

Guide to certification for the European Water Stewardship standard

European Water Stewardship (EWS) is the integrative certification system for industry and agriculture to assess, verify and communicate sustainable water management practices. It supports to develop a sustainable water management strategy and provides all the necessary information to make it reality. The EWS standard is the result of a multi-stakeholder process, coordinated by the European Water Partnership (EWP) as a clear response to the Water Vision for Europe.

Advantages of certified businesses can be:

- Independent proof of sustainable water management for stakeholders and investors.
- Improved efficiency and associated cost savings.
- Enhanced awareness and leadership within river basin activities.
- Visibility of good corporate water governance for customers and access to new markets.
- Demonstration of corporate responsibility.

TÜV NORD INTEGRA is recognised by the European Water Partnership (EWP) as a certification body for scope 2, Industry.

A. Content of the standard

The EWS aims to be applicable to a broad range of water users and industries that may affect the availability and quality of water while still respecting the complexity of impacts linked to water use and therefore:

- Comprises environmental, social and economic aspects.
- Is valid on global scale but based on local assessment with focus on Europe.
- Is valid across all sectors.

The EWS principles, criteria and indicators – as compiled in the EWS standard - have been developed with input from the European Commission, stakeholders from industry and agriculture as well as NGOs and finally approved in 2010. This set of principles, criteria and indicators demonstrated its concrete value by testing its applicability in leading companies and on farm production sites.

This standard provides indicators for the whole water cycle: from extraction to re-allocation. The EWS standard is the core document of EWS.

This standard contains 4 principles which are applicable to water users in any sector or environmental condition. The principles cover the following areas of sustainable water management:

Principle 1- Achieve and maintain sustainable water abstraction in terms of water quantity.

Principle 2- Ensure the achievement and maintenance of good water status in terms of chemical quality and biological elements.

Principle 3- Restore and preserve water-cycle related High Conservation Value (HCV) areas.

Principle 4- Achieve equitable and transparent water governance.

The 4 principles have associated criteria which are further divided into some 50 indicators.

To download the current standard document, please visit

<http://www.ewp.eu/activities/water-stewardschip-standard/standard-glossary>

The main aim of certification is to map, grade and evaluate water management based on redesigning, reusing, recycling and re-allocation measures.

Within the scope industry no “group certification” is possible. Hence certification in industry is always a site-specific individual activity.

The indicators are classified as a major indicator, a minor indicator or as a recommendation.

- The major indicators have to be complied with to achieve certification.
- More than 50% of the minor indicators have to be complied with to achieve certification.
- The indicators classified as “recommendations” (“Rec.”) are non-obligatory.

This guide, which is intended for companies considering a move towards EWS certification, contains a systematic overview of the different steps in the certification procedure of TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

B. The different steps in the certification process

1. Request for quotation

Companies considering EWS-certification may request an application form for a quotation from TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

If you wish to receive a quotation, you simply fill out the application form and forward it to TÜV NORD INTEGRA. It will give us all the necessary information about your company for preparing a quotation.

2. Quotation

TÜV NORD INTEGRA will send you a quotation containing the rates for the initial and surveillance audits. Surveillance audits are held every year.

Audit time will depend on a number of criteria like surface of the site, water-sources, complexity of processes,...

The duration of surveillance audits is shorter than the duration of initial audits.

Besides audit rates, the quotation includes the following costs:

- Travel expenses
- Amount for the certification decision
- Scheme owner fee
- Any translation costs with respect to certificates (if applied for)

TÜV NORD INTEGRA also sends you 2 copies of the agreement for EWS certification, i.e. the agreement between your company and TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

3. Application for certification and agreements

If you agree to the quotation, you send a signed copy to TÜV NORD INTEGRA together with the two copies of the agreement with TÜV NORD INTEGRA, also signed by your company.

One copy of the agreement is signed by TÜV NORD INTEGRA and returned to you. The signed quotation and agreement are valid for a period of three years.

4. Audit preparation

The company receives a system plan document (a kind of an internal audit checklist) and uses this document to prepare for the audit. The filled-in system plan is sent to TÜV NORD INTEGRA before the audit.

5. Pre-audit

If you wish you can first book a pre-audit, allowing the auditor to verify to what extent the standards are already being applied at your company and if you are ready for the initial audit. A request for a pre-audit is also submitted via the quotation application form. At the end of the pre-audit you receive a list with the non-conformities. If required, this report can be extended to include a full company assessment.

6. Initial audit on site

Audit dates are agreed between TÜV NORD INTEGRA and the company.

The auditor sends the audit plan to the company at least one week before the audit starts.

The audit on site always includes the following steps:

- Opening meeting
- Audit of procedures and documentation
- Inspection tour of the company : during the audit, free and safe access to the production units is required. The audit shall include an on-site visit of the production site as well as a visit of all water abstraction sites (sources) and all water discharge sites that are directly used by the client.
- Interviews
- Processing of the audit data by the auditor
- Closing meeting to discuss any non-conformities and further steps to be taken by you

Audits will determine conformity or non-conformity with each indicator of the standard.

After the audit, the auditor will hand you an audit report containing all the non-conformities.

Non-compliance with an indicator that is shown as “major” will result in a major non-conformity.

Non-compliance with an indicator that is shown as “minor” will result in a minor non-conformity.

7. Solving non-conformities

Major non-conformities have 30 days for corrective actions, if non-compliances against major requirements are not resolved, no certificate can be granted

Minor non-conformities have also 30 days for corrective actions.

The amount of non-compliances against minor requirements determines the status of the certificate (gold, silver, bronze).

The auditor will assess the corrective actions forwarded by you. Where necessary, the auditor will ask you to provide additional information. If the auditor approves the corrective measures you have forwarded, the report is completed and delivered to the responsible person at TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

8. Follow-up audit

If several major non-conformities are established, it may be necessary to assess corrective measures on site during a follow-up audit. The extensiveness of this audit depends on the number of non-conformities.

9. Certification decision

Based on the audit report TÜV NORD INTEGRA decides whether or not to grant a certificate to your company.

10. Invoicing

After every completed audit an invoice will be sent out for the number of man-days performed and any additional costs, in accordance with the quotation.

Companies are also required to pay an EWS operator registration fee and certificate license fee. TÜV NORD INTEGRA will invoice these fees and will forward them to EWS.

11. Certificate

A certificate of compliance will only be awarded when all major indicators and at least 50% of all minor indicators have been met to the satisfaction of TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

Three levels of classification of the certificate exist: Bronze/Silver/Gold performance

= Compliance with ALL major requirements plus:

>50% compliance of the minor requirements = **BRONZE CERTIFICATE**

>70% compliance of the minor requirements = **SILVER CERTIFICATE**

>90% compliance of the minor requirements = **GOLD CERTIFICATE**

Certificates are valid for a period of three years.

Once the production site is certified according to the EWS standard, it can use EWS assets on all communication outlets – except on products itself. Therefore EWS claims are so-called “off-product claims”.

The certified production unit may use one or more of the following EWS assets:

- 'European Water Stewardship'.
- Bronze/Silver/Gold performance.
- The initials 'EWS'.
- The EWS logo.

In

- Business-to-business correspondence
- Sales documentation
- Reports and media.

All use of EWS assets must be in compliance with the EWS standard. All statements referring to EWS have to be approved by TÜV NORD INTEGRA prior to use.

TÜV NORD INTEGRA publishes the names of certified sites on its website.

12. Surveillance audits

The annual surveillance assessment shall include a review of continuing compliance to the applicable standard and has to follow up on all major and minor non-conformities and the corrective actions stated the year before. A report will be completed in the same format as that for the main compliance assessment report.

Major non-conformities raised during a surveillance assessment must be dissolved, to the satisfaction of the CB within 30 days from the last day of audit. Failure to do so will result in the suspension of the certificate during which time no EWS assets may be used.

Failure to dissolve the major non-conformity after this suspension period will result in the withdrawal of the certificate and the requirement of a new main compliance assessment.

If during a surveillance audit it comes out, that the operator is not in compliance with its EWS status any longer, the existing certificate will be withdrawn and a new certificate with the lower status will be issued.

Example: A company starts with Silver status and has a certificate from 2012 till 2015, but in the first surveillance audit in 2013, the status is only Bronze, then the existing certificate will be withdrawn and a new certificate with the status Bronze will be made for the period 2013 – 2015.

13. Recertification audit

Shortly before the certificate expires (3 years after the initial audit), a new recertification audit is performed. This audit has the same steps as the initial audit.

A new certificate will be issued after the company has resolved any non-conformities established during the recertification audit.

The Gold/Silver/Bronze certificate status can only be determined or increased within main assessment audits (the initial or recertification audit) but not during annual surveillance audits. Clients intending a reassessment of their performance status in the period between two full assessment audits, have to apply for an additional full assessment audit.

14. Voluntary benchmarking (applied as “add-on” benchmarking on demand)

The voluntary benchmarking of performance allows an internal benchmarking of production sites' performance. For this, the operational water management performance is scored per principle: per indicator scores are given from 0 – 5 by the auditor during the audit. Compliance with an indicator is achieved with a score ≥ 3 .

15. Appeal and complaints

If you disagree with the decision of TÜV NORD INTEGRA, you may appeal by sending a substantiated written appeal to TÜV NORD INTEGRA by registered mail. The procedure to be followed in this case can be found in your agreement with TÜV NORD INTEGRA.

Substantiated complaints about audits, decisions, or other steps in the certification process must be delivered in writing within one month after delivery of a report or decision. The complaint procedure followed by TÜV NORD INTEGRA will be sent to you upon request.

16. Communication to EWS

TÜV NORD INTEGRA shall inform EWS of the company's certification status.