



Terms of Reference for Green Marine-Accredited Verifiers

Green Marine Overview

Green Marine is a voluntary environmental certification program offering a detailed framework to measurably improve environmental performance for maritime industry stakeholders. Green Marine's diverse membership extends from small local businesses to multinational corporations across Canada and the United States. The program is broadly applicable, providing a scalable framework for implementing best management practices and benchmarking environmental performance. *Participants* in the certification program include ship owners, ports, marine terminals, shipyards, and Seaway corporations. Key issues are addressed through *performance indicators* and include:

- Air quality and climate change: greenhouse gases, sulphur oxides & particulate matter, nitrogen oxides performance indicators;
- Water and soil quality: aquatic ecosystems, spill prevention & stormwater management, dry bulk handling and storage, surface treatments and coatings, and oily discharge performance indicators;
- Biodiversity and sensitive habitats: aquatic invasive species, and underwater noise performance indicators;
- Community and social acceptability: community relations, community impacts (noise & vibrations, dust & air polluting air emissions, odour & nuisance wildlife, traffic, light and visual pollution, and potable water use), and environmental leadership performance indicators;
- Waste: waste management and ship recycling performance indicators.

Each participant must complete an annual self-evaluation using Green Marine's online tool, the Smart Guide. For each performance indicator, the score on a scale of 1 to 5 is reported to Green Marine. Level 1 represents regulatory monitoring, while Level 5 indicates leadership and excellence. The results are published and must be independently verified every two years.

Verification Requirements

Obtaining and maintaining program certification requires each participant to submit their self-evaluation for third-party verification every two years. External verifications may only be conducted by Green Marine-accredited verifiers. Participants must have their results verified by a Green Marine verifier within the first two years of joining the program to obtain their certification. The use of the Green Marine Certified logo depends upon the submission of verified results.

Verifier's Mandate

The mandate of Green Marine-accredited verifiers is to evaluate the adequacy of the participant's justification for the levels reported to Green Marine via the Smart Guide. Specifically, verifiers must:

- Evaluate the relevance and quality of the participant's justifications in their self-evaluation following the methodology defined in the verifier training;
- Where applicable, verify whether the participant has used appropriate methodologies and tools (such as those proposed by Green Marine in the annexes and/or other documents) to satisfy the program's requirements;
- Document the verification following Green Marine standards, ensuring all required information relevant to the verification has been provided. This includes, but is not limited to, participant information, verifier information, verification details, verifier observations and notes, verifier's agreement or disagreement with participant justifications, confirmation of verified levels, etc.

Verifiers are not required to verify compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations; however, participants must be able to demonstrate to the verifier that:

- There is someone responsible and resourced for the monitoring, interpretation, and application of regulations; and
- Concrete actions are taken to monitor regulations regularly to ensure a reasonable level of knowledge of its legal and regulatory obligations.

Verification Process

The verification process must follow these steps:

1. After completing and submitting their self-evaluation results using the Smart Guide, the participant must then indicate through the Smart Guide which verifier they hired. The selected verifier will then have access to the participant's completed self-evaluation(s) in the Smart Guide to review the justifications and documents attached. If necessary, the verifier can ask questions and request additional information from the participant.
2. The verifier is tasked to conduct a criterion-by-criterion check for:
 - New participant's first verification;
 - New levels claimed since the last verification;
 - New and revised criteria since the last verification; and

- Highest level achieved in each performance indicator.

Verifiers must review the justification provided for the above as well as any criteria claimed as non-applicable. Following this, verifiers should use a judgment and risk-based sampling approach with emphasis on inventories and the requirements of annexes.

3. An in-person meeting must take place between the participant's Green Marine primary contact and the verifier to review the self-evaluation results. During this meeting, the participant will be asked to provide an overview of their activities and facilities, responsibility and authority for environmental management, and other related environmental management system certifications. The participant may ask questions or raise concerns at any time.

For shipowners, where possible, a ship visit is encouraged during the in-person meeting. For landside participants, a site visit is mandatory during the in-person meeting to better understand the justification submitted.

In addition to meeting with the participant's Green Marine primary contact, the verifier may request to interview other relevant manager(s) and staff members.

4. To complete the verification process, the verifier will provide the participant with a verbal report of their results during the in-person meeting. Through the verifier module in the Smart Guide, the verifier will then confirm the participant's verified results to Green Marine a few days ahead of the verification deadline to allow some time for the participant to get its Summary Report Form(s) signed by senior management and uploaded and submitted in the Smart Guide by the deadline. Verifiers must ensure adequate information is entered in the Smart Guide, including clear reasoning for any level changes during the verification.

Verification Timeline and Verifier Rates

Verifications must take place between February and late April. The verification process begins as soon as the participant submits their self-evaluation for the previous calendar year to Green Marine. The self-evaluation submission deadline is always March 15, and the verification deadline is always the first Friday of May.

Green Marine strives to have all verified results submitted (as required every two years) by early May, in time for the publication of Green Marine's Annual Performance Report. Extensions to the verification deadline may be granted to participants by Green Marine under extenuating circumstances.

Participants must select an accredited verifier from the list on the [Green Marine Website](#). Green Marine follows an open-market approach allowing verifiers to set their own competitive rates. Participants are therefore encouraged to obtain a few quotes before choosing a verifier. The participant is responsible for timely payment to the verifier in accordance with the mutually agreed-upon fees and expenses, e.g., travel and accommodation.

Initial Accreditation

Qualifications and Competencies

Verifiers are selected by Green Marine for accreditation based on their experience and must meet the following minimum qualifications and competencies:

Experience	Qualifications	Competencies
Verification & environmental experience	Minimum: <u>certified</u> compliance or Environmental Management Systems (EMS) auditor and Minimum: five years of experience conducting compliance, EMS, or International Safety Management (ISM) audits and Minimum: experience conducting at least three audits within the past five years	Apply appropriate auditing principles, procedures, and techniques to the planning and execution of Green Marine verifications such that they are conducted in a consistent, professional, and systematic manner. Verify the accuracy, significance, and appropriateness of the justification provided.
Marine transportation experience – Shipping / Terminal / Port / Shipyard / Seaway Operations	Minimum: one year of experience within the marine transportation industry	Prior experience in the marine industry is required. <u>Examples of relevant fields of experience:</u> Navigation, ship design, ocean engineering, marine and port maintenance and operations, marine environmental management and planning, health and safety, inspection, auditing, consulting, training, etc.

Initial Training Requirements

To obtain Green Marine verifier accreditation, candidates meeting the minimum experience requirements must participate in a training session by conference call and pass a written competency exam to ensure their understanding of the program's principles, requirements, and verification standards.

Maintaining Verifier Accreditation

Annual verifier accreditation session

All verifiers must participate in an annual verifier accreditation session held at the beginning of each year. This mandatory annual session serves to refresh verifiers on the certification process and to review program updates.

Annual verifier debriefing session

All verifiers must participate in an annual verifier debriefing session held following the external verification deadline, once all quality control spot-checks have been completed. This session serves as a feedback-sharing opportunity between verifiers and Green Marine.

Administration Fees

Accreditation is subject to the following Green Marine fee structure:

Initial training Non-refundable charge to new candidates before training	*CAD/USD \$300
Annual verifier accreditation session Necessary to maintain accreditation	*CAD/USD \$100

*Currency depends on the primary address of the verifier

Conflict of Interest Clause

Verifiers are not permitted to conduct verifications for a participant if the verifier or any personnel employed by the same company as the verifier has done work for the participant related to the implementation of the Green Marine program during the previous two (2) years.

Quality Assurance & Quality Control

Quality assurance & control are essential components of the verification process and ensure that Green Marine verifiers are competent, consistent, and provide high-value verification services to participants.

The following external verification quality assurance and control procedures are in place at Green Marine:

1. Annual verifier accreditation sessions:

At the beginning of each year, verifiers must attend a mandatory update session by videoconference to renew their accreditation. Agenda items on these calls include, but are not limited to:

- Reviewing program processes, including certification, self-evaluation, and verification;
- Reviewing recent program updates;
- Clarifying criteria interpretation;

- When relevant, reviewing verification guidance documents, such as *Green Marine Verifier Terms of Reference*, *Verifier Code of Ethics*, *Verification Guide*, *Multi-site Verification Policy*, *Dispute Resolution Process*.
2. Verification shadow: Each Green Marine program manager attends at least one on-site verification meeting a year as observers, as circumstances allow, to enhance their understanding of the verifiers' approach to the verification process. This proactive measure is also intended to ensure the quality and rigor of the process. At the end of the verification shadow, the program manager will inform the verifier of any relevant comment or observation, including commendations and potential areas for improvement, where applicable.
 3. Spot-checking verifier modules in the Smart Guide:
Every year, a few verifiers must have one of their completed verifier modules reviewed by Green Marine with appropriate confidentiality ensured. Green Marine will inform the selected verifiers (and participants) before conducting the spot-checks for quality control.

A minimum of six verifier modules are reviewed each year from the Smart Guide: the three verifiers that conducted the most verifications will each have one of their verifier modules randomly checked. Of the remaining verifiers that conducted at least one verification that year, an additional three verifier modules will be randomly selected for spot-checking. Additional verifier modules in given conditions will also be reviewed:

- If a verifier is conducting its first Green Marine verification;
- If a verifier's prior spot-check from the past year resulted in any issues or inconsistencies;
- When needed, additional verifier module(s) may be randomly selected to ensure that the spot-check minimally includes one verification module for each of the activity sectors covered by the program: Ship owners, Ports & Seaway, Terminals, and Shipyards.

Verifier module spot-check process:

- Once the verification deadline has passed, Green Marine contacts the verifiers (and participants) selected for a spot-check to inform them that their completed verifier module in the Smart Guide will be reviewed .
 - Green Marine completes a spot-check report that is used to provide feedback to the individual verifiers under review. Green Marine then gets back to the verifiers with feedback, suggestions/recommendations for improvements, warnings, etc.;
 - General findings and feedback from the spot-checks are shared with all verifiers at the annual debrief session.
4. Annual verifier debriefing session: Each year, to conclude the quality assurance and quality control process, Green Marine organizes a meeting during which issues, comments, suggestions, and/or questions raised during the verification process are discussed at the end of the verification period. This mandatory meeting is also an opportunity for verifiers to share observations, comments, and feedback on their individual experiences.

It is incumbent on verifiers to answer or address any questions or concerns Green Marine raises about the verification process to Green Marine's satisfaction.

Final Discretion

All decisions related to verifier recruitment and training are subject to the discretion of the Green Marine.

Green Marine has the right to withdraw or suspend the accreditation of a verifier if they have misleadingly used the accreditation or has acted in a way that could harm the reputation of Green Marine, its program, or its members.