

WSAS PROCEDURE FOR CERTIFICATION IN CHINA

INTRODUCTION

Water Stewardship Assurance Services (WSAS) is the mission-driven assurance provider for the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) System.

In Greater China (Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau), WSAS partners with TUV Rheinland Guangdong (TUV), to provide auditing services and certification recommendations.

Sites in Greater China seeking AWS Certification must formally apply to TUV in order to initiate the certification process against the AWS International Water Stewardship Standard v 2.0 (AWS Standard).

All communication relating to AWS certification processes in Greater China should be directed to TUV.

This document describes the application, audit and certification procedure for sites seeking AWS Certification in Greater China.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all clients that wish to certify sites in Greater China.

This document applies equally to single sites, multi-sites and group operations.

HOW DOES A SITE APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION IN CHINA?

Any sites in Greater China seeking to achieve AWS Certification must follow two steps to initiate the application process:

- I. Register the site with AWS by completing the short form on the [AWS Website](#).
- II. Contact TUV at yolanda.yang@tuv.com. TUV will remain the main contact for the site for the entire audit and certification process.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

TUV will request information about the site's processes, structure and size.

On the basis of this information TUV will prepare a certification agreement and a quotation for the certification fee. TUV will also share TUV's Certification Rate Card for AWS Certification with the site.

The certification agreement will be signed between the site seeking certification (or its parent company) and TUV. WSAS has no involvement in the preparation of the certification agreement or quotation.

HOW DOES TUV CALCULATE THE CERTIFICATION FEES?

In delivering certification audits, TUV must at all times comply with the [AWS Certification Requirements](#). TUV's Fees are calculated on the basis of the amount of effort, time and costs required to deliver the audit and certification services, consistent with the AWS Certification Requirements. This includes auditing and reporting time as well as WSAS's time and costs for technical review and certification approval.

The fees depend on the site's size, structure and certification level being held or targeted. Travel and accommodation costs are not included in the fee and are charged separately at cost price.

TUV's Certification Rate Card for AWS certification specifies the applicable fees.

HOW IS THE SITE STRUCTURE DETERMINED?

The AWS Certification Requirements specify three types of site structures for certification: Single sites, group operations and multi-sites. TUV will determine a site's structure using the eligibility and classification information outlined in the AWS Certification requirements.

In case of any doubt or deviation from the AWS Certification Requirements for determining the site structure, TUV will seek guidance and approval from WSAS.

WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE THE AUDIT?

TUV will schedule the audit dates in coordination with the site, and will assign the audit team for the audit.

TUV will prepare and release a [stakeholder announcement](#) 8 weeks prior to the audit start date, announcing the audit and inviting stakeholders to provide comments on the site undergoing the AWS Audit. The announcement will be published on TUV, WSAS and AWS websites.

TUV will also share the Stakeholder Announcement in local language with the Site with the request to publish the same and share it with their relevant stakeholders.

WHO ARE TUV'S AUDITORS?

All TUV's AWS auditors hold the AWS Standard System training certificate to Specialist level, and fulfill the strict qualification requirements for lead and local auditors outlined in the AWS Certification Requirements.

HOW LONG IS THE AUDIT?

The time required for the audit depends on the type of audit (certification or surveillance), the site structure, and the certification level being held or targeted. TUV's Certification Rate Card for AWS Certification specifies how the audit time is calculated.

THE AUDIT PROCESS

TUV's audit team will conduct the audit in line with the AWS Certification Requirements and following the ISO 19011:2018 - Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems.

The audits are conducted onsite, unless the [AWS Covid-related Policy for Offsite Audits](#) applies.

During the audit the site's conformity with each indicator of the AWS Standard will be assessed.

The audit will include an opening and closing meeting, a site tour, document review and staff interviews.

As part of the audit, the audit team will also conduct interviews with relevant representative stakeholders or stakeholder groups within the site's catchment.

In the closing meeting, TUV will share the summary of the findings and a preliminary score of advanced indicators with the site. The findings are preliminary pending technical review by WSAS.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE AUDIT?

TUV will prepare an audit report and submit this to WSAS for technical review. If no non-conformities were identified at the audit, the audit report will also include a recommendation for certification. If non-conformities have been raised, then a recommendation for certification will be made once these have been adequately addressed.

WSAS will conduct a technical review of the report, which may result in changes to the preliminary findings presented at the closing meeting, both in terms of the volume and classification of findings. The audit findings resulting from the technical review are final.

Following the technical review by WSAS, TUV will provide the site with the audit report reflecting the final audit findings. This will be supplied to the site within 6 weeks of the end date of the audit.

The site will be asked to review the report for error checking and to point out any confidential information.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE AUDIT RESULTS IN NON-CONFORMITIES?

If non-conformities have been raised, the site will be requested to conduct a root cause analysis and prepare a corrective action plan addressing each of the non-conformities presented in the audit report within 1 month of receipt of the audit report.

If major non-conformities have been raised, these will need to be resolved and evidence submitted to TUV for approval before the certification can be recommended. The timeline for closing out major non-conformities is 3 months from receipt of the report.

TUV will review the site's corrective action plan and any evidence submitted to close out major non-conformities within 5 working days from date of receipt of the same.

If approved, TUV will make a recommendation for certification to WSAS.

WHEN WILL THE SITE BE CERTIFIED?

WSAS will approve or reject the recommendation put forward by TUV within 5 working days.

Upon approval by WSAS, TUV will proceed to issue the site's AWS certificate, on behalf of WSAS. The certificate will have a validity of 3 years.

The final audit report (certification report) will be submitted by WSAS to AWS for publication on the AWS website, after removal of any confidential information at request of the site.

WHEN CAN THE SITE COMMUNICATE PUBLICLY ABOUT THE AWS CERTIFICATION?

The site can communicate publicly about the certification once the site has been listed on the [AWS website – List of AWS Certified Sites](#).

SURVEILLANCE

TUV will schedule surveillance audits approximately 12 months from the date of the initial audit.

The scope of the surveillance audits will follow the requirements outlined in the AWS Certification Requirements.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Sites shall direct any comments, complaints and appeals related to the AWS audit and certification process to TUV Rheinland and follow [TUV's procedure for complaints and appeals](#).

TUV shall forward to WSAS any complaints directly related to a WSAS decision or process. These will be handled by WSAS following the [WSAS Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#).