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HKCAS Supplementary Criteria No. 16

Accreditation Regulations Specific for HKCAS – Validation and Verification Body

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document provides specific regulations for accreditation of validation and verification bodies (V/VBs) under the Hong Kong Certification Body Accreditation Scheme (HKCAS). All accredited V/VBs shall conform to all the regulations stated in this document at all times. For an applicant V/VB, accreditation will only be granted after it has demonstrated to the satisfaction of HKAS Executive its competence and commitment to conforming to all the regulations stated in this document.

Notes:

- 1. In this document, validation and verification body (V/VB) refers to 'validation body', 'verification body' or 'validation and verification body'.*
- 2. It is the responsibility of a V/VB to carry out its work in accordance with the applicable regulatory requirements of Hong Kong, or of the country where the validation/verification is carried out. It should be emphasised that assessment of the V/VB's compliance with the relevant regulatory requirements is outside the scope of HKAS accreditation schemes.*

- 1.2 This document shall be used in conjunction with HKAS 002 – Regulations for HKAS Accreditation.
- 1.3 This document is applicable to any types of validation/verification. HKAS will define from time to time the specific types of validation/verification which are available for accreditation under HKCAS. Details of available types for accreditation are documented in relevant HKCAS Supplementary Criteria.
- 1.4 This document may be amended from time to time and the up-to-date version is uploaded to the HKAS website at the address of www.hkas.gov.hk.

2 VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION BODY ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

- 2.1 An assessment team may, at its discretion, carry out a witnessing on a V/VB while it is performing on-site and/or off-site validation/verification activities for which it is accredited or seeking accreditation. The V/VB

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shall seek consent from and shall explain to its clients concerning the presence of the assessment team in such activities. The V/VB shall further assure its clients that the presence of the assessment team during the validation/verification activities will not affect the outcome of the validation/verification. In establishing the strategies for witnessing validation/verification activities carried out by V/VBs, HKAS Executive shall follow the rules specified by APAC and IAF as it sees fit.

- 2.2 HKAS Executive will conduct a reassessment on the accredited activities of a V/VB every three years after the accreditation has been granted. The reassessment schedule may be varied at the discretion of HKAS Executive.
- 2.3 HKAS Executive will also conduct a surveillance visit to an accredited V/VB routinely every six months. HKAS Executive has discretion to vary the period of surveillance visit as it sees fit.
- 2.4 Upon granting of the accreditation to a V/VB for a type of validation/verification, HKAS Executive will issue to it a certificate of accreditation for such validation/verification activity.

3 OBLIGATIONS OF ACCREDITED OR APPLICANT VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION BODIES

3.1 HKCAS Accreditation Criteria

V/VBs shall at all times comply with the following accreditation criteria:

HKAS 002 - Regulations for HKAS Accreditation,

Relevant HKAS Supplementary Criteria,

Relevant HKCAS Supplementary Criteria,

Note: Additional accreditation criteria may be required for a specific type of validation/verification. A V/VB shall also comply at all times with the criteria as stipulated in the relevant HKCAS Supplementary Criteria.

Relevant IAF requirements as specified in IAF documents including Mandatory Documents and Resolutions,

Relevant APAC requirements as specified in APAC documents including Technical Documents and Resolutions,

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ISO/IEC 17029: 2019 – Conformity assessment - General principles and requirements for validation and verification bodies

For greenhouse gas V/VBs:

ISO 14065: 2020 – General principles and requirements for bodies validating and verifying environmental information

ISO 14066: 2023 – Environmental information - Competence requirements for teams validating and verifying environmental information

ISO 14064-3: 2019 – Greenhouse gases - Part 3: Specification with guidance for the verification and validation of greenhouse gas statements

HKAS and HKCAS publications relevant to the accreditation of V/VB are listed in HKCAS Application Package document (HKCAS AP003) which is available at the website of HKAS. Except international standards, all other documents mentioned in the package document can be downloaded from the same website.

When the accreditation service of HKCAS is extended to other type of validation/verification, HKAS Executive may publish the necessary accreditation criteria for the new service.

- 3.2 If an accredited V/VB intends to subcontract any part of its validation/verification activities for which it is accredited, the V/VB shall ensure that the subcontractor is competent to perform the activities. A V/VB accredited for performing the activities by HKAS or an accreditation body which has concluded a multilateral recognition arrangement with HKAS is one of the means to demonstrate its competence. A list of such accreditation bodies is obtainable from HKAS Executive. The V/VB shall notify the client in writing of its intention to subcontract the activities, the extent of such subcontracting and the name of the subcontractor. The V/VB shall further ensure that its client agrees to such arrangement and shall keep all records of such subcontracted activities.

Note: HKAS will grant accreditation to a V/VB only those validation/verification activities which the V/VB itself is competent to carry out and which it normally perform such activities itself.

- 3.3 A V/VB shall have, where applicable, legally enforceable arrangements with their clients that commit the clients to provide, on request, to allow HKAS assessment teams to assess the V/VB's performance when carrying out validation/verification activities at the client's site.

- 3.4 A V/VB shall provide information as specified from time to time by

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HKAS. HKAS Executive may use the collected information for determining the assessment plan and other surveillance activities as it sees fit.

3.5 A V/VB shall retain all validation/verification records for at least 3 years, or for the minimum period according to the validation/verification programme, contractual and regulatory requirements (whichever is longer). When a V/VB performs activities having significant impact on validation/verification results in its branch offices, relevant records shall be retrievable at such branch offices within a reasonable time upon request by HKAS.

3.6 An applicant V/VB shall maintain complete integrity at any point in the application and assessment process. Fraudulent behaviour is considered as ‘any intentional misinterpretation, concealment of information or provision of false information to a relevant interested party, resulting in the deliberate violation of accreditation or validation/verification rules’. If there is evidence of fraudulent behaviour by the applicant V/VB, HKAS Executive will reject the application or terminate the assessment process. Under this circumstance, the resulting application and assessment fees paid are not refundable.

An accredited V/VB shall cooperate with HKAS Executive and provide HKAS Executive all requested information for any credible allegations of fraudulent behaviour against the accredited V/VB itself and its clients. HKAS Executive may undertake certain actions in response to those allegations, including but not limited to, conducting extraordinary on-site assessments and, referring the allegations to any relevant legal enforcement departments for further actions.

Note: The obligations of an accredited V/VB related to integrity and impartiality are specified in HKAS002.

3.7 An accredited V/VB shall have a legally enforceable arrangement with its clients for conducting an investigation of any allegation of fraudulent behaviours against its validated/verified clients relevant to their scope of accredited validation/verification.

3.8 When an accredited V/VB received or noticed of any allegation of fraudulent behaviour against its client, for examples, via HKAS or other relevant interested parties, the accredited V/VB shall investigate and act on, if it is confirmed to be relevant to any claim was/is being validated/verified under HKAS accreditation, the allegation of fraudulent behaviour as soon as possible.

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- 3.9 If there is evidence of the fraudulent behaviour against its client and such behaviour is relevant to any claim which was/is being validated/verified under HKCAS accreditation, an accredited V/VB shall withdraw the accredited validation/verification statement or terminate the validation/verification process.
- 3.10 If an accredited V/VB fails to adequately deal with allegations of fraudulent behaviour against its clients and such fraudulent behaviour is relevant to any claim which was/is being validated/verified under HKCAS accreditation, HKAS will initiate the suspension and/or termination of accreditation of the V/VB (for an accredited V/VB) or reject the accreditation application or terminate the assessment process (for an applicant V/VB).

4 SUSPENDED OR TERMINATED ACCREDITATION

- 4.1 The authorised representative of an accredited V/VB which has its accreditation suspended or terminated (voluntarily or by HKAS Executive) shall within 14 days from the effective date of such suspension or termination, identify the responsible parties, clients and intended users to whom the V/VB has issued validation/verification statements, which are found to be unreliable because of the deficiencies discovered during the investigation of the suspension and termination, and inform them that the statements are unreliable.

Note: Validation/verification statements can be referred to using specific validation/verification programme terminology such as 'decisions', 'opinions' or 'reports'.

5 USE OF HKCAS ACCREDITATION SYMBOLS AND CLAIMS OF ACCREDITATION STATUS

- 5.1 Every V/VB accredited under HKCAS shall be awarded with a distinctive HKCAS accreditation symbol.
- 5.2 The form, size, colour and usage of the HKCAS accreditation symbol shall be in accordance with the HKAS SC-01.
- 5.3 An accredited V/VB shall issue HKCAS accredited validation/verification statements within its scope of accreditation in accordance with the applicable requirements specified in HKAS 002 and HKAS SC-01. Where an accredited V/VB body has obtained accreditation from more than one accreditation body, the validation/verification statements shall be

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issued with at least one accreditation. All HKCAS accredited validation/verification statements shall include the following elements:

- (a) the distinctive HKCAS accreditation symbol of the V/VB at the top right hand corner of the front page; and
- (b) on the same page, the following statement*:

‘This validation/verification body (Registration Number HKCAS XXX) is accredited by HKAS under HKCAS for specific type of validation/verification activities as listed in the scope of accreditation. This validation/verification statement is issued under the terms of accreditation in accordance with HKAS regulations.’

** The word ‘statement’ can be replaced by other specific validation/verification programme terminology such as ‘decisions’, ‘opinions’ or ‘reports’.*

Notes:

- 1. This clause will take effect from 17 April 2026. No non-accredited validation/verification statements are allowed to be issued for validation/verification engagements commencing from 17 October 2027.*
- 2. While issuing HKCAS accredited validation/verification statements is optional before 17 October 2027, the requirements of this clause and applicable requirements specified in HKAS 002 and HKAS SC-01 shall be followed when an accredited V/VB issues HKCAS accredited validation/verification statements within its scope of accreditation.*

- 5.4 An accredited V/VB shall keep an exact copy of every HKCAS accredited validation/verification statement it has issued for at least 3 years.
- 5.5 An accredited V/VB shall provide to HKAS Executive an up-to-date list of countries in which the V/VB has issued validation or verification statements under HKCAS accreditation.
- 5.6 An applicant or accredited V/VB shall provide the format of its proposed HKCAS accredited validation/verification statement to HKAS Executive for approval before use.
- 5.7 An accredited V/VB shall not use the HKCAS accreditation symbol on any document unless such document relates in whole or in part to an accredited activity of the V/VB. However, the V/VB is allowed to print the accreditation symbol on its pre-printed letterhead paper.
- 5.8 An accredited V/VB shall not use the HKCAS accreditation symbol on any

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stationery, documents, publications and advertisements unless those stationery, documents, publications and advertisements are related in whole or in part to the V/VB's scope of accreditation.

- 5.9 An accredited V/VB shall ensure that the HKCAS accreditation symbol would not be used by any organisations including their clients whose claims were validated/verified under HKCAS accreditation.
- 5.10 An accredited V/VB shall not use its accreditation status in a way that may be interpreted by any person that any claims validated/verified by it have been approved by HKAS or HKAS Executive.
- 5.11 If the accreditation in relation to any activity under the scope of accreditation of an accredited V/VB is suspended or terminated (voluntarily or by HKAS Executive), the V/VB shall immediately cease to use and to distribute any stationery, document, publication or advertisement which bears its accreditation symbol, save for those which relate in whole or in part to activities having valid accreditation.

6 FORMS

- 6.1 Application for any HKCAS service from HKAS shall be made in appropriate forms. These forms are obtainable from HKAS Executive and have been uploaded to the HKAS website.