



Australian Government
**Department of the Environment
 and Water Resources**
Australian Greenhouse Office

Greenhouse Challenge Plus Fact Sheet # 15

An Introduction to Independent Verification For Generator Efficiency Standards

Background

Generator Efficiency Standards (GES) is part of the Australian Greenhouse Office's (AGO's) *Greenhouse Challenge Plus* (GCP) programme and aims to reduce the greenhouse intensity of electricity supply.

GES independent verification is an objective assessment of Participant reports, to determine the material completeness, consistency, accuracy, transparency and relevance of the data. It assists Participants to continuously improve the information on which they base decisions about the management and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions. Independent verification also strengthens the credibility of GCP.

The success of verification depends on industry support and commitment.

Cost of verification

The AGO pays for the cost of the verifier. The Participant covers the cost of the Participant's staff time required for the verification.

Scope of Independent Verification

GES verification will include verification of:

1. The actual greenhouse intensity reported in the Strategic Plan and Annual Report(s);
2. The potential quantity of abatement reported in the Action Plan;
3. The reference greenhouse intensity reported in the Strategic Plan;
4. Achieved abatement from a sample of actions reported in the Annual Report; and
5. Whether there is reasonable justification for not carrying out abatement actions in the Action Plan.

The actions and non-actions to be verified will be selected by the Verification Administrator. Verifiers also assess the participants record keeping practices and engagement in GES.

Recognition of Other Verification Activities

To streamline and simplify verification, the GES participant can claim recognition of other verification activities. The Verification Administrator and Verifier will determine if these other activities can be considered for GES verification.

Verification Administrator

The Australian Greenhouse Office has appointed SMEC Australia as Verification Administrator to coordinate GCP independent verification activities. The Verification Administrator's role includes appointing Verifiers, coordinating the timing of verifications and reviewing and approving verification reports.

Confidentiality

Data provided to the Commonwealth through independent verification will be treated as confidential unless otherwise indicated by the participant. The Verification Administrator and the individual Verifiers are bound by Confidentiality Deeds with the Commonwealth.

Individual verification reports are confidential and will not be publicly disclosed. The AGO will publish an annual report on aggregate verification findings.

The Verification Process

Step One Notification of Verification

The AGO notifies the Participant that it has been selected for verification under GES. The participant has a period of at least two months to finalise reports before they are required to move to step two. The Verification Administrator will contact the Participant during this period to discuss the verification process.

Step Two Selection of Verifier

Verifiers are selected from the GCP Panel of Independent Verifiers. GES Verifiers on this panel have completed specialised GES verification training.

Participants can select a Verifier from the panel, or can request the Verification Administrator to select a Verifier on their behalf.

Conflict of Interest

Participants should disclose any Verifiers (members of the verification team, and/or the company to which they belong) who may have a conflict of interest to the Verification Administrator at the start of the verification process. The GES Verification Guidelines provide examples of conflict of interest.

Step Three Verification Scopes of Work

Once a Verifier has been selected they will be provided with the Initial Scope of Work, developed by the Verification Administrator with input from the Participant.

Verifiers will then develop a Detailed Scope of Work as a tender for the verification.

In preparing their Detailed Scope of Work, the identified Verifier(s) may wish to contact the Participant to confirm or discuss certain details regarding their reports. Participants must provide consistent information to all Verifiers.

The Verification Administrator will review the Detailed Scope of Works and select an appropriate Verifier.

Step Four Undertaking the Verification 4.1 Pre-verification briefing

The Verifier and Verification Administrator will contact the Participant by phone to outline the verification process. Verifiers may request copies of additional records at this stage.





4.2 Site Visit

Onsite assessments are typically performed over one to two days and include:

- An opening meeting where the verifier will meet key staff and establish the scope and methodology of the verification process.
- Review and verification activities – the Verifier will look at source data, operational records, plant systems and/or abatement projects. The Verifier must have the opportunity to speak with any relevant staff.
- Closing meeting – the Verifier will confirm the key findings with the Participant and discuss reporting requirements and suggestions for improvement.

The AGO and/or Verification Administrator may attend onsite assessments.

Step Five - Verification Reporting

Following report submission, a review process will take place involving the Verification Administrator. The Participant will also have the opportunity to review the report and provide any feedback.

Preparing for an Independent Verification

Prior to verification, the Participant should:

1. Assist the Verification Administrator in preparing an Initial Scope of Work;
2. Discuss choices of Verifiers with the Verification Administrator including potential conflicts of interest;
3. Discuss the Detailed Scope of Work being prepared by the Verifier(s); and
4. Make records available to the Verification Administrator and Verifier (e.g. past verification reports).

After the Verifier is appointed:

5. Provide the Verifier with source data, spreadsheets, and procedural documents related to their GES reports as requested, preferably prior to the site visit;
6. Decide with relevant staff the best timing for a site visit and discuss with the Verifier;
7. Participate in the pre-verification meeting and inform relevant staff of meeting outcomes;
8. Coordinate site visits with the verifier and make available all relevant staff and records during the visit; and
9. Provide comments on preliminary verification findings at the onsite closing meeting.

After the Site Visits:

10. Review the draft verification report and provide feedback.

Further Information

For more information on the Verification process please refer to the GES Verification Guidelines or contact the Australian Greenhouse Office.

For information about specific verifications please contact the Verification Administrator.

Contacts

Australian Greenhouse Office:

Phone: 02 6274 1511

Email: verification@greenhouse.gov.au

Verification Administrator:

SMEC Australia Pty Limited

Phone: 02 9925 5657

Email: greenhouse@smec.com.au



Australian Government

**Department of the Environment
and Water Resources**

Australian Greenhouse Office