



ISCC PLUS 201 System Basics

System Basics

ISCC PLUS Standard for the certification of sustainable biomass and its processing steps

ISCC PLUS 201
V 2.0

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1 Introduction

In the recent past, the production of goods based on renewable raw materials has often been associated with land-use competition, increasing commodity prices and deforestation of rain-forest. Until today, the international markets for agricultural commodities and bioenergy have not come up with a label for all kinds of biomass based goods from sustainable production, including food, feed, bioplastics, bioenergy and others. Thus, buyers do not have the possibility to choose between sustainable and non-sustainable products. The price is what makes a product successful. The market offers no incentives for sustainable producing farmers and supply chains.

Certification is an instrument to distinguish sustainable products from non-sustainable ones on the market. It puts buyers in the position to opt deliberately for sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction. Hence, certification supports responsible farms and processing companies and reduces the risk of unsustainable production.

ISCC is a certification system allowing a differentiation of sustainable products from non-sustainable ones. It also includes further add-ons, which enable to communicate even more information at the different stages of the supply chain, like greenhouse gas emissions or consumables (e.g. energy and water use).

The certification of sustainable biomass is a complex procedure. The ISCC certification system describes procedures and standards in its reference documents that allow an easy handling for the users.

Sustainable production is a precondition for the further expansion of biomass and the production of biomass based goods. Within the bioenergy market the proof of sustainability is already a legal requirement. It is expected that sustainability standards will be introduced on a voluntary or legal basis for the traditional markets (food, feed) as well as in the chemical / technical industries.

Independence, transparency and international scope are the core characteristics of ISCC. The ISCC logo reliably distinguishes sustainable biomass and bioenergy from non-sustainable ones. ISCC provides a platform for the necessary dialogue. The essential characteristics of the ISCC system are:

- Globally applicable certification system for sustainability
- Globally applicable certification system for the calculation of greenhouse gas emissions and consumables (e.g. energy and water use)
- Adaptable to regional requirements and specifics
- Not restricted to certain types of biomass; covering all relevant raw materials
- Multi-stakeholder approach (farmers, processors, trade, industry, NGOs, associations, research institutions, authorities)
- Audits by independent 3rd party auditors, free from conflict of interest and competent
- Specific control points for sustainability audits
- Traceability, Registry and Internet-publication of certificates issued
- Additional information on certificate holders on add-ons

- Information on sustainability properties on a selectable basis (e.g. greenhouse gas, consumables)
- Cooperation with other certification systems
- Learning system, based on continuous improvement.

2 Scope

The system basics described hereafter are effective for the ISCC PLUS certification system for the global certification of biomass and biomass-based products.

ISCC can be applied globally. In order to take the specific regional and national circumstances into account ISCC adds continuously information on area classification, production, cultivation and social issues. This will support the auditor in conducting the risk assessment and audit.

2.1 General ISCC PLUS documents

The requirements described in the system basics and in further documents of the certification system refer to all enterprises of the supply chain for biomass. This supply chain starts with farms delivering to the first gathering points which receive biomass from farms and transport or further process it and ends with economic operators which bring sustainable products based on renewable raw materials into the market.

The ISCC system retains its requirements and criteria in different documents regarding Governance documents, technical documents and audit documents. The documentation structure of the ISCC system is shown in the following table. Chapter 4.3.1 “Modular Approach” gives further explanations on the technical documents.

	Nr.	Name	Content
Governance documents	101	ISCC Statutes	The statutes govern the basic organisation and decision making processes of the association ISCC e.V.
	103	Quality Management	Description of the quality management of the ISCC system
	201	System Basics	This document describes the basic functions and processes of the ISCC system. A more detailed description of the contents can be found in further documents
Technical documents	202	Sustainability Requirements – ISCC PLUS Standard on Sustainability Requirements for the	The sustainability requirements specify the standards for sustainable biomass production

	Nr.	Name	Content
		Production of Biomass	
	202a	Sustainability Requirements – Equivalence Benchmark	Describes equivalence of sustainability requirements in different countries and draws conclusions regarding audit scope
	202-01	Environmental management and biodiversity	Add-on to 202 to ensure continuous improvement of issues soil, water, energy and biodiversity on field
	202-02	Classified Chemicals	Add-on to 202 for the prohibition of dangerous chemicals on-field
	202-0n	Options to add further Requirements for agricultural Production	Options to add further requirements for agricultural production which can be developed over time
	203	Requirements for Traceability	The listed requirements allow the traceability of biomass along supply chains, even complex and non stable supply chains. Data declarations at the individual stages of the supply chain is defined
	204-01	Mass Balance Requirements	Optional Chain of Custody requirement based on a mass balance methodology (one Chain of Custody option has to be chosen)
	204-02	Physical Segregation Requirements	Optional Chain of Custody requirement based on a segregation methodology (one Chain of Custody option has to be chosen)
	204-0n	Options to add further Chain of Custody Requirements	Options to add further chain of custody requirements which can be developed over time
	205-01	GHG Emission Requirements	Requirements for GHG emission calculation
	205-02	Consumables of a Production	Add-on for consumables (e.g.

	Nr.	Name	Content
		Process	water energy used)
	205-0n	Options to add further Requirements on Sustainability Properties	Options to add further requirements for sustainability properties
Audit documents	207	Risk Management	Definition and requirements for the risk assessment and the consequences which are derived from it
	251	Requirements for Certification Bodies	Certification bodies audit the compliance with the ISCC standard. The document describes the requirements for certification bodies and which tasks they have to fulfil
	252	Regulations to carry out Audits	This document defines which audits the certification bodies have to conduct and which contents they have to consider
	253	Complaints, Appeals and Arbitration	In case of conflicts affecting ISCC this document provides procedures for arbitration
	255	ISCC Add-ons and Extensions	Guidance for the application of add-ons of further requirements and extensions to further products and guidance for the recognition of existing certificates and how to issue extensions and add-ons.
	254	Integrity Program	Describes the Integrity Program which was launched as a means to enable closer monitoring of the CBs' verification activities via integrity audits conducted by ISCC integrity assessors.
	256	Group Certification	Requirements for group certifications, in particular for small-holder farmers, producer organisations and cooperatives
	260-01	Short Rotation Coppice (SRC)	Describes the ISCC special provisions regarding requirements

	Nr.	Name	Content
			and audit procedures for SRC
	260-02	Bioplastics	Describes the ISCC special provisions regarding requirements and audit procedures for bioplastics
	260-03	Feed	Describes the ISCC special provisions regarding requirements and audit procedures for Feed
	260-03	Food	Describes the ISCC special provisions regarding requirements and audit procedures for Food
	260-0n	Options to add further Extensions	Describes the options to add further extensions
	300	Country specific Guidelines	ISCC has developed guidelines with country specific information which auditors shall use for audit preparation

Table 1: Structure of the ISCC documentation

3 Normative references

All documents listed in the previous paragraph 2 are considered relevant references.

4 The ISCC PLUS certification system

4.1 Organisation

4.1.1 International level

The legally registered ISCC association is the responsible body for the ISCC system. Whoever is involved in the production, the processing and use of sustainable biomass can become member of this association; also other stakeholders interested in the ISCC certification system can become members, NGOs or scientific institutions, for instance. The day to day operation of the system is assigned to the ISCC System GmbH (ISCC limited liability corporation).

The General Assembly of the ISCC association incorporates all stakeholders and interested parties. Members of the General Assembly constitute the Board. It represents the different groups participating in ISCC. The Board again may delegate the competencies to an Executive Board, if necessary for an effective and stakeholder orientated management of the organisation. Technical Committees may be appointed by the Board as to support them in the handling of certain topics.

The structure of the organisation as well as the rights and duties of the involved actors are defined in document ISCC 101 ISCC Statutes.

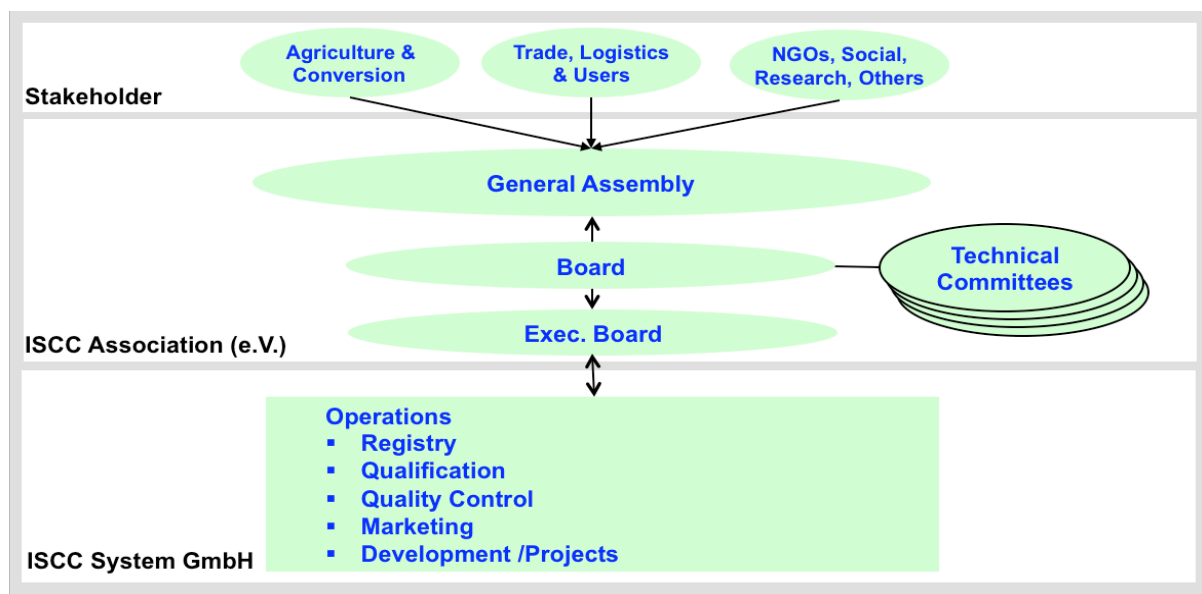


Figure 1: Interaction between Stakeholders, ISCC Association (e.V.) and ISCC System GmbH

4.1.2 National and regional level

Initiatives to promote and support the ISCC system can be formed under the umbrella of ISCC at national and regional level. Depending on the intensity of its activities, such initiatives can be an ISCC Contact Point, a National or Regional Technical Working Group or an ISCC Office. The initiatives work and function according to the ISCC association's regulations. The national or regional initiatives play an important role when an adjustment of the international standard is needed due to specific national or regional circumstances. The initiatives must act in a way to take into account the respective stakeholder interests of the countries under the terms of the ISCC association.

Detailed procedures can be found in document ISCC PLUS 102 National and Regional Initiatives.

4.2 The processes of the certification system at a glance

Processes and procedures of the ISCC System and the related terminology are based on the general requirements for bodies operating product certification systems (ISO Guide 65/EN 45 011) and are in conformity with standard ISO 19011 establishing guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing. The terminology and procedures in the system reflect the focus on a global application of the system.

The subsequent figure 2 shows an overview of the processes in the ISCC System. ISCC has considered the requirements of ISAE 3000 in its system set up especially with respect to quality control, risk management by ISCC and the auditor, planning and performing of audits, sampling processes and reporting.

An independent certification body will issue certificates after conducting a successful audit. Certificates are documents, which confirm that the owner complies with the requirements of the ISCC PLUS standard. Certification bodies can issue certificates for all relevant elements of the supply chain. A precondition for this issuance of certificates is the registration for certification at ISCC by the relevant elements of the supply chain and the positive participation in an audit. An independent certification body recognized by a national public authority or an accreditation body and cooperating with ISCC shall conduct the audit.

Certificates can be received by farms/plantations, first gathering points, conversion units, traders/warehouses, etc. Every first gathering point and conversion unit needs to be audited in order to receive a certificate. Farms and plantations have three options. They can be audited individually or as a supplier of a first gathering point. They can also be certified as part of a group (see also ISCC PLUS 256, group certification).

Warehouses/trading functions receiving sustainable products physically can be audited as a single entity or as part of a company's logistics network. In the latter case the logistic centre plus a sample of associated warehouses must be audited (see also ISCC PLUS 252 Regulations to carry out Audits and ISCC PLUS 207 Risk Management). Elements of the supply chain, which do not receive sustainable products physically, can receive a certificate on a voluntary basis. Transport does not need to register with ISCC and does not need to receive a certificate.

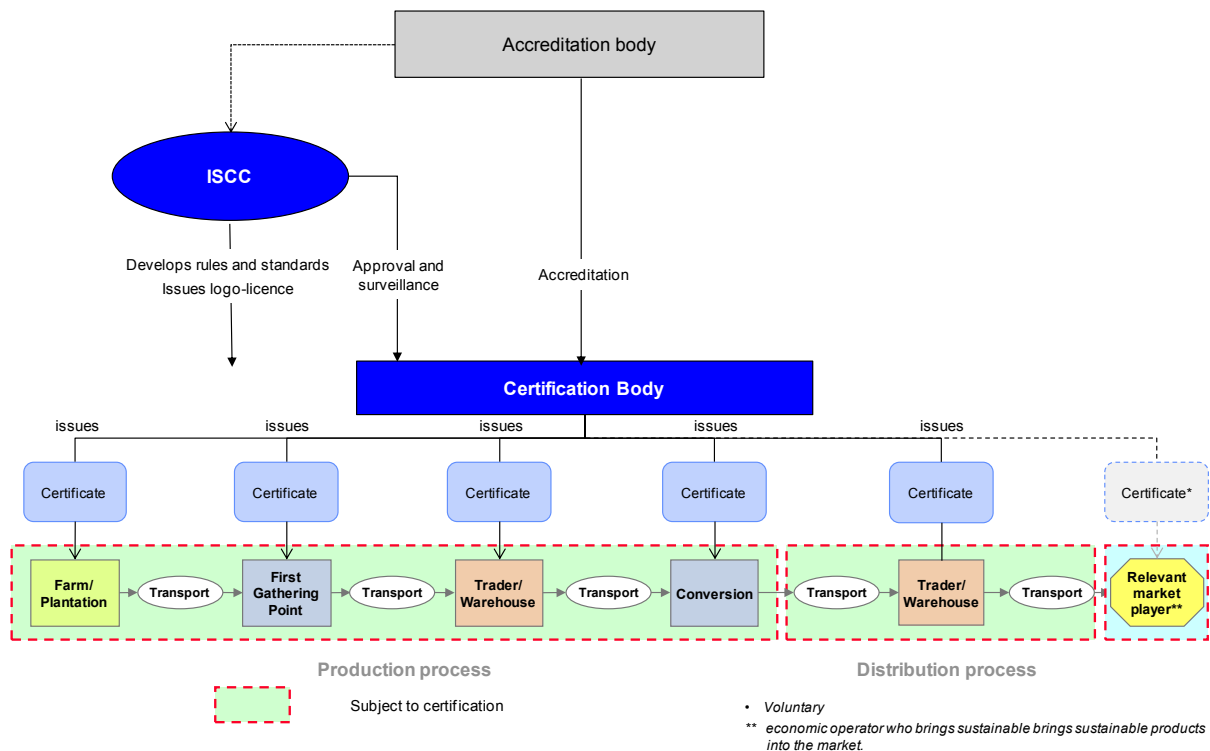


Figure 2: The processes of the certification system at a glance

The requirements for certification bodies are described in document ISCC PLUS 251 Requirements for Certification Bodies. Independence, free from conflict of interest and competence are important preconditions to be met by the third party auditors. Details of audit procedures are specified in ISCC PLUS 252 Regulations to carry out Audits. Audits must be properly planned, conducted and reported on, based on the procedures and requirements set in the system.

4.3 Modular Approach

The ISCC certification criteria comprise three categories: requirements on sustainability criteria (ISCC PLUS 202), chain of custody (ISCC PLUS 203, ISCC PLUS 204-01, ISCC PLUS 204-02) and specific sustainability properties of a product such as greenhouse gas emissions and consumables (ISCC PLUS 205-01, 205-02). ISCC PLUS 202-01, ISCC PLUS 202-02 and ISCC PLUS 205-02 are add-ons. The designation of GHG emissions (ISCC PLUS 205-01) is mandatory for the biomass production and must be available at the first gathering point. All other elements in the value chain can choose ISCC PLUS 205-01 as a modular approach.

The following table shows the different categories and their add-ons. ISCC reserves its right to react on future scientific and economic developments and advance the add-ons. Further adaptations will be subject to the approval by the ISCC Board.

Sustainability Criteria	Traceability	Sustainability Properties
202 Sustainability Requirements	203 Requirements for Traceability	205-01 GHG Emission Requirements
202-01 Environmental Management and Biodiversity	204-01 Mass Balance Requirements	205-02 Consumables of a Production Process
202-02 Classified Chemicals	204-02 Physical Segregation Requirements	205-0n Options to add further Requirements on Sustainability Properties
202-0n Options to add further Requirements for agricultural Production	204-0n Options to add further Chain of Custody Requirements	

Figure 3: Overview on ISCC modular approach

Within the ISCC technical documents these certification criteria and respective processes are defined as a globally valid standard.

In countries where the ISCC standard is applied, it can be specified by national or regional initiatives and described more precisely and adapted to the particular country situation. National or regional specifications will be subject to the recognition by the ISCC Board.

4.3.1 Sustainability Criteria

Farms and plantations, which produce sustainable biomass, must comply with sustainability requirements for the Production of Biomass, kept in document ISCC PLUS 202, which comprise

- (1) Protection of areas with high biodiversity value
- (2) Protection of areas with high carbon stock
- (3) Protection of peat land
- (4) Sustainable management of the farm

and ISCC PLUS 205-01. It is a prerequisite of ISCC that the GHG emissions of the biomass production are designated and available at the first gathering point.

Further on farms/plantations have the choice to complement ISCC PLUS 202 by add-ons. This allows farmers to comply with additional requirements from other economic operators, which are interested in achieving a higher degree of sustainability. The different add-ons currently comprise:

202-01 Environmental management and biodiversity

202-02 Classified chemicals

202-0n Options to add further requirements for agricultural production

The economic operator, who decides to fulfil these requirements, selects the respective add-on(s) during the registration process.

4.3.2 Traceability

Each element of an ISCC PLUS certified supply chain has to comply with the requirements for traceability. Compliance can be achieved by choosing either of the different chain of custody (CoC) options. Traceability does not only cover the basic requirements that products can be traced back and forth throughout the supply chain from origin to the point of final delivery but also the possibility to specify what their properties are, e.g. what they are made from and how they have been processed. The properties of relevance are the sustainability characteristics, which are an important element of a traceability system and are assigned to consignments of sustainable products.

The origin of the sustainable biomass used, must be traceable through the different stages of distribution, production and supply right up to the biomass cultivation. This is achieved within ISCC by a mass balance system or through physical segregation, where delivery notes ensure that origin, quantity and other characteristics, like related greenhouse gas emissions or consumables can be clearly identified at each stage of the supply chain.

The specific requirements for traceable chains are defined in document ISCC PLUS 203 Requirements for Traceability. The certified party can choose between the options Mass balance (ISCC PLUS 204-01) and Physical Segregation (Document ISCC PLUS 204-02).

4.3.3 Requirements for Sustainability Properties

In contrast to the requirements on sustainability and CoC, additional sustainability properties of a product can be stated additionally according to documents ISCC PLUS 205-0n. The economic operator can choose from different add-ons such as ISCC PLUS 205-01 or ISCC PLUS 205-02 with multiple choices being possible. Biomass producers have to comply with ISCC PLUS 205-01. The respective calculation and GHG values must be available at the first gathering point.

The add-on ISCC PLUS 205-01 provides the methodology for calculating the greenhouse gas emissions for a supply chain. To do so, elements of the supply chain can either calculate their greenhouse gas emissions or use disaggregated default values if applicable.

The add-on ISCC PLUS 205-02 provides the methodology for calculating the consumables used within a supply chain. The choice of consumables is not limited to a specific number. The only requirement is that the relevant information is available from the previous element of the supply chain. Consumables can be any kind of utility needed for operation or released

by the operation of the respective element of the supply chain (e.g. fuel, electricity, water, waste water, emissions etc.).

4.4 ISCC extensions to existent certification

ISCC PLUS offers extensions to further product categories. The following product categories exist.

- ISCC PLUS 260-01 Short Rotation Coppice (SRC)
- ISCC PLUS 260-02 Bioplastics
- ISCC PLUS 260-03 Feed
- ISCC PLUS 260-04 Food
- ISCC PLUS 260-0n Options to add further Extensions

ISCC will take into consideration further extensions should this be required by system participants and stakeholders.

4.5 Mutual recognition of ISCC certificates

ISCC PLUS recognizes ISCC DE and ISCC EU certificates. For details please see ISCC PLUS 255 “Add-on and Extensions” and ISCC 260-01 to 260-0n for extensions and 202-01 to 202-0n and 205-01 to 205-02 for add-ons.

4.6 Certification procedure

The workflow of the certification process complies with the requirements of ISO Guide 65 (EN 45 011). The applied audit procedures comply with the requirements of ISO 19011.

4.6.1 Participants in the certification system (relevant elements)

Enterprises of the supply chain of all products of renewable raw materials can be participants in the ISCC certification system (see figure 3).

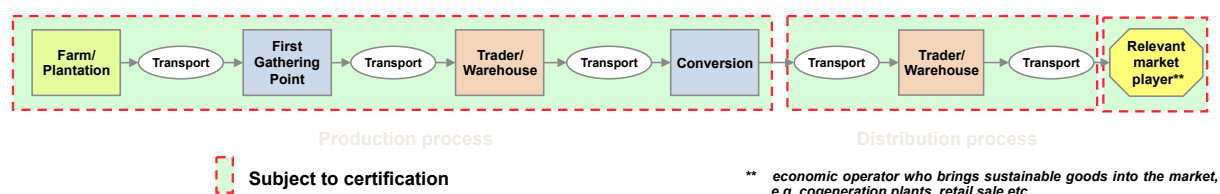


Figure 3: Different elements and sections of the supply chain

The relevant elements of the supply chain are:

- (1) **Farms/ plantation:** Farms/ plantations are companies or sites, which either own or have leased one or multiple fields. Subject to certification is always the entire land (agricultural land, pasture, forest, any other land) of the farm/ plantation. Selection of

fields (cherry picking) is not allowed under the ISCC standard. Within ISCC farms/plantations have three options: They can either apply for individual certification, group certification or they become part of the system as supplier to a first gathering point. In the latter case, they sign a self-declaration towards the first gathering point to comply with the ISCC standards. The audit will be a sample of all farmers supplying to a first gathering point..

Farms/ plantations will be audited with respect to the sustainability requirements as stated in ISCC PLUS 202 and GHG emission requirements as stated in ISCC PLUS 205-01. If farms/plantations intend to be certified against further add-ons of the ISCC system (e.g. on-field biodiversity under ISCC PLUS 202-01) these add-ons need to be included into the audit as well.

- (2) **First gathering points:** First gathering points are economic operators that first receive the biomass from companies and sites that grow and harvest this biomass. First gathering points either trade or further process this raw material. An important characteristic of a first gathering point is the fact that it determines the incoming biomass exactly according to quality and amount and that it documents this information and returns it to its suppliers. Collecting points of several farms which are for example equipped with a mobile weighbridge during harvest are not regarded as a first gathering point. The same applies for warehouses, which do not trade in and/or sell biomass or raw material, but act on demand of a first gathering point. First gathering points will be audited with respect to the traceability requirements as stated in ISCC PLUS 203 and either one of the chain of custody options ISCC PLUS 204-01 or 204-02. The GHG emission values of the biomass production (ISCC PLUS 205-01) must be available at the first gathering point. If first gathering points intend to be certified against further add-ons (e.g. calculation of own GHG emission values according to ISCC PLUS 205-01) of the ISCC system these add-ons need to be included into the audit as well.
- (3) **Traders/warehouses:** Traders/warehouses after the first gathering point storing sustainable products (i.e. biomass, bioliquids or biofuels) will be audited regarding traceability. Traders/warehouses will be audited with respect to the traceability requirements as stated in ISCC PLUS 203 and either one of the chain of custody options ISCC PLUS 204-01 or 204-02. If traders intend to be certified against further add-ons of the ISCC system these add-ons need to be included into the audit as well.
- (4) **Conversion units:** Conversion units are companies that process raw materials or their derivatives and change the properties of the processed materials (physical, chemical, visual). Conversion units will be audited with respect to the traceability requirements as stated in ISCC PLUS 203 and either one of the chain of custody options ISCC PLUS 204-01 or 204-02. If conversion units intend to be certified against further add-ons of the ISCC system (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions under ISCC PLUS 205-01 or consumables under ISCC PLUS 205-02) these add-ons need to be included into the audit as well.
- (5) **Transport:** Enterprises transporting the biomass between the above mentioned elements of the supply chain are not subject to an audit unless they actively apply for it.

- (6) **Relevant market player:** These are economic operators who bring sustainable product into the market and which may participate in the certification system on voluntary bases.

4.6.2 Application for certification

The elements of the supply chain that want to participate in the ISCC system will have to select first a certification body cooperating with ISCC. After selecting the certification body the respective company shall register with ISCC (ISCC webpage http://www.iscc-system.org/iscc_certification_guidance/registration/index_eng.html). Once the required data is processed and the company has received a registration number and the required documents, the selected certification body can start the audit process (see ISCC PLUS 252 Regulations to carry out Audits). In case the company already holds an ISCC certificate or wants to include further add-ons into the certification scope, the certification body may only need to check the additional requirements. These requirements are listed in the document Equivalence with existing Certificates and Add-Ons ISCC PLUS 252-01

4.6.3 Conducting audits

All elements in the supply chain that register with ISCC and want to receive a certificate are subject to an audit before participating in the scheme. Certification bodies carry out certification audits at all relevant elements of the supply chain. They audit the compliance with the requirements specified for the respective elements. The results of these audits must be documented in audit reports.

Auditors should comply with the requirements of the ISAE 3000 when performing an ISCC audit. The requirements for certification bodies are specified in document ISCC PLUS 251 Requirements for Certification Bodies. The regulations specifying how to carry out audits are fixed in document Regulations to carry out audits ISCC PLUS 252 and Equivalence with existing Certificates and Add-Ons ISCC PLUS 252-01.

4.6.4 Issuance of certificates

4.6.4.1 Issuance and publication of certificates

Upon positive evaluation of the audit results, the certification body issues certificates to the relevant elements of the supply chain.

ISCC publishes its certificates on its websites.

4.6.4.2 Content of certificates

Certificates must at least include the following information:

- (1) A unique certification code number composed of the registration code of the certification system, the certificate number and the number of the certification body,
- (2) Product category (e.g. Bioplastics)
- (3) Name and address of the audited company
- (4) Kind of conversion unit

- (5) Input materials of the audited company
- (6) Output materials of the audited company
- (7) Name and address of the certification body
- (8) Name and address of the certification system
- (9) Add-ons
- (10) Chain of custody option
- (11) Date of issuance of the certificate
- (12) Scope of certification

4.6.4.3 Validity

Certificates are valid over a period of twelve months from the date of issuance.

4.6.4.4 Resignation

The certificate holder can resign from participation in the ISCC system any time by giving notice to the certification body.

4.6.4.5 Withdrawal

In case of serious violation against the ISCC specifications, the certification body may withdraw the certificate.

4.7 Risk management

On different application levels, the ISCC system uses an adapted risk management to guarantee compliance with the requirements. The overall requirements are listed in document ISCC PLUS 207 Risk Management. Specific requirements are listed within the respective documents.

4.8 Logo use

After a positive outcome of the certification procedure, the relevant elements can apply for the use of the ISCC logo. The ISCC logo labels the provenance of the biomass and related products from sustainable production.

4.9 Arbitration procedure

An arbitration body is set up by the ISCC Board in case of complaints regarding the standard development process and in case of disagreement regarding the interpretation of the ISCC certification requirements.

The arbitration procedure is regulated in document ISCC PLUS 253 Complaints, Appeals and Arbitration.

4.10 Integrity Program

The ISCC Integrity Program aims to ensure a consistent and objective audit and certification process by all certification bodies cooperating with ISCC worldwide. It was launched as a means to enable closer monitoring of the CBs' verification activities and is based on an ongoing assessment process that is part of the continuous improvement of the ISCC system. It consists of multiple ISCC participant and CB office and assessments planned randomly or on a targeted basis after risk evaluations or complaints. The assessments are conducted by ISCC experts (integrity assessors) and can cover all the countries where the CB carries out ISCC activities.