm.

5.6.2 Transfer of Certificates

A Firm's right to Use the Certificate and Certification Mark is not transferable without the prior written permission of the Authority.

5.6.3 Term of validity of a Certificate

A Certificate is valid for one calendar year, subject to the terms of these Rules and satisfactory performance is demonstrated through surveillance.

5.6.4 Register of Certified Firms

The list of Firms and Certificate details shall be published on the Authority's website. The status of a Firms certification shall be identified in the Register.



5.7 Use of the Mark

Certified Firms may use the ACRS Sustainability Certification mark in accordance with these Scheme Rules, the Certification Agreement and any policies or procedures that may be issued by the Authority from time-to-time.

5.8 Surveillance

The Authority may during the entire period of validity of a Certificate make or entrust a Representative to make surveillance activities and audits as deemed necessary. The frequency of such activities shall be prescribed by the Authority from time-to-time, but normally at least annually.

5.9 Refusal to Grant Access

Refusal by the Applicant or Certified Firm to grant a Representative access for any scheduled or unscheduled audits or surveillance activities, or to provide the Authority with the required scheduled data in any period may, at the sole discretion of the Authority, result in immediate suspension of all Certificates of any classification then held by the Certified Firm until, or unless the Authority is again satisfied that the Certified Firm, in its entirety, is meeting its obligations under the Scheme.



6 CESSATION OF CERTIFICATION

6.1 Notice of Voluntary, Permanent Withdrawal from the Scheme (Relinquishment)

If a Certified Firm does not intend to renew its certification at the end of a term of validity, it shall inform the Executive Director in writing with a minimum of three (3) calendar months' notice of its intention not to renew Certification for the next term of certificate validity.

6.2 Temporary Withdrawal

The Certified Firm may temporarily suspend the Use of the Certification Mark within the current year of certification. It shall give the Authority written notification and make all changes regarding its Communication Media. Based on this information the Authority shall inform the Certified Firm of the terms and conditions for temporary or permanent cessation of Use of the Certification Mark.

6.3 Suspension of Certification for Serious Nonconformity

If a Firm is not in conformance with the requirements of the Scheme, or it has any of its ACRS product certifications suspended, the Authority may, at its sole discretion and subject to the provisions of these Rules, apply one or more of the following:

- (a) suspend one, several, or all of the current Certificates issued to the Firm; or
- (b) vary the scope of a certificate; and
- (c) require the Firm to discontinue the Use of the Certification Mark or any claim of compliance or association with the Scheme for any of its Assessable Materials, with immediate effect;

until the Authority is satisfied that conformance is achieved, or pending the result of an appeal by the Firm. Such decisions and the grounds for them shall be communicated to the Firm in writing.

The Authority may, at its sole discretion, insist that the Firm undergoes re-evaluation, resubmitting the information as laid down in the Declaration before renewing or granting a Certificate. Any re-evaluation shall be at the Firm's cost.

6.4 Termination

If a Firm is not in conformance with the requirements of the Scheme, or it has any of its ACRS product certifications withdrawn or terminated, the Authority may, at its sole discretion and subject to the provisions of these Rules,

- (a) terminate or refuse to grant or renew a Certificate; and
- (b) require the Firm to discontinue the Use of the Certification Mark or any claim of compliance or association with the Scheme with immediate effect;



NOTE - Examples of the reasons for termination and withdrawal of a Certificate include, but are not limited to:

- frequent noncompliance with any of the specified requirements, or other criteria specified in the relevant Schedule;
 - nonconformities uncorrected by the due date;
 - misuse of the Certification Mark, or failure to use it in accordance with these rules;
 - refusal to allow the Authority to carry out inspection, or hindrance of the Authority during an inspection;
- (c) refusal to produce documentary evidence required under the schedule;
- (d) any circumstances which may affect the confidence of the public, or authorities in the reliability of the Scheme;
- (e) bullying, harassment, intimidation, or coercion of a Representative by a Client in the performance of the Representative's duties, including in the Evaluation process; or
- (f) failure to pay due fees and charges.

The Authority may, at its sole discretion, insist that the Firm undergoes a re-evaluation, resubmitting the information as laid down in the Certification Agreement before renewing or granting a Certificate. Any re-evaluation shall be at the Firm's cost.

6.5 Public Notification

Any Firm voluntarily relinquishing a Certificate, or having its Certificate withdrawn, shall be listed on the Register of Certified Firms with a note stating the reason for the withdrawal (i.e. "voluntary withdrawal", "temporary suspension" or "terminated for noncompliance"). The Authority may also make public communications as it deems necessary of any change of status.



7 FEES AND CHARGES

7.1 Fees and Charges

The Firm shall pay:

- (a) application and audits fees for the initial and each subsequent evaluation for each Assessable Location;
- (b) a non-refundable fee of 15% of the total evaluation fees is due for all Assessable Locations and processes, at initial application and each Year thereafter. The application fee is included in the total evaluation fees charged for each production process;
- (g) any additional costs incurred by the Authority in the course of evaluation, such as travel, testing, freight of samples, etc., not otherwise included in the evaluation fee;
- (h) the fees for any additional visits, evaluations, surveillance by the Authority in assessing a Firm under the Scheme, or due to the Firm's noncompliance with the terms of the Scheme; and
- (e) any other charges reasonably incurred by the Authority in administering the application for, or certification of any Firm under the Scheme.

7.2 Refund Policy

Should an Applicant Firm decide not to proceed to completion of its evaluation process, any unexpended evaluation fees received from the Applicant Firm shall be refunded, less the 15% application fee, plus any costs incurred by the Authority.

7.3 Financial Conditions

The financial conditions for authorisation to Use the Certification Mark are included in the Certification Agreement between the Authority and the Certified Firm. It is an absolute requirement that a Firm shall have paid all monies owed to the Authority to be granted or to retain its Certificates.



8 APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

8.1 Appeals

An Applicant or Certified Firm may appeal a certification decision of the Authority.

Any appeal by the Firm shall be in accordance with the appeals procedure (OPS 009) that shall be provided by the Authority upon request. The Appeals Panel will then investigate, and as necessary, hear the appeal and make a decision on the appeal based on the application of the Scheme Rules. The Appellant may attend the hearing of the appeal.

8.2 Complaints

There are several forms of complaints recognised under these Scheme Rules as follows:

- (a) complaints received by Certified Firms from their customers regarding the performance sustainability requirements as certified by the Authority;
- (b) complaints made to the Authority by its Certified Firms, or other parties, regarding the performance of the Authority or any of its officers or Representatives;
- (c) misrepresentation of ACRS certification;
- (d) complaints received by the Executive Director from a Representative regarding bullying, harassing, intimidatory, or coercive conduct by a Client or their representative in the Evaluation process, or in performing any other of the Representative's duties.

A complaint shall be deemed to have been received when:

- i. a written complaint has been submitted from the complainant;
- ii. the nature of the complaint corresponds to one of the categories listed above; and
- iii. the complainant has direct or first-hand access to the basis of the complaint.
- iv. the complainant supplies sufficient information to adequately substantiate the complaint.
Note: The Executive Director, or the AAC, may request further substantiating information prior to the Authority receiving a complaint.

Once the complaint has been deemed to be received, notification shall be provided to the complainant regarding the process and timing. All complaints shall be addressed as quickly as possible.

Advice to the complainant regarding the outcome of the investigation shall be provided within 14 days of the decision.

8.2.1 Complaints received by Certified Firms

Certified firms shall have a complaints registration and resolution procedure, which allows for investigation of the complaint and undertaking corrective or preventative action. Records of complaint handling by the Certified Firm shall be made available for review during evaluations.



8.2.3 Complaints about the Authority's services or personnel

Complaints received by the Authority in relation to its certification services and personnel shall be investigated by the Executive Director in accordance with the ACRS Management System.

8.2.4 Complaints about the misrepresentation of ACRS Certification

Complaints received by the Authority in relation to misrepresentation of ACRS Certification shall be investigated by the Executive Director in accordance with the ACRS SCS Scheme.

8.2.5 Complaints of improper conduct towards a Representative

Complaints received by the Executive Director of alleged bullying, harassing, intimidatory, or coercive conduct towards a Representative by or on behalf of a Client will be investigated by the Executive Director or their designate.

The Executive Director may require further information from the Client, which may include interviewing the Client's personnel about the conduct complained of.

If the Executive Director finds that the conduct complained of occurred, the Authority may refuse an application, or suspend or terminate a Certificate.

A Client the subject of such a complaint must assure the Executive Director, to the Executive Director's reasonable satisfaction, that it will prevent any further improper conduct before the Authority will continue with its Evaluation process, or reinstate a Certificate.



9 SERVING NOTICE UNDER THE SCHEME

9.1 By the Authority

Any notice issued to the Firm by the Authority shall be in writing and signed by or on behalf of the Authority and may be served by:

- (a) email to the address on file of the Firm's nominated representative; and /or
- (b) leaving it or sending it by prepaid recorded delivery or registered post at or to its address for the time being (registered office where applicable). Any notice so served by post shall (unless the contrary is proved) be deemed to have been served forty-eight hours from the time of posting; and in proving such service it shall be sufficient to prove that the notice was properly addressed and was posted in accordance with this clause.

The parties' addresses, email addresses and facsimile numbers are as specified in Schedule A of the Certification Agreement, or as otherwise notified in writing to the Authority.

General statements regarding the Scheme for public information are deemed to be served when uploaded to the Authority's website at www.steelcertification.com.

9.2 By a Firm

Any notice issued by the Firm to the Authority shall be in writing, and may be serviced by:

- (a) sending it by prepaid recorded delivery, or registered post at or to its address for the time being (registered office where applicable), or by email to the Executive Director. Any notice so served by post shall (unless the contrary is proved) be deemed to have been served forty-eight hours from the time of posting; and in proving such service it shall be sufficient to prove that the notice was properly addressed and was posted in accordance with this clause.

A notice given in accordance with this clause is taken to be received by the Authority:

- (a) if sent by email, when
- (e) the Authority's email system confirms receipt of the email, and;
- (f) that the email and all attached files are readable by the Authority.

The date of receipt of the communication is the Business Day of receipt if received prior to 2:30pm or if later, at 9:30am on the following Business Day.

In this clause, Business Day means a day on which the Authority is open for general business.



10 CONFIDENTIALITY

Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Authority, the Client shall keep confidential all documents received from the Authority, with the exception of this document and any Certificates.



11 CHANGES AFFECTING THE SCHEME

11.1 Changes to the Rules

The Authority reserves the right to modify these Rules at any time. The Authority shall communicate changes via the ACRS website (www.steelcertification.com) and the Client shall be obligated to apply those changes.

No such alterations shall affect the right of any Client to Use Certification Mark or claim compliance with the Scheme unless the Client shall have been given notice in writing of such alteration by the Authority, who shall notify the Client of the date by which the Client shall comply with the altered Rules. This period shall not normally be less than six-months from the date of notification of the alterations, or at the commencement date of the Client's next issued Certificate/s, whichever is the soonest.

11.2 Changes to Legislation

The Authority shall comply with all relevant, applicable national and international laws, Rules and Product Requirements in force concerning the right to Use the Certification Mark or the conditions for obtaining said right. The Authority shall communicate all changes via the ACRS website and the Certified Firm shall be obligated to immediately apply all modifications resulting from said changes.