

PROCESS OF RECOGNITION OF FAIRMINED CERTIFICATION AND AUDIT BODIES

Any auditing firm that wishes to be recognized by ARM to audit and certify Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Organizations (ASMOs) in compliance with the Fairmined Standard, must ensure that it complies with what is described in this document.

The recognition process consists of the following steps:

- The audit firm gathers all the information requested by ARM with its respective annexes and sends them to cert@responsiblemines.org
- The ARM Standards and certification's area performs an evaluation of the processes and characteristics of the firm, and of the auditors who would be responsible for matters related to the Fairmined Certification.
- Once the evaluation process is completed, it is passed to the selection committee formed by the Management of ARM and the area of Standards and Certification. Then, the decision is to define if the firm is recognized for conducting Fairmined audits. This process is formalized with the signing of an agreement between the firm and ARM.
- The persons assigned to manage the Fairmined processes within the firm and the auditors must complete the Fairmined Training Program and update themselves continuously on the changes or materials related to the Fairmined Standard.
- Once the process is completed, ARM will make public the recognition of the audit firm and will directly inform the ASMOs in the process of certification or recertification.

1. Profile of the audit firms

As minimum requirements, the audit firms must demonstrate that they are legally constituted and have the experience and qualifications necessary to provide a service with high quality to the ASMOs regarding the evaluation and certification of the requirements of the Fairmined Standard.

Therefore, it is essential that the audit firm guarantees to:

- Take the necessary measures to ensure that a consistent, rigorous, efficient, impartial and transparent service is provided.
- Respect the procedures indicated on the Fairmined Certification.
- Maintain fluent communication with the ARM Standards and Certification Area.
- Provide spaces for auditors and evaluators to receive training on the Fairmined Standard and other topics necessary to carry out the audits.
- Understand the main characteristics of the ASM sector.

- Have the necessary skills to perform physical and documentary checks under excellent quality, as well as interviews without compromising the validity of the information.
- Adopt the improvements suggested by ARM after evaluations.
- Ensure that its personnel use appropriate and respectful language towards all members of the ASMOs and the mining communities.
- Be free of conflict of interest to provide service to the ASMOs.
- Confirm that all the personnel of the audit firm commit to keep absolute confidentiality about the private information obtained during the audits of the ASMOs.

1.1 Compliance with legal and technical aspects

The audit firms must be legally constituted according to the legislation of the country where they are located and provide ARM with the corresponding supports.

Additionally, they must demonstrate that they have the experience and capacity to provide a service that is consistent, rigorous, impartial and transparent.

Following the practices of the Code of Assurance of the social and environmental standards of ISEAL it is necessary that the audit firms have support of accreditations that certified its operations and it establishes applicable generic requirements for those certification bodies that perform the audit and certification in the field of quality management systems, environmental management and other types. The most common certifications: ISO 17065: 2012 and ISO 17021: 2015

1.2 Application format Submission of documentation

To initiate the recognition process to audit and certify the ASMOs in compliance with the Fairmined Standard, the audit firm must send to ARM the Application Form for Fairmined audit firms with the following annexes:

- Contact information: Address, city, country, telephone, website, email, contact person,
- Institutional curriculum: mission, vision, experience, portfolio of services and any other type of information that is relevant to present to the firm.
- Legal constitution of the company: Registration before the competent authority and updated tax register.
- Organizational chart, composition of the team and assignment of those responsible.
- Accreditations and certificates of ISO Quality guarantees (if it has another complementary accreditation, it is motivated to be presented).
- Presentation of resumes of auditors and the evaluators that would be assigned for the Fairmined audits and certifications.
- List of all the Standards that audit and certify with their respective contact references (name, email address, path, telephone number) and date of accreditation as audit entity in said scheme, in order to verify the experience and suitability of the audit firm.

- Contact information of 5 of your partners and clients as reference: name, email address, telephone.
- Procedures, manuals or standardized protocols they have for audits and certifications.
- Appeals and complaints procedure.
- Arbitration procedure.
- Sanctions policy.
- Contract format with clients.
- Satisfaction format of the service provided to clients.
- Certificate format.
- Table audits cost fees and certifications services.

2. Profile of the auditors and the evaluation team

Once the ARM Standards and Certification area has evaluated and approved the application form for Fairmined audit firms with their annexes, clarification meetings and individual interviews with the firm's team are carried out. The objective of the individual interviews will be to understand the vision of the firm and to evaluate the personal, academic and work competences to carry out the audit and certification processes with the ASMOs. To carry out these evaluations, a format designed by ARM will be used.

Individual interviews will be conducted with management personnel, auditors and evaluators. For more details, consult the document Procedures for Fairmined Certification.

The auditing firm must present the updated resumes (with academic and labor supports) of the auditors and evaluators to ARM in order to evaluate their professional and technical skills to be Fairmined auditors.

In the interview processes, the following criteria are evaluated:

- Alignment with the spirit of the Fairmined Standard, the principles of the responsible ASM and the sustainability axes of the ASM (theory of change of ARM)
- Interest in evaluating the ASMOs with a development focus
- Training in social sciences, engineering, environmental, related. It is valued considerably, training in mining, metallurgy, environmental and industrial issues.
- Specific experience in carrying out audits and certifications in sustainability standards for small producers and in social responsibility. Experience in related areas such as audits in responsible production, quality management, environmental issues, labor issues, etc. is valued. The experience in gold mining is especially valued, and even more in artisanal and small-scale mining.

It is suggested the conformation of a Fairmined audit team that has technical experts in mining and experts in social issues.

Specific skills and competences in:

- Deep knowledge of the requirements of the Fairmined Standard
- Knowledge of gold and especially artisanal and small-scale mining
- Use of computer systems, including Office software, email Management and information management
- Data analysis, reporting
- Excellent oral communication skills in the language used by their clients.
- High level of organization, time management, planning and efficiency.
- English/Spanish proficiency.

The person wishing to assume the role of auditor in the Fairmined Standard must have the following personal skills:

- Objective and professional
- Insightful in asking the questions
- High analysis capacity and attention to detail
- High level of concentration
- Persistent and focused on achieving the objectives
- Ability to capture details and make decisions based on evidence
- Acuteness to identify aspects to be improved
- Receptive and observant attitude
- Transparency and responsibility
- High level of impartiality and ethics
- Appropriate treatment for people and pedagogical capacity
- Willing to consider other points of view and perceptions
- Collaborative and easy to establish relationships
- Ability to adapt to different situations

3. Signature of agreement between ARM and the audit firm

The Selection Committee will be responsible for analyzing the information received and the results obtained in the process of analyzing the information and interviews.

If it is concluded that the firm meets the requirements requested, an agreement is signed between ARM and the audit firm and the planning of the training schedule in the Fairmined Standard. This agreement details the responsibilities of both parties and the conditions under which ARM recognizes the firm.