

**ISSUE:**

Should third-party certification be required in the BIFMA Sustainability Assessment Standard?

**MOTION:**

The BIFMA SAS, as with all ANSI/BIFMA standards, shall neither encourage nor discourage the use of third-party certification for conformity assessment. The BIFMA SAS shall be written to accommodate first party (manufacturer or supplier), second party (purchaser), and third party (independent of first and second party) claims of compliance. Third-party certification shall be accommodated but not required for any credit within the BIFMA SAS.

**RATIONALE:**

The BIFMA SAS is ultimately intended to be an American National Standard and is being developed in accordance with the principles of ANSI. ANSI is a founding member of the International Organization for Standardization<sup>1</sup> (ISO) and supports the development of standards in accordance with ISO principles.

The National Conformity Assessment Principles of the United States<sup>2</sup> (NCAP) references ISO Guide 2: 1996<sup>3</sup> to define conformity assessment as “any activity concerned with determining directly or indirectly that relevant requirements are fulfilled.” The NCAP notes that conformity assessment includes sampling and testing, inspection, supplier’s declaration of conformity, certification and management system assessment and registration, and accreditation of the competence of those activities by a third party. The NCAP includes products, services, processes, systems, personnel qualifications and organizations within the framework of this discussion.

Section 4.2 of ISO/IEC Guide 7: 1994<sup>4</sup> states: “Standards suitable for use for conformity assessment should be so written that they can be applied by any of the following: a manufacturer or supplier (first party); a user or purchaser (second party); an independent body (third party).”

By providing assessment criteria independent of third-party certification for each credit, the BIFMA SAS can accommodate first party determinations of conformance, while enabling third-party certification of manufacturer’s claims of conformance to either individual or multiple credits within the BIFMA SAS.

Third-party certification of conformance is a vital market tool and users of the BIFMA SAS should have the option of third-party certification, while encouraging harmonization of standard requirements without encouraging a proliferation of conflicting certification programs.

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<sup>1</sup> ANSI, [Standards Activities Overview](#)

<sup>2</sup> ANSI 2002, [The U.S. National Conformity Assessment Principles](#)

<sup>3</sup> ISO/IEC Guide 2: 1996, Standardization and Related Activities, General Vocabulary

<sup>4</sup> ISO/IEC Guide 7: 1994, Guidelines for Drafting of Standards Suitable for Use for Conformity Assessment