



Verifier Guidance Update - Verifier Reporting System

Dear Verifiers,

This document is intended to provide guidance on technical aspects of the Verifier Reporting System (VRS). Guidance updates will be distributed on a recurring basis and include specific guidance on entering and modifying information on applications and reports.

Update Number 3.0-05/2009

1. Pre-onsite updates

a. Verification Planning Template

Verification organizations should send SCS an updated verification planning template whenever new contracts are signed. This template has been sent to all approved verification organizations as an attachment to this message, and will be available from SCS upon request.

b. First Response Letter

C.A.F.E. Practices suppliers receive a 'First Response' letter from the Starbucks Farmer Support Center in Costa Rica once an application has been approved.

The First Response letter has two addendums: 1) the "Non Compliant Entity Addendum" which lists any entities included in the application that had Zero Tolerance evaluations in the previous verification cycle and 2) the "Mill Addendum" which includes all mills in the application with current validity (meaning that re-verification is not required unless requested by the client).

Verifiers should always request a copy of the First Response letter and the addendums (if applicable) from the supplier. This will ensure that non-compliant entities will be included in the sample and that the appropriate mills will be inspected by the verification organization.

c. Application Review

Verifiers have the ability to review an application in the VRS before they complete the claim process. A review of the application at this stage should always occur to verify that the supplier application in the VRS is correct and consistent with the version of the application provided by the applicant to the verification organization.

To review the application, click on "Claim supplier application from Starbucks" from the main page. Then, enter the security code in the VRS and click "Claim". Verifiers will see a summary of the total number of farms by size type. Verifiers will also see a list of all entities included in the application with information including the ID, name and farm size.

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If this information does not match the information received from your client in the application, please follow the procedure for supply chain discrepancies (outlined below).

Once verifiers have confirmed that the application is correct, they can click the “Claim” button again.

d. Supply Chain Discrepancies

If the verifier or inspector discovers a discrepancy between the application and the reality in the field or the application as it appears in the VRS, they should email their client, with a copy to SCS (jclark@scscertified.com and shandley@scscertified.com) and the Farmer Support Center (FSC) (cafeprac@starbucks.com and jwilliam@starbucks.com) explaining that a correction may be required. The FSC will then follow up with the supplier to make the necessary adjustments to the application. Verifiers should not make any changes to an entity coversheet which affect the scorecard without prior confirmation from SCS. Examples of these discrepancies include:

- o **Changes to farm size**

Example: the productive area of a farm is different from what was provided in the application and the difference results in the farm changing farm size type:

- Small to Medium/Large
- Medium/Large to Small

Or a farm size changes by 50% or more

- e.g. farm that was listed as 60 ha. on the application, and is verified as 113 ha.

- o **Processing changes**

Example: the inspector discovers that a farm has wet processing activities on-premise when the application listed wet milling at a separate facility, or on-premise milling listed in application but farm does not actually wet mill its coffee

- o **Incorrect entities (farms or mills) included in the application**

Example: all the farms in the application are sending coffee to a dry mill not included in the application

In all of the scenarios above, the verifier must send an email to the client, with a copy to SCS and the FSC, explaining the discrepancy.

It is imperative that inspectors and verifiers follow this procedure immediately upon encountering the discrepancy. In some of the cases above, FSC will need to issue a new application with the correct information included. However, this will only be done as a last option as we recognize the inconvenience. When possible, SCS will provide special instructions on how to modify the application to reflect the actual supply chain.

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Even in cases where a new application ID must be assigned, the inspector will be able to continue reporting in the existing application until the new application ID has been claimed.

The only application discrepancies that do not require that the procedure above is followed are minor changes to farm size: eg. 8 ha to 10 ha.

If the change results in the size category changing OR the change is greater than 50% (a 60 hectare farm actually 113 ha – still categorized as large but a very big difference), please follow the procedure outlined above.

e. Legacy ID

The VRS now lists the ‘legacy ID’ for all applications (if available) on the application overview page.

Overview of Sample application #1 (67895) Application

Application ID: 67895 - Sample application #1

Progress: Incomplete	Percentage Complete: 0%
Verified during harvest: Yes	Legacy ID: no legacy ID reference

The legacy ID is the application ID for the previous verification report. The legacy ID will only be listed if the current application has not changed by more than 50% over the prior verification. Verifiers can click on the legacy ID to see which entities were included in the sample, the GPS location for farms, and review a list of any non-compliant entities. This information will only be available if the previous verification was conducted after the VRS was implemented. Verifiers should review the legacy ID information once they have claimed the application in the VRS prior to selecting the sample to ensure that 15% of the sampled farms visited in the previous verification are inspected (see Section 6.4.3 of the Verifier and Inspector Operations Manual), as well as any entities that had non-compliances with zero-tolerance indicators in addition to the sample requirements. **If no legacy ID reference is available in the VRS, please request prior verification information from your client to determine appropriate sampling.**

f. Application Coversheets

Once the application has been claimed, verifiers should enter the “Planned Field Inspection Start Date” on the application coversheet. Verifiers should enter the “Field Inspection Actual Start Date” on the application coversheet as soon as the first inspection occurs and complete the “Field Inspection End Date” as soon as the field work is completed.

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2. Reporting Updates

a. New Inspector Interface

The new inspector interface for the VRS was released to all verification organizations on March 9, 2009. Inspectors can now write reports without an internet connection using the "new inspector interface". An internet connection is only needed in order to send/receive (synchronize) data with the main server. This is now the ONLY inspector interface.

Instructions for using the new inspector interface and a list of frequently asked questions and answers (FAQ) are available in the "Files" tab of the VRS. The FAQ includes important information to avoid problems with the new inspector interface. It is especially important for users acting as both verifier and inspector to review the necessary precautions.

b. New Flows Tool

SCS sent a communication to verification organizations on February 15, 2009 with new instructions for completing flows in the VRS. Please review the instructions carefully and contact SCS with any questions regarding the new function.

Instructions for using the automated flows tool are available in the "Files" tab of the VRS.

3. Client Review and Approval of Reports

a. Generating Client Reports

Verifiers should send a draft client report within 20 business days (for applications without sampling) or 30 business days (for applications with sampling) from the day of the last field inspection. For instructions on generating draft client reports, please refer to Section 6.1 of the VRS User Manual (available from the "Files" tab in the VRS).

If the client is unable to review the client reports using the hyperlink sent by the verification organization because of limited internet connectivity, verifiers should contact SCS for instructions on how to send client reports in another format.

b. Sending "Final Verification Reports" to Clients

Verifiers should always send a "Final Verification Report" to the client before they submit the application to Starbucks/SCS. Refer to section 6.3 of the VRS User Manual for instructions on creating a "Final Verification Report".

c. In-Dispute Function

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Verifiers no longer have the option to mark an application as “in-dispute” in the VRS. If a client does not approve a draft client report, verifiers should contact SCS and see Section 7.0 of the Verifier and Inspector Operations Manual to initiate the appeal and dispute resolution process.

If SCS determines that a dispute is valid, SCS will add an “in-dispute” flag to the application in the VRS and this will be visible to the verifier to assist with application management.

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