

## Annexure H: Overview of Accreditation and Grading

### 1. Introduction

A brief description of the rationale for the existence of the benchmarked organisations is provided in **Table 1** below:

**Table 1: Rationale for the Existence of Organisations**

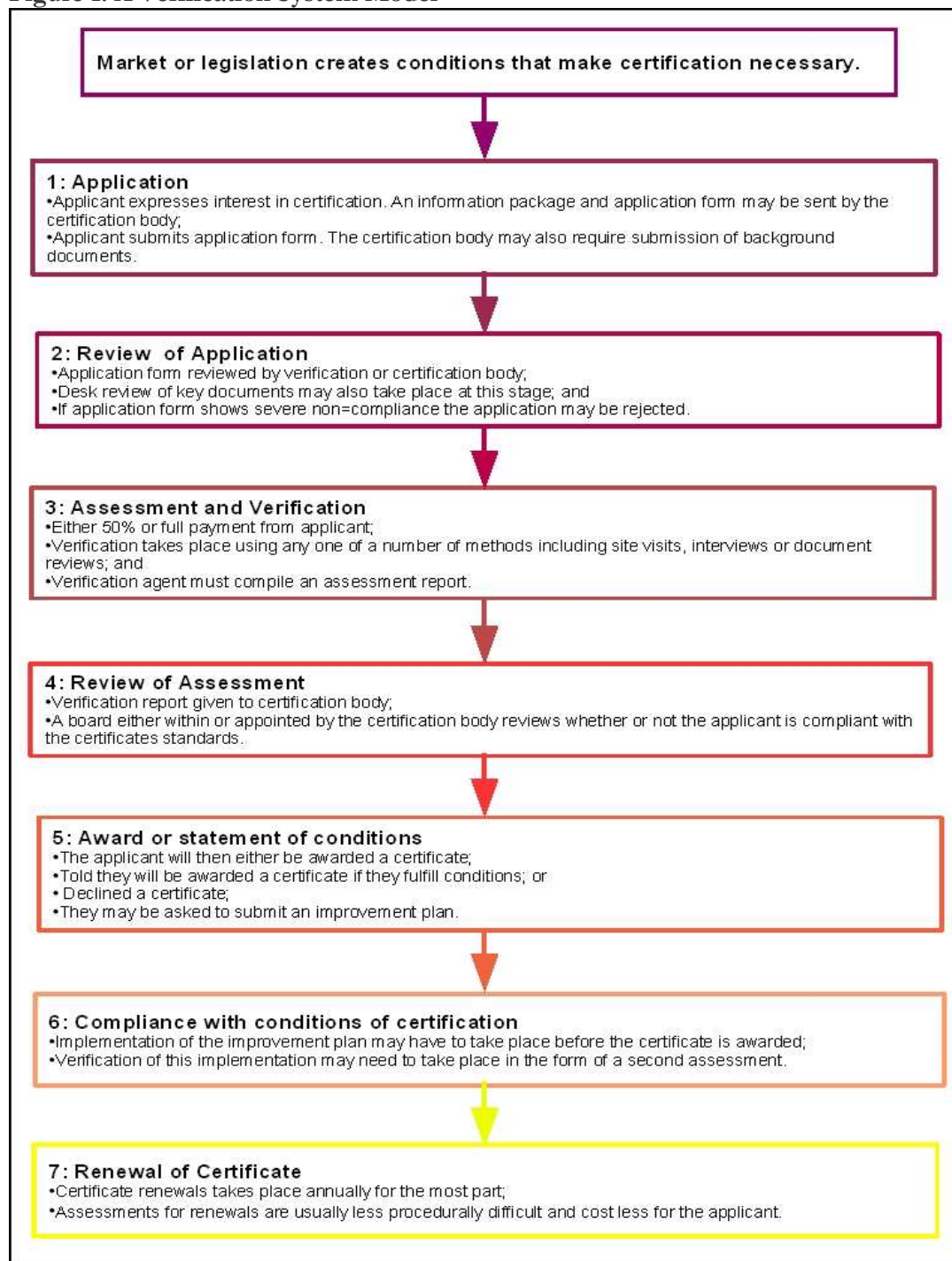
Organisation	Rationale for Existence
TGCSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A South African state owned entity that is managed by an independent Council, and is responsible for the grading of hospitality and tourism facilities and services against predefined quality and service standards and the subsequent certification of these entities according to the internationally recognised star grading system.</li> <li>• The TGCSA has graded close to 5 000 entities.</li> </ul>
FTTSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A South African registered non-profit organisation that awards the FTTSA Trademark to tourism organisations that have been verified as providing a product that is socially and economically fair/ responsible. FTTSA encourages and publicises fair and responsible business practice by South African tourism establishments. The trademark is awarded to tourism businesses that meet stringent criteria, viz               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fair wages and working conditions, fair operations, purchasing and distribution of benefits</li> <li>– Ethical business practice</li> <li>– Respect for human rights, culture and democracy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The six principles of FTTSA are as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fair share</li> <li>– Democracy</li> <li>– Respect</li> <li>– Reliability</li> <li>– Transparency</li> <li>– Sustainability.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
AA Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AA Travel intends to be a comprehensive database of accommodation facilities in South Africa. They also undertake to rate many of the establishments in their database according to a four-tiered grading system.</li> </ul>
Heritage Eco –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is a rating program that undertakes to rate tourism</li> </ul>

Organisation	Rationale for Existence
Rating (Qualitour)	<p>products based on their compliance with environmentally sensitive measures and legislations. They also award points for the establishment being economically viable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their membership base consists of 60 clients.</li> </ul>
WIETA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WIETA is an organisation, which supports ethical trade in the wine industry. Their criteria for compliance are based on South African labour legislation for the agricultural sector. They operate under democratic principles.</li> <li>• WIETA has a membership base of around 103 members.</li> </ul>
SABS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SABS does not just do certification but is a more general quality assurance organisation that ensures that products and systems meet national and international standards.</li> <li>• SABS is accredited by SANAS to conduct certifications and are thus subjected to stringent quality management and process management criteria based on ISO standards and SANAS.</li> <li>• SABS has various divisions within the organisation to deal with different sectors, including a sector that deals with certification.</li> <li>• Within the certification sector there are several different schemes, which cater for a range of industries. These schemes have different marks.</li> <li>• The SABS has a membership base in the tens of thousands.</li> </ul>
Afrisco/Ecocert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afrisco is a local organic certification body. They certify producers, producer groups and suppliers of organic agriculture. Afrisco conducts Ecocert certifications as well. Ecocert certification is based on international organic standards and as many of the clients are exporters, this is the more popular option. Afrisco provides certification according to South African Department of Agriculture standards. Afrisco has a membership base of 14. Ecocert has a considerably larger international membership base. Of this Afrisco has awarded around 80 ecocert certificates.</li> </ul>
Proudly South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proudly South Africa is a trademark committed to improving the economic status of South African goods and services. They are supported by the DTI. They assure the quality of products as well as assuring that they are at least 50% produced in South Africa.</li> <li>• Proudly South Africa has a membership base of around 1 400.</li> </ul>
SANAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SANAS is the national accreditation body of South Africa. They accredit laboratory and health and safety inspectors. Their function is to accredit certification and standards bodies like the SABS.</li> </ul>

## 2. Verification Systems

A summary of the steps involved in a typical verification process is shown in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1: A Verification System Model**



In this section of the report we discuss the processes and procedures followed by the various certification organisations surveyed, in relation to the processes described above, namely verification, certification and accreditation. The processes and procedures followed by SANAS are discussed separately.

### **TGCSA**

The process adopted by the TGCSA with regard to the assessment and certification of tourism enterprises for star grading purposes is diagrammatically depicted in **Figure 2**.

- Key points with regard to the TGCSA's certification and assessment process are:
- Approximately 5 000 enterprises are currently graded;
- The verification/grading cycle is repeated annually;
- Verification agents are known as "assessors";
- All assessors are independent individuals not employed by the TGCSA;
- All assessments are announced;
- The establishment seeking grading chooses its own assessor from the list of assessors published by the TGCSA;
- 10% of assessments are audited by a TGCSA-appointed assessor;
- Assessment standards are predefined, transparent and freely available;
- Graded (certified) establishments sign a code of conduct;
- Customer feedback plays an important role in the ongoing monitoring of standards and is also utilised for re-grading/re-assessment purposes;
- Establishments do not evaluate their own performance against the assessment criteria – an independent, trained assessor is responsible for this. However, an establishment can choose to be graded at a particular star level and opt not to be officially graded until it meets that level of quality;
- The role of the assessor is to provide a recommendation to the TGCSA – the TGCSA Awards Committee (appointed by the Council) makes the final decision as to which grading is achieved. The TGCSA Executive Director signs off on the final grading;
- Certificates are awarded to successfully graded establishments, and are valid for a year. Each graded establishment is required to display a TGCSA plaque bearing its current star rating;
- The assessment is only undertaken when the grading fee has been paid (this fee is payable whether the grading is successful or not);
- The grading fee is paid directly to the TGCSA, which subsequently pays the assessor on completion of the assessment; and
- An average assessment last 3 to 4 hours with large hotels taking significantly longer to assess (up to a day).

### FTTSA

The process adopted by FTTSA with regard to the assessment, verification and certification of tourism enterprises is diagrammatically depicted in **Figure 3**.

Key points with regard to FTTSA's certification, verification and assessment process are:

- The process cycle is repeated every 24 months;
- FTTSA verification agents are known as “assessors”;
- All assessors are independent of FTTSA;
- All verification visits are announced;
- 25% of all on-site assessments are audited;
- The assessor does not make the decision whether or not to certify, but rather makes a recommendation to the FTTSA Certification Panel (consisting of 2 independent individuals plus one FTTSA representative);
- The FTTSA Trademark Panel identifies the assessor;
- FTTSA employs a two-stage assessment process, with an initial Self-Audit Questionnaire (completed by the establishment) followed by an on-site verification assessment conducted by a third party assessor. The process allows for cost reduction as enterprises have an opportunity to identify short comings (by themselves or pointed out by the Trademark Panel) before commencing with a costly verification audit;
- Verification standards are complex and onerous and require high levels of specialist skills to verify;
- An average assessment takes 2 to 3 days to complete – including report writing;
- The SAQ is a long document that requires extensive information and knowledge of the business in order to complete;
- Certification fees are only paid on award of the Trademark, however, assessment (verification) fees are paid regardless of success;
- Both types of fee are payable to FTTSA directly. FTTSA pays the assessors upon submission of completed reports;
- Successful organisations are awarded a certificate and are able to utilize the FTTSA Trademark as a marketing tool. Display of the FTTSA plaque is recommended but not compulsory.

### WIETA

The verification system and awarding process followed by WIETA is represented in **Figure 4**.

Key points with regard to WIETA's auditing and recognition processes are:

- WIETA is a membership-based organisation;
- After joining, members have three years in which to comply with the elements of the WIETA Code of Conduct. If they have not complied, then their membership will be revoked;
- Compliance is checked via a third party audit that is repeated every three years;
- WIETA verification agents are known as “auditors”;
- WIETA trains and appoints the auditors (currently there are 16);
- Auditors work in teams. A typical audit is conducted by a team of 3 auditors over a one-day period;
- There is a pre-audit provision of questionnaires to be completed by the applicant. The applicant is advised to have good knowledge of the WIETA criteria and the relevant agricultural legislation before undertaking the verification process;
- The lead up to the audit is carefully planned and gives sufficient time to the team to seek information from applicants; for applicants to prepare information; and for the inspection team to then digest and use this in planning the actual inspection;
- On the day of the on-site audit, the team will hold a briefing meeting with management and workers/worker representatives, e.g. union representatives, or in the absence of a union, worker-elected representatives, including at least one man and one woman who are responsible for ensuring that peers understand the process;
- This briefing meeting allows an explanation of the procedures and ensures that, where management did not pre-inform workers of the inspection, they have some understanding of the audit purpose and process;
- Auditors are expected to use their own knowledge and judgments during the verification process. The audit methods are thus highly qualitative;
- The establishment of criteria, audit procedures and evaluation of audit results is all undertaken in a democratic and transparent manner;
- The purpose of “accreditation” by WIETA (i.e. certification) is to encourage socio-economic transformation in the wine and agricultural sectors. Each audit leads to the development of an improvement plan to be followed by the applicant, thus contributing to improved social performance by the private sector;
- A multi-stakeholder committee makes the final decision as to whether or not the audited business is WIETA compliant, and is also responsible for reviewing and evaluating improvement plans on a rolling basis

### Afrisco/Ecocert

The verification system and awarding process used by Afrisco/Ecocert is represented in **Figure 5**.

Key points regarding the Afrisco/Ecocert inspection and certification processes are:

- There is a pre-inspection provision of a questionnaire completion by the applicant;
- An independent inspector is contracted to carry out an on-site inspection of farm operations as well as a review of documents. The inspector is required to complete a number of forms and ask the applicant to verify the information contained in these forms;
- The inspector must be highly specialised and trained;
- The inspector writes a report for Afrisco, which in turn makes recommendations on conditions that the applicant must meet;
- An independent Afrisco Certification Committee, made up of key industry stakeholders, considers these recommendations;
- Applicants can either be certified, certified in conversion or certified with conditions. Certified in conversion refers to a farm that is undergoing conversion from a non-organic to organic farm and is still experiencing issues with soil rehabilitation;
- Once applicants are certified they must sign a contract stating the terms under which they are certified;
- Afrisco adheres to strict ISO criteria for quality management; and
- Afrisco/Ecocert certificates are valid for a year, after which time the certified farm must repeat the process.

### **Heritage Eco-Rating/Qualitour**

The process for verification and awarding followed by Heritage Eco Rating is represented in **Figure 6**.

Key points regarding the Heritage Eco-Rating scheme are:

- The applicant fills out a questionnaire and submits it to Qualitour – this is known as the “pre audit”;
- The assessments cover 64 sets of criteria and must be carried out by highly skilled auditors;
- Heritage auditors are appointed by the scheme;
- The auditor completes a scorecard. This captures the data in a quantitative manner, weighted according to importance, for example, waste management is given a greater weighting than marketing;
- Audits are carried out every 8 months;
- Audit reports are evaluated by the scheme;
- If enterprises score more than 50% they are accepted into the scheme on a silver grading. If they score more than 75% they are accepted under a gold grading and if they score more than 90% they are accepted under a platinum grading;
- Once they have been accepted, members must subscribe to a Code of Ethics of the organisation; and



- The reporting process follows ISO standards.

### **SABS**

The verification/certification process followed by the SABS is represented in **Figure 7**.

Key points regarding SABS auditing and recognition are:

- Applicants are able to contact a “Regional Specialist” who will inform them which scheme is relevant to them, and which ISO and/or SANAS standards and what criteria and product characteristics they must adhere to;
- The client then fills in an application form and sends in an application fee;
- After application, the client is directed to a “Mark Scheme” specialist and the product or process which needs to be certified is discussed and agreed upon;
- A third party auditor is then appointed to inspect products and operations;
- All audits are announced.
- Based on the auditor’s report, the SABS advises on necessary improvements and actions to improve adherence to standards;
- The SABS will award the mark if the client has met all criteria;
- Regular inspections and tests follow the award;
- SABS certifications are generally renewed or re-assessed every three years; and
- An SABS approvals board reviews all inspection and certification reports.

### **AA Travel**

The verification and awarding system used by AA travel is represented in **Figure 8**.

Key points regarding the verification and awarding process in AA travel are:

- AA travel contracts individual trained assessors to assess according to a quantifiable set of criteria including cleanliness, guest care, guest comfort, food quality and general industry requirements;
- Assessors act as sales representatives and approach clients to encourage them to join the scheme;
- Assessments typically take between 3-5 hours, depending on the size of the property;
- A four-tiered grading system defines the relative quality of establishments;
- The grading process is repeated annually;
- All quality-assured establishments receive an official AA “endorsement”;
- Endorsed properties are promoted via the AA Travel website. Inclusion in travel guides is optional and dependent on advertising;



- There are presently about 2000 products in the AA Quality Assured database (1700 of these are also star-graded).

### **Proudly South African**

The verification and awarding system followed by Proudly South African (“PSA”) is presented in **Figure 9**.

Key points regarding the PSA system:

- PSA is ISO 9000 compliant;
- PSA functions as a membership organisation. Membership is open to businesses and other entities from throughout the South African economy, and members are able to use the distinctive PSA mark on products and in marketing collateral;
- Potential members complete an application form and send this to PSA along with proof of the company’s compliance with the four membership criteria (local content; quality standards; fair labour and employment practices; and sound environmental management practices);
- PSA reviews each application. Verification of information is done by PSA telephonically i.e. to ensure that the information provided is accurate;
- Depending on the type of business or product, the status of other certificates, such as ISO or an eco-label are evaluated;
- Members pay an annual fee to use the PSA logo, payable directly to PSA;
- If there is a consumer complaint or any other evidence of non-compliance by a PSA member, an on site verification would be required by PSA. This is conducted by a third party auditor;
- Due to the volume of business, PSA often uses SABS to organise the audits; and
- Audit results are reviewed by a compliance panel within PSA that either upholds or rejects the member’s use of the PSA mark.

Figure 2: TGCSA Certification Process

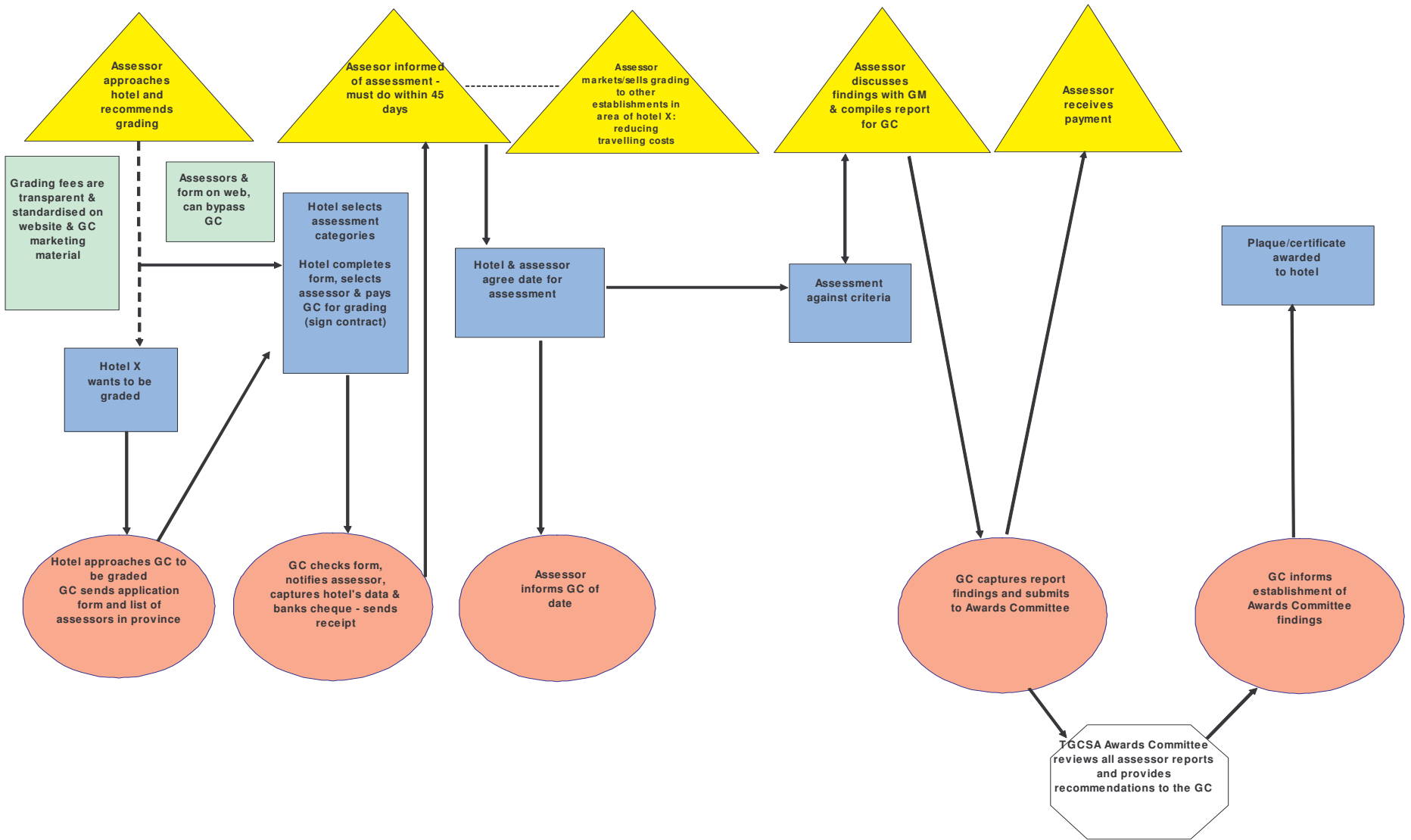


Figure 3: FT TSA Certification Process

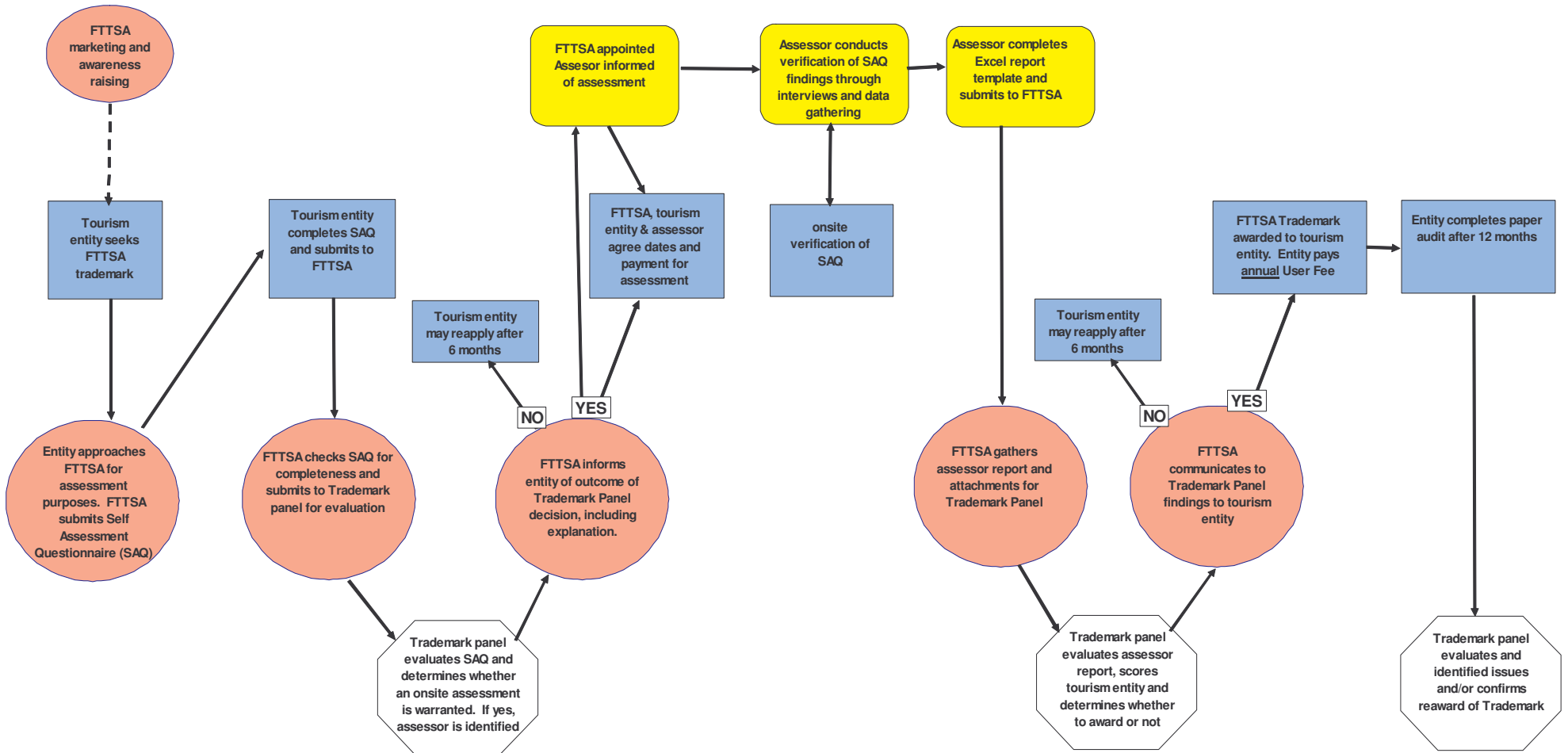


Figure 4: WIETA Certification Process

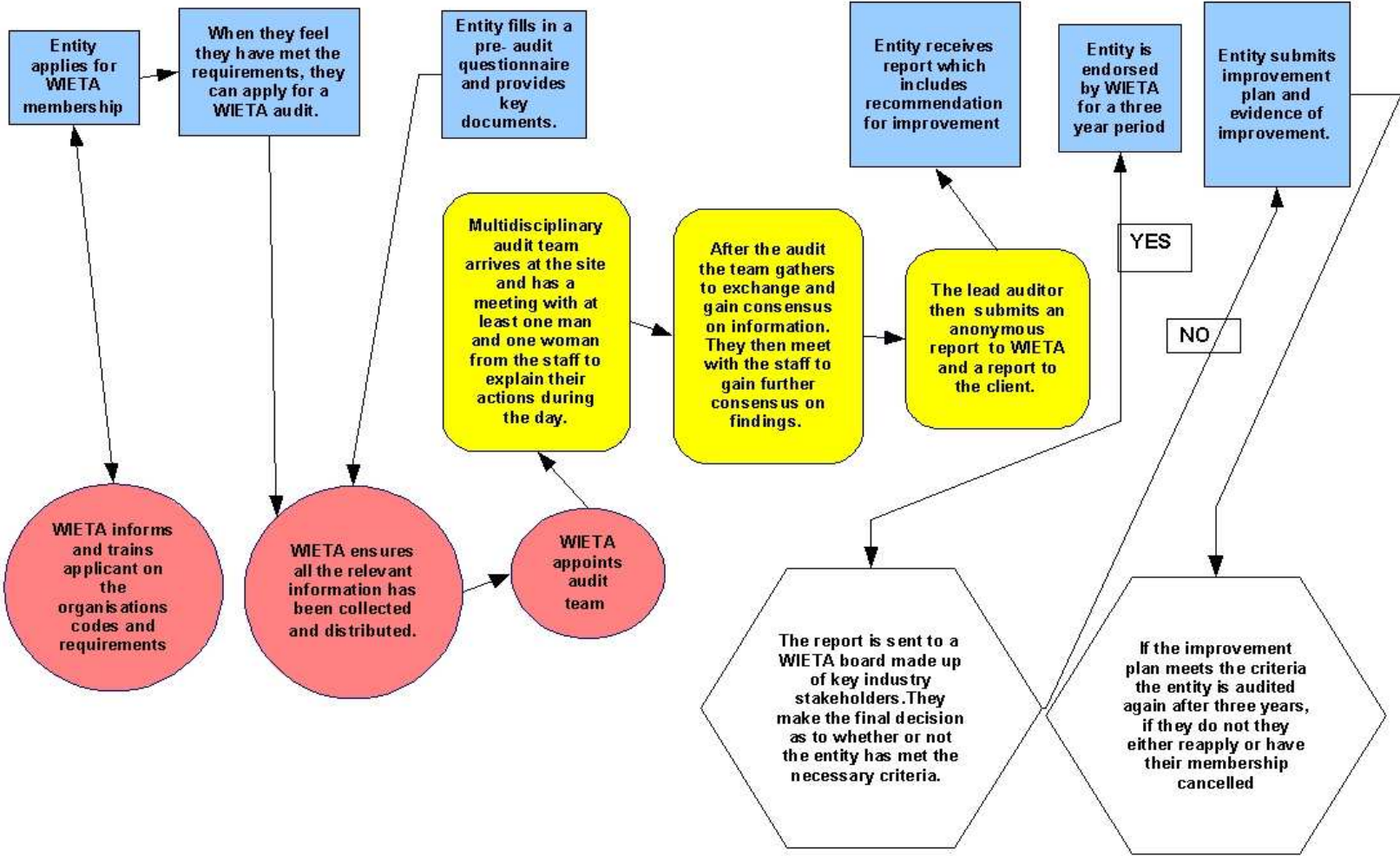


Figure 5: Afrisco/Ecocert Certification Process

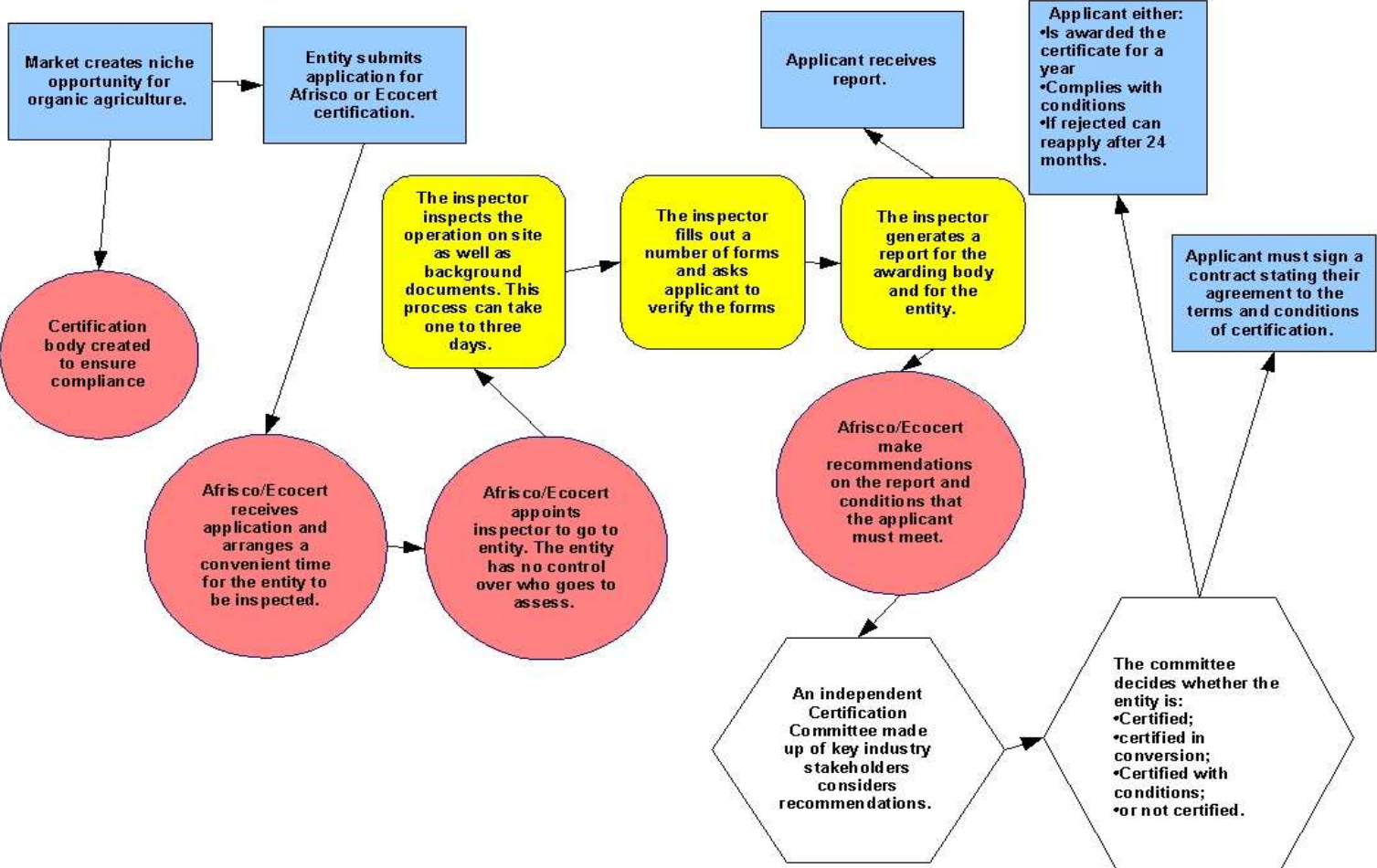


Figure 6: Heritage Certification Process

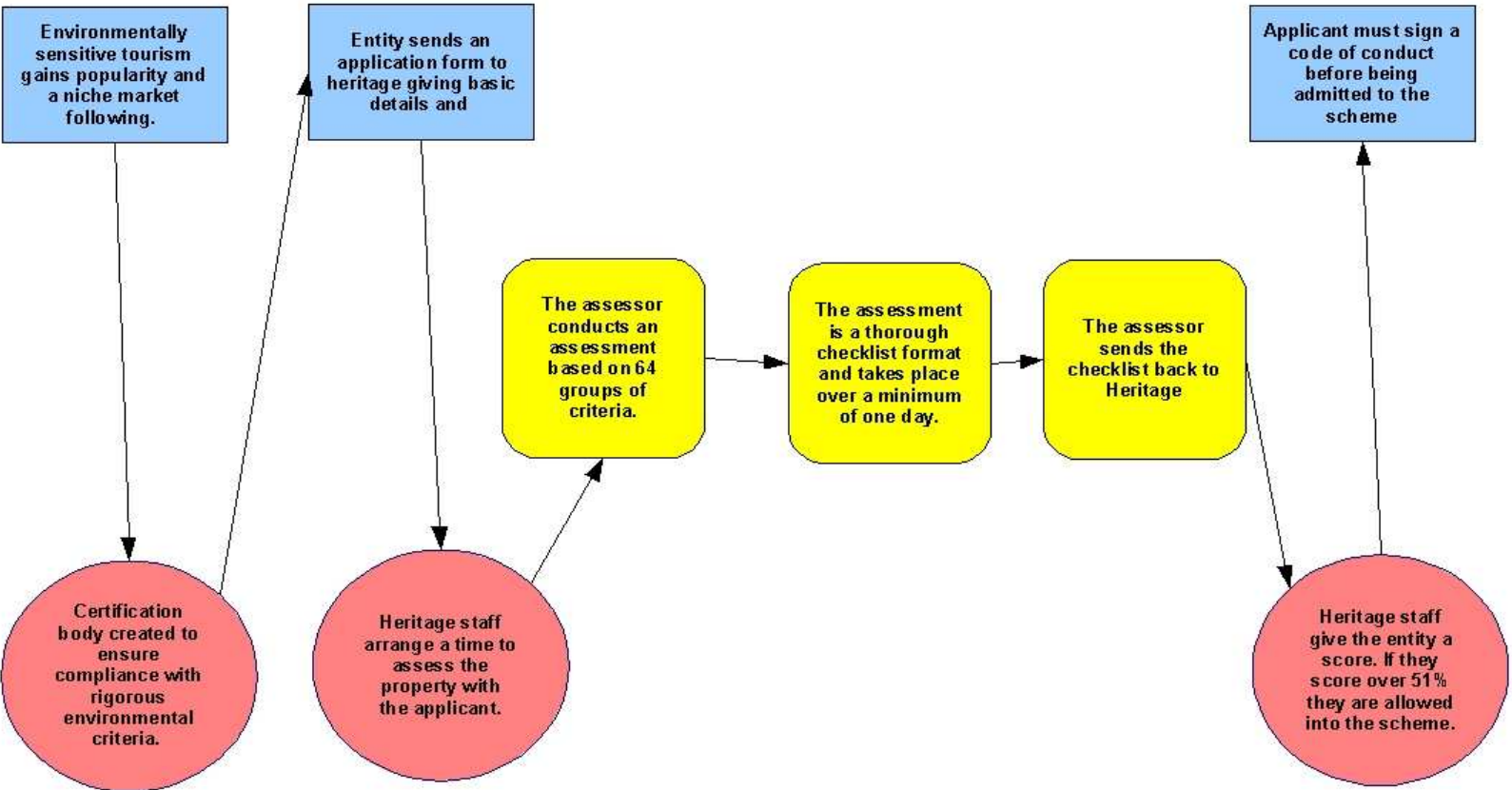




Figure 7: SABS Certification Process

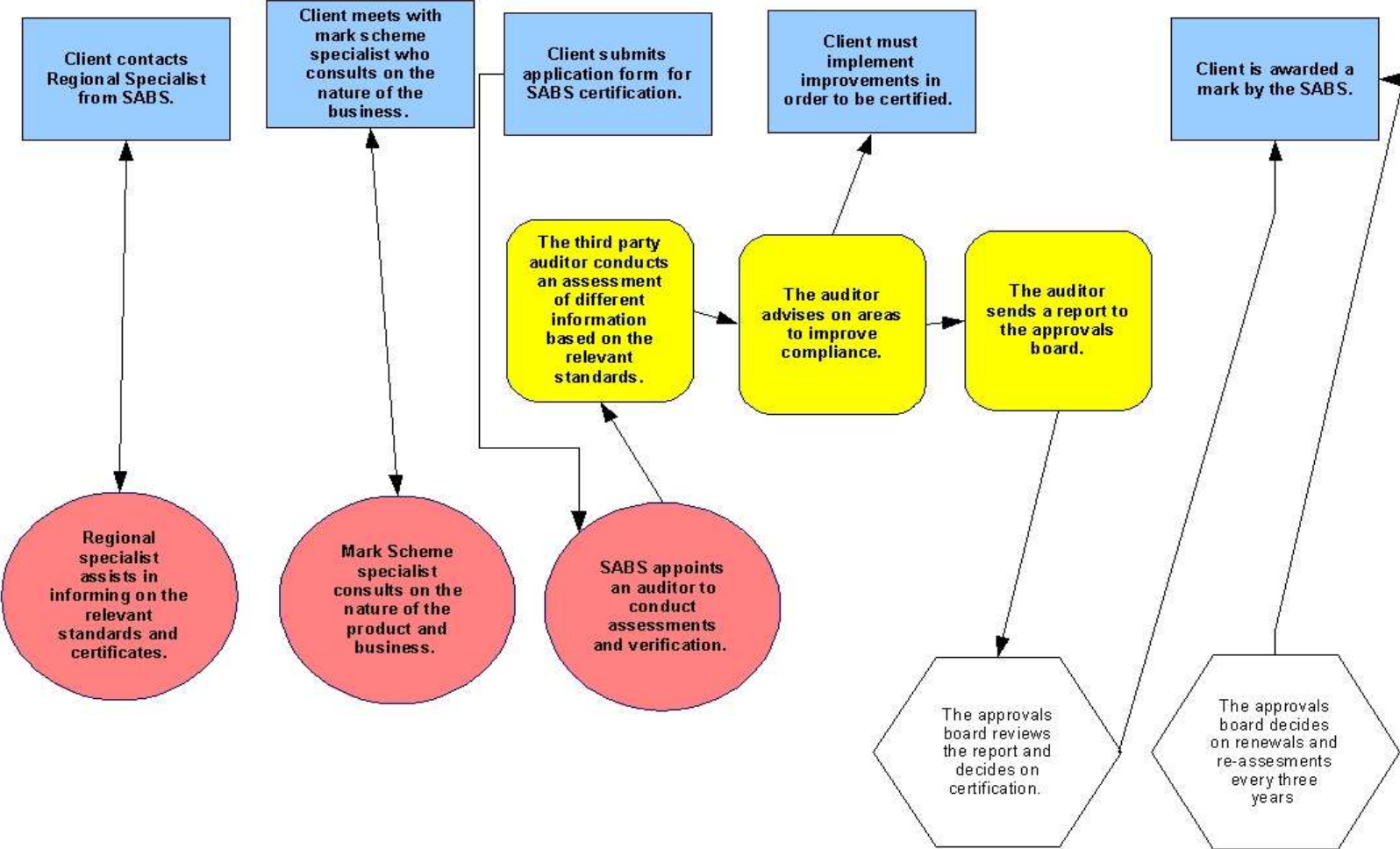




Figure 8: AA Certification Process

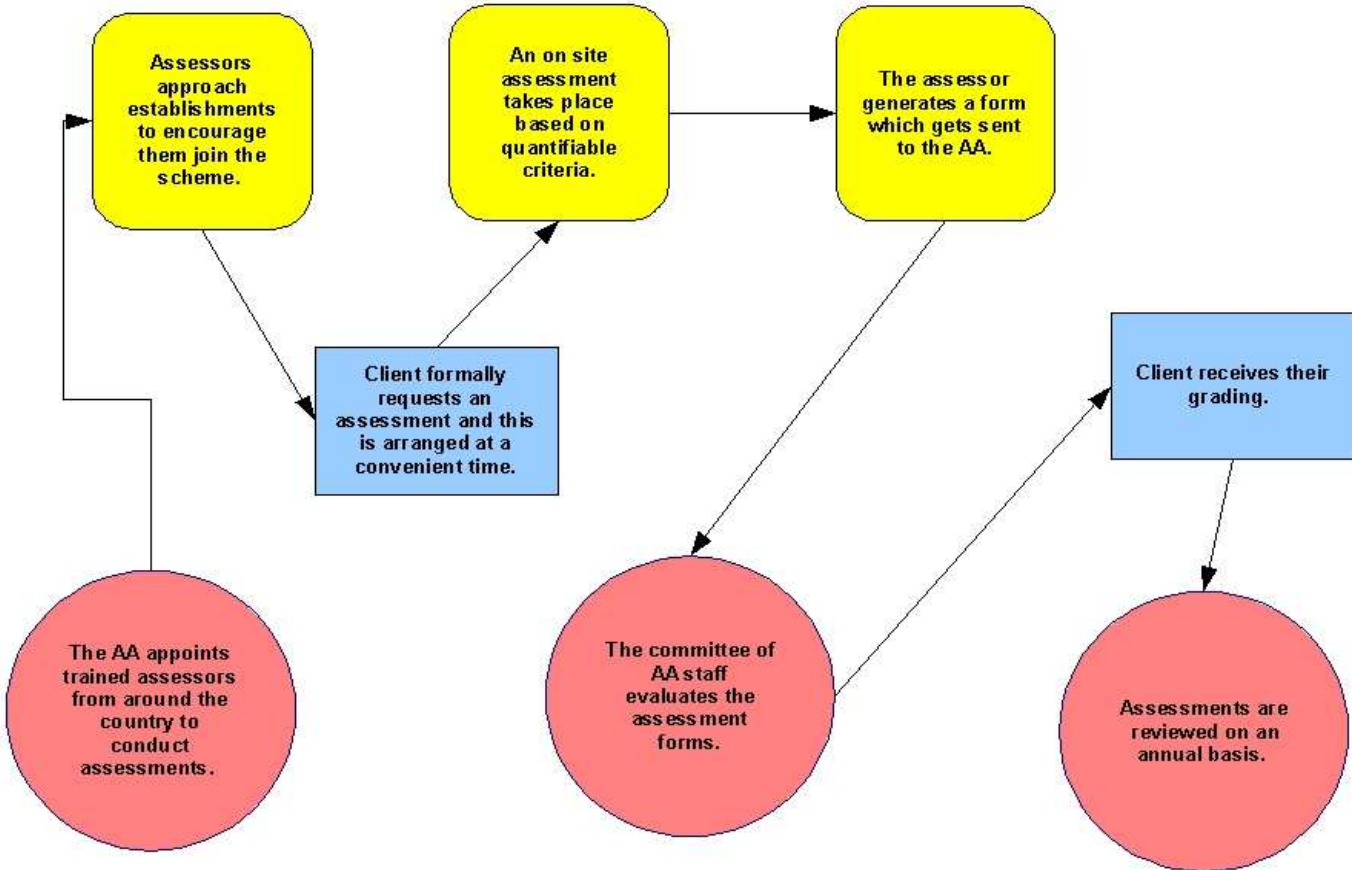
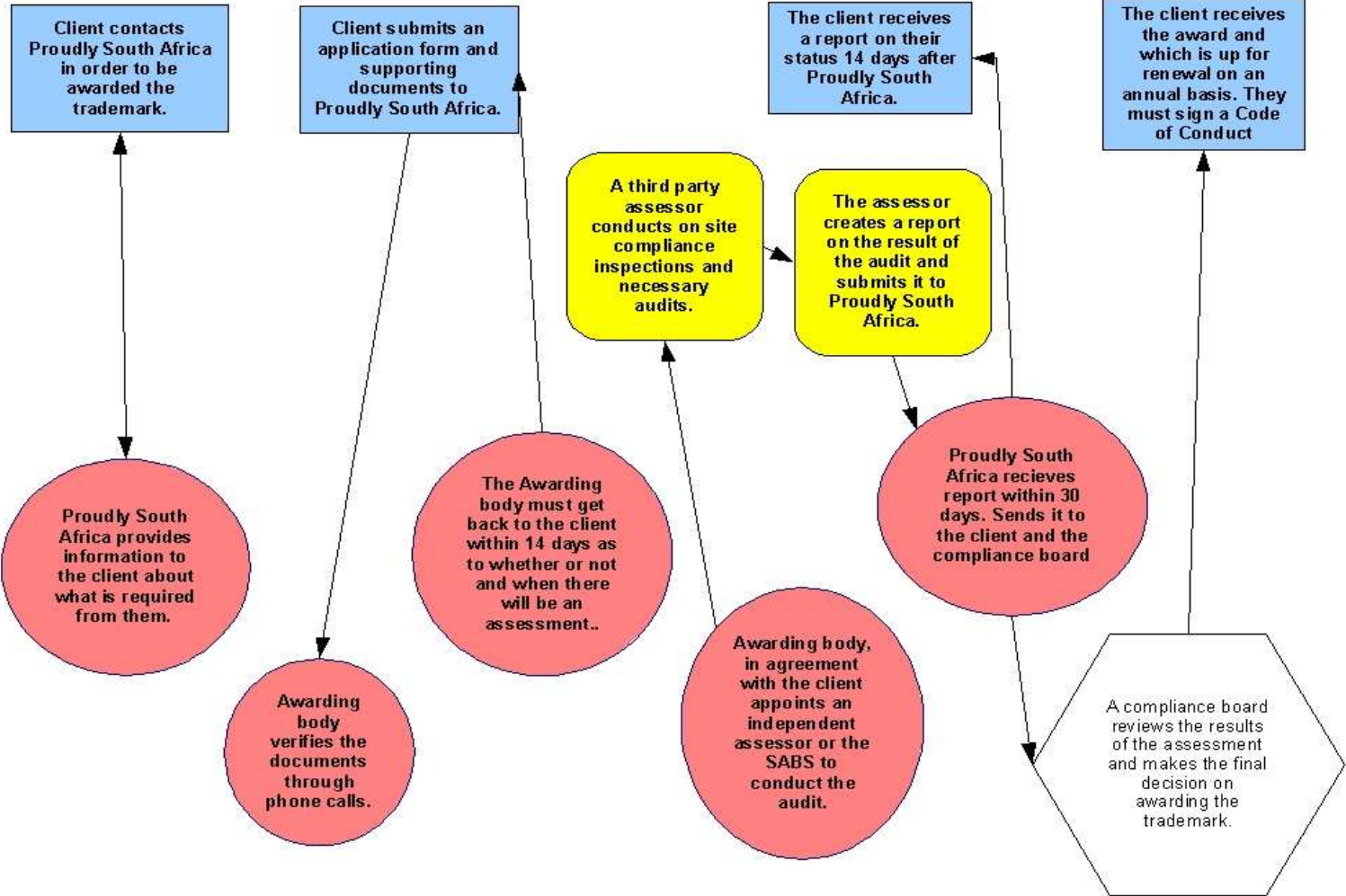


Figure 9: Proudly South Africa Certification Process



### 3. Accreditation of Verification Agents

Certification systems and bodies have different approaches and terms when it comes to the accreditation of verification agents or assessors. The various approaches to accreditation adopted by the benchmarked organisation are discussed below.

#### TGCSA

TGCSA verification agents are called assessors. Key issues for consideration include:

- All assessors are independent i.e. are not employees of the TGCSA with the exception of the Master Assessor (who is used for quality assurance purposes);
- Currently the TGCSA has around 50 registered assessors;
- The system relies on assessors to sell the scheme. However, generic and national marketing initiatives (including all marketing collateral) are undertaken by the TGCSA secretariat;
- The TGCSA will only register individuals and not companies as assessors, although for invoicing purposes sole proprietors, CCs, etc are allowed;
- Establishments are free to choose their own assessor;
- Assessors are free to establish their own relationships with each other regarding sharing of work, information, marketing, etc;
- Assessors are paid 60% of the grading fee (initially this was 50%) – assessors invoice the TGCSA monthly for establishments graded. Assessors cannot claim travel costs from the TGCSA, nor can they charge the graded establishment extra for these, i.e. travel costs are to be recovered from the grading fee;
- Assessors are recruited through an open tender system, although in some cases these national advertisements have indicated racial or geographical preferences;
- Assessors are selected on the following criteria:
  - Previous hospitality (or relevant sector experience) with at least two-years experience in supervisory or management position;
  - Personality – in particular people with the ability to get their foot in the door are selected.

The Executive Director undertakes final assessor selection.

- All selected assessors are trained (on a cost sharing basis with the TGCSA) by Hospitality Professionals. All training is aligned with the Unit Standard “Grade and Assess and Establishment”.
- Having completed the training programme (and proved competence) the assessors are required to sign a code-of-conduct and are thereafter registered as Assessors;

- An assessor disciplinary committee is in place, and is instituted only when the TGCSA Executive Director is unable to resolve any assessor-related problems;
- Ongoing communication between the Secretariat and the assessors is largely by email. Assessors generally receive daily communiqués from the Secretariat. In addition, the TGCSA offers bi-annual workshops (2 x per annum) on topical and relevant subjects. The costs of the workshops including transport and accommodation are borne by the TGCSA;
- In order to be re-registered with the TGCSA all assessors have a target of 15 new (not renewal) products graded per annum. Assessors that do not reach this target are at risk of not being re-registered.

### FTTSA

FTTSA verification agents are known as assessors.

- All assessors are independent individuals, who are contracted to FTTSA for a verification audit as required;
- A pool of 16 assessors was selected in 2002. They were selected following a “request for proposals” process. There are currently about 5 active assessors located throughout the country;
- All assessors have been trained by FTTSA and each is considered to be an expert in one or more areas of tourism development;
- FTTSA re-registers its assessors on an annual basis. Criteria for re-registration include:
  - Upholding the FTTSA assessor Code of Conduct
  - Assessors must not be in a full-time job as this restricts their availability and may engender conflict/s of interest.
- Establishments may not choose their own assessor. The FTTSA certification Panel is responsible for appointing the assessor based on various factors such as geographical proximity, suitability, experience and availability;
- Assessors are remunerated by FTTSA for the assessment at the rate of R1500 per day plus travel costs. FTTSA claims most of this amount back from the establishment that has been assessed (FTTSA contributes 60% of the travel costs); and
- FTTSA communicates with its assessors on an ad hoc basis, primarily via email.

### **WIETA**

WIETA verification agents are known as “auditors”.

- WIETA has trained 16 auditors, from multidisciplinary backgrounds;
- WIETA auditors are not employed by WIETA but are sub-contracted to the organisation as and when required;
- WIETA auditors work in teams of 2-3 for each audit. Each team must include an auditor who speaks the relevant language/s as well as individual auditors with specific knowledge e.g. in health and safety. Each team is comprised of a Lead Auditor and 2-3 Assistant Auditors;
- The Lead Auditor is remunerated at the rate of R2000 per day. Assistant Auditors receive R1000 per day; and
- WIETA does not consider itself to be a certification body, and its auditors are not accredited.

### **Afrisco\Ecocert**

Afrisco/Ecocert verification agents are known as “inspectors.”

- Inspectors are sub-contracted as required;
- Inspectors are individuals who are highly skilled both in conducting audits and in being able to understand and test the quality management criteria for organic agriculture; and
- Inspectors are not allowed to handle money. Fees are payable to the certification body, which in turn remunerates inspectors.

### **Heritage Eco Rating (Qualitour)**

Heritage eco-rating is based on second-party verification:

- A small number of auditors (1-2) are employed by Qualitour and subject to the company’s conditions of employment;
- Auditors have specialist knowledge of environmental management and environmental auditing; internal employment conditions.

## SABS

SABS verification agents are known as “auditors.”

- Auditors are highly trained in their specialist fields and in auditing techniques.
- SABS has auditors on its books with specialist knowledge of the following sectors:
  - Agriculture
  - Automotive
  - Chemicals, Petrochemicals and Explosives
  - Civil and Building
  - Clothing and Footwear
  - Cosmetics and Pharmaceuticals
  - Electro-Technical (including electrical, electronic and information technology)
  - Food and Beverage
  - Information Security Management
  - Mechanical Engineering
  - Metallurgical Engineering
  - Plumbing and Gas technology
  - TBEECC Verification Systems, Processes and Procedures Project
  - Benchmarking report Page 43
  - Safety, Fire engineering and related areas
  - Timber and Forest products
- There are a number of auditors trained in the following standards and schemes (see **Table 2**);
- Auditors are directed to do individual assessments according to their specialised sector; and
- SABS communication with auditors is via email and is constant.

**Table 2: Number of Auditors**

Standard	# of auditors
ISO 9001 (2000)	78
QS 9000 (1998)	2
VDA 6.1 (1996)	7
ISO/TS 16949 (2002)	5
ISO 14001 (1996)	4
OHSAS 18001 (1999)	2
HACCP	8
Eurpgap	1
BRC	2
Consignment Inspection	13
Chain of Custody	4
Mark Scheme Auditors	44

### **AA Travel**

AA Travel Verification Agents are known as “assessors”:

- Assessors are trained individuals who have been operative in the industry for some time;
- Assessors do not assign to a code or disciplinary procedure but clients are able to report poor performance or other problems to AA Travel; and
- There are currently about 12 assessors registered with AA Travel.

### **Proudly South African**

- Proudly South African appoints third party verification agents when an audit of a member is required;
- Given the size of PSA’s membership base, it often makes use of SABS auditors, who are trained and accredited in ISO 9000 quality management systems.