



Sustainable
Eel Group

The SEG Standard Accreditation System

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Versions Issued

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1. Purpose

This document describes the Accreditation System for the Sustainable Eel Group (SEG). It outlines SEG's programme set-up and defines requirements and procedures for accepting Compliance Assessment Bodies (CABs) into the programme, overseeing their activities, ensuring auditor competence and reviewing the Accreditation System. The system has been tailored to correspond to the narrow focus and relatively small size of the SEG programme. The full documentation on the SEG standard system can be found at: <http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org/the-seg-standard-system/>.

2. Applicability and responsibility

SEG oversees CABs directly and the Accreditation System is for use by SEG and CABs. The SEG Board approved this document and, as system owner, SEG holds responsibility for its content. The Accreditation System is published on our website www.sustainableeelgroup.org in the page [SEG Standard System](#) for transparency. Those using and applying it are responsible for ensuring they use the latest version.

3. The Sustainable Eel Group - our purpose

The European eel population has declined significantly and is now classified by the IUCN as 'critically endangered'. It was once very common and widely spread across its range from North Africa, through Europe and up to Scandinavia, and supported fishing, associated trade and livelihoods.

The reduced population is a risk to the species itself, wildlife and ecosystems and the socio-economics of communities that fish for, trade in and eat eel.

Our primary purpose is for the recovery of the European eel, with multiple concurrent benefits to habitats, communities, traditions and economies that rely on it.

Our work and strategies are designed to support the recovery of the European eel, and the European Commission's Eel Regulation ([Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1100/2007](#)). The primary objective of this Regulation is, as described in Article 1, *'the protection and sustainable use of the stock of European eel'*.

The SEG standard, one of our principal strategies, has been developed and designed as a code of conduct for best practice in the commercial eel sector, to support the recovery of the European eel and to meet the objectives of the Eel Regulation.

4. Independence

The SEG programme is designed to safeguard independence of accreditation and assurance. Audits and certification decisions shall be made by the CABs while accreditation and logo licensing rests with SEG. SEG does not charge CABs an accreditation or other fee, nor do CABs make any payments to SEG. SEG's independent standard panel is composed of scientists and conservationists and is responsible for developing the standard and for carrying out oversight of the application of the SEG standard by CABs.

SEG standard panel members and SEG personnel entrusted with accreditation functions shall not have a commercial or financial relationship with CABs. Any other conflict of interest or situation that might be perceived as a conflict of interest shall be made known by members of the SEG standard panel and by SEG personnel to the SEG Chairman, who will decide if and how to address the situation. Actions may include

removing standard panel members from oversight activities such as shadow audits or removing SEG personnel from accreditation functions. SEG personnel shall not undertake audits, but may shadow audits in their oversight and accreditation capacity.

5. CAB Eligibility

Only registered and accredited CABs shall issue SEG certificates.

5.1 Requirements for CAB registration

Audits against the SEG standard shall be conducted by CABs that are registered with SEG. Registration requires applicant CABs to provide the following to SEG:

1. Evidence of the applicant CAB being a legal entity;
2. Proof of valid ISO 17065 accreditation and / or
3. Proof of valid accreditation against other relevant certification standards, such as MSC or ASC;
4. Evidence of relevant auditors possessing the competences outlined in this document;
5. Evidence of relevant auditors having participated in a training on the SEG standard as outlined in this document.

Once SEG has reviewed the applicant's documentation, they shall register the CAB and inform them that they can now start conducting audits against the SEG standard as per their requested accreditation scope.

5.2 Requirements for CAB accreditation

Following registration, SEG and the CAB shall agree on a date for shadowing the CAB's audit of its first SEG certification client. During this shadow audit, one of the members of the SEG standard panel will witness how the CAB applies the Assurance System section 2 'Audit procedures'.

Upon successful completion of the shadow audit, the registered CAB shall be accredited by SEG's Director of Conservation Operations and shall be listed as such on the SEG website. The CAB shall issue SEG certificates only after it has been accredited by SEG and is listed on the SEG website.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 CAB Responsibilities

The CAB shall:

1. Sign a SEG CAB Agreement with SEG prior to conducting SEG-related auditing activities;
2. Implement the requirements outlined in the SEG Assurance System;
3. Assign auditors to SEG audits that meet the competence and training requirements outlined below;
4. Comply with the SEG Claims and Labelling Guide for claims made in relation to SEG accreditation;
5. Provide specified data and information about audits to SEG to enable SEG to operate its Monitoring and Evaluation system;
5. Provide copies of SEG certificates and audit reports to SEG for publication by SEG;
6. Inform SEG of any changes to the CAB's ISO 17065 or other relevant accreditation status within five days of the change;

- Participate, where requested, in SEG efforts to investigate complaints and incidents of potential transgressions and non-conformance with the standard.

6.2 SEG Responsibilities

SEG shall:

- Provide training to the CAB and their relevant auditors on the SEG standard at the time of CAB approval for accreditation and as needed thereafter, for example when the SEG standard has been reviewed and updated. Training details are provided in 7.2 below;
- Maintain a list of registered and accredited CABs on the SEG website;
- Provide training to SEG personnel entrusted with accreditation functions on the SEG standard and ensure they understand the principles of assurance, including accreditation and oversight. See 7.2 below for details;
- Review 25% of all CAB audit reports every year to confirm that the Assurance System is adequately applied. Where departures from the Assurance System are identified, the issue is brought to the attention of the respective CAB who shall take action to prevent recurrence;
- In addition to shadow audits conducted during CAB accreditation processes, conduct one shadow audit per year, rotating the shadowed auditor, to confirm their competence and take corrective action where needed;
- Review the Accreditation System as described below;
- Feed the results of points 1. to 6. into the SEG standard monitoring and evaluation system.

7. Competence and Training

7.1 Auditor Competences

At a minimum, auditors shall possess the following competences before engaging in SEG-related activities:

Education and knowledge	Work experience	Auditor training and experience	SEG training
Bachelor's degree in a relevant field, e.g. Environmental Management, Natural Resource Management, Fisheries Biology, Aquaculture, Food Technology Knowledge of the European Union Council Eel Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007	5 years of professional experience in an area of work relevant to the fishing or fish farming industry or environmental evaluation	Successful completion of a 4-5 day auditor training course on an ISO management standard Participation in 5 on-site audits of any fishing, fish farming or fish processing operations	Participation in SEG standard training as provided by SEG

To remain an auditor for the SEG programme thereafter, auditors shall conduct at least 2 SEG audits per year.

7.2 SEG Personnel Competences

At a minimum, SEG personnel carrying out accreditation functions shall possess the following competences:

Assurance	SEG training
Understanding of the principles of assurance, including accreditation and oversight. This may be acquired through e.g. self-study of relevant documentation or an ISEAL training course	Participation in SEG standard training as provided by SEG
Knowledge of the SEG Accreditation System and Assurance System	

7.3 SEG Standard Training

CABs, their relevant auditors and SEG personnel carrying out accreditation functions shall participate in SEG standard training as requested and delivered by SEG.

The training shall be designed to:

1. Help participants understand the SEG Theory of Change and the SEG programme overall;
2. Provide background on the European eel life history, threats to the European eel, its conservation status, fishing and farming of European eel and the commercial market for European eel;
3. Educate participants in-depth about the components and criteria of the SEG standard, placing emphasis on the most critical issues.

8. Review

The SEG Accreditation System will be reviewed every five years or as needed based on feedback during implementation or through the SEG Standard Monitoring and Evaluation System. The review aims at ensuring that the System is sound, adequate and effective. It will take account of:

1. Results of CAB, auditor and SEG personnel training;
2. Insights gathered from CAB review reports, CAB audit reports and shadow audits;
3. Outcomes of label and claims monitoring activities;
4. Insights gathered from the SEG standard monitoring and evaluation system;
5. Any input received from stakeholders.

SEG will provide notification of changes within thirty days of making a change to the following SEG stakeholders:

1. SEG registered and accredited CABs;
2. SEG personnel;
3. SEG standard panel members.

Notification will include, minimally:

1. the original requirement;

2. the revised requirement; and
3. the timeline for implementation of the new/revised requirement.

9. Termination

SEG may suspend or terminate accreditation under any of the following conditions:

1. The CAB repeatedly fails to implement the requirements of the Assurance System;
2. The CAB fails to submit data and information for the SEG Monitoring and Evaluation System;
3. The CAB does not undergo a shadow audit as requested by SEG;
4. The CAB's auditors do not take part in training as requested by SEG.

The CAB may terminate its SEG accreditation with two months' notice to its SEG certificate holders and SEG.



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