POLICY ON EXTERNAL TECHNOLOGY

Considering the growing number of technologies developed to support certification processes and their objectivity, this policy clarifies and formalizes ASI´s position in terms of its endorsement of the application of external technologies in certification processes. This policy can be used to facilitate discussions with external organizations involved in the development and/or promotion of external technologies relevant to the assurance systems of ASI Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) by applying the following principles:

- ASI understands **External Technology** as a software or an infrastructure developed by an external organization for the purpose (exclusive or otherwise) of facilitating the conformance and/or evaluation of conformance with ASI VSS Requirements.

- ASI welcomes and supports the development and use of any External Technology that increases the credibility and efficiency of certification and assurance processes. **ASI does not endorse any External Technologies for the time being**. This position originates from our strong emphasis on the neutrality and objectivity of the assurance process, whereby recommending or endorsing any External Technologies could lead to a conflict of interest and go beyond the role of ASI as an oversight and assurance provider.

- ASI is available to provide technical input to the development process of such technologies according to ASI's capacity. Depending on the scope of involvement, ASI may charge for its input, applying ASI's normal daily rate.

- ASI participation in the development processes or ASI opinion provided on the usability of features shall not be understood as ASI's endorsement or preference of any External Technology, unless otherwise explicitly stated in a separate official document.

- The absence of an official ASI endorsement does not mean that an external technology cannot be used to facilitate compliance with ASI VSS Requirements. The evaluation of compliance will remain the responsibility of the ASI accredited Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) of the given Certificate Holder (CH), regardless of the external tools used.

- ASI is open to the use of External Technologies or its access when granted by third parties, including CABs, CHs and others in order to make ASI´s oversight more effective, provided that adequate safeguards are in place in accordance with GDPR.

- ASI will continuously explore the need to evaluate available External Technologies, while the above position stands.

- ASI may develop or introduce known technologies in those cases where it is necessary for ensuring compliance within the scope of ASI assurance and to ensure the credibility and integrity of our operations.

- ASI welcomes contact from third parties to test and trial innovative technology-driven assurance solutions, considering the above conditions and that ASI provides feedback from an impartial, technology agnostic user perspective.

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