



RESPONSIBLE  
JEWELLERY  
COUNCIL

# ACCREDITATION

Process and Criteria

APRIL 2024

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# THE RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY COUNCIL

The Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) is a not-for-profit standard setting and certification organisation founded in 2005.

Our vision is a responsible world-wide supply chain that promotes trust in the global fine jewellery and watch industry.

The RJC Process and Criteria for the Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies and Auditors details the process conformity assessment bodies (CABs) and auditors can utilise to apply for and conform with the requirements of RJC in order to obtain accreditation.

The official language of this document is English. All / any translations of this document should revert to the original English version for clarification.

This is a 'living document' and the RJC reserves the right to revise this document based on implementation experience and emerging good practice. Please refer to the RJC website to ensure that you have the latest version: [www.responsiblejewellery.com](http://www.responsiblejewellery.com)

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## Enquiries or feedback

The RJC welcomes comments and feedback from all stakeholders on this document, this can be submitted at any time to:

Email: [assurance@responsiblejewellery.com](mailto:assurance@responsiblejewellery.com)

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The RJC will make all efforts to resolve any issue or grievance regarding this document in an impartial and documented manner. If you wish to register a complaint, please refer to the RJC Complaints Mechanism on the RJC website.

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Please see the RJC website to ensure this is the latest version.

The Responsible Jewellery Council is a trading name of the Council for Responsible Jewellery Practices Ltd, 1st Floor, 11 Gough Square, London, EC4A 3DE, UK.

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All our documentation is in the process of being rebranded. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this time.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

The credibility of RJC certification hinges on the quality and independence of third-party Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and auditors. It is essential that the RJC can satisfy itself that CABs and their auditors have appropriate experience and competence to manage RJC certification audits in a competent, consistent, impartial, transparent, and credible manner for RJC members.

This document specifies the procedure for CABs applying for, renewing, changing scope of and maintaining their RJC accreditation. This procedure is aligned with relevant requirements outlined in ISO 17011<sup>1</sup> and the ISEAL Assurance Code<sup>2</sup>.

## 1.2 SUPPORTING REFERENCES

The following documents provide additional information:

- **RJC Accreditation Contract**
- **RJC Assessment Manual** - includes instructions for members and auditors on how to conduct certification audits to establish conformance with the RJC standards.
- **RJC Complaints Mechanism** - defines the process for how the RJC will respond to complaints and appeals from members, auditors and external stakeholders.
- **RJC Governance Handbook**
- **RJC Oversight Assessment Checklist**
- **Rules for use of the RJC Logo, Trademarks and Intellectual Property**

### RJC Code of Practices (COP)

- **RJC COP** - the mandatory RJC standard which defines responsible ethical, human rights, social, and environmental practices.
- **RJC COP Standards Guidance** - provides general information and advice for RJC members to help them implement the RJC COP, may also be used by auditors to understand the requirements of COP provisions.
- **RJC COP Self-assessment** - a tool used by members for evaluating their company's performance against the RJC COP.

### RJC Chain-of-Custody Standard (CoC)

- **RJC CoC Standard** - voluntary standard which defines an approach for members to handle and trade gold and platinum group metals in a way that is fully traceable and responsibly sourced.
- **RJC CoC Standards Guidance** - provides general information and advice for RJC members to help them implement the RJC CoC, may also be used by auditors to understand the requirements of CoC provisions.
- **RJC CoC Self-assessment** - a tool used by members for evaluating their company's performance against the RJC CoC

These documents are publicly available from the RJC website [www.responsiblejewellery.com](http://www.responsiblejewellery.com)

1 ISO, ISO/IEC 17011:2017 Conformity assessment – Requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Conformity Assessment Bodies (2017) <https://www.iso.org/standard/67198.html>

2 ISEAL Alliance, Assuring Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards: ISEAL Code of Good Practice [Assurance Code] (2018) [https://www.isealalliance.org/sites/default/files/resource/2018-02/ISEAL\\_Assurance\\_Code\\_Version\\_2.0.pdf](https://www.isealalliance.org/sites/default/files/resource/2018-02/ISEAL_Assurance_Code_Version_2.0.pdf)

## 1.3 APPLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

CABs and their auditors can only conduct certification audits of RJC members to the RJC COP and the RJC CoC Standards if they have a valid Accreditation Contract with the RJC and a valid accreditation status. Figure 1 illustrates the RJC accreditation process.

From the date of its publication, this procedure applies to:

- All new CABs applying for RJC accreditation
- All new auditors, whether part of an existing RJC accredited CAB or a new CAB
- Existing CABs and auditors.

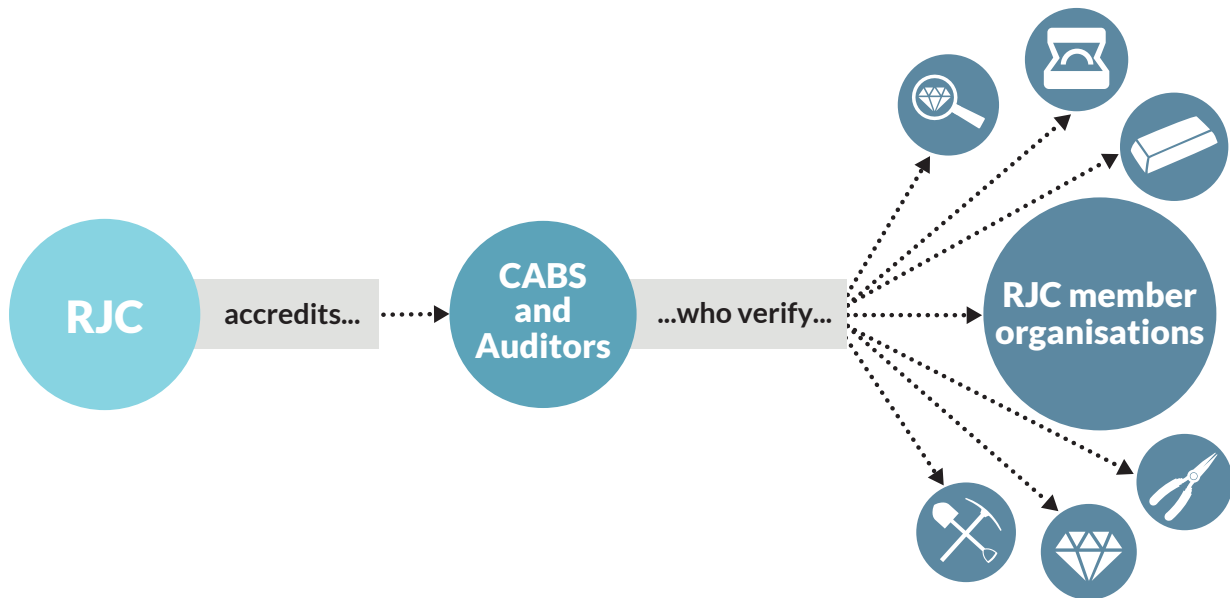


Figure 1. RJC accreditation process

## 1.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information submitted by CABs in respect of RJC accreditation will be kept strictly confidential by the RJC and the RJC's appointed third party assessor. Information will be used solely for the purposes of accreditation and oversight.

# 2 GENERAL ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

## 2.1 ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

The RJC accepts applications for accreditation from CABs who are a legal entity that performs auditing and certification services operating anywhere around the world. CABs must inform the RJC of all sites where audit services occur or may occur and demonstrate their conformance to:

- ISO 17021<sup>1</sup>
- RJC accreditation criteria (see [Section 2](#) and [Appendix 1](#))
- RJC Assessment Manual

This can be demonstrated by:

- Current ISO 17021 accreditation by a national accreditation body to ISO 17021 for certification of management standards of at least one (most current publication) of the following:
  - ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems
  - ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems
  - ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety, and
- Documented evidence that demonstrates conformance with the requirements of ISO 17021, submitted to the RJC, and reviewed by the RJC's third-party assessor, and
- Completed Oversight Assessment Checklist, submitted to the RJC, and reviewed by the RJC's third-party assessor.

As the RJC scheme is not a management-standard that is accredited by a national accreditation body under ISO 17021, CABs are required to implement and maintain documented processes (in manuals and/or procedures) that describe how the following requirements taken directly from ISO 17021 are managed in relation to the conduct of RJC audits as outlined in the RJC Assessment Manual (available on the RJC website):

- 4.2 Impartiality
- 4.3 Competence including how the RJC programme manager identifies, plans and conducts training to maintain the competence, knowledge and skill set of individual auditors (training may include external, internal and/or on-the-job training)
- 4.5 Openness
- 4.6 Confidentiality
- 4.7 Responsiveness to complaints
- 4.8 Risk-based approach
- 5.1 Legal and contractual matters
- 5.2 Management of impartiality
- 5.3 Liability and financing
- 6.1 Organisational structure and top management
- 6.2 Operational control
- 7.1 Competence of personnel
- 7.2 Personnel involved in certification activities
- 7.3 Use of individual external auditors and external technical experts
- 7.4 Personnel records
- 7.5 Outsourcing
- 8.4 Confidentiality
- 9.1 Pre-certification activities

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1 ISO, ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Conformity Assessment – Requirements for Bodies Providing Audit and Certification of Management Systems – Part 1: Requirements (2015) <https://www.iso.org/standard/61651.html>

- 9.2 Planning audits
- 9.3 Initial certification
- 9.4 Conducting audits
- 9.6 Maintaining certification
- 9.7 Appeals
- 9.8 Complaints
- 9.9 Client records
- 10.2 Option A: general management system requirements; or
- 10.3 Option B: management system requirements in line with ISO 9001

CABs must ensure that all audit programme managers, lead auditors and auditors conducting audits to the RJC Standards or managing the RJC scheme within their operations meet the mandatory competency and qualification criteria outlined in Appendix 1 (see [Appendix 1](#)) and have received training (see [Section 3](#)).

CABs that do not meet the above mandatory criteria will not be eligible for RJC accreditation which means they will not be able to conduct RJC certification audits. Similarly, CABs that cease to meet the above mandatory criteria will be suspended or have their accreditation withdrawn (see [Section 7](#)).

Auditors who do not meet the accreditation criteria (see [Appendix 1](#)) or have not undergone RJC training and equivalent on-the-job training (see [Section 3.2](#)) may not conduct RJC certification audits. Similarly, auditors that cease to meet the accreditation criteria (see [Appendix 1](#)) will be suspended or have their accreditation withdrawn (see [Section 7](#)).

## 2.2 SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION

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The CAB shall conduct its auditing operations according to their scope of accreditation and in conformance with the requirements specified within the accreditation criteria (see [Appendix 1](#)). Accreditation scope shall include the RJC Standards, sectors in the jewellery supply chain and countries in which the CAB has the ability to conduct RJC audits. This includes the experience, qualifications and competency of the CABs auditors.

### 2.2.1 RJC STANDARDS

The scope must indicate one or both RJC Standards:

- **RJC COP:** covers responsible business practices, at the level of the business. All commercial members of the RJC are required to be audited by accredited, third-party auditors to verify their conformance with the COP, and thus achieve RJC member certification within two years of joining the RJC.
- **RJC CoC:** provides requirements for responsibly sourced jewellery materials produced, processed and traded through jewellery supply chains. CoC certification is voluntary for RJC members and can be audited in conjunction with a COP audit, or after the member has achieved certification to the COP, not before.

### 2.2.2 SECTORS

The below scope includes member fora that CABs shall clearly indicate within their application when they are seeking accreditation:

- Diamonds and Coloured Gemstones Miner
- Diamond and Coloured Gemstones Trader
- Diamonds and Coloured Gemstones Cutter and/or Polisher
- Precious Metals Miner
- Precious Metals Refiner
- Precious Metals Hedger and/or Trader
- Jewellery and Watch Manufacturer and/or Wholesaler
- Jewellery and Watch Retailer
- Service Industry

### 2.2.3 GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

CABs must be able to demonstrate which countries the CAB is able to conduct RJC certification audits based on:

- The countries included in the CAB's ISO 17021 accreditation scope; and
- The countries in which the CAB has auditors with relevant experience for that country, or in exceptional circumstances region experience may also be considered (see [Appendix 1](#)).

For example, if a CAB holds ISO 17021 accreditation in countries A, B and C but only has auditors with relevant auditing experience in countries A and B, only countries A and B are eligible for RJC accreditation. The CAB may expand its RJC accreditation geographical scope to include country C when it has individual auditors with relevant auditing experience in country C.

## 2.3 CHANGES TO SCOPE AND CAPACITY

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CABs must inform the RJC of any changes to its organisation that may affect the CAB's accreditation scope, capacity and competence to conduct RJC audits.

This includes changes to personnel (auditors, RJC programme managers and contractors), geographic location and status of existing accreditation to ISO 17021 or other management system certification schemes such as (ISO 14001, SA 8000, ISO 45001 and ISO 9001).

The CAB may also apply at any time to have its accreditation scope expanded, where it can demonstrate the ability to do so.



# 3 TRAINING

The CAB must ensure that all RJC audit programme managers, COP and/or CoC lead auditors and auditors meet the competency and qualification criteria within the RJC accreditation criteria (see [Appendix 1](#)).

## 3.1 RJC SUPPLEMENTED TRAINING

The CAB must ensure that all audit programme managers, lead auditors and auditors conducting RJC certification audits against the RJC Standards complete mandatory RJC training modules and associated assessments within 2 months from accreditation and are confirmed as passed by RJC, **before any audits are carried out**. Failure to obtain confirmation will invalidate the results of the audit.

A list of RJC auditor training modules and assessments can be accessed on the RJC website. Access may be restricted, therefore, only a CAB and auditor who has applied for RJC accreditation may be granted access, login details will be provided.

RJC training modules will cover:

- The RJC Standards
- The RJC audit and certification process
- Topic and sector specific modules
- Refresher modules and updates when there are changes to the RJC system, interpretations of the RJC Standards or to address results from oversight/audit report monitoring
- Other relevant topics may also be covered.

Training shall be offered primarily online via electronic learning tools, in person round tables may also be organised.

For more information on training email: [training@responsiblejewellery.com](mailto:training@responsiblejewellery.com)

## 3.2 ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

For applicant auditors/lead auditors, CABs shall implement a period of on-the-job training whereby the applicant auditor attends at least three RJC COP (at least one of these must be CoC if this will form part of the auditor's scope) audits within a consecutive three-year period under the direct supervision of an RJC accredited lead auditor. The following criteria apply:

- At least one audit shall be an initial or re-certification audit;
- At least one audit shall be a desktop or onsite mid-term review or surveillance audit;
- At least two audits, the auditor in training shall be an active member of the audit team, with a clearly defined role, under the direct supervision of a lead RJC accredited auditor and must have successfully completed the training modules before taking an active part in the audit. Under no circumstances, applicant auditors/lead auditors can be alone on a site.

As a rule, all team members in the overall audit must be fully RJC accredited if they are auditing alone at any site.

During all three audits a supervising qualified auditor shall attend (be present and oversee the applicant auditor's activity), and a report, including a competence recommendation by the supervising auditor, must be made available to the RJC and third-party assessor, upon accreditation application.

For applicant CABs where one or two auditors/lead auditors will be applying for accreditation for the first time, on-the-job training shall take place for the first three audits conducted by them and supervised by a qualified (non-RJC accredited) lead auditor or the RJC programme manager. As above, a report, including a competence recommendation by the supervising auditor, must be made available to the RJC and third-party assessor.

This option should be used for new / inexperienced auditors to support their application. It can also be used for experienced auditors, should they wish to use this option, before they apply to become RJC accredited.

## 3.3 ONGOING EVALUATION OF COMPETENCY

In line with the requirements of ISO 17021 7.2, a CAB must witness their RJC auditors/lead auditors at least once every four years, with a supervision report including a competence recommendation by the qualified supervising auditor, these reports must be available to the RJC and third-party assessor for oversight purposes upon request.

## 3.4 AUDITOR CALIBRATION

Calibration can be an effective tool for exchange and learning between CABs, auditors and the RJC for improving consistency of interpretation of the RJC Standards and the audit process.

The RJC hosts virtual (in person where possible) calibration meetings, at least one CAB representative, either the RJC audit programme manager or auditor are required to participate.

# 4 ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The six general steps that apply to RJC accreditation are:

1. Application by a CAB
2. Assessment by the RJC and a third-party assessor
3. Training of a CAB's auditors and programme managers
4. Accreditation decision by RJC of CABs and auditors
5. RJC publication of accredited CABs
6. Oversight of CABs by the RJC and a third-party assessor

## 4.1 APPLICATION

CAB applicants shall submit to the RJC a completed RJC Accreditation Application Form, RJC Oversight Assessment Checklist and RJC Accreditation Contract (to be provided by the RJC). All documentation, including supporting documentation shall be submitted in English. If this is not possible, additional translation costs may apply.

Upon receipt of a fully completed application and supporting documentation, the RJC will invoice for the application fee (see [Section 12](#)). Upon receipt of payment, the RJC will then refer the application form and supporting documents for review to a third-party assessor with appropriate experience to conduct a document review of the application and the applicant CAB. The review shall be completed within 30 days from payment of the invoice. The CAB may be required to respond to requests for clarification, information, etc., which may cause the review to go beyond 30 days.

Based on the document review conducted by the RJC and/or its nominated third-party assessor, the applicant CAB shall be informed of the findings. The results of the assessment will include either of the following outcomes:

- The applicant CAB may proceed to the head office assessment (see [Section 7](#)).
- Further information or action is required before the head office assessment can proceed.
- The CABs application will be invalidated in cases where it's not possible for the CAB to comply with the RJC accreditation criteria.

The applicant CAB shall respond to any requests for clarification, additional documents or information requested by the RJC/ third-party assessor within 30 days of the request.

Should the applicant CAB not respond to a request within two months, the RJC shall consider they no longer wish to pursue with their application. The RJC will notify the CAB that the application has been withdrawn and they will be required to reapply to the RJC if they wish to pursue RJC accreditation in the future. Previous payment of invoices is non-refundable.

## 4.2 HEAD OFFICE ASSESSMENT

The RJC will appoint a third-party assessor to conduct on-site and/or desktop assessments: this may be carried out onsite or remotely, and will be agreed between the RJC and third-party assessor in advance. The CAB will be provided with an estimated budget and assessment plan in advance of the assessment taking place.

All third-party head office assessments will be conducted in accordance with the appointed third-party assessor's procedures.

The CAB must confirm they agree with the estimated budget and assessment plan. Once confirmed, the RJC will issue an invoice for the full estimated assessment fee. This invoice must be paid by the CAB **before** the assessment can go ahead. Any remaining fees (e.g. expenses) will be payable once the assessment has been completed.

An assessment report containing the findings of the assessment, will be sent to the RJC and CAB within 10 working days of the assessment.

The follow up and closure of assessment findings will be managed by the appointed third-party assessor according to their procedures.

CABs have the right to appeal a non-conformity and/or the assessor's decisions within 30 days of submission of the final audit report (see [Section 10](#)).

In cases where an applicant CAB does not satisfactorily address all non-conformities within a period of 12 months, the RJC will withdraw their application.

# 5 ACCREDITATION DECISION

Applicant CABs shall not conduct the following before they receive RJC accreditation:

- Advertise their status as RJC accredited.
- Use the RJC logo and other intellectual property.
- Sign agreements with RJC member clients or book/conduct any RJC audits.

## 5.1 APPROVAL BY THE RJC ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

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The RJC Assurance Committee decides upon granting accreditation to CABs, information on the committee and their terms of reference can be found in the RJC Governance Handbook available on the RJC website.

The following conditions must be met for the RJC Assurance Committee to consider granting accreditation:

- All the requirements for accreditation (within this document) have been met;
- A signed Accreditation Contract is in place;
- Major non-conformities have been closed (if applicable);
- A corrective action plan to address minor non-conformities has been provided and agreed by the RJC and third-party assessor;
- All invoices have been paid.

Once all the conditions are met the RJC Assurance Committee will convene and decide upon whether to grant accreditation to the applicant CAB.

The accreditation decision shall be communicated to the CAB, including justification should the decision be to not grant accreditation.

When accreditation is granted, the CAB will be added to the list of RJC accredited CABs on the RJC website, including their applicable accreditation scope. CABs shall only carry out auditing services within their accreditation scope.

## 5.2 VALIDITY OF RJC ACCREDITATION

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RJC accreditation is granted for five years (the accreditation cycle). RJC reserves the right to suspend or withdraw accreditation during this period if CABs do not carry out their duties appropriately or otherwise impair the quality and credibility of RJC certification during the accreditation cycle.

# 6 OVERSIGHT

In line with ISO 17011 and the ISEAL Assurance Code, the competence and consistent performance of CABs must be periodically reviewed as part of having an effective oversight mechanism.

Upon RJC granting accreditation to an applicant CAB, a witness assessment shall take place within one year of the accreditation being issued.

The ongoing monitoring of accredited CAB performance will be carried out using three main mechanisms:

1. A remote or on-site head office assessment every two consecutive years
2. An annual witness assessment
3. Audit report reviews

The cycle of assessments is established by a set of criteria (see Figure 2), CABs will be evaluated and assigned a tier once they have undergone an initial head office and witnessed assessment. CABs may move amongst the tiers throughout their five-year accreditation cycle depending on their performance and number of RJC clients.

	Audits conducted per year		Major conformities raised		Minor conformities raised
<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>50</b> or more	and/or	<b>5</b> or more		N/A
<b>Tier 2</b>	between <b>6-49</b>	and/or	<b>4</b> or fewer	and/or	<b>6</b> or more
<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>5</b> or fewer	and/or	<b>0</b>	and/or	<b>5</b> or fewer

Figure 2. Assessment criteria

Oversight per tier is applied across a CABs five-year accreditation cycle (see Figure 3).

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Tier 1	Witness	Witness	On-site head office Witness	Witness	On-site head office Witness
Tier 2	Witness	Witness	Remote head office Witness	Witness	Remote head office Witness
Tier 3	Witness	None	Remote head office	Witness	Remote head office

Figure 3. Oversight assessment cycle

The RJC reserves the right to conduct additional oversight assessments if deemed necessary, reasons can include a need to verify the effectiveness of implemented corrective actions or potential non-conformities that have been identified through audit report reviews or complaints received by the RJC. In all cases a justification shall be provided.

## 6.1 WITNESS ASSESSMENTS

The RJC will appoint a third-party assessor to conduct witness assessments, these will be conducted in accordance with the appointed third-party assessor’s procedures.

An RJC member audit will be selected for the witness assessment based on a set of criteria:

- a. New auditor or new CAB country of operation
- b. Complexity of a member’s operation
- c. Complaints or incidents of a CABs potential non-conformity that have been identified from oversight activities  
e.g. RJC audit report reviews
- d. Areas of risk that has been identified by RJC within the jewellery supply chain
- e. Logistical consideration and availability

Approval will be sought from the member before a witness audit is conducted. Matters relating to commercial confidentiality will also be addressed prior to the conduct of a witness assessment.



CABs will be provided with an estimated budget and assessment plan in advance of the assessment taking place. The CAB must confirm they agree with the estimated budget and assessment plan. Once confirmed, the RJC will issue an invoice for the full estimated assessment fee. This invoice must be paid by the CAB **before** the assessment can go ahead. Any remaining fees (e.g. expenses) will be payable once the assessment has been completed.

An assessment report containing the findings of the assessment will be sent to the RJC and CAB within 10 working days.

The follow up and closure of assessment findings will be managed by the appointed third-party assessor according to their procedures.

## 6.2 OVERSIGHT ASSESSMENT FINDINGS AND TIMESCALES FOR CLOSURE

CABs can be issued with findings such as a minor non-conformance, major non-conformance or opportunity for improvement during oversight assessments.

Finding	Definition	Timescale for closure	Implications if deadline surpassed
 <b>Minor non-conformance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CABs operations perform in a way that does not wholly conform to the RJC accreditation criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corrective actions proposed within three months of date identified.</li> <li>Fully implemented within 12 months of date identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgraded to a major non-conformance</li> </ul>
 <b>Major non-conformance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete failure to fulfil an RJC accreditation requirement</li> <li>Absence or a breakdown of a critical element of the CABs management system (e.g. internal audits, qualification of auditors)</li> <li>Non-conformities with significant implications on the validity of RJC certifications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corrective actions proposed within one month of date identified.</li> <li>Fully implemented within three months of date identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspension of accreditation</li> </ul>

CABs may also be issued with opportunities for improvement that whilst cannot be directly referenced to the non-fulfilment of a requirement of the RJC accreditation criteria, can be an action to improve the CABs quality management system, its performance and/or prevent potential non-conformities.

## 6.3 AUDIT REPORT QUALITY CONTROL

All audit reports submitted to the RJC are reviewed by the RJC assurance team as part of the RJC's quality control processes. The findings of the quality checks and reviews may initiate the need for refresher training and/or the implementation of other RJC controls designed to maintain the credibility of RJC certification i.e. oversight.

# 7 SUSPENSION, WITHDRAWAL OR CANCELLATION OF ACCREDITATION

## 7.1 SUSPENSION, WITHDRAWAL OR CANCELLATION OF ACCREDITATION

RJC accreditation of the CAB and/or its auditors may be suspended or withdrawn if:

- the quality of RJC audits are compromised;
- the RJC accreditation criteria (see [Section 2.1](#) and [Appendix 1](#)) ceases to be complied;
- the CAB fails to undergo an oversight assessment, or
- there is misconduct of auditors which contravenes the seven principles for effective auditing as identified by ISO 19011:

1. **Integrity:** the foundation of professionalism.
2. **Fair:** the obligation to report truthfully and accurately.
3. **Due professional care:** the application of diligence and judgement in assessments.
4. **Confidentiality:** security of information.
5. **Independence:** the basis for the impartiality of the assessment and objectivity of conclusions.
6. **Evidence-based approach:** the rational method for reaching reliable and reproducible conclusions in a systemic assessment process.
7. **Risk-based approach:** an audit approach that considers risks and opportunities

Suspension of accreditation places restrictions on a CAB's ability to continue to offer and provide audit services to members. Suspension can be for the full scope of a CAB's accreditation or for part of the scope.

Conduct of an audit booked prior to, or planned to be undertaken after, the effective date of a suspension shall be subject to written approval from the RJC. When suspended, the CAB shall not enter into new agreements for audit services but may continue to honour those in which it already has agreements in place. In cases of individual auditor suspension, the CAB must substitute the suspended auditor for another auditor who has RJC accreditation to cover the audit scope.

In the event of suspension, withdrawal or cancellation of accreditation, the CAB shall:

- Inform all their affiliates, partners and clients of the change to their accreditation status and its related implications.
- Cease using the RJC logo, trademarks and intellectual property.
- Audit reports due for submission from audits that were conducted during the time when the CAB had valid accreditation may remain valid. However, the reports must be submitted to the RJC within a period of 90 days from date of the audit, subject to confirmation by the RJC.
- Any audit agreements signed with a member prior to the withdrawal or cancellation of the CAB's accreditation will be invalid. CABs must contact the relevant clients and inform them that they must find an alternative RJC accredited CAB.
- Reports, records, files and documents in relation to the CAB and in possession of the RJC shall remain the property of the RJC.

CABs who have had their accreditation suspended, withdrawn or cancelled will be removed from the website until their accreditation is reinstated or granted upon reapplication.

Decisions to withdraw a CAB's accreditation outside of voluntary withdrawal by the CAB will be brought to the RJC Assurance Committee for consideration and decision, the affected CAB will be advised of the reasons for the decision.

## 8 REACCREDITATION

CABs wanting to extend their accreditation status for another five years must reapply to the RJC by completing the RJC Auditor Accreditation Application Form and submitting supporting documentation (if any processes or procedures have changed since the last submission). CABs are encouraged to apply at least six months prior to their accreditation expiry date. The assessment and decision process shall follow the process outlined within this document (see [Section 4](#)).

## 9 SCOPE EXTENSIONS AND REDUCTIONS

Scope extension includes but is not limited to the addition of auditors, RJC standard scope or geographic location. Requests for changes to the accreditation scope can be submitted to the RJC at any point during the accreditation cycle.

CABs shall submit to the RJC the RJC Accreditation Application Form (completing the section(s) most relevant to the change in scope) and supporting documentation.

Within 30 days the RJC shall confirm the outcome of its review, which may result in either of the following:

1. The CAB's scope may be extended to include the additions as per the application.
2. The CABs scope extension request may be rejected.
3. An oversight assessment is required to evaluate the scope extension before the CAB's scope of accreditation can be extended. Reasons for an on-site assessment could include:
  - a. acquisition of another non-RJC accredited CAB; and any other significant and/or justified concern from the RJC or third-party assessor.
  - b. further information or action is required before the on-site assessment can proceed.

Upon approval of the scope extension, the RJC will confirm this in writing and update the RJC website. Any changes to the accreditation scope will not affect the original accreditation validity dates.

The RJC and the CAB may mutually agree in writing at any time to reduce the scope of accreditation. CABs may voluntarily reduce their accreditation scope by notifying the RJC. CABs that voluntarily reduce their scope of accreditation may reapply for the extension of the scope of accreditation at any time by following the process set out in this section.

Following an oversight assessment, the third-party assessor may recommend a reduction in the scope of accreditation. Upon such a recommendation, the RJC may impose further steps to the CAB including, but not limited to, an agreement to reduce the accreditation scope, a CAB's voluntary reduction of its scope or increased oversight of the relevant scope.



# 10 APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

All appeals and complaints can be directed to the RJC in accordance with the RJC Complaints Mechanism available on the RJC website.

# 11 USE OF RJC LOGO

CABs shall conform with the RJC rules for use of the RJC logo, trademarks and intellectual property available on the RJC website.

# 12 FEES

The fees (see Table 1) apply to all CABs applying for and maintaining RJC accreditation\*.

Table 1: RJC Accreditation Fees from January 2022

Activity	Fee (£)	Estimate of duration (days)
<b>Pre-initial assessment desk review</b>	845	1
<b>Annual accreditation fee</b>	500	-
<b>Scope extension</b>	50	-
<b>Certificate fee for each RJC certification (COP or CoC certification)</b>	150	-

All amounts are quoted in British Pound Sterling and do not include statutory charges and taxes. All invoices are payable within 30 days of the issue date. Fees shall be reviewed annually. The RJC reserves the right to adjust fees as it deems appropriate and reasonable.

\* Additional fees apply for third party oversight assessments, payable directly to the oversight body.

# REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

APSCA Competency Framework (2017)

[https://www.theapsca.org/uploads/7/3/4/0/73406857/apsca\\_competency\\_framework\\_-d-011.pdf](https://www.theapsca.org/uploads/7/3/4/0/73406857/apsca_competency_framework_-d-011.pdf)

ISEAL Alliance, Assuring Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards:

ISEAL Code of Good Practice [Assurance Code](2018)

[https://www.isealalliance.org/sites/default/files/resource/2018-02/ISEAL\\_Assurance\\_Code\\_Version\\_2.0.pdf](https://www.isealalliance.org/sites/default/files/resource/2018-02/ISEAL_Assurance_Code_Version_2.0.pdf)

ISO, ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems – Requirements (2015)

<https://www.iso.org/standard/62085.html>

ISO, ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems: Requirements with Guidance for Use (2015)

<https://www.iso.org/standard/60857.html>

ISO, ISO/IEC 17011:2017 Conformity assessment – Requirements for Accreditation

Bodies Accrediting Conformity Assessment Bodies (2017)

<https://www.iso.org/standard/67198.html>

ISO, ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Conformity Assessment – Requirements for Bodies

Providing Audit and Certification of Management Systems – Part 1: Requirements (2015)

<https://www.iso.org/standard/61651.html>

ISO, ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems – Requirements with Guidance for Use (2018)

<https://www.iso.org/standard/63787.html>

ISO, ISO 19011:2018 Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems (2018)

<https://www.iso.org/standard/70017.html>

National Standards Authority of Ireland, OHSAS 18001: Occupational Health and Safety Management (2007)

<https://www.nsai.ie/download/certification/MD-19-02-Rev-4--OHSAS-18001-Occupational-Health-and-Safety.pdf>

OECD, OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas, Third Edition (2016)

[www.oecd.org/fr/daf/inv/mne/mining.htm](http://www.oecd.org/fr/daf/inv/mne/mining.htm)

UN Human Rights, Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011)

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf)

Social Accountability International (SAI), Social Accountability 8000 International Standard (SA8000®:2014) (2014)

[http://www.sa-intl.org/\\_data/global/files/SA8000Standard2014\(3\).pdf](http://www.sa-intl.org/_data/global/files/SA8000Standard2014(3).pdf)

# GLOSSARY

Please refer to the following glossary for terms and acronyms used in the RJC certification documents:

<b>Accreditation</b>	Recognition of an auditor's competence to carry out verification assessments and evaluate conformance against a standard.
<b>Applicable law</b>	The relevant national and/or state and/or local laws of the country or countries in which the member operates.
<b>APSCA</b>	Association of Professional Social Compliance Auditors
<b>Audit programme manager</b>	Personnel allocated by the CAB who manages the RJC scheme, conducts technical review of audit reports and acts as the main point of contact between the CAB and the RJC.
<b>Auditor</b>	An independent, third-party person meeting the RJC's objective selection criteria who performs the RJC certification audit.
<b>Business ethics</b>	Ethical rights and duties existing between businesses and society.
<b>CAB</b>	An independent third-party conformity assessment body who is accredited to perform RJC certification audits.
<b>Calibration</b>	The process by which auditors and other personnel such as RJC assurance personnel, exchange knowledge and learn from each other to achieve more consistent interpretation of the RJC standards.
<b>Certification</b>	An attestation by the RJC, based on the results of an audit by an accredited auditor, that the member has achieved the required level of conformance against the RJC Standards.
<b>Coloured gemstones</b>	Emeralds, rubies and sapphires are within scope of the RJC Standards.
<b>CQI</b>	Chartered Quality Institute
<b>Entity</b>	A business or similar which operates one or more facilities where there is ownership or control of that entity by the member. The entity can constitute part or whole of the member.
<b>Finance of terrorism</b>	Any kind of financial support to those who encourage, plan or engage in terrorism.
<b>Head office assessment</b>	An RJC-nominated third-party assessor assesses the CAB head office (the head office is identified where the top management of the CAB is located)
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IRCA</b>	International Register of Certificated Auditors
<b>ISO</b>	International Organisation for Standardisation
<b>Jewellery</b>	For the application of the RJC certification system, an adornment made of gold, silver, PGM and/or set with diamonds or coloured gemstones. Jewellery includes, but is not limited to, bracelets, rings, necklaces, earrings and watches.
<b>Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS)</b>	A joint government, international diamond industry and civil society initiative to stem the flow of conflict diamonds.
<b>Lead auditor</b>	A lead auditor is responsible for the efficient and effective conduct and completion of a certification audit for a member and may coordinate a team of auditors.

<b>Member</b>	<p>Any business that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i is actively involved for commercial reasons in the gold, silver, PGM, diamond and coloured gemstones jewellery supply chain;</li> <li>ii commits to the prevailing RJC principles on business ethics, social, human rights and environmental performance; and</li> <li>iii undertakes the payment of the annual RJC commercial membership fee; is eligible to become an RJC commercial member.</li> </ul> <p>The member may consist of one or more entities and/or facilities.</p> <p>In RJC certification system documents, the term ‘member’ refers specifically to RJC commercial members.</p>
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>Oversight</b>	A combined process of audit, review and decision on a CABs conformance with the RJC accreditation criteria.
<b>Platinum group metals (PGM)</b>	Includes rhodium, palladium and platinum.
<b>UNGPs</b>	United Nations Guiding Principles
<b>RBA</b>	Responsible Business Alliance (formerly EICC)
<b>RJC</b>	Responsible Jewellery Council
<b>SAAS</b>	Social Accountability Accreditation Services
<b>SoW</b>	System of Warranties
<b>Standard</b>	An objective practice, procedure or process that is recognised as integral to the integrity of an organisation’s business and/or products and/or services. For the RJC certification system, the Code of Practices is mandatory for all members. The Chain of Custody is voluntary and compliments certification against the COP.
<b>Third-party</b>	A person or body independent of the person or organisation being evaluated, and of user interests in that person or organisation.
<b>Third-party assessor</b>	A person or body independent from the RJC who conducts the oversight assessment of a CAB.
<b>Topic expert</b>	A person who provides specific knowledge or expertise to the audit team but does not audit.
<b>Witness assessment</b>	On-site evaluation and verification of the competence and performance of an auditor by a third party who is not part of the audit team.

# APPENDIX 1: RJC ACCREDITATION CRITERIA FOR LEAD AUDITORS/AUDITORS

Category	RJC Standard	Industry sector	Requirement	Evidence to be submitted
Education and professional experience	All	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tertiary education (college or university qualification) in a relevant discipline (e.g. environmental, law, geology, sociology, social science, international or sustainable development); and</li> <li>Minimum five years of relevant professional experience in a relevant discipline e.g. business ethics, social and/or environmental management field.</li> <li>Fluent in English (written, spoken, comprehension).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualifications including certificates</li> <li>Resume/CV on the CAB letterhead</li> </ul>
Auditor training and experience	All	All	<p><b>Training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful completion of a CQI/IRCA approved auditor/lead auditor training course or equivalent based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ISO management standard such as ISO 9001:2015;</li> <li>Environmental management systems or ISO 14001:2015 or</li> <li>ISO 19011:2018</li> </ul> </li> <li>Successful completion of at least one relevant four to five-day auditor/lead auditor training course on one of the following standards or equivalent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occupational health and safety or ISO 45001:2018 or OHSAS 18001:2007 (until March 2021);</li> <li>SA8000 five-day auditor training course conducted by an accredited SAAS course provider;</li> <li>RBA (formerly EICC) Labour &amp; Ethics by Verité;</li> <li>Social Compliance Management System by Worldwide Responsible Apparel Producers (WRAP) or</li> <li>Registration as an APSCA certified social compliance auditor (APSCA CSCA).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Business ethics (anti-money laundering*, financial reporting, freedom of association).</li> <li>Know Your Customer approaches to support anti-money laundering/counter finance of terrorism.</li> <li>UNGPs on Business and Human Rights</li> <li>ILO Conventions</li> <li>OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas</li> </ul> <p><b>Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For <b>auditors</b> - within the last three consecutive years, four complete audits for a total of at least 20 days of onsite audit experience under the direction and guidance of an audit team leader.</li> <li>For <b>lead auditors</b> - within the last three consecutive years, three complete audits for a total of at least 15 days of onsite audit experience acting in the role of an audit team leader.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate</li> <li>Professional audit log endorsed by CAB</li> <li>Resume/CV on the CAB letterhead</li> <li>Certificate</li> <li>For each sector that relates to the RJC Standards, clear references to competencies, experience and skill sets with endorsement by the CAB</li> </ul>

Category	RJC Standard	Industry sector	Requirement	Evidence to be submitted
Relevant technical experience for the sector	CoC	All	In addition to the requirements for the COP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal material controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resume/CV on the CAB letterhead</li> <li>Certificate</li> <li>For each sector that relates to the RJC Standards, clear references to competencies, experience and skill sets with endorsement by the CAB</li> </ul>
	COP	Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mining experience, including understanding of stakeholder engagement, biodiversity, emergency response and mine closure</li> <li>Security and human rights</li> <li>Environmental protection laws</li> <li>Tailings and waste rock management</li> <li>Waste emissions</li> <li>Kimberley Process* (diamonds)</li> <li>Awareness of artisanal and small-scale mining</li> </ul>	
	COP	Diamond or coloured gemstones* trading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trading and wholesale</li> <li>Kimberley Process* and World Diamond Council System of Warranties* (diamonds)</li> <li>Product disclosure</li> </ul>	
	COP	Diamond or coloured gemstones* cutting or polishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manufacture of jewellery</li> <li>Security and human rights</li> <li>Product disclosure</li> <li>Kimberley Process* and World Diamond Council System of Warranties* (diamonds)</li> <li>Awareness of artisanal and small-scale mining (coloured stones)</li> </ul>	
	All	Gold, silver, PGM processing or refining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metals processing and refining</li> </ul>	
	All	Gold, silver, PGM hedging or trading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metals trading and wholesale</li> <li>Product disclosure</li> </ul>	
	All	Jewellery manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manufacturing of jewellery experience</li> <li>Kimberley Process* and World Diamond Council System of Warranties*</li> <li>Product disclosure</li> </ul>	
	All	Jewellery wholesale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metals trading and wholesale</li> <li>World Diamond Council System of Warranties*</li> <li>Product disclosure</li> </ul>	
	All	Jewellery retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail of products</li> <li>World Diamond Council System of Warranties*</li> <li>Product disclosure</li> </ul>	
	All	Service & support industries (e.g. laboratories)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product disclosure</li> <li>Transportation</li> </ul>	

Category	RJC Standard	Industry sector	Requirement	Evidence to be submitted
<b>Relevant country experience</b>	All	All	<p>For <b>each</b> geographical country nominated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of applicable laws (e.g. ethical, environmental, occupational health &amp; safety, product labelling, etc).</li> <li>• Relevant experience in sectors nominated</li> <li>• Knowledge of local customs and practices</li> <li>• Language proficiency</li> </ul> <p>Relevant experience in a geographical region rather than country may also be considered on a case-by-case basis, at RJC's sole discretion.</p>	<p><b>Evidence of relevant experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Resume/CV on the CAB letterhead</b></li> <li>• <b>Professional audit log endorsed by CAB</b></li> </ul>
<b>Impartiality and objectivity</b>	All	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectivity means that conflicts of interest do not exist, or are resolved, so as not to adversely influence subsequent activities of the audit. This includes no provision of any form of consulting service to the RJC member being auditing within the last three years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Statement endorsed by CAB confirming which members, and the nature of the consulting work, if any, provided.</b></li> </ul>

\*Supplemented by RJC training module

