

Airport Carbon Accreditation Communication

Communication No:	1 of 2025
From:	Environmental Minds
To:	Accredited Airports, Approved Verifiers and Programme Stakeholders
Subject:	Update Regarding On-Site and Off-Site Verification
Date:	4 th February 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Communication is to provide updated information on the use of on-site and off-site verification in line with the proposals of the *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Task Force that were approved by the Advisory Board in December 2024.

Key Terminology

- *On-site verification:* The process of conducting verification activities through the verifier's physical presence at the airport. This involves the verifier conducting direct observations of the processes at the airport to gather evidence in person to assess compliance with the requirements of the selected *Airport Carbon Accreditation* level.
- *Off-site Verification:* The process of conducting verification activities from any place other than the location of the verified airport using communication technologies, such as video conferencing and other online tools. (See *ISO 17012, Section 3.1*).

2. Overview

Verification is a core part of *Airport Carbon Accreditation* which is required at regular intervals (including entry into the programme, upgrades to higher levels, renewals at specific intervals) and contributes to the credibility of the programme. To date, the programme set on-site verification as the default method, while off-site verification was considered a special case and airports were required to submit a written request to the Administrator to obtain approval before proceeding.

Effective immediately off-site verification has an equivalent standing as on-site verification for all levels of accreditations. This means that airports are allowed to choose the most appropriate form of verification in accordance with their conditions and needs.

Consequently, Section 10.5 of the Application Manual Issue 14 which outlines the special cases under which off-site verification is permitted, is no longer applicable. All other verification requirements, such as the scope or cycle of verification, remain unchanged. Airports opting for off-site verification are still encouraged to undertake on-site verification on a voluntary basis if/when conditions permit.

3. Criteria for Airport Decision

It is the responsibility of the airport to decide on the most appropriate form of verification in accordance with their conditions and needs. Airports shall assess the risks and opportunities in relation to on-site and off-site verification, for example, by reviewing Section 5.3 of *ISO 17012:2024, Guidelines for the Use of Remote Auditing Methods in Auditing Management Systems*. It is recommended that airports discuss with their verifiers the most appropriate form of verification including the verifier's competence to complete off-site verification as per Section 7 of ISO 17012:2024.

4. Requirements for Off-site Verification

For off-site verification specific visual means shall be available (e.g., web camera and virtual meeting tools) and specific guidelines for remote auditing shall be followed (e.g., pre-audit planning, connectivity, remote accessibility, documents in digital form). Special attention should be paid to the following:

1. The verifier shall coordinate with the airport regarding the establishment, implementation, monitoring, etc. of the audit programme as well as the use of remote audit methods.¹
2. Verifiers shall consult Annex A and Annex B of *ISO 17012:2024 Guidelines for the Use of Remote Auditing Methods in Auditing Management Systems* for remote auditing methods and useful practices. Indicatively, the following shall be adhered to:
 - The verifier and the airport must ensure that appropriate, reliable and secure communication tools are available.
 - The verifier shall develop an audit plan to share with the airport identifying which activities will be conducted remotely while ensuring jointly with the airport that all necessary resources are available.
 - The technology used shall enable effective communication, data sharing, and access to required documents.
 - All activities that would be conducted during an on-site verification must also be conducted during an off-site verification, including but not limited to observation of activities; document reviews; interviews with personnel; and evidence of stakeholder engagement and/or partnership
 - Formulation of a back-up plan in case of technical difficulties.

In addition, airports and verifiers shall adhere to any relevant data protection provisions.

5. Other Information

The information in this Communication supersedes the information provided in:

1. Application Manual Version 14 (December 2023) Section 10.5 on Off-site Verification.²
2. Verifiers Manual Issue 1 (November 2020) Section 7 on On-site and Off-Site Verification.

These changes to the verification methods will be reflected in the updated *Application Manual (Issue 15)* and the *Verifiers Manual (Issue 2)* both of which are due to be updated in 2025.

For any questions, please contact the Airport Carbon Accreditation Helpdesk at
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¹ For example, as a guidance you may see ISO 17012:2024: Sections 5.4-5.7 and 6.

² Including the provisions of Section 6.1.4.2 of ISO 14064-3.