NSI Certification/Verification Policy

March 31, 2007
Revision 1.1

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Table of Contents

1. Overview 4
   1.1 Introduction 4
   1.2 Terminology and Definitions 4
   1.3 Referencing Documents 8
2. Certification/Verification Process 8
   2.1 Preparation for Certification/Verification 10
   2.2 Registering for Certification/Verification 10
   2.3 Conformance Statement 10
   2.4 Indicators of Conformance and Conformance Review 10
   2.5 NASPL Certification/Verification Logo 10
   2.6 Notification and Publication of Certification/Verification 11
   2.7 Archiving Certification/Verification Materials 11
3. Conformance 11
   3.1 Conformance Release 11
   3.2 Conformance Requirements 11
   3.3 Conformance Statement 12
4. Obligations of Organizations 12
   4.1 Achieving Certification/Verification 12
   4.2 Maintaining Certification/Verification 13
   4.3 Removal of Certification/Verification 14
5. The NASPL Certification/Verification Logo 14
   5.1 Licensing the NASPL Certification/Verification Logo 14
   5.2 Use of the NASPL Certification/Verification Logo 14
   5.3 Removal of the NASPL Certification/Verification Logo 15
6. The Certification/Verification Register 15
   6.1 Inclusion in the Register 15
   6.2 Removal from the Register 15
7. Validation Methods 16
8. Certification/Verification Requirements for Modifications of a Certified/Verified Entity 16
9. Renewal 16
   9.1 Duration of Certification/Verification 16
   9.2 Renewal Process 16
   9.3 Time Period for Renewal 17
   9.4 Withdrawal of Certification/Verification at Renewal 17
10. Problem Reporting and Interpretations Process 18
   10.1 Overview 18
   10.2 Problem Report Resolution Process 18

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

10.3 Resolution of Problem Reports 21
10.3.1 Interpretations 21
10.3.2 Validation Method Deficiency 21
10.3.3 System Deficiency 22
10.4 Problem Report Repository 22
11. Appeals Process 23
12. Confidentiality 23
12.1 Confidentiality 23
12.2 Disclosure of Certification/Verification Information 24
12.3 Optional Confidential Treatment of Certification/Verification 24

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

The objective of the North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries (NASPL) Standards Initiative Certification and Verification Program is to encourage and facilitate the adoption and implementation of NASPL Standards Initiative (NSI) Best Practices and Technical Standards in lotteries, lottery industry vendors, and other lottery industry expert organizations that provide software, hardware, or services to lotteries. The program provides formal recognition of an Organization's conformance to an industry Best Practice or Technical Standard.The Certification Program is for vendors and other organizations that wish to demonstrate and receive recognition for the conformance of their business practices and technologies to the NSI Best Practices and Technical Standards, whereas the Verification Program is the parallel program providing the means for lotteries to demonstrate conformance in the areas applicable to lotteries.

The Certification/Verification Policy documents set forth the policies that govern the operation of the NSI Certification and Verification Program. These policies define what can be certified/verified, what it means to be certified/verified, and the process for achieving and maintaining certification/verification. These policies also define the obligations on Organizations, including a requirement for an Organization to warrant and represent that its Certified/Verified Entity meets the applicable Conformance Requirements, which include conformance to the applicable NSI Best Practice(s) or Technical Standard(s) as interpreted by the NSI from time to time.

The policy documents are intended primarily for Organizations that would like to certify or verify one or more of their business practices or technologies. These policies – in conjunction with the applicable Certification/Verification Agreement and Trademark License Agreement – constitute the set of requirements and obligations for achieving certification/verification. Buyers intending to procure from Organizations with Certified/Verified Entities, and other stakeholders who want assurance of an Organization's capabilities, will also find this document useful for understanding what they can expect from a Certified/Verified Entity.

The NSI Certification and Verification Program is a voluntary program and is open to any Organization that has implemented one or more NSI Best Practices or Technical Standards and that meets the documented Conformance Requirements. An Organization may be certified or verified in multiple areas, provided that it meets the applicable set of Conformance Requirements for each.

1.2 Terminology and Definitions

The following table defines terms or clarifies the meaning of words used within the Certification/Verification Policy. Where an acronym is also used, it is provided in parentheses.

Applicant	The Organization that is in the process of having a business practice or technology certified/verified.
Assessment	With respect to certifying/verifying against an NSI

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

	Best Practice or Technical Standard, an inspection of an Organization's processes, procedures, staff, and/or documentation to determine the degree to which the Organization is operating in accordance with an NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard.
Assessment Report	The Assessment Report consists of a recommendation by the Assessor(s) regarding certification/verification of the Applicant's business practice or technology and any corrective actions required on the part of the Applicant, accompanied by documents that support and elaborate upon that recommendation.
Assessor	An individual who has been qualified by the Certification and Verification Authority as competent to perform Assessments.
Business Practice	An Organization's customary way of operating with respect to a particular functional area.
Business Practice Location	The specific, identified, physical location of an Organization in which a Business Practice is carried out under the leadership of the Business Practice Management, and in which the documented processes and procedures of the Business Practice are accessible. In cases where certification/verification requires an on-site Assessment, the Business Practice Location is where this Assessment will be performed.
Business Practice Management	The specific individual(s) identified within an Organization as having the overall responsibility for managing a Business Practice on a day-to-day basis and ensuring that it is carried out in accordance with the documented processes and procedures.
Certificate	A document issued to Organizations confirming that the Certified/Verified Entity has successfully met the requirements of the NSI Certification and Verification Program.
Certification/Verification Agreement	The agreement between the Organization and the Certification and Verification Authority that defines the service to be provided and contains the legal commitment by the Organization to the conditions of the NSI Certification and Verification Program.
Certification and Verification Authority (CVA)	The organization officially sanctioned to manage the day-to-day operations of the NSI Certification and Verification Program in accordance with the policies defined in the Certification/Verification Policy. The Open Group acts as the Certification and Verification Authority for the NSI Certification and Verification Program.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Certification/Verification Policy	The "NSI Certification/Verification Policy" document, along with any Policy Supplements specific to the Business Practice or Technology being certified/verified, as amended from time to time by NSI, and currently available at http://www.opengroup.org/naspl/conformance/docs/policies.html.
Certified/Verified Entity	A Business Practice or Technology that has been awarded certification/verification under the NSI Certification and Verification Program.
Conformance Release	From time to time, the Specification Authority will issue new versions of its Best Practices and Technical Standards. These NSI Best Practices and Technical Standards (and associated Conformance Requirements Documents) will be collected together into consistent sets to aid certification/verification. Such a set is called a Conformance Release.
Conformance Requirements	A definition of the mandatory and optional behavior that must be implemented in order for a business practice or technology to be considered conformant.
Conformance Requirements Document	The document in which Conformance Requirements are specified and against which Business Practices and Technologies may be certified/verified in the NSI Certification and Verification Program.
Conformance Statement	The Organization's documented set of claims describing precisely the way in which their business practice or technology meets the Conformance Requirements. The Conformance Statement includes a definition of which optional requirements are implemented.
Indicators of Conformance	Evidence submitted to the Certification and Verification Authority to demonstrate the conformance of a Certified/Verified Entity to a Best Practice or Technical Standard (e.g., results from an assessment process, test suite, test procedure, or other Validation Method).
Interpretation (INT)	Recommendation to the Certification and Verification Authority, made by the Specification Authority, that elaborates or refines the meaning of an NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard. An Interpretation is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
NASPL Certification/Verification Logo	The applicable certification mark, verification mark, or other marks as designated from time to time by NASPL for use in association with NSI certification/verification.
NSI Specification	An NSI approved and published document, which

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

	contains specific requirements for implementation. Developed by the Specification Authority, it can be either an NSI Best Practice or an NSI Technical Standard.
Organization	A lottery, vendor, or third-party lottery expert organization that is interested in applying for certification/verification or that has certified/verified a business practice or technology in the NSI Certification and Verification Program. During the period in which an Organization is going through the certification/verification process, the Organization may be referred to as an Applicant or an Organization. The Organization takes legal responsibility for the conformance of the business practice or technology and fulfills the Applicant's responsibilities during the process.
Policy Supplement	A Policy Supplement defines requirements and obligations specific to the type of Business Practice or Technology being certified/verified and is used in conjunction with the general NSI Certification/Verification Policy document.
Problem Report	A question of clarification, intent, or correctness of (1) an NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard, (2) a Validation Method, or (3) a certification/verification document, assessment materials, or the web-based certification/verification system, which, if accepted by the Certification and Verification Authority, will be resolved into (1) an Interpretation, (2) a Validation Method Deficiency, or (3) a System Deficiency, respectively.
Program Guide	The document that describes the processes for how an Organization achieves NSI certification/verification. The guide is used in conjunction with the Certification/Verification Policy. The guide provides the detailed instructions on the steps an Organization must perform and where to obtain relevant information and documents.
Register	The official list of all Certified Entities (for the Certification Program) or Verified Entities (for the Verification Program), which is maintained by the Certification and Verification Authority and made available via the Internet.
Specification Authority (SA)	The NASPL Standards Initiative, which is responsible for developing, maintaining, and interpreting the NSI Best Practice and Technical Standard Specification(s). In the first instance this will be the working group that developed the NSI Specification. However, final authority rests with the NSI Steering Committee.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

System Deficiency (SD)	An agreed error in the certification/verification system, which is inhibiting the certification/verification process. The system includes the processes, documentation – including the assessment materials - and software systems provided to implement certification/verification. A System Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Technology	A hardware or software component, or a collection of such components.
Trademark License Agreement	The applicable agreement that contains the legal commitment by the Organization to the conditions for use of the NASPL Certification/Verification Logo.
Validation Method	A set of test procedures or standardized test methods used to establish confidence in conformance.
Validation Method Deficiency (VMD)	An agreed error in a Validation Method, which is causing it to produce an incorrect result that impacts certification/verification. A Validation Method Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Validation Method Maintenance Authority (VMMA)	The organization(s) responsible for maintaining the Validation Methods.

1.3 Referencing Documents

All NSI Policy Supplement documents will reference this general NSI Certification/Verification Policy document.

2. Certification/Verification Process

Once an Organization has implemented an NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard and believes that it is in conformance with the specification, the Organization may apply for certification/verification to receive an independent review of the Organization's conformance to the NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard.

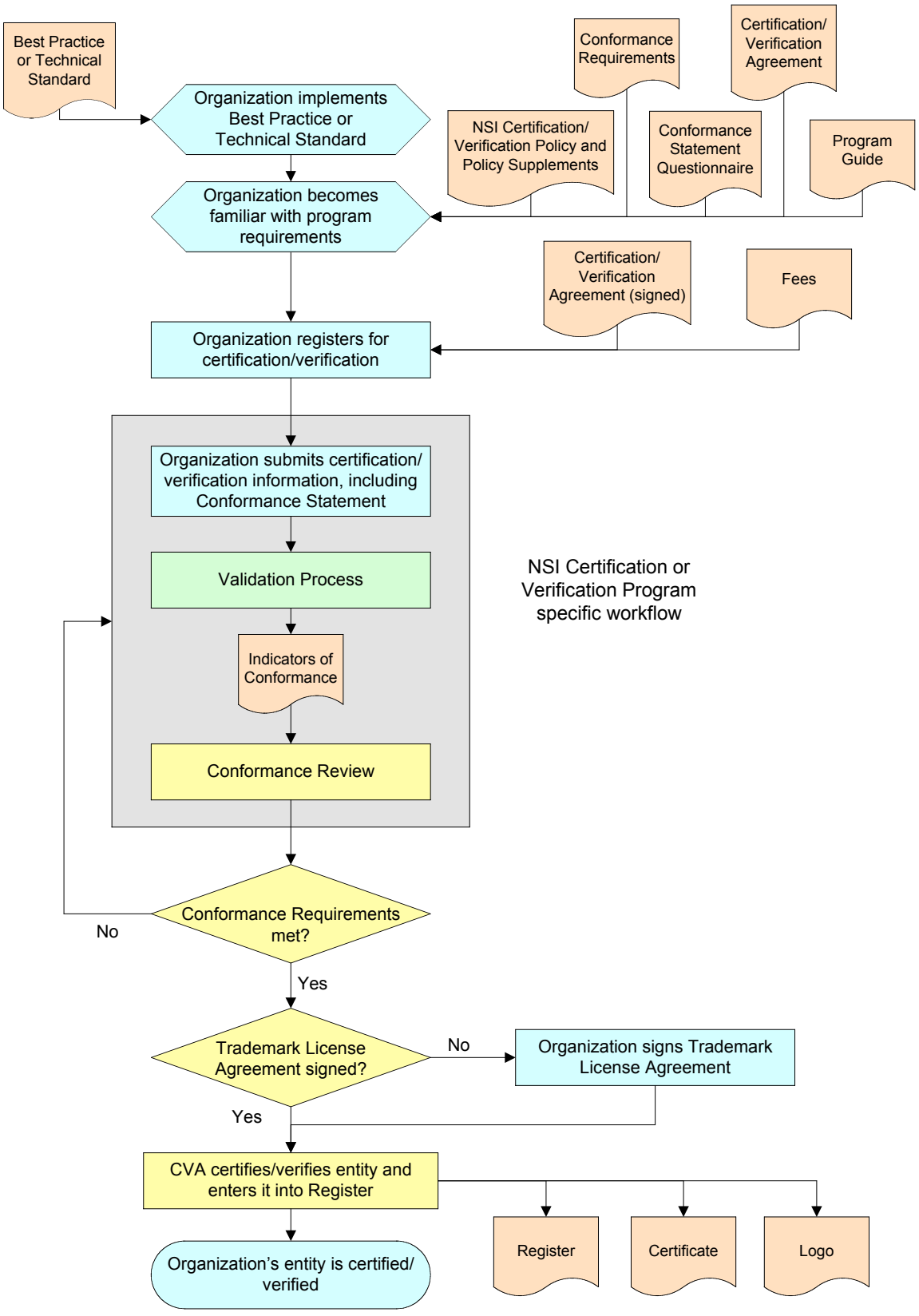
This section defines the process an Organization must follow to achieve NSI certification/verification.

The parties involved in the process are:

- Organization
- Certification and Verification Authority
- Specification Authority
- Validation Method Maintenance Authority

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

NSI Certification/Verification Process



© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

2.1 Preparation for Certification/Verification

Prior to applying for certification/verification, the Organization should become familiar with the NSI Certification and Verification Program and the requirements for certification/verification to ensure the business practice or technology meets the applicable Conformance Requirements and is ready for entry into the program. To accomplish this, the Organization should review the Certification/Verification Policy, the applicable Conformance Requirements Documents, any agreements that are part of the program, and other related information such as the Program Guide. All information and documents related to the NSI Certification and Verification Program are available on the Certification and Verification Authority's web site.

2.2 Registering for Certification/Verification

The first step in the process is for the Organization to register its intent to be certified/verified by completing the registration information and submitting it along with the Certification/Verification Agreement and fee to the Certification and Verification Authority.

As part of the registration process, the Organization must specify individuals within the Organization to be the points of contact with respect to this certification/verification. All notifications regarding this certification/verification and subsequent renewals will be made to the applicable contacts. It is the responsibility of the Organization to ensure that these contacts are kept up-to-date for the duration of the certification/verification.

2.3 Conformance Statement

The Organization must produce a Conformance Statement to describe the particular business practice or technology and the way in which it meets the Conformance Requirements. The Conformance Statement is produced when the Organization completes a Conformance Statement Questionnaire.

The Conformance Statement will contain information characterizing how the Organization has implemented the NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard. In areas where the NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard contains optional requirements, the Conformance Statement will identify the particular requirements the Organization has implemented in its business practice or technology, as appropriate.

Information on how to complete the Conformance Statement Questionnaire to produce the Conformance Statement is available in the Program Guide.

2.4 Indicators of Conformance and Conformance Review

The processes, procedures, and policies by which conformance is demonstrated are specific to each NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard Certification and Verification Program. Consequently these policies and procedures are documented in a Policy Supplement; i.e., the *NSI Policy Supplement for <Name of the NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard> Certification/Verification*. For policies pertaining to the Indicators of Conformance and Conformance Review, see the appropriate Policy Supplement.

2.5 NASPL Certification/Verification Logo

If the Organization has not previously completed a Trademark License Agreement for use of the applicable logo, it must be completed at this point in time. The

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Certification and Verification Authority's web site will contain information on how to obtain and complete the applicable Trademark License Agreement.

2.6 Notification and Publication of Certification/Verification

The Certification and Verification Authority will notify the Organization in writing of the final certification/verification outcome.

If the result is success, and there is a Trademark License Agreement in place, the Certification and Verification Authority will enter the Organization's Certified/Verified Entity into the applicable Register and issue a Certificate to the Organization. The Organization will also be notified that the applicable logo may then be used in connection with the business practice or technology, according to the terms defined in the applicable Trademark License Agreement.

Organizations have the option to keep certification/verification confidential for a defined period of time, as described in Section 12.3. During this period, the business practice or technology will not be included in the Register and the Organization may not make use of the logo.

If the Certification and Verification Authority determines that the Conformance Requirements have not been met, the Certification and Verification Authority will reject the application for certification/verification and report the discrepancies with the Conformance Requirements. The Organization may undertake corrective action and reapply. The fees, if any, which an Applicant will be required to pay in order to reapply, are defined in the fee structure document.

2.7 Archiving Certification/Verification Materials

All materials provided to the Certification and Verification Authority for use in determining or re-assessing the conformance of a business practice or technology must be archived for six (6) years to provide an auditable trail. The Certification and Verification Authority will maintain the archive for all materials, unless an alternative means of archival is provided for in a specific Policy Supplement.

3. Conformance

3.1 Conformance Release

Certification/verification is made available for particular versions of NSI Best Practices or Technical Standards, specifically those versions that are included in a Conformance Release. Business practices and technologies are certified/verified for a particular Conformance Release.

There is expected to be a Conformance Release for each major version of an NSI Best Practice and/or Technical Standard. Certification/verification may be available for multiple Conformance Releases simultaneously.

3.2 Conformance Requirements

It is an explicit condition of NSI certification/verification that the Organization warrants and represents that the Certified/Verified Entity meets the applicable Conformance Requirements.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

The Conformance Requirements for NSI Best Practice and Technical Standard certification/verification are specified in a Conformance Requirements Document. A Conformance Requirements Document is a precisely defined and documented set of requirements against which business practices or technologies may be certified/verified.

Each Conformance Requirements Document includes a description of the nature and purpose of the document, the label to be used in connection with the NASPL Certification/Verification Logo, detailed Conformance Requirements, and, if applicable, a summary of the migration issues to the current Conformance Requirements from previous versions of the Conformance Requirements.

3.3 Conformance Statement

A Conformance Statement is the Organization's documented set of claims describing precisely the way in which the business practice or technology meets the Conformance Requirements, including which optional requirements are implemented. It provides a precise characterization of the business practice or technology. A Conformance Statement is produced by completing the relevant Conformance Statement Questionnaire.

Conformance Statements are submitted to the Certification and Verification Authority as part of the registration process for certification/verification. It is the responsibility of the Organization to ensure that the information supplied in the Conformance Statement is correct and complete. The Conformance Statement will be included in the Certification/Verification Register entry for the business practice or technology once it is certified/verified.

Organizations must ensure that the Conformance Statement of a Certified/Verified Entity is kept accurate and up-to-date. Changes to a Conformance Statement may only be made by the Certification and Verification Authority, subject to the requirements set forth in Section 8.

4. Obligations of Organizations

4.1 Achieving Certification/Verification

Claims of conformance with NSI Best Practices or Technical Standards or claims of certification/verification may only be made in relation to Certified/Verified Entities; that is, business practices or technologies that meet the Conformance Requirements and for which the Certification and Verification Authority has provided written notice that certification or verification has been achieved.

Claims of conformance or certification/verification may not be used with business practices or technologies that have not completed the certification/verification process, or that have been withdrawn from the NSI Certification and Verification Program.

The Certification/Verification Agreement requires the Organization to publicly "warrant and represent" that:

- The Certified/Verified Entity meets the applicable Conformance Requirements.
- The Organization agrees to the policies expressed in the Certification/Verification Policy.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Customers and stakeholders of Organizations with Certified/Verified Entities therefore have confidence that the Organization is operating in accordance with industry standard practices and will continue to do so.

4.2 Maintaining Certification/Verification

An Organization with a Certified/Verified Entity is required to ensure that the business practice or technology continues to conform to the applicable NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard, including all Interpretations that have been granted by the Specification Authority.

The Certification and Verification Authority has the right to audit the Organization's claims of conformance and adherence to the requirements of the Certification/Verification Policy. The Certification and Verification Authority may at any time request such Organizations to provide the Certification and Verification Authority with any information reasonably related to their Certified/Verified Entity's conformance with the applicable NSI Best Practices or Technical Standards. If the Organization fails to provide such information within 45 calendar days of the request, then the Certification and Verification Authority may remove the business practice or technology from the Register, in which case it ceases to be certified/verified and the Organization may no longer make a claim of certification/verification.

Customers and stakeholders of Organizations with a Certified/Verified Entity who discover a non-conformance in the business practice or technology should first report such non-conformance to the Organization. If the Organization does not address the non-conformance within 30 calendar days, the issue may be raised to the Certification and Verification Authority, along with justification for why the claimant believes there is a non-conformance. Recourse should always be made through normal communication channels before escalation to the Certification and Verification Authority.

If a Certified/Verified Entity is found by any means to no longer meet the Conformance Requirements, the Certification and Verification Authority shall provide written notification to the Organization with the certification or verification who shall:

a. Within 20 calendar days provide a plan to the Certification and Verification Authority for rectifying the non-conformance and within 45 calendar days rectify the non-conformance and satisfy the Certification and Verification Authority and/or the claimant of the efficacy of the rectification; or

b. Within 20 calendar days notify the Certification and Verification Authority that the Certified/Verified Entity is indeed conformant and provide evidence to satisfy the Certification and Verification Authority and/or the claimant that the business practice or technology is conformant; or

c. Within 20 calendar days acknowledge the existence of the non-conformance and indicate an inability to rectify the non-conformance within the 45-day period, in which case the business practice or technology ceases to be certified/verified; or

d. Within 20 calendar days invoke the appeals process as described elsewhere in this Certification/Verification Policy document.

If option "d" is selected, the Organization will have 45 calendar days from the completion of the appeals process to implement the decision.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

If the Organization fails to take one of the above actions within the timescales described above, the certification/verification will be revoked and the business practice or technology will cease to be certified/verified.

4.3 Removal of Certification/Verification

If a business practice or technology ceases to be certified/verified, the Organization may no longer make any claim of certification/verification in relation to that business practice or technology. The Organization, at its own expense, shall remove any existing claim of certification/verification from all materials related to such business practice or technology; for example, web sites and promotional materials. The Certification and Verification Authority may inspect any materials related to the business practice or technology to ensure adequate removal.

Once a business practice or technology ceases to be certified/verified, any future claim of certification/verification in relation to that formerly Certified/Verified Entity will require re-certification/re-verification in advance of such claims being made.

Furthermore, the right to use the applicable logo (see Section 5) in conjunction with a business practice or technology that ceases to be certified/verified shall be immediately terminated.

5. The NASPL Certification/Verification Logo

Once the Certification and Verification Authority has notified the Organization that a business practice or technology is now certified/verified, the Organization may use the applicable logo in association with the business practice or technology as per the terms specified in the applicable Trademark License Agreement.

The logo may only be used on or in relation to Certified/Verified Entities. It may not be used with business practices or technologies that have not completed the certification/verification process, or that have been withdrawn from the NSI Certification and Verification Program.

Award of the logo is not an endorsement of any Certified/Verified Entity.

5.1 Licensing the NASPL Certification/Verification Logo

In order to use the applicable logo, the Organization will be required to sign a Trademark License Agreement. This agreement is the legal contract governing how the logo may be used and defines the rights and obligations of the Organization.

The Trademark License Agreement requires the Organization to warrant and represent that each Certified/Verified Entity meets the applicable Conformance Requirements as well as agree to the policies expressed in the Certification/Verification Policy.

5.2 Use of the NASPL Certification/Verification Logo

The terms for use of the applicable logo in relation to a Certified/Verified Entity are as described in the applicable Trademark License Agreement.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

5.3 Removal of the NASPL Certification/Verification Logo

If a business practice or technology ceases to be certified/verified, any and all rights the Organization has to use the logo on or in relation to that business practice or technology cease immediately. The terms for removal of the logo in relation to a Certified/Verified Entity are as described in the applicable Trademark License Agreement.

Once the rights to the logo have been removed, any future use of the logo will require re-certification/re-verification in advance of such use.

Failure to adhere to these provisions will be a breach of the Trademark License Agreement and shall result in its termination.

6. The Certification/Verification Register

6.1 Inclusion in the Register

The Register is a web-accessible record of all Certified or Verified Entities (business practices and technologies) and is maintained by the Certification and Verification Authority. The Register contains:

- The name of the Organization
- The duration for which the certification/verification is valid before it must be renewed
- The Conformance Requirements against which it is certified/verified
- The Conformance Statement

Once the Certification and Verification Authority is satisfied that the Organization's business practice or technology meets the applicable Conformance Requirements and that all other requirements for certification/verification have been met, the Certification and Verification Authority will issue written notice to the Organization that certification/verification has been awarded and enter the information into the applicable Register.

6.2 Removal from the Register

Only Certified/Verified Entities are included in the Register; thus, if a business practice or technology ceases to be certified/verified, the Certification and Verification Authority will remove it from the applicable Register.

A business practice or technology shall cease to be certified/verified if:

- The Organization requests that the Certification and Verification Authority delete the certification/verification details from the Register.
- The Certified/Verified Entity ceases to meet the Conformance Requirements.
- The Organization fails to meet the renewal requirements or declines to renew certification/verification.
- The Organization fails to adhere to any of the policies defined within the Certification/Verification Policy.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

- The Organization fails to satisfactorily implement any agreed corrective actions within the respective agreed timeframes.

7. Validation Methods

Validation Methods are used to generate Indicators of Conformance. The processes, procedures, and policies by which these tools are maintained and accepted for use in certification/verification are specific to each NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard Certification and Verification Program. Consequently, these policies and procedures are documented in a Policy Supplement; i.e., the *NSI Policy Supplement for <Name of the NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard> Certification/Verification*. For policies pertaining to the Validation Methods, see the appropriate Policy Supplement.

8. Certification/Verification Requirements for Modifications of a Certified/Verified Entity

The certification/verification requirements for modifications of a Certified/Verified Entity are specific to each NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard Certification or Verification Program. Consequently, they are documented in a Policy Supplement; i.e., the *NSI Policy Supplement for <Name of the NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard> Certification/Verification*. For policies pertaining to modifications to a Certified/Verified Entity, see the appropriate Policy Supplement.

9. Renewal

9.1 Duration of Certification/Verification

Certification/verification is valid for a specified period of time from the date at which the Certification and Verification Authority provides written notice to the Organization that certification/verification has been achieved, unless it is subsequently terminated in accordance with Section 4 or Section 6 of this Certification/Verification Policy document.

The last day of this period is referred to as the renewal date and represents the date on which the certification/verification will cease to be valid, unless the Organization renews it in accordance with the procedures defined herein.

9.2 Renewal Process

An Organization with a Certified/Verified Entity is required to renew the certification/verification at or before its renewal date. The Organization is required to demonstrate that the business practice or technology continues to meet all applicable Conformance Requirements. This includes the requirement to conform to the applicable NSI Best Practice and/or Technical Standard, including all Interpretations that have been granted since the previous certification/verification. Thus, renewal is subject to review of the Conformance Statement and the Indicators of Conformance for the Organization's Certified/Verified Entity.

At or before 90 calendar days prior to the renewal date, the Certification and Verification Authority will notify the applicable contacts within the Organization that

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

renewal is due. The Organization must respond to the Certification and Verification Authority within 30 calendar days indicating whether or not the Organization would like to renew the certification/verification. Failure to respond within 30 calendar days will be deemed a non-renewal and the certification/verification will expire on the renewal date.

If the Organization wishes to renew, the Organization must review the existing Conformance Statement and update it as appropriate to reflect the current state of the Certified/Verified Entity. The updated Conformance Statement and any Indicators of Conformance or other documentation requested by the Certification and Verification Authority must be submitted to the Certification and Verification Authority at least 45 calendar days prior to the renewal date.

Upon receipt of these materials, the Certification and Verification Authority will inspect them to ensure that the Certified/Verified Entity remains in conformance. If there are additional requirements associated with renewal that are specific to each NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard, they will be specified in the appropriate Policy Supplement document.

Once all requirements are met, the Certification and Verification Authority will renew the certification/verification and inform the Organization. The Certification and Verification Authority will update the Register and issue an updated Certificate to reflect that certification/verification has been renewed.

An Organization with a Certified/Verified Entity has a responsibility to act in good faith to facilitate completion of the re-certification/re-verification process by the renewal date.

In the event that a non-conformance is identified during the re-certification/re-verification process, the Organization has at most 60 calendar days after the renewal date to rectify the non-conformance and satisfy the Certification and Verification Authority of the efficacy of the rectification.

9.3 Time Period for Renewal

The length of time a given certification/verification remains current varies for different NSI Certification and Verification Programs and is specified in the relevant Policy Supplement.

9.4 Withdrawal of Certification/Verification at Renewal

During the renewal process, the Certification and Verification Authority may revoke the certification/verification and remove the Certified/Verified Entity from the Register, if:

- The Organization does not complete the renewal process by the renewal date; or
- The Organization fails to complete any action within the timeframe defined in Section 9.2.

If so removed from the Register, the business practice or technology will then no longer be considered certified/verified.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

10. Problem Reporting and Interpretations Process

10.1 Overview

During the certification/verification process or during the preparation phase, an Organization may encounter a problem that inhibits or will inhibit the certification/verification effort. The Organization may file a Problem Report via the Certification and Verification Authority's web site to obtain resolution to the issue. The Certification and Verification Authority is the sole interface with the Organization for problem reporting, though others will be involved in determining the resolution.

The types of problems that may be found include:

- Errors or ambiguities in the NSI Specifications(s) against which conformance is based
- Errors in the certification/verification system, specifically those related to the registration process, agreements, and completion of Conformance Statements
- Errors in assessment materials, which are sometimes used as an Indicator of Conformance for an NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard
- Errors in the Validation Methods, which are sometimes used as an Indicator of Conformance for an NSI Best Practice or Technical Standard

The Problem Report is used specifically for the types of errors listed above which are inhibiting the certification/verification effort. For general questions on the certification/verification process, the assessment process, or other problems not covered above, the Certification and Verification Authority can provide assistance on obtaining further information.

10.2 Problem Report Resolution Process

The Certification and Verification Authority is responsible for reviewing and providing a resolution to all Problem Reports. The key element of the review process is a deterministic timeline for a formal resolution to the Problem Report.

The Certification and Verification Authority will perform a preliminary review and provide an initial response to the Organization within 15 business days of the Problem Report submission. This stage allows simple problems to be dealt with expeditiously.

In order for the Certification and Verification Authority to resolve Problem Reports for issues related to the NSI Specification(s), an opinion from the Specification Authority is required. These opinions must be provided within 10 business days of the Problem Report submission, in order for the Certification and Verification Authority to provide its preliminary response on time.

In order for the Certification and Verification Authority to resolve Problem Reports for issues related to Validation Method(s), an opinion from the Validation Method Maintenance Authority is required. These opinions must be provided within 10 business days of the Problem Report submission, in order for the Certification and Verification Authority to provide its preliminary response on time.

In some cases, 15 business days are sufficient to provide a final Problem Report resolution. However, when the preliminary review does not resolve the issue, a detailed review will be undertaken to address the more complicated issues. Final

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

resolution will then be provided within an additional 15 business days, thus within 30 business days maximum from submission of the Problem Report.

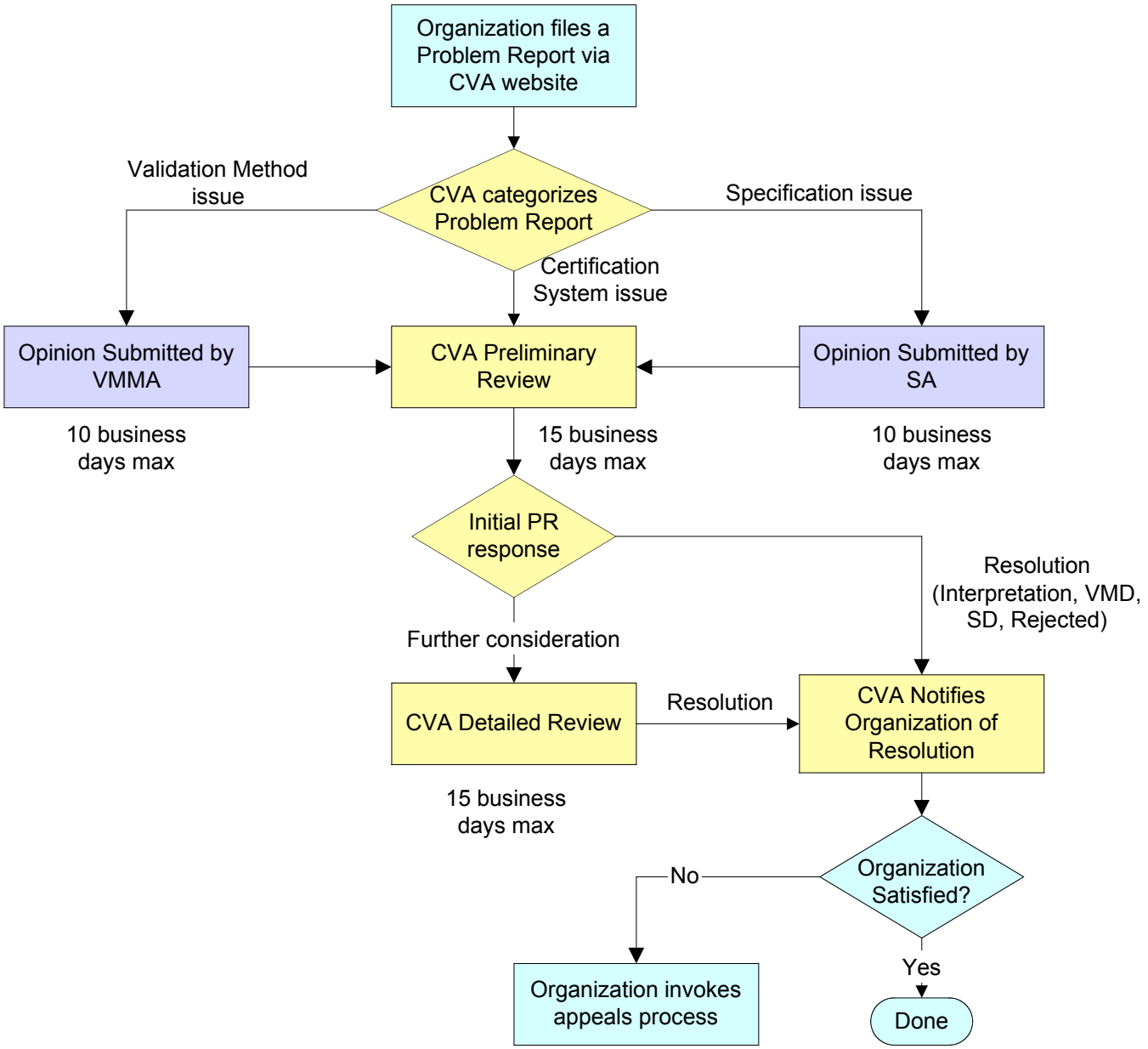
If the Organization is not satisfied with the final resolution, the Organization may invoke the appeals process.

The Problem Report resolution process will allow the Organization to remain anonymous, so pre-certification/pre-verification activity is kept entirely confidential. This requires that requests be filtered automatically prior to viewing by anyone other than the Certification and Verification Authority. Filtering will remove the sections of the Problem Report specific to identification of the Organization, so these are the only sections that should contain the company name or other confidential information. Please note that if Organization-specific information is included in the sections reserved for the detailed problem descriptions, filtering will not result in an anonymous request.

The process is outlined in the following diagram.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

NSI Problem Reporting Process



© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

10.3 Resolution of Problem Reports

The possible outcomes for Problem Report resolution are:

- Accepted as an error or ambiguity in the NSI Specification(s) (an Interpretation)
- Accepted as an error in the certification/verification system or assessment materials (a System Deficiency)
- Accepted as an error in the Validation Method (a Validation Method Deficiency)
- Rejected

The issuance of an Interpretation, Validation Method Deficiency or System Deficiency will not cause a previously Certified/Verified Entity to be "un-certified/un-verified" at a given Conformance Release, but can affect a business practice or technology's continued conformance. Interpretations, Validation Method Deficiencies, and System Deficiencies evolve the definition of conformance over time and Certified/Verified Entities are always required to conform to the current definition of conformance. At the time of certification/verification renewal, the Organization will be required to demonstrate that the Certified/Verified Entity conforms to the applicable NSI Best Practice(s) or Technical Standard(s), including all Interpretations that have been granted since the previous certification/verification.

10.3.1 Interpretations

An Interpretation elaborates or refines the meaning of an NSI Specification, therefore clarifying an error or ambiguity in that specification. Interpretations apply to a specific version of an NSI Specification and are permanent against that version. They remain in force until that specification is updated, at which time, the elaboration or refined meaning should be incorporated into the updated version of that specification.

Interpretations always apply to a particular version of an NSI Specification. Therefore, if a Problem Report submitted against an NSI Specification includes a rationale that cites conflict with a previous or subsequent version of that specification, the Problem Report will be assessed without reference to such rationale. Conflict with another version of the same NSI Specification does not in itself form grounds for granting an Interpretation.

The Specification Authority is responsible for deciding the meaning of conformance to normative referenced specifications only within the context of the NSI Best Practices or Technical Standards. Problem Reports regarding any such underlying or referenced specifications in the context of the NSI certification/verification will be processed as normal. However, any Problem Report that seeks to change the base requirements of underlying normative specifications over which the Specification Authority has no direct control will be rejected.

10.3.2 Validation Method Deficiency

A Validation Method Deficiency is an agreed error in a Validation Method. Validation Method Deficiencies apply to the Conformance Release in which they are found.

If the problem is blocking the certification/verification effort, an update or workaround will be made immediately to the Validation Method to enable certification/verification to proceed. In this case, as certification/verification may

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

proceed upon application of the update or workaround, the Problem Report will be rejected.

Otherwise, the Problem Report will be approved as a Validation Method Deficiency against the current Conformance Release. The problem will be fixed in a future update of the Validation Method and the Validation Method Deficiency will remain in force until such update.

The Problem Reporting and Interpretations system may not be used to dispute the outcome of the validation and certification/verification process. Such issues should instead utilize the appeals process defined in Section 11. Any Problem Report not related to the correctness of the Validation Method itself will be rejected.

10.3.3 System Deficiency

A System Deficiency is an agreed error in the certification/verification system or assessment material. The certification/verification system includes the certification/verification process, assessment materials, and software systems provided to implement certification/verification. System Deficiencies apply to the version of the certification/verification system or document in which they are found.

If the problem is blocking the certification/verification effort, an update or workaround will be made immediately to the relevant part of the certification/verification system to enable certification/verification to proceed. In this case, as certification/verification may proceed upon application of the update or workaround, the Problem Report will be rejected.

Otherwise, the Problem Report will be approved as a System Deficiency against the current version of the certification/verification system. The problem will be fixed in a future update of the certification/verification system or document and the System Deficiency will remain in force until such update.

The Problem Reporting and Interpretations system may not be used to dispute the outcome of the assessment and certification/verification process. Such issues should instead utilize the appeals process defined in Section 11. Any Problem Report not related to the correctness of the certification/verification system itself will be rejected.

10.4 Problem Report Repository

The Certification and Verification Authority will maintain a web-accessible repository of all submitted Problem Reports. This repository will be publicly accessible. The publicly accessible information will contain the technical details – such as the nature of the problem and its current status of resolution – but will not contain sections reserved for organizational details, thus maintaining the confidentiality of the Organization.

An Organization may cite an Interpretation, Validation Method Deficiency or System Deficiency to resolve discrepancies or to support their application for certification/verification in any other way, irrespective of the origin of the Problem Report.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

11. Appeals Process

Organizations may appeal decisions made by NSI or the Certification and Verification Authority. The occasions that may give rise to an appeal include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. The Organization disagrees with the resolution of a Problem Report.

b. The Organization disagrees with the Certification and Verification Authority's grounds for denying the award of certification/verification.

c. A certified/verified Organization disagrees with a formal notification of the need to rectify a non-conformance.

Appeal requests should be made to the Certification and Verification Authority. The Program Guide describes the process for raising an appeal.

There are two levels of appeal: a Technical Review and a Board Review. Review decisions will be made in accordance with NSI policies, as defined in the current version of the NSI Charters and Procedures Document.

At each level of appeal, the Organization has the right to representation at the review meeting to make the technical case, though it is not required to do so. The appeals process will be anonymous if the Organization does not wish to be represented at the review meetings. In such case, the Certification and Verification Authority will remove details that may identify the Organization or its Certifiable/Verifiable Entity from all information provided for the Technical and/or Board Reviews.

An Organization wishing to dispute an NSI or Certification and Verification Authority decision may request a Technical Review. Technical Review requires the relevant NSI Working Group to consider the matter and produce a response with a recorded vote according to NSI voting rules, within 21 calendar days of the request. The NSI Working Group may commission reports from independent experts, and may seek input from other working groups and committees within NSI as it sees fit.

If the Organization is not satisfied with the outcome of the Technical Review, the Organization may request an appeal to the NSI Steering Committee within 14 calendar days of being notified in writing by the Certification and Verification Authority of the results of the Technical Review. The NSI Steering Committee may ask for reports or assistance from the relevant working groups and also from independent experts. The Board Review will be completed within 30 calendar days of the Organization's written request for a Board Review. The results of a Board Review are final and cannot be further appealed.

12. Confidentiality

12.1 Confidentiality

All information relating to an Organization and the business practice or technology to be certified/verified will be held confidential during the certification/verification process; that is, prior to the award of certification/verification. This includes information related to the registration, assessment process, Conformance Statements, and Problem Reports.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Assessment Reports and any documents submitted by the Organization will always be confidential. Information regarding the details of the assessment process or the validation process, as applicable, shall not be disclosed in any publicly available document, or to any third party, by the Certification and Verification Authority, the Organization, or any party acting on the Organization's or Certification and Verification Authority's behalf.

In addition, the Certification and Verification Authority will always hold confidential any information regarding unsuccessful requests for certification/verification.

The terms and conditions regarding confidentiality and nondisclosure are contained in the Certification/Verification Agreement.

12.2 Disclosure of Certification/Verification Information

Certification/verification information consists of the fact that certification/verification was achieved, the description of the Certified/Verified Entity, and the associated Conformance Statement. Any claims of conformance or information related to the certification/verification process may only be made public after the Certification and Verification Authority has notified the Organization in writing that certification/verification has been awarded.

The Certification and Verification Authority will make certification/verification information publicly available by including it in the Register available on the Certification and Verification Authority's web site.

12.3 Optional Confidential Treatment of Certification/Verification

On occasions, an Organization may wish to keep the fact that certification/verification was achieved, and all certification/verification information, confidential. The Organization may request that the certification/verification be kept confidential for a maximum period of six (6) months from the date of written notification by the Certification and Verification Authority that the Organization has achieved certification/verification.

During this period, the Organization may not publicly use the NASPL Logo or make any representation of conformance with the NSI Best Practice(s) or Technical Standard(s) without first informing the Certification and Verification Authority that the confidential period has expired. In the event that the Organization wishes to keep the certification/verification information confidential permanently, the Organization may request withdrawal and deletion of such information. Such business practices or technologies will then no longer be considered certified/verified.

The certification/verification information will cease to be held confidential upon the earlier of notice by the Organization that the confidential period has expired, or at the end of the six (6)-month period, provided that the Organization has not requested withdrawal and deletion of such information.

© 2001 – 2007 The Open Group
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED