

Safety Schemes in Procurement Competence Forum (SSIP-C Forum)

Prepared by **jzcarpenter Limited**
for the Health and Safety Executive 2009

Safety Schemes in Procurement Competence Forum (SSIP-C Forum)

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This report describes a study into the means by which the Safety Schemes in Procurement- Competence Forum' (SSIP-C Forum) might operate; it also considers the business case for such a forum and how this body might be brought to the attention of clients.

This report and the work it describes were funded by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Its contents, including any opinions and/or conclusions expressed, are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect HSE policy.

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First published 2009

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank all those involved in SSIP-C for their assistance and co-operation in preparing this report and wishes them well in achieving the aim of mutual recognition between industry 'assessment' schemes.

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GLOSSARY

ACoP	Approved Code of Practice
Applicant	An organisation (acting as Contractor, Designer, CDM Co-ordinator-singly or in combination) applying to one of the Scheme providers for accreditation in respect of Stage 1 of the CDM ACoP.
Assessment scheme	An industry scheme which assesses the corporate safety competence of organisations. The extent to which the assessment is made varies between schemes; some schemes also assess other aspects of an organisation, and organisations in other industries.
Assessor	Persons within each Scheme provider, or externally appointed, responsible for assessing whether an applicant is suitable for accreditation
Auditor	The independent Person(s) responsible on behalf of the Forum for auditing Scheme providers for compliance with Forum procedures.
CDM	Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007
Forum	The 'Safety Schemes in Procurement- Competence Forum' (SSIP-C Forum).
Forum applicant	Scheme providers to be considered for membership of the Forum, once the Forum procedures are agreed.
Forum Management Group	An agreed group, representing all Scheme providers within the Forum, HSE and Others, which manages the Forum on Scheme providers' behalf.
Forum member	A Scheme provider (currently as Table 1).
Reviewer	A person from within a Scheme Provider, or externally appointed, who undertakes a periodic check on the process of scheme member assessment.
Scheme provider	An organisation providing an 'assessment' scheme meeting the Stage1 requirements of Appendix 4 of the CDM 2007 Approved Code of Practice (ACoP).
Stage 1 (Core Criteria)	The generic requirements of Appendix 4 of the CDM ACoP.
Stage 2	The project specific requirements of Appendix 4, and the assessment of adequate resource. This lies outside the Forum's remit and area of interest.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need for competent organisations is an essential need for any industry. The construction industry is no exception and suffers from the poor corporate competence of some organisations and from unnecessarily bureaucratic assessment procedures imposed on others. This has affected SMEs particularly. The Health and Safety Executive is keen to resolve both these situations and has commissioned this research project as a contribution towards the raising of standards and simplification of the process.

One form of this unnecessary bureaucracy can arise from a requirement made by an engaging party that any organisation employed by them should belong to a specified industry 'assessment' scheme. Whilst this is often a sound business basis on which to proceed (and there are a number of schemes in the marketplace offering appropriate services), a difficulty arises when one scheme does not recognise membership of another, thereby forcing organisations to join (at some cost and effort) more than one scheme in order to maintain their client base.

The idea, first mooted in 'Constructing the Team' [1], for one construction industry scheme, is unlikely to be achieved. However, it is imperative that the wasted time, trouble and expense incurred by organisations which are forced to join more than one scheme is removed.

In 2007 a number of industry Pre-Qualification 'assessment' schemes formed the Safety Schemes in Procurement- Competence Forum (SSIP-C Forum); a Forum with a view to finding a mutually acceptable solution to this challenge. They are to be congratulated for initiating this move. The forum's objectives are supported by the Health and Safety Executive.

This report:

- describes the background
- sets out draft Operational Protocols, developed by the author under this commission, to allow the Forum to proceed using these as a platform such that mutual recognition will result for Stage 1: Core Criteria (as set out in the Approved Code of Practice to the CDM regulations 2007).
- describes the business case for such a Forum

The protocols set out objectives and procedures covering the operation of the Forum and the review and assessment process. They were accepted by the Forum as a way forward in September 2008. The Forum will be open to any scheme which wishes to join, subject only to them satisfying the finally agreed Operational Protocols. In this manner each scheme will maintain its individual identity and commercial business plan, but will be seen to satisfy the Stage 1 Core Criteria.

This work, in support of the Forum, will help to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and simplify the application of regulations. There is a demonstrable business case in support of this approach.

It is important that HSE does all it can to influence industry's major clients to use assessment schemes belonging to the Forum, and to encourage mutual recognition, for the benefit of industry generally.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The need for competent organisations is an essential need for any industry. The construction industry is no exception and suffers from the poor corporate competence of some organisations and from unnecessarily bureaucratic procedures imposed on others. The Health and Safety Executive is keen to resolve both these situations and has commissioned this research project as a contribution towards the raising of standards and simplification of the process.

Since the 1990s a number of corporate ‘assessment’ schemes have been established to assist those engaging other parties establish the competence of the engaged party. Having competence to undertake a role or task is a legal requirement under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, but is also a sensible business strategy. One of these schemes, ConstructionLine, was established following the seminal report by Sir Michael Latham (Constructing the Team) in 1994. The report recommended the adoption of a single construction industry scheme. This aspiration has not come to pass; however the industry has responded instead with a number of schemes. These differ to varying degrees but they all have adopted the common aim of improving the manner in which organisations can demonstrate their competence in a cost effective and quality controlled manner.

Current schemes vary in the extent to which they demonstrate ‘competency’ of an organisation. A number of the schemes limit themselves to a generic assessment of an organisation’s safety management system (sometimes referred to as ‘Stage 1’), relying on others to complete the process based on the requirements for a particular project. Some schemes offer a range of Client requested added-value services, thus providing a complete ‘competency’ review and also advice in environment, CSR, and other policy areas.

The revised CDM Regulations, published in 2007, set out for the first time a framework for establishing corporate competence, based on previous research work [1]. This enabled a consistent approach to be taken to this area of compliance and industry schemes have responded to this initiative. The research report also stated that:

- Having one construction industry scheme was unrealistic in the short term
- Schemes should work towards mutual recognition as this was ‘essential and a key element to the removal of duplication and wasted effort.’ (Section 5.6).

The latter point has been recognised and has led to the formation of a group (**Safety Schemes in Procurement- Competence Forum**) (**SSIP-C Forum**) representing the majority of current scheme providers. These are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: schemes representing theSSIP-C Forum

Scheme	Web address	Sectors	Company Accreditation	Also recognises:	Stage 1 and 2*
Achilles	www.achilles.com	Gas, oil, railway, construction and others	ISO9001	----	Yes
BM Trada	www.bmtrada.com/hvca.php	Construction+	UKAS, BS9001, BS ISO14001 BS ISO 18001	Achilles, CHAS, SafeContractor	No
CHAS	www.chas.gov.uk	Construction	No	Achilles; SafeContractor, Safe-T-Cert NHBC Scheme EXOR Managed services SHQual SPECC Hire Association Europe. ARCA scheme	No
ConstructionLine	www.constructionline.co.uk	Construction	BS9001	CHAS,	No
Exor		Construction++	BS9001	-----	No
NHBC	www.nhbc.co.uk	Construction	No	-----	No
Safe Contractor	www.safecontractor.com	General	BS9001	CHAS	No

+ currently one client: HVCA ++ Client driven * of CDM ACoP Appendix 4.

1.2 THE BRIEF

This report is the result of a research commission awarded by HSE in May 2008; the brief was to:

- i) Develop a set of operating procedures such that independent schemes are aware of agreed common standards necessary to satisfy HSE that they meet the legal minimum.
- ii) Develop the means by which schemes which seek more than the minimum may participate, without diminishing their standards.
- iii) Identify the means by which those standards may be demonstrated to a consistent and uniform base.
- iv) Develop a means of third party monitoring of all participating schemes to ensure that these standards are met and maintained on an unbiased basis.
- v) Determine how clients and others may be made aware of this work and of the range of schemes open to them.
- vi) Develop the business case for such an approach to demonstrate its efficacy and rationale.

In order to satisfy item i) of the brief it has been necessary to determine in parallel how mutual recognition between schemes may be achieved. Both objectives require resolution.

1.3 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SSIP-C

The stated aim of the SSIP-C Forum is to:

- Eliminate unnecessary health and safety bureaucracy in procurement
- Promote transferable standards in non-construction fields
- Help clients and Contractors (see Author's Note below) achieve value for money by avoiding unnecessary duplication
- Provide confidence in first stage safety competency assessments through a consistent, reliable, and quality controlled standard of vetting
- Promote the work of the Forum through relevant trade press.

Author's Note: it is assumed that this is to encompass also Designers and CDM-Coordinators, at a corporate level.

1.4 THIS REPORT

The report aims to set the brief in context by documenting the broad background and influencing features. It makes recommendations for operating protocols which may then be taken forward by SSIP-C for detailed development. A commentary is also given on the business case for such a forum, and how this body can be brought to the attention of clients.

2. CURRENT SITUATION

2.1 SCHEME CHARACTERISTICS

At present the SSIP-C Forum schemes exhibit differing prime characteristics as indicated in Tables 2 -4. These are scheduled, not for the purposes of ranking, but to identify the range of approaches currently adopted.

Table 2: Scheme Characteristics

Scheme	Scheme characteristic					
	On a strictly commercial basis	Organisation formally accredited by third party	Scheme includes more than H&S+	Includes site assessment of applicants++	In addition to Contractors, Designers	applicants may be: CDM-Cs
Achilles	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes****	Yes	Yes
BM Trada	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes**	No	No
CHAS	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
ConstructionLine	Yes***	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Exor	Yes	Yes (from 9/08)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
NHBC+++	Yes	No	No	Yes****	Yes	Yes
Safe Contractor	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

- + e.g. CSR, Environmental management
- ++ in addition to desk-top assessment.
- +++ new scheme to be launched in September
- * but not currently in open commercial marketplace (single client-HVCA)
- ** technical review only and does not necessarily include an active site.
- *** BERR sponsored but run by a commercial company
- **** office only

Table 3: links with others

Scheme	Formal links with other non-scheme bodies	Comment
Achilles	--	-----
BM Trada	Heating and Ventilation Contractors Association (HVCA)	Scheme membership is mandatory for HVCA members.
CHAS	Heating and Ventilation Contractors Association (HVCA)	--
	Hire Association Europe	
	Asbestos Removal Contractors Association	
	Construction Industry Accreditation Partnership Scheme (CIAPS)	
ConstructionLine	--	--
Exor	National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC)	Scheme membership optional for NFRC and HVCA members
	Heating and Ventilation Contractors Association (HVCA)	
NHBC	--	--
Safe Contractor	--	---

Table 4: Assessor standards

Scheme	Assessors:			
	Minimum standard	Scheme led Training	Scheme led Refresher	Review of assessors' work
Achilles	Diploma; institution membership; construction experience; lead auditor qualification; in-house checks	Yes	Yes (annually)	Yes- in-house.
BM Trada	Assessed at interview. No formal accreditation	--	--	All reports are viewed internally by HQ
CHAS	NEBOSH Cert minimum; Most are CMIOSH. Scheme takes up references. Experience of giving advice and policy writing; soft skills required	Yes	2 years	3% of assessments by external assessor
ConstructionLine	n/a at present (or uses CHAS).	n/a	n/a	n/a
Exor	Currently CMIOSH, construction experience	By assessor.	No	Internal peer review
NHBC	NEBOSH, experience with H&S advice in construction; IRCA 3 day auditor training course	No	No	The Operations Manager personally reviews all audits.
Safe Contractor	NEBOSH or HSE info line, plus experience with H&S advice	In-house informally	No	Internal Team leader review

All member Schemes incorporate the CDM2007 ACoP (Appendix 4) 'Core Criteria' within their requirements although some do not do so explicitly.

Table 5: Other services

Scheme	Other consultancy services offered?	Comment
Achilles	No	Policy decision
BM Trada	No	
CHAS	No	Policy decision
ConstructionLine	n/a	
Exor		
NHBC	No	
Safe Contractor	Yes- but see comment.	SafeContractor is ring-fenced from the consultancy services offered by other parts of the group.

2.2 COMMENTS FROM HSE

If the Forum is to be recognised by HSE as representing a robust means of regulating industry ‘assessment’ schemes, and to a standard that reflects the relevant legal requirements for CDM competency, it is anticipated it will need to address the following matters:

Table 6: Anticipated requirements of HSE

	Element	Comment
1	Scope of Forum requirement	Limited to the Core Criteria i.e. Stage 1 assessment, so as to avoid barriers to the SME in particular.
2	Third party review of schemes	HSE seek a sufficient independent review to be satisfied that standards are maintained.
3	Approach to assessments	Desk-top, with measures to minimise risk of deceit or discrepancy by applicant.
4	Standard of assessors	Competent assessors with a formal qualification in health and safety matters e.g. NEBOSH Construction Certificate as a minimum, and training in the process of auditing.
5	Review of assessments	Internal review procedures required.
6	Commercial interaction	Scheme members should not derive commercial benefit from membership of the scheme.
7	Data acceptance	Schemes should allow data from applicants to be accepted in hard copy as well as electronic format, so as not to disadvantage the smaller organisation.

2.3 OTHER EQUIVALENT ‘FORUM’ STANDARDS

There is another example of an ‘assessment’ Forum (Trustmark) with which useful comparisons may be made.

The ‘Trustmark’ scheme, promoted by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Review (BERR) is a useful comparison (www.trustmark.co.uk). This scheme has been established to allow users (typically householders) of building related trades to be satisfied as to the standard of the organisation and to avoid the ‘cowboy’ element of the domestic market. The scheme sets minimum standards in a range of company matters- finance, insurance, warranties and also ‘safety’.

The key aim of Trustmark is to raise standards of ‘customer care’. This is different from the key aim of the Forum which is to ensure adequate (legal) standards of safety risk management. The application questionnaire for schemes applying to join Trustmark asks whether their members: *sign up to a code of practice which includes; Compliance with legislation.* This is considerably less specific than the equivalent enquiry within the Forum.

In respect of monitoring, Trustmark states:

Trading and health & safety practices: *only simple checks are required that will not impose undue burdens on the scheme or member firms. These would normally be expected to cover:*

- . confirmation of appropriate employer’s and public liability cover, either as part of on-site inspections or annual membership renewal*
- . checks on the existence of an active written health & safety policy where appropriate, or other simple checks as may be proposed by the scheme.*

. confirmation, from the firm or the customer, of the offer of a warranty and of assistance in building control notifications, and of clear understandings on work to be done, timescales, costs, etc.

Hence the emphasis on ‘health and safety’ is somewhat limited.

Trustmark is operated by accredited scheme providers which have to be working towards UKAS registration or compliance with EN 45011/12/13. These providers currently include BM Trada and Exor.

Although Trustmark provides a useful comparison with a situation where a branch of government has been able to endorse an ‘assessment scheme Forum’ similar to SSIP-C, it is unfortunate that the requirements for ‘health and safety’ do not fully test the legal minimum.

Specific aspects of Trustmark include:

Table 7: Trustmark characteristics

Aspect	Requirement	Comment
TrustMark		
Accreditation	Set by BERR	Currently run by IOB
Independent Audit		IOB make an annual submission to BERR.
Scheme Provider		
Accreditation	EN45011/1/213; ISO9001	Required to be at, or working towards this level.
	Core Criteria	These Core Criteria are different from the CDM ACoP.
Audit	Yearly.	
Assessors of applicants by Scheme Provider		
Minimum standard	Technical qualification in associated trade	No auditing experience required
Reviews	3 yearly	Some trades e.g. electrician are more frequent.
Site audit	Yes	

3 REVIEW OF DISCUSSIONS WITH SCHEME PROVIDERS

3.1 GENERAL

The Author met with all Forum members individually, in addition to having group discussions at Forum meetings. Meetings were also held with other individuals involved with SSIP-C. A number of issues emerged from these useful discussions.

3.2 KEY ELEMENTS TO ENABLE MUTUAL RECOGNITION

The discussions suggested that in order to allow mutual recognition between schemes it will be necessary to resolve the following, alongside those items in Table 5 above:

Table 8: key elements to be resolved to allow mutual recognition

Element	Comment
Definition of 'designer'	The CDM definition utilises a functional approach.
Categorisation of applicant	The view was expressed that it would be necessary to agree a means of categorising applicants to define the exact area of work, and hence competence, that had been assessed. At present differing methods are utilised.
Additional services	Concern has been expressed by some that additional 'added-value' services should not be seen as an optional extra to a base level 'minimum standard', thus raising the query 'why should we do more?'
Data transfer between schemes	It will be necessary for Schemes to transfer data so that others within the Forum are aware of suspensions, refused applications etc. This has been suggested as being achieved via compatible Scheme databases; this raises the issue of commercial confidentiality of data.
Terminology	It will be necessary to agree the terminology associated with the operation of the Forum and the Core Criteria.
Non-construction organisations	Some schemes currently include assessment of non-construction organisations. Some schemes wish this to be part of the Forum remit.
Accreditation of 'assessors'	The agreed minimum standard of qualification and experience will need to be set
Competence of assessors	The minimum level of competence of the assessors considered acceptable.
Level of interrogation	The depth of questioning in relation to the submission
Site visits	Whether the assessment process should include a site visit- either to an office or construction site.
Subjects explored	The extent to which the breadth of subject matter examined is relevant e.g. CSR, finance.

These points were considered in the development of the Forum proposals by the author, and which feature in Chapter 4.

4 PROPOSALS

The proposals have been derived from a combination of the work already undertaken by the Forum, suggestions made during discussions with Forum members, HSE requirements and the author's views.

These proposals ('Operating Protocols') were presented to the Forum on 9th September 2008. The proposals set out standards for:

- The Forum
- Its members i.e. scheme providers
- Assessing, reviewing and auditing,

These are enclosed in Appendix 1.

Following the presentation in September 2008, the Forum agreed to use these, with some amendments, as the basis on which to proceed. The key amendments relate to:

- The period for which an applicant to the Forum must have been operating their scheme, prior to membership of the Forum. The 15 months suggested was considered unnecessarily long.
- The requirement for sample site audits was of concern to some members of the Forum. It was agreed to put this to one side for the time being.
- The suggestion that assessor's work towards a formal audit qualification such as IRCA was of concern to some members of the Forum. It was agreed to omit this suggestion.

The Forum has established a working group to finalise the Operating Protocols.

5 THE BUSINESS CASE

This Chapter analyses, qualitatively and quantitatively, the benefits and costs associated with operating a 'Forum' as described in Chapter 3.

Table 9 below provides a qualitative analysis, which clearly shows the benefits of a Forum and schemes operating within its jurisdiction.

Table 9: Benefits and Costs

Client Benefits	Member* benefits	Industry benefits
Time saving in assessing organisations for Stage 1 compliance.	Time saving in preparing for Stage 1 assessment requests to varying requirements.	Consistency of approach.
Clients are able to choose organisations from any recognised scheme in the Forum knowing that it satisfies Stage 1.	Can choose scheme to suit its own preferences as all accredited Schemes are recognised for Stage 1.	Maximum flexibility and market choice is achieved and protected.
Partial discharge of CDM responsibilities. HSE recognised route.	Assured that legal obligations are met. HSE recognised route. Audits company systems etc.	Rising standards. Marginalises the 'cowboy' element over time.
Easy identification of organisations which are of a standard.	Avoidance of competing against those which are not of a standard Allows investment in training etc, knowing that others will be doing likewise.	Scheme membership likely to rise with time, raising standards as it gathers momentum. Development of training and support packages based around Stage 1. Consistent approach to other 'Forum' e.g. Competent Persons.
Client Costs	Member Costs	Industry Costs
No necessary direct costs.	Scheme membership and renewal fees All categories should show savings over time	No direct costs

*i.e. Contractor, Designer or CDM Co-ordinator organisations which belong to a Forum Scheme.

The Health and Safety Executive gains from this as the Forum:

- acts to raise and control standards to a level that meets HSE expectations,
- is owned, run and moderated by industry,
- demonstrates HSE commitment to effective initiatives which reduce barriers to business,
- specifically benefits SMEs,
- reduces bureaucracy.

The 2008 report by BERR [2] reinforces this by stating:

276. The Government must reduce the burden that multiple public sector prequalification schemes impose on construction firms, particularly SMEs.

Information was received from some Forum members to indicate the quantitative benefits of working to accredited schemes. Although this varies, all reports indicate savings to some degree. However the reports also indicate that some of the benefit is lost through the insistence by clients for organisations to continue to complete bespoke forms, regardless of their membership of CHAS or other scheme. This issue will need to be tackled if the work of the Forum is not to be diluted.

6 INFORMING THE CLIENT

Once the Forum is formally established it will be necessary to inform Clients of its benefits. This action is considered to be key to its success. It is suggested that this be done as follows.

Generally

- 1 Use should be made of press releases and articles in technical journals to inform the wider industry of the Forum and its aims.
- 2 A free HSE promoted leaflet should be considered.
- 3 HSE should give emphasis to the initiative at all levels (Inspector to Executive).
- 4 HSE should actively encourage construction bodies such as the Construction Confederation, Major Contractors Group (MCG) (or its successor), Specialist Engineering Contractors (SEC), Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA), Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE), Strategic Forum, and others, to encourage the use of Forum members and to take a lead on promotion generally.

Private sector clients

- 1 HSE (in conjunction with other industry bodies) should approach leading private sector clients e.g. 'top 5' retailers, Cross-rail, BAA, ODA) to persuade them to adopt 'Forum schemes'.

Public sector clients

- 1 HSE (in conjunction with other industry bodies) should discuss the formal adoption of the Forum protocols with OGC.
- 2 HSE (in conjunction with other industry bodies) should discuss the formal adoption of the Forum protocols with representatives of Local Authority bodies, Highways Agency, Environment Agency, Ministry of Defence, 'Schools for the Future' and other major spenders.

References

1	Constructing the Team Michael Latham HMSO 1994
2	Construction Matters House of Commons Business and Enterprise Committee Ninth Report of Session 2007-08 HC 127-I

APPENDIX 1: OPERATING PROTOCOLS

Specification or Scope	Element	Comments or observations
A Forum Requirements		
1. The Forum requirements apply to all Schemes accepted for membership.		Founder members will undergo an Independent Audit prior to acceptance in order to demonstrate 'equality to all'.
2. The Forum will accept any new Scheme Provider which meets the Forum requirements	a) Discrimination	e.g.. there will be no discrimination on commercial or competitive grounds. Independent review of this element will be achieved through the Forum Management Group which includes HSE and Others.
	b) Application	The application process will consist of a paper submission, which if meeting Forum requirements, will be followed by an Independent Audit (as indicated in Appendix 1). The application is to demonstrate how the applicant Scheme Provider meets the requirements of this Protocol.
	c) Assessment of application and implementation of initial audit	To be implemented by one of the Independent Auditors
	d) Acceptance	No new Scheme Provider shall become a member of the Forum until: i) the application procedures are fully and successfully completed. ii) the new Scheme Provider has been in operation for at least 15 months in this field of operation.
3. The Forum will be managed by a Management Group.	a) Make-up	The Management Group will consist of representatives from each member Scheme together with a representative from HSE and Others. Day to day operation may be delegated to a smaller group/secretariat.
	b) Operation	The Management Group will meet at agreed intervals. The Management Group will decide its own operational rules utilising good business principles. These will be established in writing.
	c) Decisions	It is hoped that the Management Group will operate by consensus. Notwithstanding, the Forum will have an agreed voting/decision making process. HSE will act as an observer.
	d) Scope of business	The Group will decide its own agenda within the scope of these Protocols.
	e) Data from Schemes	The Group will ensure it regularly receives and considers all reports and review data from Schemes and ensures Non-Conformities are followed through and closed out
	f) Non-Conformities and other actions	The Management Group will decide on an appropriate action sequence should a Scheme Provider fail to abide by the Forum rules

Specification or Scope	Element	Comments or observations
		and ethos.
4. Confidentiality		All those involved will respect commercial confidentiality and work to accepted business standards.
5. The Forum will appoint sufficient Independent Auditors to allow timely audit of Scheme Providers and of the Forum itself	a) Eligibility	Auditors may be individuals or organisations at the Forum's discretion. Auditors shall have no connection with any of the Forum Schemes.
6. Maintaining standards within the Forum	a) Generally	The Forum Management Group will operate in such a manner that Scheme members are able to be readily satisfied as to the adequacy of the procedures adopted.
6a. Implementation of Independent Audits of Scheme Providers.	a) On application to join	An Independent Audit shall take place after examination of the submission.
	b) Generally	At yearly intervals.
	c) Objectives	<p>The purpose of the Independent Audit is to ensure (for the sake of transparency) that Scheme Providers are following their own, and the Forum requirements. The Independent Auditor will undertake the audit in two parts:</p> <p>Part A General operational aspects covering-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) written operational procedures ii) document control/record management iii) customer care/complaints procedures iv) resource management v) monitoring, measurement, analysis and improvement processes <p>and which meet the aspirations of BS EN ISO 9001:2000</p> <p>Part B The specifics of Sections B and C of this Forum Protocol, having regard to the principles outlined in Part A.</p> <p>Assessor's shall not assess their own Scheme's work</p>
	d) Exceptions	Those Scheme Providers which are formally accredited to BS EN ISO

Specification or Scope	Element	Comments or observations
		9001:2000 are deemed to satisfy Part A above on production of a valid certificate.
	e) Provision of information	Schemes will provide all relevant and requested information to allow the Independent Auditor to carry out the function.
6. The cost of running the Forum will be covered by Scheme Providers	a) Generally	Costs will be shared equally.
	b) Independent Audits and other Scheme specific issues	Costs will be allocated directly to the relevant Scheme.
7. Mutual recognition		Scheme Providers shall accept a current and valid certificate from another Scheme Provider as adequate proof of meeting the Stage 1 Core Criteria, subject only to a check on current status (see B9).
8. Compliance criteria	a) Assessments of applicants and members of Schemes b) Reviews and Independent Audits of Schemes	Assessments, Reviews and Independent Audits should be evidence based wherever possible i.e. a demonstration of something that is done to achieve a goal.
	c) Pass/Fail criteria	A clear distinction will be made between those elements which may require improvement within a specified time-span (a corrective action), and those elements which will result in an Assessment, Review or Audit 'Fail'.
9. Legal basis		The Forum shall be established in a formal manner e.g. a 'Not for profit' company.
B Requirements for Scheme Providers		
1 For Forum purposes Schemes will adopt the CDM ACoP Appendix 4 'Stage 1' Core Criteria for use in all pre-qualification assessments of construction-related organisations. No other criteria will be utilised in respect of Forum requirements.		Each Scheme's operation will be reviewed by Independent Auditors appointed by the Forum. Further data requested of the applicant organisation by a Scheme Provider e.g. financial, CSR, shall be noted as outwith the Forum remit and certificate.
2. Schemes will undertake a 'desk-top' assessment of an applicant's submission, against the: -Core Criteria as set out in Appendix 4 of the CDM b) Depth ACoP. -Guidance on Appendix 4 as outlined on www.cskills.org.uk/healthsafety/cdmregulations/guidance Annex A.	a) General	This should be predominantly evidence based as noted in A8. Where possible, evidence should be selective to avoid large quantities of paperwork being assembled.

Specification or Scope	Element	Comments or observations
	b) Depth of interrogation	Factual statements should be checked. E.g. -Notices, Prosecutions -Qualifications Training of Assessors should include advice on the appropriate depth of examination.
2a Scheme Providers will accommodate organisations employing less than 5 persons		Although these organisations do not have to have a written policy or assessment of risk, in other respects the full provisions of the law apply. Scheme Providers must have procedures for assessing organisations of this size.
3. Scheme Providers will supplement the above submission assessment by speaking on the phone to, or meeting with the signatory of the submission and other relevant persons as appropriate, on-site.	a) General	It is important that the application signatory is an appropriate senior person within the organisation (not an external advisor). The Assessor needs to be satisfied that the procedures described in the submission are genuinely 'owned' by the organisation.
	b) Depth of interrogation	To be implemented in a structured manner and sufficient to ensure the management of the organisation actively implements and reviews the policies outlined in their submission.
4. Scheme Providers will undertake a site visit audit on a sample percentage of applicants and members.		Applicants/Members will provide a selection of sites from which the Scheme Provider will choose those to be visited. The check is to ensure the declarations in the submission are practised on a day-to-day basis. This will be a selective check over say 2 hours or so.
5. Schemes will have robust methods for ensuring changes or amendments to the Forum Protocols are communicated to and implemented within their Schemes and by their assessors and reviewers.	.	The Independent Audit will confirm whether these have happened effectively
6.Schemes shall have a robust and transparent process for undertaking their own quality control on their assessments of applicants	a) Confidentiality	These process outputs will remain the property of the Scheme. However, the Independent Auditor will review them and judge their effectiveness.
	b) Actions	Schemes should ensure that the outcomes of reviews and audits are implemented.
7. Schemes shall accept applications in hard copy in addition to any electronic format adopted.		This is so as to facilitate the smaller organisation.
8. Schemes shall facilitate the work of the Independent Auditor.		The Independent Auditor shall be given reasonable access to any relevant information.

Specification or Scope	Element	Comments or observations
9. Scheme Providers shall ensure the prompt supply of data to the Management Group		This will include: -Applicant data as B2 -Review data as C2d.
10 Certificates	a) General	Scheme Providers shall issue certificates to successful applicants, or on renewal, to their own style.
	b) Classification	In respect of all applicants, Scheme Providers shall clearly state whether they are awarding accreditation to a Contractor, Designer, CDM-Co-ordinator or a combination of these duty holders. Although most of the assessment is the same, regardless of duty-holder, there are some divergences within Appendix 4 of the CDM ACoP.
11. Advertising membership of the Forum		Scheme Providers may advertise their membership of the Forum, as providing a means whereby organisations can demonstrate compliance with Stage 1 assessment of the CDM ACoP.
C-Assessors, Reviewers and Auditors		
1. Schemes shall ensure their Assessors have adequate competence to undertake an assessment of a Contractor, Designer or CDM-Co-ordinator's compliance with the CDM corporate competence core criteria given in appendix 4 of the CDM ACoP (Stage 1).	a) The Assessor's qualification.	The minimum level is: i) the NEBOSH national general certificate or equivalent ii) having, or working towards a formal audit/assessment qualification e.g. IRCA, or have successfully taken the Forum's assessment training module
	b) Their experience	The Assessor must have adequate experience of successfully: i) providing advice or guidance on health and safety issues to Contractors and/or Designers, or ii) being responsible for delivery of health and safety management.
	c) soft skills such as IT and report writing, interaction with clients and applicants	Assessors should be able to demonstrate excellent communications skills both written and oral in a manner all can understand. This could be determined as part of customer feedback in quality control.
	e) CPD and training	Assessors will be active in CPD and the Scheme Provider will need to demonstrate how this is being addressed.
	f) New Assessors	Newly appointed Assessors shall have their work actively assessed by the Scheme Provider over an initial 6 month period, or 25 assessments, whichever is completed first, to check that they attain

Specification or Scope	Element	Comments or observations
		the requisite standard.
2. Schemes shall ensure that they appoint adequate numbers of Reviewers	a) Qualifications	As for Assessors (as a minimum expectation)
	b) Experience	Reviewers shall have 2 years experience as an Assessor or similar activity.
	c) Eligibility	Reviewers may be externally appointed, or be drawn from the ranks of Assessors, providing they do not review their own work.
	d) Results	Results of reviews will be actioned by Scheme Providers and will also be made available to the Independent Auditor.
3. Scheme Providers will ensure their Assessors and Reviewers have no conflict of interest in performing their assessment of organisations, or review of assessors work.	a) General	Schemes will ensure they act responsibly to ensure they do not bring their Scheme or the Forum into disrepute in this respect (See also C4b). Scheme Providers, Assessors and Reviewers shall not undertake any advisory work relating to any applicant or member of the Scheme
	b) Accusations of improper behaviour.	Any formal accusation of improper behaviour will be: i) Notified to the Forum ii) investigated by the Scheme and reported to the Forum. ii) if not resolved, referred by the Scheme to the Independent Auditor via the Management Group. The Independent Auditor will investigate and report to the Management Group.
4. Independent Auditors	a) Qualifications	All auditors shall have: -formal H&S qualifications. -industry experience -experience of auditing
	b) Confidentiality	Auditors shall respect the confidentiality of all Scheme material.
	c) Reporting	All Independent Auditor outputs will be reported to the Forum and copied to the relevant Scheme Provider.

