IS Verification Procedure - DRAFT

May 2025

Infrastructure Sustainability Council

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

QUALITY INFORMATION

Document	Verification Procedure - DRAFT
Version	1.0
Date	May 2025
Prepared by	B. Wade, G. Echavarria Suarez
Reviewed by	M. Colen
Approved by	

See Changelog at the end of this document for Revision History.

IS VERIFICATION PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the verification process applicable to IS Planning, Design, and As Built Ratings from Round 1 of rating submission until the end of Round 2 verification.

2. Definitions

Assessor	The primary contact person on the project or asset-management team who liaises with ISC during the rating process and is ultimately responsible for organising and submitting all evidence and documentation required to complete the self-assessment. It is required that this person be an IS Accredited Professional (ISAP) and maintain their accreditation throughout the project.
Assessment Submission	Once the Assessment stage concludes (end of the design phase for a Design Rating, or end of the construction phase for an As Built Rating), the finalised self-assessment is submitted for the ISC for verifications. This submission includes: • A completed IS Scorecard including the level targeted for each credit • A completed set of Credit Summary Forms (CSF) • All necessary evidence.
IS Project Manager	An ISC staff member assigned to the project or asset during the Registration stage of the rating process. The IS Project Manager (IS PM) is the first point of the contact for the Assessor and provides support to the Assessor throughout the rating process. It is required that this person be an IS Accredited Professional (ISAP).
IS Quality Controller	An ISC staff member assigned to conduct a consistency, credibility and accuracy check of verification outcomes and to ensure that the IS Verifier Principles are interpreted and applied appropriately in the verification process. For more information on the role and competency requirements of the IS Quality Controller, see Appendices 2 and 3.
Rating Partner	Any party involved in delivering the IS Rating; usually includes, but is not limited to, the proponent, design team, construction team, owners and operators.
Project or asset	This term is used interchangeably to refer to any infrastructure project or asset registered to pursue an IS Rating.

Verifier	A person responsible for conducting independent, third-party verification to ensure that a project or asset complies with the requirements specified in the applicable version of the IS Technical Manual.

For more information on the role and competency requirements of the IS Quality Controller, see Appendices 4 and 5 |
| **IS Verifier Principles** | A mandatory set of verification guidance principles to ensure consistency, impartiality, and an unbiased verification process.

For more information, see Appendix 6 |
| **Verifier briefing** | This is a one-hour online meeting where the Assessor presents to the Verifier and IS Quality Controller an overview of the project including scope, timeline and key aspects or issues that relate to the project's achievement of an IS rating. This meeting is undertaken after the registration process and is facilitated by the Project Manager. It will be recorded (with the agreement of all participants) so the Verifier can access it during the verification process. |
| **Verifier Face to Face Meeting** | This is an optional two-hour meeting held after round 1 verification. This meeting is an opportunity for the Assessor to meet with the Verifier and IS Quality Controller and ask questions about the Round 1 feedback and to propose approaches to address feedback in Round 2. This meeting is facilitated by the Project Manager and can be recorded where agreed by all parties. |

3. Background

The IS Rating Scheme includes a third-party independent verification process to assess and verify project claims before a certified Rating is awarded. The verification process formally starts once:

- The Assessor has submitted their Assessment Submission (rating documentation) that is true, accurate and complete to the ISC (via the applicable platform),
- The IS PM conducts high level quality spot check of the Assessment Submission and confirms the Submission is of an adequate 'submission quality' to progress.

For more information on what is required as part of a Submission, please review the IS Submission Guideline.

Figure 1 outlines a project or asset's standard journey through the four stages of the IS Rating process. This Verification Procedure covers all steps related to the verification of the project from section 2. Assessment to section 3. Verification, for IS Planning, Design, and As Built Ratings:
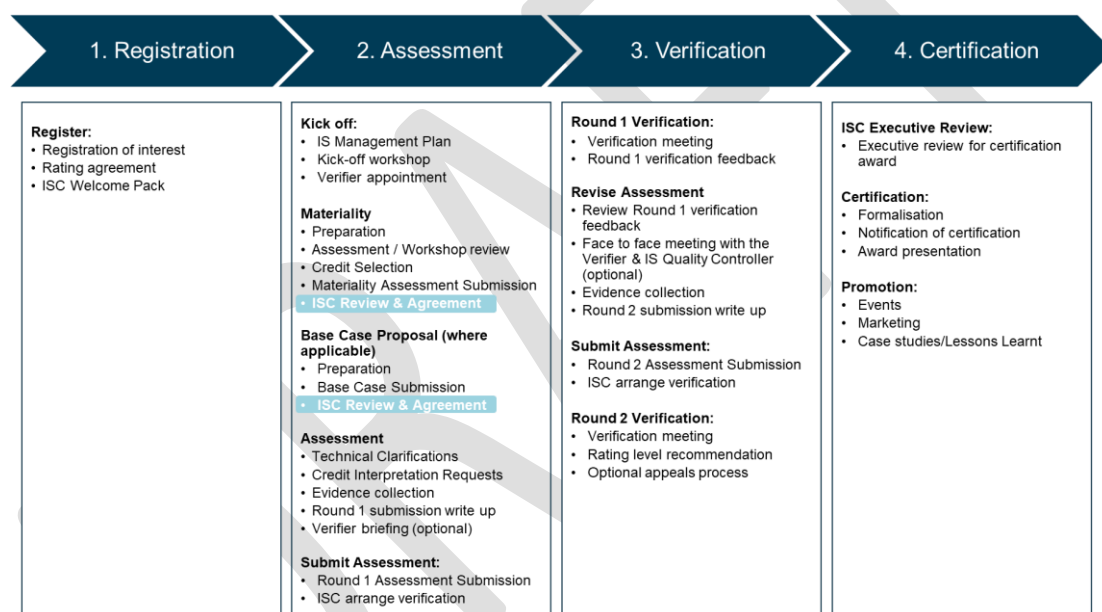
Figure 1. Rating Process

Why is this procedure important?

In the IS verification process, the Verifier is a third-party, independent entity that will carry out the verification of the Submission.

The IS Quality Controller will review the Submission while ensuring that the verification process and Verifier principles are adhered to, and that consistency across projects is maintained whenever relevant/possible.

The need for such a process stems from the reality that verification outcomes inherently carry some level of subjectivity. As per ISEAL's Revised good practice guide for benchmarking of sustainability systems (October 2024), the use of a quality check is required to promote consistency in the verification outcomes. This procedure is designed to reduce subjectivity and to ensure that the process, roles and responsibilities of all parties involved are clear, appropriate and transparent.

4. IS Verification Procedure Overview

The following overview outlines the specific tasks and involvement of the IS Project Manager (IS PM), Verifier, and IS Quality Controller (IS QC) from the Assessment Submission to the completion of Verification:

Assessment Submission
Focus: Quality check of project submission

- **Step 1 (Optional):** IS PM organises Optional Verifier Briefing prior to Round 1 (involvement of Verifier and IS QC required)

- **Step 2:** IS PM conducts high level quality spot-check of submission

- **Step 3:** IS PM organises verification meeting (involvement of Verifier and IS QC required)

Round 1 and Round 2 Verification
Focus: Assess and verify project claims in a high quality and consistent manner

- **Step 4:** Verifier and IS QC individually review project submission against the relevant IS Technical Manual

- **Step 5:** Verifier and IS QC undertake verification meeting to agree on verification feedback (involvement of IS PM required)

- **Step 6 (Optional):** IS PM coordinates Quality Management Process (involvement of Verifier and IS QC required)

- **Step 7 (Optional):** IS PM organises Optional Face to Face verification meeting between Round 1 and Round 2 (involvement of Verifier and IS QC required)

Certification

- **Step 8 (if required):** Appeal Process (where Assessor does not agree with verification outcomes)

- **Step 9:** Certification

5. IS Verification Procedure

Assessment Submission
Focus: Quality check of project submission

Step 1 (Optional): IS PM coordinates Optional Verifier Briefing prior to Round 1 (involvement of Verifier and IS QC required)

Prior to the Submission being sent to the Verifier and IS QC, the project may elect to conduct a Verifier Briefing. The Verifier Briefing is an opportunity for the Assessor and other members of the delivery team to engage directly with the Verifier and IS QC to explain the scope and objective of the project or asset.

1. Refer to the IS Submission Guidelines for further information regarding the process for setting up and running this meeting.
2. The IS PM will organise the meeting.
3. The Assessor and other members of the project's delivery team will engage directly with the Verifier and IS QC to explain the scope and objective of the project or asset.

The Verifier and IS QC will both ask questions or provide comments as the meeting proceeds.

Step 2: IS PM conducts quality spot-check of Submission

Upon submission and before the commencement of the verification process, the IS PM will carry out a spot quality check of the Submission through sampling. Table 1 provides an overview of the items that are checked. IS PMs will not review the Submission in its entirety and the ISC will not be held responsible for any Assessor errors or omissions that are not picked up during the IS PM's spot-check. Where submission quality items are identified by the IS PM, the Assessor will be given the opportunity to address these. Once any amendments have been addressed, ISC will inform the Assessor, Verifier and IS Quality Controller that the Submission is ready for verification.

Table 1 IS Project Manager Submission Quality Spot Check (non-exhaustive)

Item	Submission Quality Spot Check when using SharePoint
1	Credit Targets set to the correct levels in Credit Summary Forms/Scorecard/Digital Platform
2	Not-targeted credits confirmed on Credit Summary Forms/Scorecard/Digital Platform
4	Checked referencing of evidence to correct documents
5	Evidence documents listed in credit/evidence summary have been copied to respective evidence folders (not relevant for Digital Platform)
6	Evidence documents are named correctly
7	Same evidence documents for multiple credits copied to all relevant folders (not relevant for Digital Platform)
8	Pin-point references provided for evidence, include page/section numbers

9	
	Renamed updated documents to "Updated 'document name' for 'Rating Category' R2" (for Round 2 Submission)
10	
	Response provided to Verifier'(s) queries/feedback (for Round 2 Submission)
11	
	Assessor's name printed on all Credit Summary Forms /Scorecards

A similar quality spot check is performed when using the IS Ratings Portal, however the Scorecard and Credit Summary Forms are replaced by the portal. For more information, please review the IS Submission Guidelines.

Step 3: IS PM organises verification meeting (involvement of Verifier and IS QC required)

The IS PM will organise the verification meeting between the IS PM, the Verifier and the IS QC (see Step 4).

Round 1 and Round 2 Verification
Focus: Assess and verify project claims in a high quality and consistent manner

The standard rating process for IS Planning, Design and As Built comprises of 2 verification rounds. For more information, please review the IS Submission Guideline

Step 4: Verifier and IS QC individually review the Submission

The Verifier and IS QC will review the Submission individually against the relevant IS Technical manual and determine if the submitted evidence supports the intent and outcomes and meets the requirements of the credit level targeted. Where the Verifier's view of the level achieved does not match the Assessor's, then comments will detail an explanation, including whether more information is required, the information supplied is incorrect, or both. The Verifier's comments form the basis for the verification outcomes and feedback and will be provided back to the IS QC and IS PM.

The IS QC's review of the Submission is conducted to ensure the IS QC has a sufficient understanding of the Submission when assessing the application of the IS Technical Manual, verification process and Verifier Principles. After completing their own review, the IS QC will evaluate the Verifier's comments with consideration to their own comments, highlighting any areas where they believe verification misalignment has occurred.

Verification misalignment entails:
- Misinterpretation or incorrect application of the IS Technical Manual, relevant rulings, supporting guidelines and/or rating process documentation.
- Proposed feedback or commentary that does not align with Verifier Principles and Verifier contractual requirements.

Note:

1. The Verifier may consult the IS QC where necessary to ensure their interpretation of the Rating Process and Rating Tool is appropriate during the verification meeting (See step 5).
2. Where verification misalignment between the Verifier and the IS QC review comments arises, the IS QC will propose and record a suitable alternative for the Verifier to consider in the verification meeting.

Step 5: Verifier and IS QC undertake verification meeting to agree on verification feedback (involvement of IS PM required)

The verification meeting will be chaired by the IS QC, and include the below agenda items:

1. ***Review of submission quality:*** Both Verifier and IS QC will discuss overall submission quality, including:
   - Quality of referencing,
   - Quality of evidence provided,
   - Quality of presentation of information (was it clear, relevant, etc.).

2. ***Review of IS QC evaluation of Verifier's proposed feedback:*** Both Verifier and IS QC will review the evaluation comments provided by the IS QC on the Verifier's proposed feedback. They will seek to resolve any concerns flagged by the IS QC. This can be done by collectively agreeing suitable feedback that satisfies both parties' responsibilities and concerns.

The IS PM supports the review and resolution of differences between the Verifier and IS QC through:
   - Accessing and pulling up project documentation in the background to avoid delay and assist the Verifier and IS QC's discussions
   - Capturing and refining proposed feedback, allowing the Verifier and IS QC move on through the review.

It is also important for the IS PM to listen across the entire verification conversation as this may assist in providing valuable context when the project later receive their feedback.

If both parties agree on the verification outcomes:

1. The IS PM will send the final feedback/scorecard to the Verifier for final review and approval and any general feedback on the Submission.

2. Once approved by the Verifier, the IS PM will send the finalised scorecard/feedback to the Assessor along with any accompanying general verification feedback.

3. The Assessor should take the time to carefully review the feedback. For more information, please review the IS Submission Guideline.

Where agreement is not achieved, the Verifier and IS QC can resolve any differences through the "Quality Management Process". This process should only be used as a last option (See Step 6 (Optional))

Note:
The Round 2 Verification will follow the same process as listed above, however, this Verification will instead focus on the Assessor's response to the Round 1 Feedback previously provided and/or amended self-assessment levels. Refer to the 'IS Submission

Guidelines' for further information on the differences between a Round 1 and Round 2 assessment.

Step 6 (Optional): IS PM coordinates Quality Management Process (involvement of Verifier and IS QC required)

Where agreement on the verification outcomes is not achieved, the Verifier and IS QC can resolve any differences through the "Quality Management Process":

1. The IS PM to log in a Quality Management Process register:
    a. IS QC evaluation comments
    b. Verifier comments and perspective on why agreement has not been reached
    c. Relevant submission evidence.
2. The IS PM escalates item for review with a delegated member of the ITP (senior member of   the Ratings or Technical team).
3. If required, a meeting may be organised by the IS PM with the IS QC and the delegated member.
4. The delegated member provides a recommendation for the correct application of the IS Technical Manual and Verifier Principles for the given context.
5. The recommendation is provided to the Verifier and they confirm the final response
6. Final agreed response is documented and any verification outcomes reflected in the final feedback/scorecard (go to Step 5)

Step 7 (Optional): IS PM organises Face to Face verification meeting between Round 1 and Round 2 (involvement of Verifier and IS QC required)

The Face-to-Face verification meeting (F2F) is facilitated between the Round 1 feedback and the Round 2 Submission. The intention of the meeting is to give the Assessor an opportunity to ask questions about the Round 1 verification feedback and hear first-hand what the Verifier would like to see as part of the Round 2 Submission.

1. Refer to the IS Submission Guidelines for further information regarding the process setting up and running this meeting.
2. The IS PM will minute the meeting.
3. The Verifier and IS QC will both review the project prepared Face to Face meeting agenda. The Verifier will conduct a review of the agenda items, revisiting the submission if necessary, and provide their commentary, for the IS QC to evaluate prior to the Face-to-Face meeting.
4. The IS QC will evaluate the Verifier's comments on the agenda, and where misalignment between the Verifier and the IS QC review comments arises, the IS QC will propose and record a suitable alternative for the Verifier to consider prior to the Face to Face meeting (prior to the Face-to-Face meeting, a short meeting may be held, if needed, to ensure alignment between the IS QC and Verifier).
5. The Verifier may consult the IS QC where necessary to ensure their interpretation of the rating process and tool is appropriate during the Face-to-Face meeting.

Certification

Step 8 (Optional): Appeal Process (where Assessor does not agree with verification outcomes)

If a project wishes to dispute their Round 2 verification an Informal Appeal may be submitted to challenge the outcomes. For more information, Refer to the ISC Submission guideline and ISC Appeal Resolution Procedure.

Step 9 Certification:

Following the Verification process, the Verifier will provide a recommendation to ISC on the score and Rating level the project has achieved. Following this, ISC will certify the achievement of a rating at the applicable performance level. For more information, refer to the ISC Submission guideline and the IS Technical Manual.

CHANGELOG

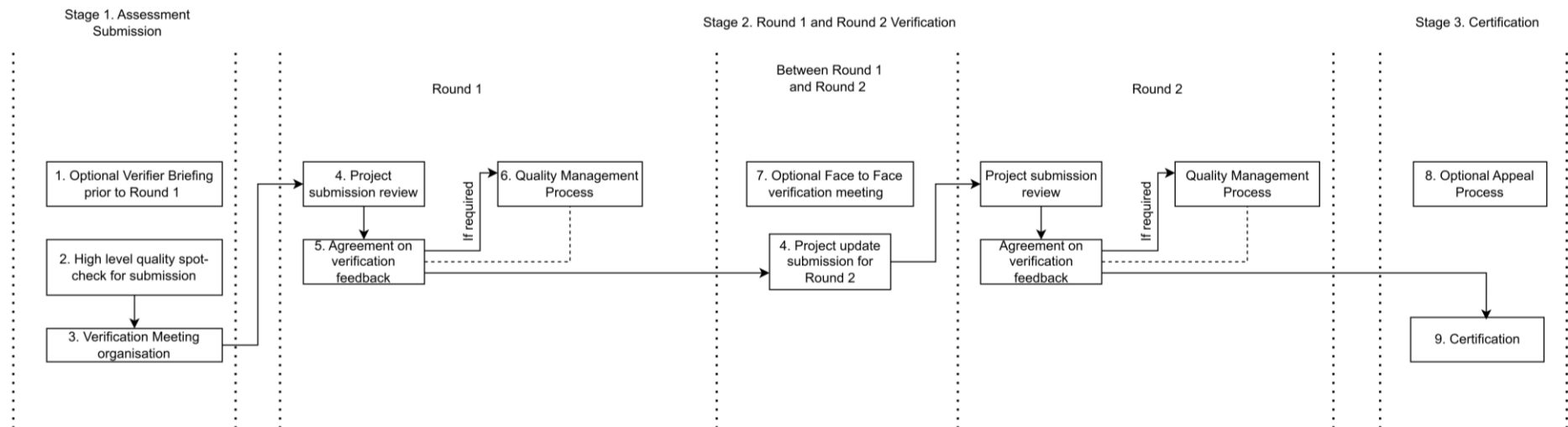| Version	Date of Approval	Prepared by	Summary of Change
1.0	May 2025	B. Wade, G. Echavarria	Draft Procedure developed

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Detailed Verification Diagram

Appendix 2. The Verifier role

The role of the Verifier is to provide an independent, third party, verification that a project or asset has met the requirements outlined in the relevant version of the IS Technical Manual (TM) including applicable Rulings, Technical Clarifications (TCs) and/or Credit Interpretation Requests (CIRs), for each credit being verified.

The verification process is expected to be executed in an equitable, consistent and unbiased manner.

Verifiers:

a) Are assigned to project/assets during the Rating process to provide independent verification on the Assessment Submission. Standard interaction with Verifiers includes Round 1 and Round 2 verifications.

b) Review the Submission and seek clarification or additional evidence where the team have not clearly demonstrated they have met the criteria. The Verifier is required to check evidence that is referenced in the Credit Summary Forms, plus the information presented in the scorecard and Credit Summary Forms (when submitted via SharePoint) or online forms (when submitting via the IS Ratings Portal), against the credit criteria, IS Rulings and, in IS v1.2, additional guidance (in IS v2.1 "the additional guidance section" provides information which may assist the Assessor in understanding and achieving the credit outcomes, it does not introduce any additional requirements).

c) Use the following wording in verification:

    o "Not verified" – for responses/evidence that do not satisfy credit/criteria. Claimed points not awarded.

    o "Verified" – for credits/criteria deemed to satisfy. Claimed points awarded.

d) Provide review comments that clearly align (or reference) relevant credit/criteria/must statement in the TM, and are clear, specific and suitable for the Assessor. Where credits are titled 'not verified', comments must clearly outline the reasons why the evidence, or lack thereof, make a requirement or claim unverifiable.

e) Are allowed to ask any necessary questions to the Assessors which will help them to determine whether the project has met the criteria requirements.

f) Are required to adhere to the IS Verifier Principles.

g) Keep up to date with scheme updates.

Appendix 3. Verifier qualifications and experience

Verifiers come from the public and private sector and generally have experience across multiple asset types and phases. Each Verifier has an extensive level of expertise in infrastructure sustainability, and understands the project lifecycle across different stakeholder perspectives and asset types. Verifiers have experience in sustainability assessment, auditing, or sustainable planning, design, construction and/or operation.

Verifiers must:

a) Be an IS Accredited Professional.

b) Have experience as an assessor on a number of projects applying the IS Rating Scheme, preferably throughout the full rating process for one or more of the IS Rating Versions.

c) Have experience in one or more of: sustainability assessment; environmental auditing; and sustainable design.

d) Have substantial direct and relevant industry experience in major infrastructure work in Australia and/or New Zealand with respect to planning, design and delivery phases of infrastructure.

e) Have knowledge and/or experience in ISO type auditing or sustainable strategies/implementation.

f) Have relevant tertiary qualifications (i.e. science, engineering, environmental management, social policy, economics etc.).

Appendix 4. The IS Quality Controller role

The role of the IS Quality Controller is to conduct a consistency, credibility and accuracy check of verification outcomes and to ensure that the IS Verifier Principles are interpreted and applied appropriately in the verification process.

By upholding the IS Verifier Principles, IS Quality Controllers maintain the integrity of the verification process, ensuring objectivity, clarity, and reliability.

IS Quality Controllers:

a) Are assigned to project/assets during the Rating process to ensure that Verifiers adhere to the Verifier Principles when verifying the Assessment Submission.

b) Review the Submission and Verifier comments on the Rating Submission. The IS Quality Controller is required to check evidence that is referenced in the Credit Summary Forms, plus the information presented in the scorecard and Credit Summary Forms (when submitting via SharePoint) or online forms (when submitting via the IS Ratings Portal), against the credit criteria, IS Rulings and, in IS v1.2, additional guidance (in IS v2.1 "the additional guidance section" provides information which may assist the Assessor in understanding and achieving the credit outcomes, it does not introduce any additional requirements).

c) Provide review comments regarding the alignment or misalignment with the Verifier's proposed feedback.

d) Are allowed to ask any necessary questions to the Verifiers to determine whether the verifier has followed the IS Verifier Principles.

e) Are required to adhere to the IS Verifier Principles.

f) Keep up to date with scheme updates.

Appendix 5. Quality Controller qualifications and experience

Quality Controllers have expertise in infrastructure sustainability, understand the project lifecycle across different stakeholder perspectives and asset types, and has experience in sustainability assessment, auditing, or sustainable planning, design, construction and/or operation.

Quality Controllers must:

a) Be an IS Accredited Professional.

b) Have experience in applying the IS Rating Scheme.

c) Have experience in one or more of: sustainability assessment; environmental auditing; and sustainable design.

d) Have substantial direct and relevant industry experience in major infrastructure work in Australia and/or New Zealand with respect to planning, design and delivery phases of infrastructure.

e) Have knowledge and/or experience in ISO type auditing or sustainable strategies/implementation.

f) Have relevant tertiary qualifications (i.e. science, engineering, environmental management, social policy, economics etc.).

Appendix 6. IS Verifier Principles

Verification Guiding Principles

1. **Single reference point:** The TM (including endorsed TCs, CIRs and/or Rulings) forms the reference point for all verification decisions, evidence requests, and feedback provided to project teams.

2. **Balance of Evidence:** Verification must focus on ensuring that the TM criteria or credit aim (IS Version 1.2) or intent (IS Version 2.0 and beyond) has been met on the balance of evidence, as opposed to interrogating the technical validity of the initiative or proposal, unless there are material concerns over the scope or quality of the evidence provided. The project must be allowed the benefit of the doubt unless:

    o   There is clear contradiction in the documentation to warrant uncertainty over its credibility; or

    o   Claims in the Credit Summary Form are not substantiated with evidence.

3. **Focus on intent:** In situations where there is ambiguity, but the referenced evidence provided shows that a criterion or credit's aim or intent has been met, the Verifier must verify the criteria or credit level (Note: this decision is to be clearly documented with justification provided).

4. **Assumption of truth:** Verifiers must assume rating submissions to be correct and truthful. Verifiers should not assume documentation to be misleading, dishonest or forged, unless real evidence exists to indicate otherwise.

5. **Professional judgement:** Verifiers must use judgement on how much of their approved time allowance to allocate to each credit's evidence submission in consideration of the total points available, credit complexity and potential scope for misunderstanding.

6. **Suitably Qualified Professional:** Verifiers must defer to the opinion of the Suitably Qualified Professional (SQP) unless there are significant concerns over the scope or quality of the opinion provided (Note: this decision is to be clearly documented with justification provided).

    o   Where significant concerns exist, the Verifier must deem the evidence not verified and provide justification for their decision.

7. **Continuous Improvement Opportunities:** Opportunities for continuous improvement (CI) of the IS Scheme identified by the Verifier during ratings should not be reflected within a project's verification results. CI opportunities are to be flagged to ISC in separate communications to the IS Project Manager.

8. **Timebound Feedback on Evidence:** Feedback cannot be provided retrospectively on a previous round of verification unless significant* information or issues come to light and, likewise, between Design and As Built. For instance:

   o   An approach verified at Design cannot be questioned at As Built if the project is following through on their planned approach.

   o   If feedback was not provided on a Round 1 verification it cannot then influence decisions in Round 2 of verification.

   o   Where a Verifier recognises that they (or a previous Verifier where applicable) has made an error they must report this to the IS Project Manager.

‘Significant’ is referring to instances where further information or issues come to light which conflicts, undermines or alters the detail and/or perception of evidence and information provided in submissions prior (including the Base Case Proposal and Materiality Assessment).

9. **Should Statements:** For Version 1.2: Should statements need to be addressed by evidence unless it can be justified that they are not appropriate or necessary.

10. **Positive Precedents:** Do not create or follow incorrect precedent: Where erroneous decisions and/or comments have been provided on previous projects (including verification comments), these are not to form precedent, even when they may have been applied on multiple historic projects i.e. projects are not to be awarded points based on an error that has been made on another project.

11. **Essential Feedback:** Feedback must be provided against all targeted criteria. This applies even where the level verified is dependent on preceding criteria which were not verified (e.g., feedback must be provided against Level 3 criteria even in the case where Level 3 is dependent on Level 1 and 2 outcomes which were not verified).