

WORKING MATERIAL 4.3 · CHAPTER 4 — THE CERTIFIER'S LENS

Accreditation: Who Checks the People Who Check You

Source: Francesco Dore, *The Helm and the Lens*, Volume 1b — ISO 14001:2026, subchapter 4.3

GUIDING QUESTION

A buyer on another continent accepts your certificate without ever visiting your property or meeting your auditor. What, exactly, are they relying on?

1 · Verification Pact

Copied from the book. The third column is for your property: what holds here, and how you know.

What is claimed	What actually holds	In our property
"ISO 14001 requires accredited certification."	ISO 14001 does not mention accreditation at all, and does not require certification. Where accreditation is required, the requirement comes from a buyer, a scheme or a regulator.	
"The accreditation body came to check the hotel."	It assesses the certification body. The hotel is the venue of the assessment, not its subject, and the assessor forms no judgement about the hotel's conformity.	
"A witnessed assessment means more findings against us."	Findings arising from witnessing concern the certification body. The property's own audit outcome remains the certification body's decision, reached on the certification body's evidence.	
"The property has no say in whether it happens."	Witnessing takes place during a real audit on the client's premises and is arranged with the client in advance. The practical problem is not the absence of a say; it is that the request usually reaches someone who reads it as a diary matter.	
"Once accredited, always accredited."	Accreditation is a continuing cycle of assessment, including on-site witnessing sampled across the scopes held, and can be reduced, suspended or withdrawn.	
"Accreditation says something about the hotel's environmental performance."	It constrains how the certification body works. It reaches the hotel only through the quality of the audit, and no more asserts a performance level than the certificate itself does.	
"My certificate is recognised internationally through the accreditation forum."	That organisation ceased operating on 1 January 2026 and its functions passed to the Global Accreditation Cooperation, which operates a single recognition arrangement. Existing accreditations continue and the former marks remain in use through the transition.	

2 · Common mistakes — a self-check

Tick each mistake you recognise in your own property. The consequence is the book's.

- ☐ **Believing the accreditation body has come to inspect the hotel** — It has come to inspect the auditor, and the hotel that grasps this stops performing and starts watching.
- ☐ **Taking the accreditation mark as sufficient** — The mark shows that a body is accredited; the register shows for what. The scope is where the information lives, as subchapter 4.2 found the hard way.
- ☐ **Treating accreditation as permanent** — It is a surveillance relationship with the same shape as the one the property is in, and it can be narrowed or lost.
- ☐ **Answering a request to host an assessor as a scheduling question** — It is the request that gives the property its only view of the machinery, and it usually arrives in the wrong inbox.
- ☐ **Confusing the complaints route with an appeal** — Conduct and competence go to the accreditation body; disagreement with a finding goes to the certification body's appeals process.
- ☐ **Assuming that published guidance about the international arrangement is current** — A great deal of it names an organisation that stopped operating at the beginning of 2026, and a property quoting it in a tender response is quoting something out of date.

3 · What an auditor would ask to see

Questions drawn from the subchapter's reading of the standard and its practical application. They are questions to test your own evidence, not additional requirements.

Question	Where the evidence lives	Seen?
Which accreditation body accredits the certification body, for which scope, as shown on the register — and when was this last checked?	Dated note taken from the register	
Do buyer contracts name a recognition arrangement, and does the wording still correspond to an organisation that exists?	Client contracts	
Who handles a request to host an accreditation assessor, and how were departments briefed?	Correspondence; briefing note	
Did the witnessing produce findings against the certification body, and what was the property told?	Correspondence with the certification body	
Where is the complaints route to the accreditation body recorded, and for which kinds of matter is it kept?	Contacts file	

4 · From the Operative Synthesis to action

Concrete actions taken from the subchapter's Operative Synthesis. Fill in the owner and the date in your property.

Action	Owner	Due date
1. Write down the chain behind the certificate — certification body, accreditation body, recognition arrangement — from the register, with a date.		
2. If a witnessed assessment is proposed, host it and watch what is examined: team competence, audit time, assigned scope.		
3. Check those same three things yourself every cycle.		

Action	Owner	Due date
4. Never present accreditation as saying anything about the hotel's environmental performance.		

What this sheet is not: ISO 14001 does not prescribe this form. It is a working aid drawn from the book; the standard and, in Chapter 4, the certification body's own rules and contract govern the real case.