WORKSHEET 4.1

The Chain That Makes a Certificate Mean Something

Subchapter 4.1 · case in the book: Geneva

Take your certificate off the wall and answer three questions without telephoning anybody. Is it accredited. By whom. And in what scope. Then find that scope on the public register the accreditation body is obliged to maintain, and read it to see whether it covers what your property actually does. The whole exercise takes about twenty minutes, and most hotels have never done it once in the life of the certificate.

This worksheet turns the tools of the subchapter into a form you can fill in. The texts come from the book; the empty columns are for your own property. Adapt it before use: an unadapted checklist is exactly what the book warns against.

Practical application: what to do in your property

Step (from the book)	Done?	What we found / owner
Read your certificate and establish whether it carries an accreditation mark.		
Find the certification body on the accreditation body's public register and read the scope.		
Establish whether that scope covers the operation of a hotel.		
Confirm that the accreditation body is a signatory to the recognition arrangement.		
At tender, ask in writing how the audit duration was calculated and on what personnel figure.		
Supply the personnel figure the calculation asks for, not the smallest one available.		
Ask whether the body or its affiliates have advised this property, and when.		
Ask which of your own clients, lenders or frameworks require accredited certification, and in what scope.		
Keep the answers on one page.		

These steps are the book's method, not requirements of ISO 50001. Evidence can take whatever form suits the property; a separate document is needed only where an applicable requirement, or the property's own system, makes it necessary.

Verification Pact: what is believed, tested against the standard

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	Our position
«Our certification body is accredited.»	Accreditation is a scope, not a status. Ask in what scope, and whether it covers accommodation services.	
«The certificate is genuine.»	It may be entirely genuine and unaccredited. Both things are lawful, and only one of them travels.	

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	Our position
«Their offer was cheaper because they are efficient.»	In this market the variable cost is auditor days, and a shorter audit is the usual reason for a lower price.	
«We gave them our staff numbers.»	Which numbers? For this standard the calculation counts the people whose work materially affects the energy system, together with its complexity, and in a hotel in July that is not the January figure.	
«They did our gap analysis, so they know us.»	Under accreditation that firm would be barred from certifying the system it helped to build, for a defined period.	
«Accreditation guarantees a good audit.»	It constrains competence, duration, impartiality and decision-making. A weak audit can still occur inside a compliant chain.	

Common mistakes: a self-check

Mistake (from the book)	Present here?	Action / owner
Asking whether a body is accredited rather than in what scope.		
Comparing certification offers on price without asking what determines the price.		
Supplying the payroll figure from the quietest month of the year.		
Engaging the firm that will certify you to build the system first.		
Assuming the certificate answers a question the client has not yet stated precisely.		
Believing that an unaccredited certificate is a forgery, or that it travels.		
Treating accreditation as a warranty of audit quality.		
Never reading the public register, which exists for exactly this purpose.		

Operative synthesis

- **A certificate is accepted by people who have never visited the property because of a chain in which each party is constrained by the next, and the chain exists because the first link cannot be made disinterested: the property pays the body that judges it. Everything else is a structure for containing that.**
- **Four functions, whatever they are called locally. Somebody writes the requirement. Somebody audits the property and issues the document. Somebody audits that body and grants it a scope in which it may do so. And somebody makes a scope granted in one economy acceptable in another. The third link is where every external constraint on competence, duration, impartiality**

and decision-making enters, and it is the link a property loses entirely when it buys outside the chain.

- **The property's defence is three questions and a public register. Is it accredited, by whom, and in what scope, and does that scope cover the operation of a hotel. Twenty minutes, findable by anybody, and not done once in most certified properties in the life of the certificate.**
- **What none of it guarantees is the quality of any particular audit, and a reader who leaves this subchapter believing that accreditation warrants a good audit has taken the wrong lesson from it. The chain constrains a process. Whether the process was well executed on a particular week in a particular hotel is the subject of the rest of this chapter, which begins where a property's real exposure begins: with the choice of a body whose auditors have, or have not, ever set foot in a building like this one.**

Action plan for our property

Action	Owner	Due	How we will know it worked

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 4b «The Lens», subchapter 4.1. Edizioni Effedore, 2026. Clause references are paraphrased; this sheet does not reproduce the text of ISO 50001, ISO 50003 or ISO/IEC 17021-1. It is not legal advice: energy law is that of the place where the property operates.