ASES ON-CHAIN PROTOCOL

PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF aOCP VALIDATORS AND VERIFIERS

III. Procedures V1.0

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ACRONYMS

aOCP	ASES climate action on-chain protocol
GHG	Greenhouse gas
PSF	Project submission form
EP	Expert Panel
aOCP-Ve	ASES On-Chain Protocol Verifier
aOCP-V	ASES On-Chain Protocol Validator
PRC	Post-registration change
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
VVB	Validation and Verification Body

INTRODUCTION

While the aOCP Rules specify precise standards, the general principles of the aOCP Program are mostly based on International Standards ISO 14064-2 and ISO 14064-3. With an integrated registration and issuance process, the aOCP Program offers a global platform for reducing GHG emissions and guarantees that aOCP Project Activities do no harm to environment and society. Furthermore Projects registered on the aOCP shall have a positive impact on biodiversity and, optionally, on soil hydric response.

The "Procedures for Approval of aOCP Validators and Verifiers" document outlines the approval processes for applicant Expert Panels under the aOCP Program to carry out validation of projects and verification of project activities, in accordance with aOCP Validation and Verification Standard. This document was created in accordance with the guidelines in the aOCP Program Manual, the main program document that contains links to other aOCP papers that describe the regulations governing the aOCP Program. Before signing a validator and verifier agreement, individuals and organizations who wish to apply for membership on the "aOCP Expert Panel" must adhere to the "Procedure for Approval of aOPC Validators and Verifiers" and complete the aOCP Validator/Verifier Application Form.

The aOCP Validation and Verification Standard outlines the steps involved in carrying out an independent third-party validation and verification of an aOCP Project Activity and specifies what the aOCP Expert Panel shall be required to validate, verify, and certify.

FIGURE 1. VALIDATION, VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION ELEMENTS

When using this standard, aOCP Validators and Verifiers must also make sure that all related aOCP standards, such as the Validation and Verification Standard and Project Standard, are met.

I.   OBJECTIVE

The "Procedure for Approval of aOCP Validators and Verifiers" outlines procedures to make sure that the aOCP Validation/Verification is carried out in accordance with the aOCP Program's rules and requirements, by an authorized third party independent aOCP validator/verifier in a neutral and independent manner, to produce a Output, known as a Validation or Verification Opinion and a Certification Statement, of an acceptable quality level. This procedure intends to include the aOCP principles and requirements into the approval/reapproval process for verifiers and validators as well as the validation/verification process itself. Consequently, this process defines:

a) The guidelines and procedures for approving, rating, and reapproving a potential or current aOCP validator/ verifier;

b) The procedures for carrying out, in addition to those outlined in ISO 14064-3 and Verification Standard, the aOCP Project Validation and the aOCP Emission Reduction/Removal, biodiversity, and water-related Verification.

The requirements outlined therein shall also be applied when applying this procedure, because it was created in accordance with the aOCP Rules and the definitions given below.

II.   DEFINITIONS SPECIFIC TO THIS DOCUMENT

When implementing this document, please refer to the aOCP Program Definitions document.

The term "aOCP Validator/Verifier" refers to an entity, either an individual or an organization (Validation and Verification Body -VVB), that has been approved and authorized by the aOCP Program to provide validation and verification services within the Program. The VVB plays the role of aOCP Validator when performing validation of the forecasted Project's impacts, based on the Project Submission Form (PSF), and the compliance with aOCP rules and requirements for project submission and register. The VVB plays the role of aOCP Validator when verifying the Project's GHG emission reductions/removals, impacts on biodiversity and (optionally) on water reported by the Project Proponent in the Monitoring Report, as well as compliance with aOCP rules and requirements for the corresponding issuance of Verified Nature Positive Credits.

III.   PRINCIPLES APPLIED

The following accreditation principles were used in the creation of this document for the aOCP Program.

- Legal entity
- Safeguarding impartiality
- Competent validators/verifiers guaranteed
- Financial independence and risk insurance
- Valid international accreditation
- Information management

These guidelines for VVBs are detailed in the accreditation programmes of CDM and accreditation bodies that accredit the verifiers following ISO 17011 and ISO 14065 to verify the conformity to ISO 14064-2 and ISO 14064-3 requirements. While the specific mandatory requirements of the

aOCP Program and Project Activities are specified in the Project Standard, the requirements for validation and verification activities are specified in the aOCP Validation and Verification Standard and respective methodologies, the general requirements of the aOCP Program are based on International Standards ISO 14064-2 and ISO 14064-3.

IV. OVERVIEW OF AOCP VALIDATION / VERIFICATION PROCESSES

Two phases in the aOCP Project cycle require the participation of an independent, aOCP-accredited third-party. These phases are Validation and Verification. Project Proponents shall get the Project validated by an aOCP-approved Validator prior Project Registration and in case of changes made to PSF post-registration. Similarly, Project activities and its effects on carbon, biodiversity and water shall be verified prior VNPCs Issuance by an aOCP-approved Verifier.

The aOCP Program's Expert Panel (EP) which consists of the aOCP Validators (aOCP-V) and aOCP Verifiers (aOCP-Ve) is a decentralized team of qualified experts, who validates carbon offset, biodiversity, and water restoration projects to make sure they adhere to the program's principles and requirements.

All individuals and organizations wishing to join the Expert Panel must complete the aOCP training courses, which focus on developing competencies for the evaluation of some or all of the five aOCP Scopes:
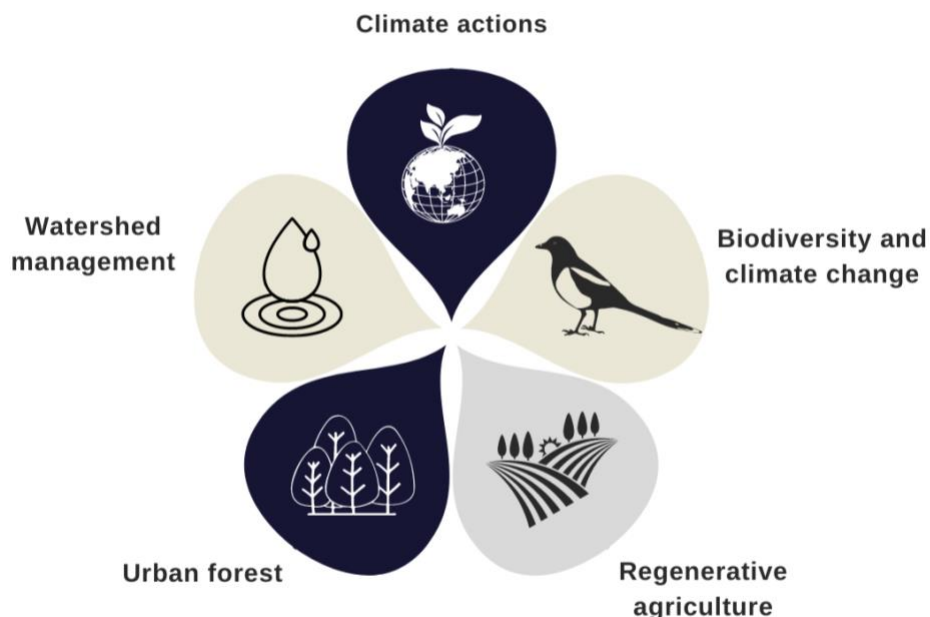
FIGURE 2. AOCP SCOPES

The members of the Expert Panel will only be authorized to validate and verify projects for the competences they have been accredited with. In case of being accredited for the five project types, they become Integral aOCP-V and aOCP-VE.

IV.1. PROJECT VALIDATION OF THE PROJECT ACTIVITY

The project proponent gets a Project Validation Report (PVR) completed by the aOCP Validator. The PVR includes the Project Certification Statement, confirming that the aOCP project activity:

(i) complies with aOCP standards and norms of processes; and (ii) is anticipated to accomplish the estimated real, measurable, and additional GHG emission reductions/removals, impacts on biodiversity and (optionally) on soil hydric response; and (iii) has safeguards in place that are anticipated to provide protection against adverse environmental/social impacts and does not harm the environment in any way by adhering to "Do-No-Harm" requirements. Additionally, depending on the choice made by the Project proponent in the Project Submission Form (PSF), the Project Certification Statement shall also state that the project is anticipated to help achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

IV.2. PROJECT VALIDATION OF POST-REGISTRATION CHANGE

This kind of validation is carried out after the registration stage. It seeks to achieve independent assessment of aOCP project activity by aOCP Project Validator against the requirements of ISO 14064-2, ISO 14064-3 (reasonable level of assurance), and aOCP Rules, including aOCP Validation/Verification Standard, and on the basis of the data provided in the registered aOCP Project Submission Form and post-registration change (PRC) documentation. The project proponent and the aOCP get the "PRC Validation Report" that was submitted after validation was completed by the aOCP Project Validator. In essence, the Certification Statement shall re-affirm the validity of the same statements as in the first PVR, considering the changes.

IV.3. EMISSION REDUCTIONS/REMOVALS, BIODIVERSITY AND WATER-RELATED VERIFICATION

This type of verification is carried out by an aOCP verifier prior to the VNPCs Issuance Stage and aims at periodic independent evaluation and ex-post determination of project implementation as defined in the PSF registered with aOCP. It also monitors and reports GHG emission reductions/removals, impacts on biodiversity and soil hydric response (if applicable) that have happened as a result of the registered aOCP project activity. This is compared to the specifications set forth in ISO 14064-2, ISO 14064-3 (reasonable level of assurance), and the aOCP Rules, including the Verification Standard, as well as the data contained in the aOCP Project Submission Form and the aOCP Monitoring Report Form. The project proponent and the aOCP get the aOCP Verification Report (VR) completed by the aOCP Verifier. In essence, the Certification Statement certifies that, during a given monitoring period, the aOCP registered project activity: (i) has been implemented in accordance with the details in the registered PSF; and (ii) has actually achieved the quantified amount of reported GHG emission reductions/removals, impacts on biodiversity and (optionally) on soil hydric response; and (iii) has not caused harm to the environment or society in any way, by adhering to "Do-No-Harm" requirements. Additionally, depending on the choice made by the Project proponent in the Project Submission Form (PSF), the Certification Statement shall also state if the project's impacts contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as targeted in the PSF.

V. APPROVAL/ RE-APPROVAL PROCESS FOR AOCP VALIDATORS/VERIFIERS

The establishment of a pool of qualified, skilled, and experienced verifiers and validators, along with their selection and approval criteria and procedures, is necessary to ensure that the verification and validation are appropriately carried out by qualified aOCP verifiers/validators in an impartial and impartial manner, in accordance with ISO 14064-2, ISO 14064-3 and aOCP Rules, including the aOCP Validation/Verification Standard.

All individuals or organizations wishing to join the aOCP Expert Panel must be accredited in at least one of the five aOCP Scopes (Figure 2) and demonstrate knowledge, experience, expertise, performance, information management and accountability.

V.1. SCOPE AND STATUS OF APPROVAL/ RE-APPROVAL

Under the aOCP program, only Validators and Verifiers that have been accredited by ASES will carry out Project validation or Project activity verification, and only for the aOCP scopes in which they have been accredited.

The GHG sectoral scope relevant to the particular aOCP Projects authorized to employ the GHG methodology is defined by the approved aOCP and CDM methodologies. This enables a Validator/Verifier to determine whether they are qualified to carry out validation or verification of the different project types participating in the aOCP.

V.2. VALIDATOR /VERIFIER APPROVAL TRACKS

The following subsections describe the three different tracks aspiring validators/verifiers can follow for Initial Approval or Re-approval to conduct validations and verifications under the aOCP Program.

V.2.1. VERIFICATION UNDER UNFCCC-TRACK (CDM/ ARTICLE 6.4):

Organizations wishing to apply under this track must be Designated Operational Entities (DOEs) and accredited for CDM/Article 6.4 for Validation or Verification under particular sectoral scopes. They are only deemed eligible to become an aOCP Validator/Verifier after their applications have been reviewed and deemed suitable. Emission Reduction/Removal, biodiversity, and water-related verifiers, for the associated sectoral scopes only, as long as they can show that other requirements of this procedure have been met. According to Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, the UNFCCC/CDM Executive Board/Supervisory Body oversees the entire accreditation process for DOEs, which includes initial accreditation, witnessing, surveillance, renewal of accreditation, performance assessment, and other assessments and procedures. According to Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, the aOCP Program should evaluate the applicant Organizations'/DOEs' accreditation status as kept publicly by the UNFCCC/CDM Executive Board/Supervisory Body. In particular, their comprehension of the aOCP requirements that are supplementary to CDM/Article 6.4 may require some further examination for this track. The accreditation status and the supplied documents are verified.

V.2.2. VERIFICATION UNDER ISO-TRACK

Organizations wishing to apply under this track must be Verification Bodies accredited by National or International Accreditation Bodies[1] in accordance with ISO 17011 for conformity assessment of ISO 14065. If their applications are approved, only then are they qualified to serve as an aOCP Validator/Validator/Verifier, for the relevant sectoral scopes, provided they can show that they have complied with the relevant sectoral scopes and all other requirements specified in this procedure. The aOCP program also permits the use of the criteria established by the International Accreditation Forum in a document (IAF MD 14) that outlines the sectoral scopes for projects using ISO 14064-2. The relevant National or International Accreditation Body manages the entire accreditation process for the applicant verifiers, including initial accreditation, witnessing, surveillance, renewal of accreditation, performance assessment, among other examinations and procedures. The aOCP Program will evaluate the applicant organizations' and verifiers' accreditation status as kept openly by the accreditation bodies. In particular, their comprehension of the aOCP standards that are based on CDM requirements may need some extra examination for this track after the accreditation status and the supplied documents have been examined.

V.2.3. VERIFICATION UNDER MoU-TRACK

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) can be signed by the aOCP Program with any accreditation authority to offer accreditation services in compliance with aOCP requirements and applicable international standards. The accreditation organization must prove that it is qualified to conduct assessments in accordance with the aOCP requirements if it hopes to establish an MOU with the program. The recognized Accreditation Body having MOU with aOCP program conducts the entire accreditation process for the applicant verifiers, including initial accreditation, witnessing, surveillance, renewal of accreditation, performance assessment, and other assessments and procedures. The applicant validation and verification bodies (VVBs) seeking accreditation from accreditation bodies that have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with aOCP will apply directly to the accreditation body for aOCP scope and, after receiving accreditation from them, will be taken into consideration as automatically being approved by "aOCP program" for the accredited aOCP scopes and duration specified on the accreditation certificate.

This protocol contains information on the requirements that must be met before approval as an aOCP Verifier.

V.3. OVERVIEW OF APPROVAL/ RE-APPROVAL PROCESS UNFCCC (CDM/ARTICLE 6.4) AND ISO- TRACK

V.3.1. INITIAL APPROVAL OF aOCP VALIDATOR/VERIFIER FOR 2 YEARS

Organizations applying to become aOCP Validators/Verifiers approved by the aOCP Program must use the "*aOCP Verifier/Validator Application Form- for obtaining Approval*" (hereinafter referred to as the "form").

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[1] Validators/Verifiers are encouraged to seek accreditation from the National/international accreditation bodies which are the members of International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and its respective regional forums and have signed Multilateral Recognition Arrangements to undergo mutual assessments.

The form as well as the "*aOCP Validator and Verifier Agreement*" must be filled out completely, signed by the Applicant, and sent electronically to aOCP at onchainprotocol@asessc.net.

Details on the requirements that must be met as prerequisite for aOCP Validator/Verifier approval can be found in this procedure and the "*aOCP Validator and Verifier Agreement*", both of which are available on the aOCP website. Attachments with additional information are accepted.

After receiving an application, the aOCP Operations Team will examine the data offered and communicate its findings to the applicant within 15 calendar days, with the results being either approval, denial, or a request for more data. If an applicant's capacity to deliver high-quality services under the aOCP Program cannot be proven, aOCP maintains the right to reject their application.

According to the following procedure, the aOCP Operations Team should evaluate the application of an Applicant Validator/Verifier for Approval and the aOCP Validator/Verifier for Re-approval:

- Review of the application materials provided by the applicant aOCP Validator/Verifier with a view to identifying any missing or unclear information and requesting the applicant aOCP Validator/Verifier to compile all necessary information and documentation in order to demonstrate whether their systems, as well as its competence and operational capability to perform Validation and Verification, are sufficient. An on-site evaluation must be conducted at the Applicant's main office, but it may also be conducted at any other offices or outsourced organizations where the Applicant performs validation, verification and/or certification tasks. These other offices will be chosen for re-approval based on the outcomes of prior assessments (regular on-site assessments) and the performance of aOCP Validators/Verifiers.

- In order to decide whether the assessment approach will only involve desk review of the application submitted by the Applicant, or both desk review and the on-site assessment, physical or virtual/remote, the aOCP Operations Team shall conduct a risk assessment to evaluate each application from the Applicant, including capability, previous track record, and performance.

- The costs associated with the assessment, including the travel, boarding, and accommodation of the assessment team selected for the assignment, shall be covered by the Applicant.

- The aOCP Validator/Verifier shall be informed by the aOCP Operations Team of the assessment plan, including expenses, for carrying out such approval/reapproval assessments. Approval or Re-approval shall be given to the Applicant for both, Validation and Verification, functions and in the aOCP scopes and GHG sectoral scopes in which the Applicant has demonstrated compliance with all aOCP requirements.

- The aOCP Validator/Verifier can execute Project Validations and Emission Reduction/Removal, biodiversity and water-related Verification functions only after the aOCP Operations Team has provided Approval or Re-approval. aOCP will only accept Validation and Verification Reports created by aOCP-approved verifiers. After the application is approved, the aOCP Operations Team will send the applicant an invoice for the initial approval cost. The applicant will get a copy of the *aOCP Validator and Verifier Agreement* signed by the aOCP Operations Team after the fee has been covered. The

newly certified aOCP Validator/Verifier will be added to the list of approved Verifiers/Validators with a validity term of two years or the validity of GHG (CDM or NAB) certification, whichever is shorter. This list is public and available at the aOCP website

V.3.2. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF AOCP VALIDATOR/VERIFIER

At any moment throughout the aOCP Validator/Verifier's approval term, the aOCP Operations Team may choose to subject the aOCP Validator/Verifier to performance evaluations based on the risk assessment. Through an evaluation of a specific Project Validation and/or Emission Reduction/Removal, Biodiversity, and Water-Related Verification/Certification activity, a performance assessment is intended to evaluate the implementation of the systems of the aOCP Validator/Verifier and its competence in approved aOCP scopes and GHG sectoral scopes. Performance evaluations can only begin if the results of a risk assessment undertaken by the aOCP Operations Team and the aOCP Validator/Verifier are made publicly available for at least one submission of a request for registration or one monitoring report during the approved term.

Based on the Assessment of Projects submitted by the aOCP Validator/Verifier after Project Verification or Emission Reduction/Removal, biodiversity, and water-related Verification, the aOCP Operations Team shall continuously conduct evaluation of the aOCP Validator/Verifier's performance for the approval period of two years. The performance evaluation's input will be shared with the aOCP Steering Committee and taken into account when the individual aOCP Validator/Verifier is to be re-approved.

The costs associated with this performance evaluation, including the travel, boarding, and accommodation of the assessment team selected for this assignment, shall be covered by the aOCP Validator/Verifier.

The aOCP Operations Team is required to advise the aOCP Validator/Verifier of the performance assessment plan and associated costs.

V.3.3. SPOT-CHECK OF AOCP VALIDATOR/VERIFIER

Based on the risk assessment, the aOCP Operations Team may choose to spot-check the aOCP Validator/Verifier at any moment throughout the period of time that it has been approved. The purpose of a spot-check is to determine whether the aOCP Validator/Verifier still meets specific requirements set forth in this document due to a specific concern regarding the aOCP Validator/Verifier's compliance with the aOCP requirements as stated in this document or derived from an aOCP Validator/Verifier's insufficient performance while conducting Validation and/or Verification/Certification activities. Spot checks of any aOCP Validator/Verifier may also be prompted by complaints from relevant stakeholders or based on random selection in order to determine whether the validations/verifications are being carried out in accordance with aOCP rules, including the submitted and signed "aOCP Validator/Verifier Application Form" and "aOCP Validator and Verifier Agreement."

A spot-check may involve a desk review, an on-site assessment at any offices of the aOCP Validator/Verifier and outsourced entities where the validation and/or verification/certification activities are carried out, and/or an assessment at the location of the aOCP project activity being validated/verified/certified.

The results of the spot check could lead to further inquiry, the filing of a complaint with the CDM EB, the Supervisory Body under Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, the NAB, a competent authority, or the suspension or termination of the aOCP's approval. The aOCP Steering Committee will be informed of the results.

V.3.4. RE-APPROVAL OF AOCP VALIDATOR/VERIFIER FOR NEXT 2 YEARS

The aOCP Validator and Verifier may request re-approval after two years in order to continue serving in that capacity for an additional two years. The *aOCP Validator and Verifier Application Form- for requesting Re-approval* must be completely filled out by applicants. They must also electronically sign the form and the *aOCP Validator and Verifier Agreement* and send it to aOCP at onchainprotocol@asessc.net.

The approval procedure and the re-approval process are comparable. When the application is reapproved, aOCP will send the applicant an invoice for the reapproval charge. The applicant will get a signed copy of the "*aOCP Validator and Verifier Agreement*" from aOCP Operations Team once the fee has been paid. The re-approved aOCP Validator/Verifier will be added by aOCP to its list of authorized Expert Panels with a validity of two more years or the remaining time required for GHG accreditation (under CDM/Article 6.4 or NAB), whichever is shorter.

V.3.5. APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO AOCP VALIDATOR/VERIFIER STATUS

Numerous changes to the aOCP Validator and Verifier organization or events may take place after the approval of aOCP Validator and Verifier and before the end of the 2-year approval period. These changes may necessitate updating the information provided in the prior "*aOCP Validator/Verifier Application Form*" and/or may have an impact on the status to continue as a member of the aOCP Expert Panel. Within 15 calendar days of the modification's occurrence or earlier, the aOCP Validator/Verifier must notify the aOCP Operations Team via email (onchainprotocol@asessc.net.) of the change. Changes like this could occur, for instance:

a) **Non-significant changes:** Such changes will not change or affect the status of being assigned as the approved aOCP Validator/Verifier but will merely require updation of information to the aOCP and will possibly include:
    i)   Information having no impact.

b) **Significant changes:** Such changes may change or affect the status to continue as the aOCP Validator/Verifier and therefore will require prior approval from the aOCP Operations Team.
    i)   Extension of sectoral scope;
    ii)   Reduction of sectoral scope;
    iii)   Change of accreditation status of CDM/Article 6.4 of the Paris agreement or NAB;
    iv)   Transfer of accreditation to another legal entity;

v) Replacing management personnel, in case this does not impact CDM/Article 6.4 or NAB accreditation;

vi) Other information that may have an impact and change or affect the status to continue as the aOCP Validator/Verifier.

The prior-approval fee, which is the same as the approval fee, will be invoiced to the applicant by aOCP upon receipt of the prior-approval application. There is no fee associated with minor modifications because they do not need approval. The applicant will get a signed copy of the new "*aOCP Validator and Verifier Agreement*" from aOCP once the fee has been paid. With a Validity of 2 Years or the GHG Accreditation Validity (CDM/Article 6.4 or NAB), whichever is less, aOCP will update the list of Approved Validators/Verifiers. This list is public and available at aOCP's website.

V.4. OVERVIEW OF THE MOU-TRACK APPROVAL/REAPPROVAL PROCESS

Applicant verification bodies seeking accreditation from accreditation bodies that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the aOCP, will submit their application directly to the accreditation body and will be automatically considered approved by the "aOCP program" for the accredited aOCP scopes and duration indicated on the accreditation certificate.

Details of the conditions that must be met prior to approval as an aOCP validator/verifier are listed in Table 1 of this procedure and in the "*aOCP Validator and Verifier Agreement*" available on the aOCP website.

The list of accreditation bodies that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the aOCP is available on the aOCP website.

TABLE 1. APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR AOCP VALIDATORS/VERIFIERS

Criteria required to be demonstrated by the Applicants		Organizational Track		
		MOU Track	**UNFCCC Track (CDM/Article 6.4)[#]**	**ISO Track[+]**
Valid Accreditation	Shall possess valid Accreditation by UNFCCC and CDM[#]	Not Required	Required as per CDM/Article 6.4 rules	Voluntary
	Shall possess valid Accreditation by **National Accreditation Body** as per ISO 17011 for conformity assessment as per ISO 14065[+]	Required as per ISO 14064-2, 3	Voluntary	Required as per ISO 14064-2, 3

Criteria required to be demonstrated by the Applicants		Organizational Track		
		MOU Track	UNFCCC Track (CDM/Article 6.4)#	ISO Track+
	Demonstrate how you will comply with '**Sectoral Scopes**' for aOCP Validation and Verification	As per the aOCP scope defined by accreditation body having MoU with aOCP	As per accredited CDM/Article 6.4 'Sectoral Scopes' for validation	As per the scopes defined by applicable national/international accreditation body or IAF-MD14 document, as relevant.∞
Legal Status	Shall be Registered under applicable national or international law	Required to provide Information	Required to provide Information	Required to provide Information
	Shall not have any pending judicial process for malpractice, fraud and/or other activity incompatible with functions as a aOCP Validator/Verifier	If this is not covered under the accreditation process for MoU track, Declaration is to be given at the time of application.	Declaration to be given at the time of application.	Declaration to be given at the time of application.
Liability	Must have appropriate Liability Insurance for a cover up to USD 5 million	Required	Required	Required
Safeguarding impartiality	Shall act impartially and avoid any conflict of interest that may compromise its ability to make impartial decisions	Not Required for MoU track	Not Required if covered under valid CDM/Article 6.4 Accreditation	Not Required if covered under valid National/International Accreditation
Competence	The VVB shall demonstrate how they have determined competence (GHG, biodiversity, water, UN SDGs, Do-No-harm requirements) and qualified their personnel.	Not required for MoU track with aOCP scope of accreditation.	Required to be demonstrated, for example through skills, experience, qualifications including through course/examination, if required	Required to be demonstrated, for example through skills, experience, qualifications including through course/examination, if required
Validation/ Verification Process Management	Ensure Validation and Verification process to be conducted as required by aOCP Rules & Figure 4 of "Procedure	Not required for MoU track with aOCP scope of accreditation.	Not Required if covered under valid CDM/Article 6.4 Accreditation	Not Required if covered under valid National/International Accreditation

Criteria required to be demonstrated by the Applicants		Organizational Track		
		MOU Track	UNFCCC Track (CDM/Article 6.4)#	ISO Track+
	for Approval of GCC Verifier"			
Information Management	Ensure confidentiality of Information	Not required for MoU track with GCC scope of accreditation.	Required	Required
Fee	Pay Approval and Re-approval Fee	No fee will be charged by aOCP. Accreditation charges of Accreditation Body having MoU with aOCP will apply.	As per aOCP Fee Schedule available on aOCP website	As per aOCP Fee Schedule available on aOCP website
Performance Assessment	Evaluation and Assessment of Performance to be conducted by the 'aOCP Operations Team'	For MoU accreditation Bodies, this will be part of the accreditation process. aOCP Program may forward the any complaints received.	aOCP Program will initiate the performance assessments.	aOCP will initiate the performance assessments.

* aOCP Validators and Verifiers shall comply with '**Procedure for Approval of aOCP Validators and Verifiers'** and applicable '**aOCP Rules'** and submit '**aOCP Validator/Verifier Application Form'** & Signed '**aOCP Validator/Verifier Agreement'**.

Organizations/Designated Operational Entities (DOEs) accredited for CDM for Validation or Verification will automatically qualify as aOCP Validaotr/Verifier, respectively for those Sectoral scopes only, provided they demonstrate compliance with other conditions mentioned in the Table above. The complete accreditation process for the DOEs including initial accreditation, witnessing, surveillance, renewal of accreditation, performance assessment and other assessments and procedures is conducted by UNFCCC/CDM Executive Board/Supervisory Body under Article 6.4 of the Paris agreement.

aOCP will follow and adopt the accreditation status of the DOEs as maintained publicly by the UNFCCC/CDM Executive Board/Supervisory Body under Article 6.4 of the Paris agreement.

Criteria required to be demonstrated by the Applicants	Organizational Track		
	MOU Track	UNFCCC Track (CDM/Article 6.4)#	ISO Track+

+ Organizations/Certification Bodies accredited by National or International Accreditation Bodies, as per ISO 17011 for conformity assessment as per ISO 14065, will automatically qualify as '**aOCP Validator/Verifier**', respectively for those specific sectoral scopes, provided they demonstrate compliance with those Sectoral scopes and other conditions mentioned in the Table above. The compete accreditation process including initial accreditation, witnessing, surveillance, renewal of accreditation, performance assessment and other assessments and procedures is conducted by the applicable National or International Accreditation Body. aOCP will follow and adopt the accreditation status of the Certification bodies as maintained publicly by the applicable National or International Accreditation Body. ∞ It is possible that the sectoral scopes defined by national or international accreditation bodies may not exactly correspond to CDM/Article 6.4 sectoral scopes adopted by aOCP Program. In such cases, applicant aOCP Validators/Verifiers shall demonstrate the equivalence of the sectoral scopes of their accreditation body with those adopted by aOCP.

VII. aOCP Validation and Verification process

For aOCP Program, the following principles of ensuring and independent third-party validation/verification, as shown in Figure 3 below, are applied in the preparation of this document.

An *aOCP Validator/Verifier* shall comply with:

a) "Procedure for Approval of aOCP Validators and Verifiers" as available publicly on aOCP website;
b) Applicable "aOCP Rules" as available publicly on aOCP website;
c) Conduct validations and verifications as per submitted "aOCP Validator and Verifier Application Form-for seeking Approval", "aOCP Validator and Verifier Application Form-for seeking Re-approval" and last signed and approved "aOCP Validator and Verifier Agreement".

An *aOCP Validator/Verifier* shall ensure compliance with the criteria for conducting aOCP Project Validation and Verification.

FIGURE 3. PRINCIPLES FOR CONDUCTING VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION

VII.1. CONTRACT REVIEW

An aOCP Validator/Verifier must perform a contract review prior to submitting a proposal or quotation to a prospective client and signing a contract for the Validation/Verification of an aOCP Project. This review should confirm that:

a) The aOCP project activity must fall within the aOCP scopes and associated GHG sectoral scopes for which the aOCP Validator/Verifier has been accredited by the aOCP.
b) The VVB has enough internal or external human resources who are qualified to carry out the Validation/Verification;
c) The VVB has no impartiality issues with the conduct of the Validation/Verification;
d) For the same project activity, it will either carry out Project Validation or Emission Reduction/Removal, Biodiversity, and Water-Related Verification, but not both;
e) Consideration has been given to the location(s) of the customer's operations, the time required to complete the validation/verification, and any additional factors affecting the validation/verification, such as language barriers, hazardous situations, etc.

The following data must be obtained or made available to the aOCP Validator/Verifier in order to confirm the elements mentioned in the paragraph above:

a) The draft "Project Submission Form (PSF)" or "Project Monitoring Report (PMR)" for the specific monitoring period of the aOCP Project, which specifies the project boundaries, the sites included in the assessment, and the nature of the data needed for Validation/Verification as well as the applicable aOCP regulatory documents, the aOCP Methodology(ies), and the tool(s) used by the project.
b) Information about the Legal Owners, Project Proponents, their designated focal point and representatives, and any other parties involved in the identification, development, consultancy, and financing of the aOCP Project, as specified in the most recently signed *Letter of Authorization or Nomination*. This information shall include corporate identity, address, and contact information.
c) Scope of the Validation/Verification;
d) Contract period and the liability conditions.

VII.2. VALIDATION OR VERIFICATION CONTRACT

For the provision of validation/verification services, an aOCP Validator shall have a legally binding agreement with the designated focal point and representative(s) or any authorized registered and verified legal entity/organization. The signing counterparty is defined in accordance with the most recently signed "Letter of Authorization or Nomination". The contract shall be in the aOCP Validator/Verifier's name.

VII.3. SELECTION OF THE VALIDATION/VERIFICATION TEAM AND PERSONNEL

VII.3.1. VALIDATION/VERIFICATION TEAM

A validator for an aOCP may carry out a validation through its validation team. Whether made up of one or more people, the validation/verification team must aggregate all the competences (all knowledge and abilities) necessary to execute a validation/verification in accordance with aOCP

rules. A Validation/Verification Team generally refers to one or more qualified individuals performing a Validation/Verification activity and includes the following roles:

a) **Team Leader:** a competent individual selected to lead and oversee a team performing a validation or verification;

b) **aOCP Auditor**: is a qualified person appointed to audit Validations and Verifications performed by the team;

c) **Financial Expert:** is a skilled and capable professional who contributes relevant financial expertise, especially in Investment Analysis and understanding in a validation/verification team. To assess and verify project-related cash flow statements according to the cashflow waterfall, profit and loss statements, balance sheet, treatment of depreciation and accelerated depreciation, taxation, tax-shield, transfer pricing, and assessment of Investment Analysis including Capital Asset Pricing Models, the expert must have the necessary qualifications, skills, and at least five years of experience.

d) **Technical Expert:** is a qualified professional who provides relevant technical, methodological and sectoral knowledge and/or expertise in a validation/verification team.

The unbiased Technical Review of the Validation or Verification Report shall be carried out by a qualified individual (Technical Reviewer), independent of the validation/verification team.

The validation/verification team shall jointly possess the competence (all knowledge and skills) required according to ISO 14064-2, ISO 14064-3 and the aOCP Rules, and the ability to deploy such knowledge and skills to carry out a validation/verification. If necessary, an external technical/financial expert may assist the aOCP Validator/Verifier.

VII.3.2. TECHNICAL REVIEWS

In accordance with ISO 14064-2, ISO 14064-3 and aOCP, the validation or verification report produced by the validation/verification team shall be subject to a Technical review, independent of the validation/verification team. At least one technical reviewer who is not a member of the validation/verification team must be on the technical review team. A qualified individual chosen to perform the Technical Review and who will be a member of the Panel of Experts is referred to as a Technical reviewer.

VII.3.3. COMPETENCE OF VALIDATION/VERIFICATION AND TECHNICAL REVIEW TEAM

The competency necessary for third-party aOCP Validators/Verifiers to carry out an aOCP validation/verification, including the Technical Review, is depicted in Figure 4. All these competencies shall be demostrated prior aOCP approval of new Validators/Verifiers.
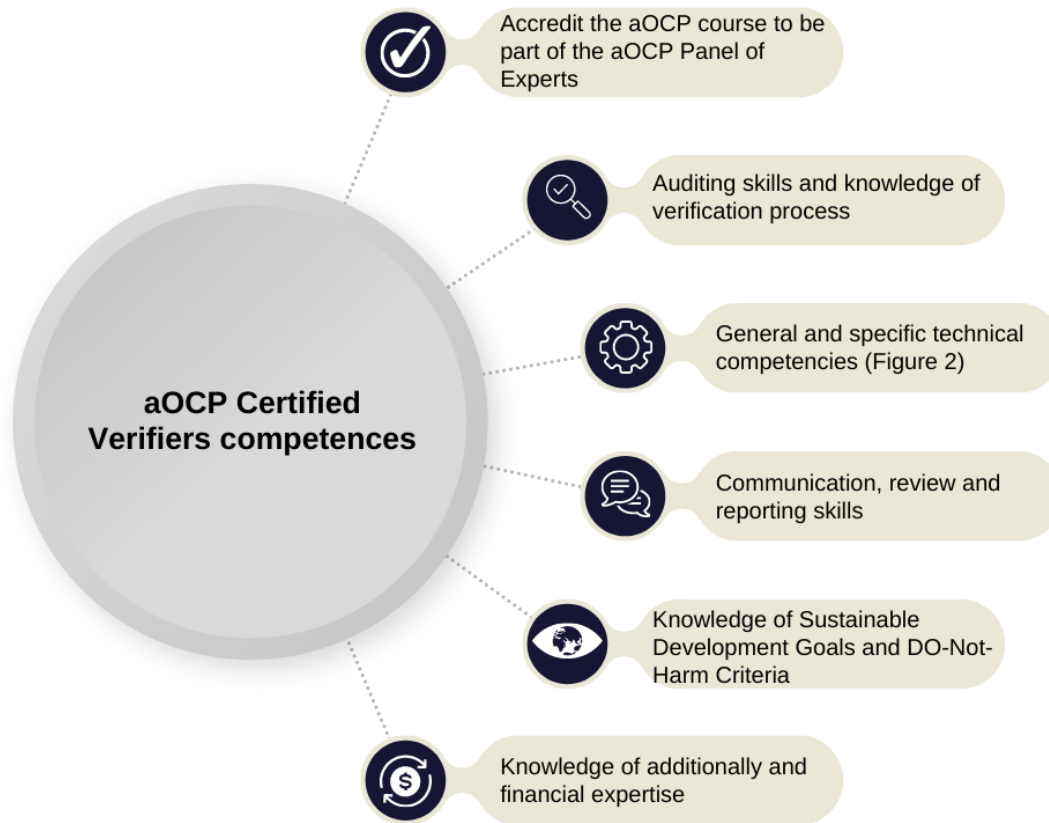
FIGURE 4. COMPETENCES REQUIRED FOR THE AOCP CERTIFIED EXPERT PANEL

DOCUMENT HISTORY		
Version	**Date**	**Comments**
V1.0	08/01/2023	● Initial version released for review by the aOCP Steering Committee under the aOCP Version 1.