



IRMA Procedure for Oversight of Certification Bodies

VERSION 1.3

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Table of Contents

Responsibility for this Procedure	3
Versions Issued	3
About IRMA	3
1. Purpose and Scope	4
2. Effective Date	4
3. References	4
4. Terms and definitions	5
5. Roles and responsibilities	6
Table 1. IRMA oversight roles and responsibilities	6
Figure 1. IRMA high-level oversight program	7
6. General requirements	7
7. Scope of Approval	7
8. Certification Body application	8
9. Initial head office assessment	9
Figure 2. Assessment report timelines (calendar days)	11
Table 2. CB assessment findings and timescales for closure	11
10. Approval of the CB	12
11. Publication of approved CBs	12
12. Maintaining approval	13
13. Reapproval	15
14. Changes to CB scope	17
15. Auditor approval	18
16. CB sanctions	18
17. Auditor sanctions	20
18. Appeals	22
19. Fees	23
Table 3. CB application and oversight fees	23
Table 4. Estimated OB oversight assessment costs	23
APPENDICES	24
FORM 1—IRMA Certification Body Application	25
FORM 2—IRMA Scope Extension or Reduction Application	32
FORM 3—IRMA Auditor Application Form	34

Responsibility for this Procedure

The IRMA Secretariat holds responsibility for this document and its content.

Versions Issued

Version No.	Date	Description of Amendment
1.0	19 May 2022	First publication, after review by IRMA Board
1.2	31 May 2023	Removed reference to “certification,” updated fees
1.3	27 June 2023	Corrected erroneous dates (cover, footer, Form 2)

About IRMA

IRMA is the acronym for Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance, an independent not for profit organization. IRMA was founded in 2006 by a coalition of nongovernment organizations, businesses purchasing minerals and metals for resale in other products, affected communities, mining companies, and labor unions. IRMA seeks to improve the environmental and social performance of mining operations through the multi-stakeholder development of a set of best practice standards, as well as a system to independently verify implementation of those standards.

See www.responsiblemining.net for more information.

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1.

This procedure describes the general oversight process of IRMA. It specifies the requirements for Certification Bodies (CB) and auditors seeking to apply for and maintain IRMA approval to conduct conformity assessment activities, including granting IRMA verified levels of achievement. It covers processes such as CB and individual auditor application, maintenance, reapproval, scope extension and reduction, suspension, and withdrawal of approval.

1.2.

This procedure explains the duties and responsibilities of IRMA, the IRMA Assurance Committee, the third-party Oversight Body (OB) and CB during the approval cycle.

1.3.

Other applicable operational activities and responsibilities of IRMA and the OB are described in additional supporting procedures outlined in Section 3.1, including IRMA's Certification Body Requirements.

2. Effective Date

2.1.

This procedure becomes effective on 19 May 2022.

3. References

3.1.

The current and valid version of the IRMA standards, normative documents or guidance documents shall be the reference documents. The latest versions can be found on the IRMA website www.responsiblemining.net. Key documents include:

- 3.1.1. IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining
- 3.1.2. IRMA Certification Body Requirements
- 3.1.3. IRMA CB Application ([Form 1](#))
- 3.1.4. IRMA Scope Extension & Reduction Application Form ([Form 2](#))
- 3.1.5. IRMA Auditor Application ([Form 3](#))
- 3.1.6. IRMA-Certification Body Agreement
- 3.1.7. IRMA Assessment Checklist
- 3.1.8. IRMA Issues Resolution System Procedure
- 3.1.9. IRMA Communications and Claims Policy

3.2.

External normative documents include:

- 3.2.1. ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Conformity Assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Part 1: Requirements

4. Terms and definitions

The following defined terms are identified in the document with a dashed underline.

Appeal: Request for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by IRMA or an Oversight Body.

Approval cycle: Begins at or after the initial approval decision date or decision after a reapproval assessment and shall be no longer than five years. Before the end of a cycle, a reapproval assessment shall be conducted prior to the cycle expiration.

Approval decision: Decision on granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending, and withdrawing approval.

Assessment report: The report prepared by the OB following an oversight assessment.

Auditor: Person who conducts a conformity assessment.

Certification Body (CB): An organization that conducts conformity assessments and verifies an entity's level of conformity with IRMA's standards and requirements.

Conformity Assessment: Assessment to determine if specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person, or body have been fulfilled (ISO/IEC 17000:2004). For the purposes of this procedure, conformity assessments refer to assessments carried out by certification bodies related to the requirements in the IRMA Standards.

IRMA Assurance Committee: A committee convened and approved by IRMA to carry out certain assurance-related oversight activities (See Section 5).

IRMA Secretariat: Staff of the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) who are overseen by and work in service to the IRMA Board of Directors, with the objective of fulfilling IRMA's mission and vision. [NOTE: In this document, if not otherwise stated, reference to IRMA means IRMA Secretariat.]

Nonconformity (NC): The non-fulfillment of a requirement (ISO 9000:2015). Nonconformities are considered minor unless: 1) there is an absence or systemic failure of one or more elements of the CB management system or 2) there is repeated nonconformity or a nonconformity that persists over time. In scenarios 1 and 2, nonconformities will be considered major nonconformities.

Oversight: Assessment of an CB demonstration of competence to carry out specific assurance activities (modified based on ISEAL Assurance Code version 2.0). Oversight shall be carried out by IRMA and an IRMA designated Oversight Body (See Section 5).

Oversight Body (OB): Body responsible for performing the assessment and other oversight of CBs (modified based on ISEAL Assurance Code version 2.0).

Sanction: An action taken by IRMA in response to a failure by a CB or auditor to meet approval obligations (as per [Sections 17](#) and [18](#)).

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1.

IRMA's oversight program is in place to ensure the credibility, independence, and quality of IRMA assurance activities. To ensure the independence of its oversight program IRMA shall contract an independent oversight body (OB) to support the execution of the IRMA oversight program.

5.2.

[Table 1](#) sets out the key roles and responsibilities for oversight. [Figure 1](#) describes the approach to approve certification bodies (CB) and monitor their activities in the delivery of the IRMA assurance process.

Table 1. IRMA oversight roles and responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
IRMA Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review of CB application (for completeness) <input type="checkbox"/> Application review of auditors <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain records on auditor training and testing <input type="checkbox"/> Review of audit reports <input type="checkbox"/> Initial investigation of complaints/appeals
IRMA Assurance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Decide on approval of CBs <input type="checkbox"/> Decide on CB scope extension or reduction requests <input type="checkbox"/> Decide to sanction CBs and reinstate status <input type="checkbox"/> Decide to terminate agreement with CBs <input type="checkbox"/> Peer review of the first audit report from each CB, and potentially, a sample of audit reports thereafter <input type="checkbox"/> Review of complaints/appeals (where necessary)
Third-party Oversight Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review of CB application <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule and conduct remote, hybrid or onsite assessments (desk, head office and witness) of CBs <input type="checkbox"/> Issue Non-Conformities (NC) to CBs <input type="checkbox"/> NC review and closure <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations to approve, renew status or reject CBs

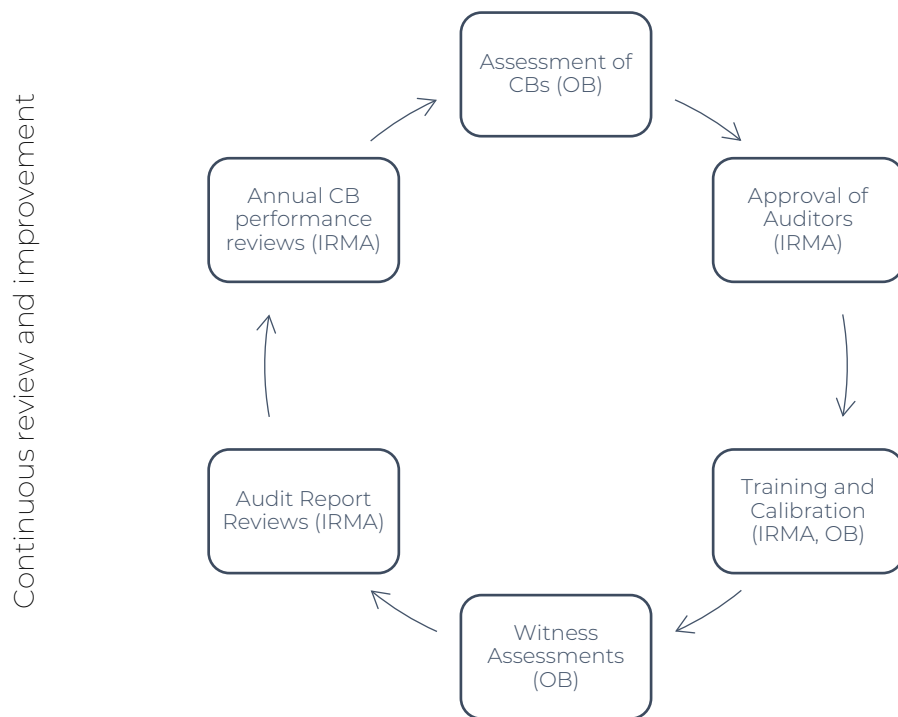


Figure 1. IRMA high-level oversight program.

6. General requirements

6.1.

Only CBs that are approved by IRMA may sign contracts with clients and refer to offering IRMA-approved independent, third-party conformity assessment activities. The IRMA Secretariat shall maintain a publicly available approved list of CBs with their full company name and address on the IRMA website.

6.2.

Only auditors that are employed or contracted by approved CBs and are approved by IRMA (See [Section 20–Auditor Approval](#)) may carry out IRMA conformity assessments. The IRMA Secretariat and the CB shall maintain a list of approved auditors that includes, at minimum, auditor name, contact details, CB affiliation and approval scope.

7. Scope of Approval

7.1.

The scope of approval refers to the area(s) of competence for which a CB's conformity assessment activities are covered by IRMA approval. The scope of approval shall include:

- 7.1.1. The IRMA standard(s).
- 7.1.2. Type of activities and/or commodities covered.
- 7.1.3. Type of sector (e.g., exploration, mining, refining, processing, manufacturing, trade).
- 7.1.4. Geographical area in which the IRMA conformity assessment activities occur.

8. Certification Body application

8.1.

A CB seeking to carry out conformity assessment activities for the IRMA assurance program will be required to meet the following criteria:

- 8.1.1. Be a legal entity;
- 8.1.2. Be accredited by an Accreditation Body that is a member of the International Accreditation Form (IAF) as follows:
 - ISO 17021 accredited with a relevant scope such as ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems) or ISO 45001 (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems)
 - ISO 17065 accredited for relevant areas such as construction or oil and gas products, personal protective and safety equipment or waste water treatment units by an Accreditation Body that is a member of the International Accreditation Form (IAF)
- 8.1.3. Commit to incorporating the IRMA Certification Body Requirements into its internal management system;
- 8.1.4. Ensure all auditors and key personnel who will manage or participate in the IRMA assurance program meet the mandatory qualifications in the IRMA Certification Body Requirements, and that auditors are approved by IRMA;
- 8.1.5. Sign an agreement with IRMA upon acceptance of the application;
- 8.1.6. Pay IRMA an application fee when invoiced (see [Section 19–Fees, Table 3](#)).

8.2.

Applicant CBs shall complete the IRMA CB Application Form and submit it by email to info@responsiblemining.net together with the documentation requested on the form. (See [Form 1](#))

8.3.

All information requested, including the application, and supporting documentation shall be completed in English.

8.4.

IRMA shall acknowledge receipt of the application and commence a screening of the application and supporting documents within 10 calendar days of receipt. Additional information and/or clarification may be requested from the applicant and, if not provided, an incomplete application may be rejected. If applications are complete, IRMA shall send the application to the OB. IRMA shall notify the applicant when the application has been forwarded to the OB for assessment.

8.5.

Within 30 calendar days of receiving the complete application, the OB shall evaluate the application package and recommend to IRMA to accept or reject the application.

8.6.

IRMA may reject the application or end the application process:

- 8.6.1. If at any time during the application or assessment process, there is evidence of fraudulent behavior;
- 8.6.2. If the applicant intentionally provides false information or conceals information;
- 8.6.3. If any known violation of laws and regulations by the CB would bring IRMA into disrepute;
- 8.6.4. If there is evidence of lack of compliance by the CB with local regulations and legal requirements in any country or region of operation.

8.7.

If the application is rejected, IRMA shall provide the applicant with a justification, and shall refund the portion of the fee meant to cover the cost of the OB evaluation. If a CB wishes to reapply for approval after a rejection, a new application shall be submitted, and a new application fee paid.

8.8.

Once IRMA has determined that an application from a CB is accepted, IRMA shall send the IRMA CB Agreement to the CB for signing. The Agreement shall be signed by the CB before the initial head office assessment can take place (see [Section 10–Initial head office assessment](#)).

8.9.

The CB shall inform IRMA in writing if during the application process the CB decides not to pursue approval and withdraws from the process.

8.10.

If there are significant changes to the CB's status or operations during the application process, IRMA may request that the applicant submit a new application.

9. Initial head office assessment

9.1.

Upon acceptance of the application, IRMA shall appoint a third-party oversight body (OB) to conduct a head office assessment of the CB. This assessment shall be conducted remotely unless IRMA deems it necessary to do an on-site assessment. Reasons to conduct assessments on-site can include but are not limited to CB size, geographical scope, areas of risk that have been identified by IRMA or the OB.

9.2.

The OB may send the IRMA Assessment Checklist to the CB for completion. The checklist will include the elements needed to demonstrate that IRMA Certification Body Requirements and other normative documents are met. If requested by the OB, the CB shall complete the checklist and return it to the OB together with supporting documentation prior to the commencement of the assessment.

9.3.

Upon receipt of the completed checklist and documentation, the OB shall provide IRMA and the CB with a budget and assessment plan prior to commencement of the assessment (see [Section 19–Fees](#)). The assessment shall be conducted once the assessment plan has been agreed by all parties and the invoice has been paid.

9.4.

The assessment shall include a review and evaluation of the implementation of the CB's management system and documented procedures to determine if the IRMA Certification Body Requirements and other normative documents have been met and the CB is competent to carry out the third party assurance activities.

9.5.

The assessment shall be conducted in accordance with the appointed OB procedures.

9.6.

The OB shall document findings using the definitions in [Table 2](#) and develop a draft assessment report following the reporting timelines in [Figure 2](#). The draft report shall undergo a technical review and be sent to IRMA and the CB within 15 calendar days of the closing meeting.

9.7.

The CB shall have 15 calendar days to file any errors of fact (EOF). EOF shall be managed according to the OB's procedures. The CB may inform the OB that there are no EOF prior to the 15-calendar-day deadline to progress with the process more quickly.

9.8.

Within five days of receiving confirmation from the CB that there are no EOF, the OB shall send a final assessment report to IRMA and the CB. If the CB submits an EOF, the OB shall send a final assessment report within five days of resolving identified EOF.

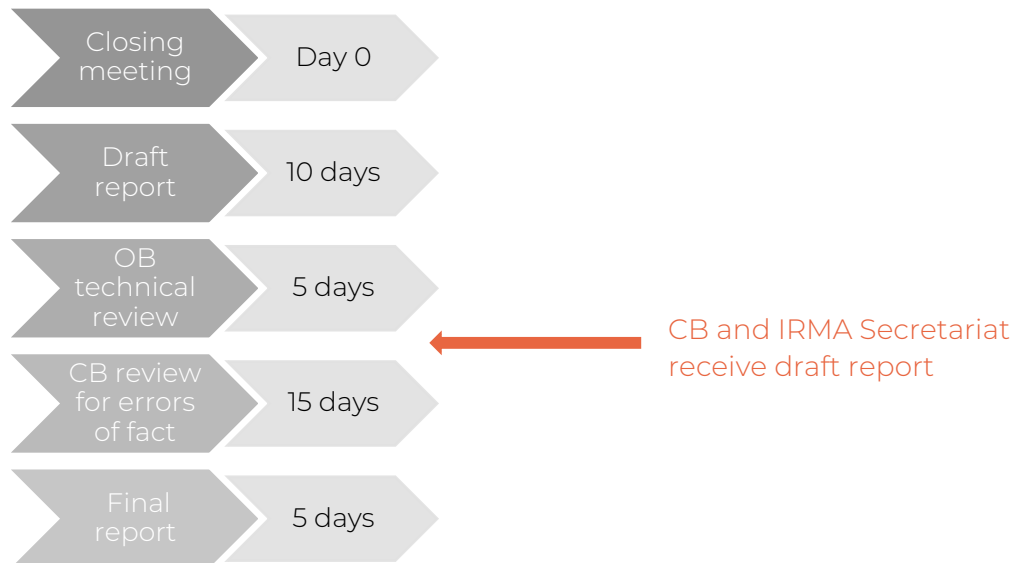


Figure 2. Assessment report timelines (calendar days)

9.9.

Following receipt of the final assessment report, the CB shall submit a corrective action plan to the OB within the timelines specified in Table 2. CBs shall carry out a root cause analysis to determine the cause and extent of the nonconformity and provide evidence of effective implementation of correction and corrective action for each nonconformity. If the CB submits an EOF, the timelines will be extended for submission of the corrective action plan, and closure for the relevant nonconformities.

Table 2. CB assessment findings and timescales for closure

FINDING	DEFINITION	TIMESCALE FOR CLOSURE
Minor nonconformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ A non-fulfillment of a requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Corrective action plan submitted within two months of receiving the final assessment report. □ Corrective actions fully implemented and closed within 12 months of receiving the final report.
Major nonconformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Absence or systemic failure of one or more elements of the CB management system. □ A repeated nonconformity or a nonconformity that persists over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Corrective action plan submitted within one month of receiving the final assessment report. □ Corrective actions fully implemented and closed within three months of receiving the final report.
Opportunity for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ A requirement has been met but there is room for improvement in performance or implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Not applicable

9.10.

The OB shall follow up and assess the effective closure of nonconformities according to their procedures. CBs are advised to submit all the information requested to enable the OB to determine an effective response.

10. Approval of the CB

10.1.

If, after the initial head office assessment, the OB verifies the closure of all major nonconformities, and a corrective action plan is in place to address minor nonconformities within 12 months, the OB shall prepare a report to IRMA, recommending approval.

10.2.

The IRMA Assurance Committee decides upon granting approval to CBs. (The Terms of Reference for the IRMA Assurance Committee and other relevant information are available on the IRMA website.)

10.3.

The following conditions shall be met for the IRMA Assurance Committee to consider granting approval to the CB:

- 10.3.1. Major nonconformities have been verified by the OB as closed (if applicable);
- 10.3.2. A corrective action plan is in place to address minor nonconformities (if applicable);
- 10.3.3. Demonstrated compliance with IRMA Certification Body Requirements, ISO 17021, and other normative documents;
- 10.3.4. All IRMA invoices have been paid.

10.4.

When all conditions have been met, the IRMA Assurance Committee shall convene and decide whether to grant approval to the CB, taking into consideration the OB's assessment findings and any recommendations from the OB and IRMA Secretariat.

10.5.

The IRMA Secretariat shall communicate the decision to the CB within seven calendar days of the committee meeting, including justification should the decision be to not grant approval.

11. Publication of approved CBs

11.1.

IRMA shall publish a list of all approved CBs on the IRMA website, including the following information:

- 11.1.1. CB name and contact information;
- 11.1.2. Approved scope;
- 11.1.3. CB status as approved, suspended or cancelled;
- 11.1.4. Approval expiration date.

11.2.

CB approval is valid for a period of five years unless a sanction has been applied (see [Section 16–CB Sanctions](#)). The CB shall apply to renew its approval before it expires (see [Section 13–Reapproval](#)).

11.3.

The approved CB shall ensure that all claims related to its approval status are within the scope of approval as outlined in IRMA’s Communications and Claims Policy.

12. Maintaining approval

12.1.

To ensure that an approved CB continues to operate in compliance with the IRMA Certification Body Requirements, ISO 17021 and other normative documents, IRMA shall monitor and evaluate the CB’s competence and conformity throughout the five-year approval cycle via oversight activities such as witness and office assessments, audit report and performance reviews (see [Figure 1](#)).

12.2.

An approved CB shall inform IRMA of any changes to its organization that may affect its approval scope, capacity, and competence to deliver the IRMA assurance program.

12.3.

Following the initial approval decision (see [Section 10](#)), both stages of the CB’s first IRMA conformity assessment shall be witnessed. Exceptions to the first conformity assessment being witnessed may be granted by IRMA only under exceptional circumstances. The IRMA-appointed third-party OB shall conduct the on-site or remote witness assessment of the CB’s conformity assessment activities according to its procedures.

12.4.

The OB shall provide IRMA and the CB with a budget and assessment plan prior to a witness assessment taking place (see [Section 19–Fees, Table 4](#)).

12.5.

The OB shall document findings using the definitions in [Table 2](#) and develop a draft assessment report following the reporting timelines in [Figure 2](#). The draft report shall undergo a technical review by the OB and be sent to IRMA and the CB within 15 calendar days of the closing meeting.

12.6.

The CB shall have 15 calendar days to file any errors of fact (EOF). EOF shall be managed according to the OB's procedures. The CB may inform the OB that there are no EOF prior to the 15-calendar-day deadline to progress with the process more quickly.

12.7.

Within five days of receiving confirmation from the CB that there are no EOF, or within five days of resolving identified EOF, the OB shall send a final assessment report to IRMA and the CB.

12.8.

Following receipt of the final assessment report, the CB shall submit a corrective action plan to the OB within the timelines specified in [Table 2](#).

12.9.

The CB shall carry out a root cause analysis to determine the cause of each nonconformity and provide evidence of effective implementation of correction and corrective action for each nonconformity. If the CB submits an EOF, the timelines will be extended for submission of the corrective action plan and closure for the relevant nonconformities.

12.10.

The OB shall follow up and assess the effective closure of nonconformities according to their procedures. CBs are advised to submit all the information requested to enable the OB to determine an effective response.

12.11.

For each witness assessment, the OB shall provide a conclusion in the assessment report as to whether the evidence from the assessment supports maintaining, suspending, or reducing the scope of the approval.

12.12.

The baseline assessment frequency is one witness assessment per year, and one head office surveillance assessment approximately two years after the approval or reapproval determination subject to demonstrated good performance and no significant changes to the CB operations. Significant changes might include, for example, an increased number of audited sites, scope changes such as new countries, and an increase in the number of approved auditors. Poor performance might be attributed to, for example, the number and type of findings from assessments, poor quality audit reports, complaints or incidents received, or unresponsiveness to IRMA requests.

12.13.

Over the course of the CB's five-year approval cycle, IRMA shall aim to witness the CB's performance on all types of IRMA conformity assessments (i.e., initial, surveillance and reassessment).

12.14.

IRMA shall conduct an annual CB performance review to determine the CB oversight plan for the following year based on the CB's performance and/or any significant changes over the previous 12-month period.

12.15.

The CB performance review shall consider all CB oversight assessment results including conformity assessment report reviews and other relevant information (e.g., reported complaints/incidents or changes to CB scope).

12.16.

The IRMA Secretariat shall submit the recommended oversight plan to the IRMA Assurance Committee for approval.

12.17.

The IRMA Assurance Committee shall review, approve, or alter the oversight plan.

12.18.

The IRMA Secretariat shall send the approved oversight plan to the CB prior to the start of the next year. The plan shall include a projected number of office and witness assessments.

12.19.

The location and timing of witness assessments shall be selected by IRMA, based on a set of criteria that may include:

- 12.19.1. New auditor or CB geographical scope;
- 12.19.2. Complexity of the site or assessment scope of the entity (e.g., mine site) applying for IRMA assessment or undergoing a surveillance or re assessment;
- 12.19.3. Reported complaints or incidents related to the CB or a participating site that require verification;
- 12.19.4. Areas of risk that have been identified by IRMA within the supply chain;
- 12.19.5. Logistical consideration and availability.

12.20.

IRMA may require additional oversight assessments as part of or outside of the oversight plan to address any heightened risk or allegations that pose an immediate threat to IRMA and/or the integrity of the IRMA assurance program.

12.21.

Upon receipt of a witness assessment request, the CB shall inform its client(s) (i.e., the site or entity applying for IRMA participation or undergoing an IRMA assessment) that a witness assessment of their IRMA conformity assessment will occur.

13. Reapproval

13.1.

A CB wanting to renew its approval for another five-year period shall reapply to IRMA by completing the CB Application Form ([Form 1](#)) at least six months prior to its current approval expiration date, and shall submit supporting documentation (if any processes or procedures have changed since the last submission).

13.2.

The objective of the reapproval assessment is to confirm the competence of the CB, evaluate the CBs management and certification systems in full, and renew the approval cycle.

13.3.

The reapproval process shall follow the initial assessment process ([Section 9](#)), whereby a head office assessment is conducted by the OB.

13.4.

All major nonconformities raised in assessments up to and including the reapproval head office assessment shall be closed and all minor nonconformities shall have a root cause analysis and planned correction and corrective action before reapproval can be recommended.

13.5.

Once all major and minor nonconformities are addressed as per requirement 13.4, the OB shall prepare a report to IRMA that includes key conclusions of the assessments carried out in the cycle and a recommendation related to reapproval. The process shall follow the steps in requirements 10.2 to 10.5 (see [Section 10–Approval of the CB](#)).

13.6.

If the approval cycle expires before the decision-making process can be finalized due to the CB's failure to demonstrate conformance with requirement 13.4, the CB approval shall be suspended by the IRMA Secretariat (see requirements 16.3 and 16.4) until the CB has demonstrated conformance with 13.4 and the reapproval process can continue.

13.7.

If the approval cycle expires before the decision-making process can be finalized for reasons beyond the CB's control, the CB approval will remain valid.

13.8.

If a major nonconformity raised during the reapproval assessment has been reported as an error of fact and is under investigation, the IRMA Assurance Committee review shall be postponed until the issue is resolved. The CB's approval will remain valid.

13.9.

If the IRMA Assurance Committee decides against reapproval, the IRMA Secretariat shall notify the CB within five calendar days of the decision, with justification and any next steps. CBs that fail to be reapproved shall not sign contracts with new IRMA clients. Conformity

assessments currently under way may be completed, but no new conformity assessments may commence.

13.10.

The CB may appeal the decision in accordance with [Section 18–Appeals](#).

14. Changes to CB scope

14.1.

If a CB wants to expand its approval scope to include additional standards, countries, etc., it shall provide a completed IRMA Scope Extension or Reduction Application Form ([Form 2](#)) and supporting documentation and email it to info@responsiblemining.net.

14.2.

A scope extension (or reduction) application may be evaluated:

- 14.2.1. During a regular head office assessment if submitted before the scheduled assessment; or
- 14.2.2. As a separate desk review conducted by the IRMA Secretariat and/or the appointed OB.

14.3.

Within 10 calendar days of receiving the extension application, the IRMA Secretariat shall share the information and make a written recommendation to the IRMA Assurance Committee. The IRMA Assurance Committee shall make the final decision whether to accept or reject the extension.

14.4.

The IRMA Secretariat shall inform the CB of the decision within five calendar days of the committee's decision and provide a justification where an application has been rejected.

14.5.

Where the scope extension has been approved, the IRMA Secretariat shall update the CBs scope records on the IRMA website.

14.6.

A CB may voluntarily reduce its scope by notifying IRMA in writing by completing the IRMA Scope Extension or Reduction Application Form ([Form 2](#)) and emailing it to info@responsiblemining.net.

14.7.

IRMA may also reduce a CB's scope based on evidence of lack of compliance from assessments or other sources such as substantiated complaints (see [Section 16–CB sanctions](#)).

15. Auditor approval

15.1.

Auditors seeking to carry out conformity assessment activities for the IRMA assurance program shall apply for approval from IRMA and shall meet the following requirements:

- 15.1.1. Be employed or contracted by an IRMA-approved CB;
- 15.1.2. Meet the IRMA auditor qualifications (see Annex A in IRMA Certification Body Requirements);
- 15.1.3. Complete the IRMA Auditor Application Form ([Form 3](#)) and email it to info@responsiblemining.net together with documentation requested;
- 15.1.4. Participate in mandatory training on the IRMA Standard(s) and assurance system and pass any testing requirements.

15.2.

All information requested, including the application and supporting documentation, shall be completed in English.

15.3.

IRMA shall acknowledge receipt of the application and conduct a screening of the application and supporting documents within 10 calendar days of receipt. If applications are incomplete, additional information and/or clarification may be requested from the applicant, and if supplementary information is not received the incomplete application may be rejected.

15.4.

If the application is rejected, IRMA shall provide the applicant with a justification. If an auditor wishes to reapply for approval after a rejection, a new application shall be submitted.

15.5.

The IRMA Secretariat shall decide whether to approve the applicant once all the requirements in 15.1.1-15.1.4 are met and shall notify the applicant of the approval status in writing.

15.6.

Once approved, the IRMA Secretariat and the CB shall enter the auditor's name, contact details and approval scope in their approved list of auditors.

16. CB sanctions

16.1.

If a CB fails to comply with the IRMA Certification Body Requirements, ISO 17021 and other normative documents or is/has been in breach of the terms of the IRMA CB Agreement, IRMA can impose sanctions on the CB.

16.2.

Sanctions can include:

- 16.2.1. A formal warning;
- 16.2.2. Additional monitoring (frequency or duration of assessments and/or oversight activities) at the expense of the CB;
- 16.2.3. Suspension of all or part of the scope of approval;
- 16.2.4. Withdrawal of approval.

16.3.

When a CB is suspended, it shall not sign new contracts with new IRMA clients. However, the CB may continue to conduct surveillance audits necessary to maintain existing achievement levels, and conduct reassessments not within the scope of the suspension (if the suspension is only applicable to a certain scope).

16.4.

The IRMA Assurance Committee shall decide on cases to suspend, lift suspension, or withdraw CB approval. For each decision the IRMA Secretariat shall prepare a report explaining the reasons leading to suspension or withdrawal, a justification for the decision, the conditions for lifting the suspension (if applicable) and any other relevant information.

16.5.

The IRMA Assurance Committee shall decide on the sanction within 10 calendar days of receipt of the report.

16.6.

Within five calendar days of the decision of the IRMA Assurance Committee, the IRMA Secretariat shall notify the CB of the decision and the sanction in writing. This shall include the effective date, duration (if applicable), reasons, scope and conditions, any actions required by the CB and the CB's right to appeal.

16.7.

The CB may appeal the decision to suspend approval. See [Section 18–Appeals](#). The suspension of approval shall not be made public by IRMA until the appeal period has expired or the appeals process has been completed, and the sanction has been confirmed.

16.8.

Once a sanction has been confirmed, IRMA will update the status of the CB on its website.

16.9.

Suspension shall be effective for a maximum period of six months.

16.10.

Suspension shall be lifted based on evidence that the causes that led to suspension and the conditions specified in the notice of suspension have been addressed and verified (where applicable via assessment).

16.11.

Failure to satisfactorily address the causes that led to suspension within the specified deadline can be grounds for initiating withdrawal of approval. The CB may apply for an extension to the suspension period in exceptional circumstances based on a clear justification.

16.12.

Upon confirmation of withdrawal of approval and termination of the IRMA CB Agreement the CB shall:

- 16.12.1. Immediately cease all IRMA assurance activities;
- 16.12.2. Submit to IRMA within 10 calendar days a list of all clients affected;
- 16.12.3. Submit to IRMA any audit reports due for submission from audits completed prior to the withdrawal of approval;
- 16.12.4. Inform all subcontractors, affiliates, and clients within 15 calendar days in writing of the withdrawal of the approval and its related implications;
- 16.12.5. Cease referring to IRMA approval status and discontinue to use the IRMA logo or trademarks (if applicable).

16.13.

When approval has been withdrawn this cannot be appealed or reinstated. If a CB wants to be approved in the future, it must apply for initial approval as per [Section 8–CB application](#).

16.14.

For a period of 24 months from the date of the withdrawal notification, IRMA may choose not to accept applications from a CB or a linked affiliate whose approval has been withdrawn.

17. Auditor sanctions

17.1.

IRMA reserves the right to suspend or withdraw the approval or part of the approval scope of individual auditors where there is evidence of misconduct and/or noncompliance with IRMA Certification Body Requirements and other normative documents.

17.2.

Suspension or withdrawal of scope can include country, sector, or IRMA Standard.

17.3.

Reasons for suspending auditors include but are not limited to:

- 17.3.1. Substantiated complaint about the auditor, including, but not limited to complaints related to a lack of impartiality;
- 17.3.2. Results indicating repeated low performance identified from oversight activities such as assessments or audit report reviews;
- 17.3.3. Failure to disclose conflicts of interest;
- 17.3.4. Repeated failure to comply with the IRMA Certification Body Requirements or other normative documents;
- 17.3.5. Failure to undertake and pass the IRMA mandatory training modules.

17.4.

Auditor suspension shall be effective for a maximum period of six months during which time the requested action(s) must be corrected.

17.5.

In addition to the items in requirement 17.3, reasons for withdrawing auditor approval include but are not limited to:

- 17.5.1. Serious or repeated deficiencies or nonconformities directly related to the auditor's performance and/or conduct;
- 17.5.2. Failure to address suspension and requested actions within six months;
- 17.5.3. An intentionally conducted act of fraud;
- 17.5.4. Inactivity of the auditor, where they have not conducted IRMA conformity assessments in the last two years and have not participated in mandatory or refresher training.

17.6.

The IRMA Secretariat shall make the decision whether to sanction auditors and shall notify the CB in writing of a sanction (suspension or withdraw) to be applied to an individual auditor and indicate the effective date, duration (if applicable), reasons, scope, conditions, any actions required by the CB and the CB's and auditor's right to appeal.

17.7.

Upon confirmation of suspension or withdrawal of auditor approval, the CB shall:

- 17.7.1. Inform the auditor;
- 17.7.2. Immediately cease all IRMA conformity assessment activities with the affected auditor;
- 17.7.3. Update the status of the auditor in the auditor approval list (see [Section 6- General Requirements](#)).

17.8.

To reactivate the auditor's approval status following a withdrawal of approval, the following requirements shall be met by the auditor:

- 17.8.1. Participate in at least one IRMA conformity assessment under the supervision of an approved lead auditor. The supervising auditor shall write a report on the auditor's performance, including a competence recommendation and submit the report to IRMA for review. IRMA may grant exceptions to this requirement if auditor approval was withdrawn due to inactivity (see 17.5.4) and not for reasons of poor performance or misconduct;
- 17.8.2. Complete the required training during the period of inactivity;
- 17.8.3. Any additional requirements determined by IRMA.

18. Appeals

18.1.

A CB or an auditor may submit an appeal to IRMA about findings, sanctions and decisions taken by IRMA or the IRMA Assurance Committee, unless stipulated otherwise.

18.2.

When an appeal is submitted and accepted by the IRMA Secretariat, the pre-appeal status of the CB or auditor shall be maintained until a decision is made.

18.3.

All appeals shall be submitted to the IRMA Secretariat in writing within 30 calendar days of receipt of the communication of the decision being appealed.

18.4.

To be accepted as an appeal, the submission shall:

- 18.4.1. Be submitted electronically by email to info@responsiblemining.net;
- 18.4.2. Be submitted in English including all supporting documents;
- 18.4.3. Contain a clear justification and evidence to substantiate the appeal.

18.5.

The IRMA Secretariat will review the appeal and decide within 10 calendar days to accept or reject the appeal and determine the actions to be taken, which can include:

- 18.5.1. Direct dialogue between the CB and/or auditor, IRMA, and OB (where applicable);
- 18.5.2. Review by the IRMA Assurance Committee; or
- 18.5.3. Review by an Ad Hoc Resolution Committee as per the IRMA Issues Resolution Procedure.

18.6.

Appeal reviews shall be completed within 60 calendar days from the date of the submission. During this period the timeline to address appealed nonconformities will be placed on hold. The nonconformity remains valid, pending finalization of the appeals process.

18.7.

The final appeal decision shall be communicated by the IRMA Secretariat to the CB or auditor.

19. Fees

19.1.

Approved and applicant CBs shall pay fees as shown in [Table 3](#) for applying for and maintaining IRMA approval.

Table 3. CB application and oversight fees paid to IRMA

ACTIVITY	FEE	NOTES
IRMA Certification Body maintenance fee	\$2,500 USD	Annual fee payable to IRMA
Training	TBD	

Table 4. Estimated OB oversight assessment costs paid to Oversight Body

ACTIVITY	FEE	NOTES
Initial applicant desk review Minimum days: 1.5	€ 1,425	Preparation, off-site evaluation, report writing and technical review
Head office assessment Minimum days: 2.4	€ 2,280	Preparation, off-site evaluation, report writing and technical review
Witness assessment Minimum days: 10.5	€ 9,975	Example: Oversight of stage 1 audit (2 days), stage 2 (6 days) with preparation, off-site evaluation, report writing and technical review (2.5 days)
Nonconformity follow-up (from office or witness assessments)	€ 495 -950	Varies based on number of NCs. If no NCs, this may be € 0.

APPENDICES

FORM 1—IRMA Certification Body Application

Applicants should refer to the IRMA Standards, Certification Body Requirements and Oversight Procedure to gain an understanding of the IRMA systems and Certification Body application requirements. All documents are available from the IRMA website www.responsiblemining.net.

Please complete all the relevant sections of this document, and that all information is provided in English. Completed applications must be emailed to the IRMA Secretariat info@responsiblemining.net.

1. General information
Date of application
Legally registered name of the applicant certification body (hereafter named applicant CB) that will perform the assurance activities. Including the trading or commercial name (if applicable).
Legal name
Commercial or trading name
Description of legal status and ownership
Please attach evidence of your legal status and summarize a breakdown of ownership.
Registered head office business address
Street
Zip/postal code
City
Country
Email
Telephone
Website
Billing address (if different to above)
Contact name
Street
Zip/postal code
City
Country
Email
VAT number (for EU and VAT registered companies only)

2. CB details

CEO (or another legal representative) name

Primary contact person (for the IRMA assurance program)

IRMA will address all correspondence concerning this application to this contact person

Full name

Job title

Telephone number

Email

Does the applicant CB have foreign entities or subsidiaries?

This includes foreign entities or subsidiaries carrying out activities related and unrelated to certification activities that are part of the scope of this application)

Yes

No

If yes, for each entity please describe:

What is the relationship of these foreign entities or subsidiaries with the applicant CB?

Are any of these entities or subsidiaries undertaking certification or consulting activities? If so, which activities?

What are the applicant CB's arrangements for managing certification activities undertaken by foreign entities and subsidiaries?

In what country or countries are these entities located? Are these entities or subsidiaries fixed locations or remote? Are the personnel fixed or remote?

Is the applicant CB an affiliate office (AO) of a CB that is already approved by IRMA?

Affiliate office refers to an organization/entity contracted by the approved or applicant CB to perform one or more IRMA assurance activities.

No

Yes. Indicate CB name

Does the applicant CB have one or more affiliate offices where assurance activities that are part of the scope of this application are performed?

In case of two or more AO please attach a list with all AO including the details indicated in the field below.

No

Yes. Provide details below

Name of the AO

Address of the AO

Countries where the AO operates

IRMA assurance activities conducted

Legal status of the AO

Indicate the anticipated number of CB employees, auditors, and subcontracted auditors (if applicable) who will work in the IRMA assurance program.

CB employees

CB employed auditors

Subcontracted auditors (if applicable)

What is the applicant CB office language and the language of the quality management system (QMS)?

Office language

Language of QMS

3. Applicant CB quality management system

Does the applicant CB have a governance body or bodies (e.g., certification committee, impartiality mechanism, board of directors) that ensures the integrity of its certification services? If so, please describe it or them.

Does the applicant CB employ, or have access to, sufficient human resources and technical expertise to carry out the IRMA assurance services?

Please provide a summarized description of the resources/personnel that will or can be allocated to the IRMA program.

Indicate how the applicant CB management system addresses general management system documentation (e.g., manual, policies, definition of responsibilities, control of documents/records, management review, internal audit, corrective actions, and preventive actions.)

Does the applicant CB have a quality manual? If yes, provide the quality manual in electronic form, as well as any additional documentation developed specifically for the IRMA assurance program (e.g., program manual, auditor handbook).

In some systems, a quality manual may be referred to as a management system manual.

No

Yes

4. Third party accreditations and services provided

Is the applicant CB accredited/approved by another accreditation body (e.g., national accreditation body or other)?

If yes, indicate by whom and for which accreditation scope, and provide the link or attach your certificates.

If no, then the application will be rejected.

No

Yes ISO 17021

Yes, another scheme. Please explain

Does the applicant CB offer or provide consultancy, training and other activities or services?

No

Yes. Please explain

5. Integrity

In the last 10 years, has your organization or its agents (beneficial owners, leadership team, staff, contractors, etc.) been accused of or investigated for allegations of fraud, corruption or any other illegal or unethical activity?

Please clarify any allegations or investigations involving your company or staff. This includes allegations or investigations into false claims, bribery, conflict of interest, social issues, or any fraudulent activity.

Note: Omitting any information about the company or staff history involving fraudulent or unethical activity which could impact the reputation or credibility of IRMA will result in the rejection of the application.

For the geographic scope(s) being proposed in Section 6, does the applicant CB need prior approval from legal authorities before it can undertake certification activities?

Applicant CBs are expected to understand the legal framework and operating environment(s) and comply with corresponding laws and procedures. In regions where legal prerequisites are in place (such as China), please provide copies of all documents verifying compliance. Applicants whose geographical scope includes China shall also submit:

- CNCA registration or evidence of being in the process of registration.
- Business license, evidence of resources registered with CSCA, results of CB internal audit and contract between the applicant CB and the affiliate office.

Note: lack of verifiable documentation confirming compliance with all legal authorities may result in the rejection of the application.

Does the applicant CB have any policies and/or procedures in place to ensure ethical and responsible business conduct?

Provide copies of any company policy and/or procedures responsible for corporate social responsibility and ethical behavior (this can include a company code of conduct, whistleblowing procedure, or any other internal systems designed to prevent fraud, corruption, and ensure responsible business conduct).

6. Scope of application

Please tick the scopes for which the applicant CB is applying.

Standards

IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining

Sector scope

Mining

Geographical scope of application

List the countries or regions in which the applicant CB seeks to provide IRMA third party assessments.

7. Documents to be included in your application

In addition to materials mentioned above, please provide the following documents when submitting your application:

Mandatory:

- Evidence of professional indemnity insurance.
- Evidence of legal status (e.g., certificate of registration, extract of commercial register.
- List of affiliate offices (if applicable).
- Valid accreditation/approval certificate(s) for ISO 17021.
- Most recent National Accreditation Body ISO 17021 assessment report.
- Quality management system (or equivalent) documentation.
- Evidence of competency for the technical scope (this can be supplemented by auditor audit logs or IRMA auditor applications).
- Evidence of sufficient organizational capacity and auditing experience for the geographical scope(s).

Recommended:

- Specific documents for the IRMA assurance program.
- Other accreditation/approval certificate(s) or relevant links.
- Prior approval from national authorities.
- Policies and/or procedures to ensure ethical and responsible business conduct.

8. Applicant CB agreement

Please review, tick and sign to confirm your understanding and agreement with the following conditions:

<p>A. That at this stage IRMA only evaluates the eligibility of the CB to become an applicant CB. This evaluation does not guarantee that the CB shall be accepted as an official applicant. If accepted as an applicant by IRMA, the parties will sign an IRMA CB Agreement. The acceptance of the CB as an official applicant for the IRMA assurance program is at the discretion of IRMA. The CB agrees that IRMA shall not be obliged to grant the status as an official applicant for the IRMA assurance program.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>B. That in case my application is rejected IRMA can, at its discretion, define and impose a cooling-off period until a new application for approval can be submitted.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>C. To accept the full fees for application processing as specified in the IRMA Oversight Procedure in its most recent version as published on the IRMA website. The CB agrees that the initial application screening fee will not be reimbursed if the application is rejected during the screening process, and the full application fee will not be reimbursed if the application is rejected after OB review.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>D. To continually fulfil the IRMA Certification Body Requirements and other normative documents and to provide evidence of such fulfilment.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>E. For both parties to guarantee confidentiality of business and personal information, as relevant. To treat all information received during the application as confidential to the extent that such information is not already published, generally available to third parties or otherwise in the public domain.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>F. That collection and processing of personal data detailed within this form and at any other time during the application process is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by IRMA regarding evaluating and processing this application for approval.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>G. That personal data disclosed to (or gathered by) IRMA as part of the application process may be retained by IRMA throughout the application process and – if applicable – throughout approval and oversight activities until the CB requests that it be removed or their working relationship with IRMA is no longer active.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>H. That any dispute arising in relation to this application shall be settle in accordance with the laws of Washington State, United States.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Authorized IRMA representative

Authorized CB representative

Signature

Signature

Name and title

Name and title

Date

Date

FORM 2—IRMA Scope Extension or Reduction Application

IRMA applicant or approved certification bodies shall complete this application to extend (or reduce) their application or approval scope. Applicants applying for a scope extension shall ensure that IRMA grants its approval prior to conducting any assurance activities for the extended scope.

Please complete all the relevant sections of this document and ensure that all information is provided in English. Completed applications must be emailed to the IRMA Secretariat info@responsiblemining.net

1. CB details

Date of Application

Name of CB

Contact information (for primary contact person for the IRMA assurance program)

Full name

Job title

Telephone number

Email

2. Technical Scope

Please tick the scopes that the applicant CB wants to extend (or reduce).

Standards

IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining

IRMA Chain of Custody Standard (Not relevant in 2023)

Sector scope

Mining

Exploration (Not relevant in 2023)

Mineral Processing (e.g., Refining, Smelting) (Not relevant in 2023)

3. Geographical scope extension (or reduction)

Indicate the requested countries and regions in which the CB seeks to conduct IRMA third party audits and has evidence of competence and experience.

4. Documents to be included in your application

Please provide the following documents when submitting your application for scope extension:

Mandatory for scope extension:

- Evidence of competency for the technical scope (this can be supplemented by auditor audit logs or IRMA auditor applications).
- Evidence of sufficient organizational capacity and auditing experience for the geographical scope(s).

Applicants wanting to extend geographical scope to include China shall also submit:

- CNCA registration or evidence of being in the process of registration.
- Business license, evidence of resources registered with CSCA, results of CB internal audit and contract between the applicant CB and the affiliate office.

Authorized CB representative

Signature

Name and title

Date

FORM 3—IRMA Auditor Application Form

Individual auditors who are employed or contracted by an applicant or IRMA approved certification body shall complete this application to apply for approval to conduct IRMA audits.

Applicants should refer to the IRMA Standards, Certification Body Requirements and Oversight Procedure to gain an understanding of the IRMA systems and application requirements. Additionally, auditors shall review the IRMA minimum auditor qualification requirements in the IRMA Certification Body Requirements to ensure they qualify for approval. All documents are available from the IRMA website www.responsiblemining.net

Please complete all the relevant sections of this document and ensure that all information is provided in English. Completed applications must be emailed to the IRMA Secretariat info@responsiblemining.net

1. Auditor details
Date of application
Full Name
Country of residence
Email address
Working languages
Name and address of IRMA applicant/approved certification body
Full company name
Street
Zip/postal code
City
Country
Relationship with IRMA applicant/approved certification body
Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Subcontracted <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Scope of application
Please tick the scopes for which that the applicant auditor is applying.

Standards

IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining

Sector scope

Mining

Geographical scope of application

List the countries or regions in which the applicant CB seeks to provide IRMA assurance activities.

3. Auditor qualifications and experience

Education

Highest level of education

University degree (if any)

Other relevant education Professional experience in a relevant field

Auditor training and qualifications

Please attach certificates for all completed training.

ISO 19011

ISO 14001

ISO 50001

ISO 14064

ISO 45001

ISO 31000

SA 8000

APSCA

Sedex SMETA

Other, please provide details

Relevant auditing experience

Please provide details on the role (observer, auditor, lead auditor), number and type of audit that the applicant auditor has participated in within the past three years that are relevant to the scope of application. This information can be submitted in a separate audit log.

Relevant professional experience

Please provide details of relevant experience in the following areas:

Cultural heritage

Cyanide management

Free, prior, and informed consent

Emergency Preparedness and Response

Human rights due diligence	Environmental modelling, sampling, and monitoring (air, noise, greenhouse gas emissions)
Labor and working conditions	Environmental and/or biodiversity management
Mining in conflict-affected areas and OECD due diligence	Environmental and/or social impact assessment
Occupational health and safety	Mine waste management
Resettlement	Mine reclamation, closure, and financial assurance
Revenue and payments transparency	Water resources management
Security and human rights	
Stakeholder engagement	

Other (please provide details)

Knowledge or experience of relevant social and environmental laws, agreements, conventions, treaties, guiding principles

The applicant auditor has successfully completed IRMA mandatory training

Yes No

If yes, date of training

Knowledge of IRMA standards and normative documents

4. Details of past/current consultancy services

Please indicate if you have provided consultancy services to mining companies/sites in the past three years

Yes No

If yes, please provide details on the type of consultancy provided

5. Documents to be included in your application

Please provide the following documents when submitting your application:

Mandatory:

- CV or resume that highlights relevant mining-related experience, relevant auditing experience, and training or experience related to the topics areas you feel qualified to audit.
- Training/qualification certificate(s) for those referenced in this application.

- Professional registration(s) e.g., IRCA, APSCA.

Recommended:

- Audit logs for the past two years, at minimum, containing audit date, audit type, country, role of auditor, sector, and certification program, if relevant. More logs may be provided, e.g., to demonstrate additional areas of competency or additional mining-related audits.

6. Declaration of applicant auditor

Please review, tick and sign to confirm your understanding and agreement with the following conditions:

A. The applicant auditor hereby applies to become an IRMA approved auditor based on the information supplied in this application.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. If the application is rejected by IRMA, that IRMA can, at its discretion, define and impose a cooling-off period until a new application for approval can be submitted.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. The applicant auditor will continually fulfil the IRMA Certification Body Requirements and other normative documents and, upon request, provide evidence of such fulfilment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. The collection and processing of personal data detailed within this form and at any other time during the application process is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by IRMA regarding evaluating and processing this application for approval.	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. The personal data disclosed to (or gathered by) IRMA as part of the application process may be retained by IRMA throughout the application process and – if applicable – throughout approval and oversight activities until the auditor requests that it be removed or their working relationship with IRMA is no longer active.	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. The applicant auditor is not currently engaged in any activity which would be likely to bring IRMA into disrepute.	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Auditor approval may be suspended or withdrawn by IRMA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If there is a failure to comply with IRMA normative requirements; b. If the auditor’s actions or omissions do, or threaten to bring IRMA into disrepute in any way; or c. As a result of the outcomes of a complaint/incident process. 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Auditor Signature

Auditor Full Name

Date

