



## **Assessment Manual for Assessment Bodies**

**Version 1.1**

**Operating Within the Certification Scheme for  
THE CRADLE TO CRADLE CERTIFIED™ PRODUCTS PROGRAM**

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## ASSESSMENT MANUAL FOR ASSESSMENT BODIES REVISION HISTORY

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# **1 General**

## **1.1 Purpose**

This manual is designed to establish a framework of standardized procedures for Assessment Bodies operating within the Certification Scheme of the Cradle to Cradle Certified Products Program, which is administered by the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute (C2CPPI).

While it is incumbent upon the C2CPPI to establish foundational policies to ensure uniformity in conducting assessments, this document is also designed to allow for creative latitude in developing continual improvement plans consistent with the spirit and intent of Cradle to Cradle® concepts to transform products.

## **1.2 Language Requirement**

All documentation developed and utilized in the processes delineated in this manual shall be in English.

# **2 Normative References**

Certification Scheme for the Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Products Program

Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Product Standard, V3/0

Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Material Assessment Methodology

Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Banned Lists of Chemicals

Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute Certification Standards Board Policy and Procedures for Appeals

Manual for Certification Bodies Conducting Certification Audits Within the Cradle to Cradle™ Certified Certification Scheme

Policy for Certification Extension within the Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Product Certification Scheme

Policy for Manufacturers to Maintain Product Certification Compliance Within the Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Certification Scheme

### 3 Definitions

**Assessment Body (AB):** An entity accredited by the C2CPH to conduct assessments sufficient in scope and rigor to support a certification decision based on the standard.

**Accredited Assessor (AA):** An individual trained by the C2CPH to conduct Cradle to Cradle product certification assessments under the auspices of an accredited AB. The individual may be accredited to conduct full assessments or assessments limited to specific categories of the standard.

**Certification Body (CB):** An entity accredited by the C2CPH to perform conformity audits, render certification decisions, and issue certificates based on the standard in accordance with the principles of ISO 17065.

**Certification Scheme Owner (Scheme Owner):** The Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute (C2CPH).

**Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Standard (the ‘standard’):** The governing standard that serves as the basis for all Cradle to Cradle product certifications.

**Evaluation:** Activity leading to a recommendation and certification decision.

**Report:** The written basis containing data and information sufficient to render a measurable, consistent, and viable basis for a certification recommendation or decision.

**Review:** CB internal peer review to ensure quality, consistency, and accuracy of a report.

**Certification Decision:** Action taken by a designated qualified individual to render a decision regarding certification, based on a report.

**Re-certification:** The process defined in the policies and procedures of the C2CPH for continuing certification beyond the initial certification period.

**Surveillance:** Oversight of a certification by a CB throughout the duration of the certification period.

### 4 Qualifications

1.1 An AB shall be accredited in accordance with the C2CPH Policy and Procedures for Accrediting Certification Bodies.

1.2 Or, an AB shall be provisionally accredited under the process for Provisional Accreditation defined by the C2CPH.

## **5 Assessment Process**

### **5.1 Application**

5.2.1 An AB shall have an application process in place that makes initial engagement with the Cradle to Cradle product certification process clear, convenient, and efficient.

5.1.2. Application form: The AB shall have an application form in a format consistent with its quality control procedures or quality system that captures sufficient information to make a thorough and accurate proposal to a client seeking Cradle to Cradle product certification.

### **5.2 Proposal**

5.2.1 The AB shall prepare a proposal consistent with its quality control procedures or quality system that presents a clear and accurate delineation of the Cradle to Cradle product assessment process, including estimates for a timeline and associated fees.

5.2.2 The AB shall negotiate with the applicant to clarify the assessment process and finalize fees, leading to a decision regarding engagement in the assessment process.

5.2.3 The AB and client shall execute a legally binding assessment agreement.

## **6 Assessment**

6.1 The AB shall devise an assessment plan and present it to the client.

6.2 The AB shall obtain sufficient data to conduct an assessment.

6.3 The AB shall assess the data in accordance with the standard by qualified personnel.

## **7 Reporting**

### **7.1 The Report**

7.1.1 The assessor shall write a report based on findings of the evaluation. The report shall be in a C2CPH-approved format, and contain sufficient detail and data to support a certification recommendation.

7.1.2 If warranted by the evaluation, the report shall include detailed Opportunities for Improvement (OFI). An OFI is based on the informed opinion of the assessor. It shall

relate directly with issues that may enhance a client's current conformance with the standard.

7.1.3 An OFI requires only acknowledgement by the client in the form of a plan to address the issue. An assessor may withdraw an OFI if the client can demonstrate that it is impossible to enact the improvement in the context of its operations, which otherwise conform to the standard. OFIs can also be withdrawn if the client can demonstrate its enactment shall have undue negative consequences in other aspects of its operations, which conform to the standard. Economic impacts may also be considered, but absent other considerations are not alone sufficient to warrant the withdrawal of an OFI, unless the magnitude is so great it seriously compromises the financial viability of the client's enterprise.

7.1.4 If warranted, the report shall include nonconformity reports (NCR). Nonconformities are of two types: major and minor.

(a) A major nonconformity is sufficient to deny certification, and must be corrected before further consideration of certification can occur. A corrective action plan must be presented and adhered to by the client in order for the certification process to move forward. Certification cannot be granted until a major NCR is closed.

(b) A minor nonconformity is one that is not in strict accordance with the standard, yet on its own is not sufficient to deny certification. A minor nonconformity requires a detailed corrective action plan with a specific timeline for achieving closure of the NCR. Certification may be withdrawn by a CB if a minor nonconformity is not closed by the agreed upon means within the agreed upon timeframe.

7.2.3 The report shall be peer-reviewed by qualified AB personnel. The peer reviewer need not be a Cradle to Cradle Accredited Assessor. In this stage the report shall be corrected, modified, amended, or enhanced if necessary.

7.2.4 The assessor creates the final draft of the report.

7.2.5 The final draft is approved by a Cradle to Cradle Accredited Assessor.

7.4.3 The final draft is sent to the client.

7.2.6 The client responds to the report's findings, recommendations, and required actions. If there are OFIs and NCRs, these must be addressed by the client in accordance with the AB's policies and the C2CPII's requirements for certification. These action plans shall become part of the report, which shall be returned to the AB with the required responses included.



7.2.7 The AB shall determine if the client's action plans to address OFIs and NCRs are sufficient to warrant consideration for a certification recommendation.

### **7.3 Certification Recommendation**

7.3.1 When the AB determines the report is complete; the certification recommendation is made by a Cradle to Cradle Accredited Assessor and included in the final version of the report. The drafter and the reviewing approver of the report sign it and send it to the client.

7.3.2 If the recommendation is negative, the assessment process stops. At this point a client would have these options:

- (a) Accept the recommendation and make no further efforts to certify.
- (b) Accept the recommendation and, using the report's findings, make changes that would make certification possible.
- (c) Dispute the recommendation within the policy defined in section 6 of this document.

7.3.3 If the recommendation is for certification, the client signs the report, indicating agreement with its findings and requirements for certification. The report is then returned to the AB.

7.3.4 The AB sends the completed and executed report to a CB.

## **8 Certification Decision**

8.1 The CB shall review the report for completeness.

8.2 The CB shall evaluate the report.

8.3 The CB shall render a certification decision based on its evaluation of the report. A product is not certified until the CB issues a final positive certification decision.

## **9 Disputes, Complaints, Appeals**

9.1 If there is a dispute or complaint at any stage of the assessment process, resolution should first be sought within the context of the AB's policy for dispute resolution.

9.2 If a client and AB are unable to resolve a dispute or complaint, the C2CPH shall be called upon to address the matter. The resolution of the dispute or complaint by the C2CPH shall be final.

9.2 Appeals of certification decisions is the sole domain of the CB

## **10 Re-certification**

10.1 The assessment process for re-certification shall be substantially the same as the initial assessment, using current data and process information.

10.2 The assessment for re-certification shall be conducted in accordance with the current version of the standard, as well as all C2CPH interpretations and guidance in place at the time re-certification is initiated.

## **11 Confidentiality and Security**

### **11.1 Confidentiality**

11.1.1 The AB shall have adequate methods and practices in place to ensure information essential to certification evaluation shall remain confidential.

8.1.2 Confidential information shall be held in accordance with the quality policies of the AB and the terms of any legally binding agreement between the AB and the client.

11.1.3 By mutual agreement, clients and ABs shall be made aware certain confidential information shall be shared with the CB and C2CPH when such information is deemed essential to render a certification decision, provide oversight guidance, or serve as accreditation documentation. The confidentiality of this information shall be maintained through the C2CPH's and CB's quality systems and legally binding agreements with the C2CPH and CBs.

11.1.4 At no point prior to the announcement of a positive certification decision shall an AB or the C2CPH make or allow for any public acknowledgment that a client is engaged in the assessment process. Negative certification decisions shall remain strictly confidential. With certain exceptions granted by the C2CPH, a client may be allowed to make public mention of its engagement in the assessment process, but may not under any circumstances imply certification is guaranteed or imminent.

### **11.2 Security**

11.2.1 The AB shall have adequate methods, practices, and mechanisms in place to ensure the security of all confidential information in its possession.

11.2.2 The AB shall have policies in place to address the personal security of its employees who are conducting standard assessments.