



VeraSolSM

VeraSol Certification Program Rules and Procedures

Version 1.0

July 2020

Introduction

CLASP operates VeraSol, a voluntary and independent quality assurance program serving the global off-grid solar energy industry, in which products are certified to internationally recognized standards for product quality and integrity through the VeraSol Quality Standards. The rigorous VeraSol certification scheme is designed to identify off-grid solar products that meet the Quality Standards. A manufacturer that wishes to have a product certified may submit the product to VeraSol for certification review. Before the certification process can proceed, CLASP will screen the company and the product according to the criteria laid out below. Products that pass this screening may be submitted for testing at one of CLASP's contract testing labs by the manufacturer. In addition, the manufacturer must sign an agreement with CLASP and pay a fee to cover the costs of certification.¹

Product Scope and Screening Processes

VeraSol certifies pico-solar products and solar home system (SHS) kits with PV modules rated up to 350 watts to the VeraSol Quality Standards. As a threshold for consideration, products must meet the following eligibility criteria before CLASP will submit the product for testing:

- All components required to provide basic energy services are sold/installed as a kit, included as a part of a family of products, or integrated into a single component.
- Peak power ratings (of the PV module or other power generating device) do not exceed 350 W.
- PV module maximum power point voltage and the working voltage of any other components in the kit do not exceed 35 V DC (though AC inputs may exceed this voltage limit).
- Only DC systems, outputs, and loads are covered. AC-to-DC converters that meet appropriate safety standards may be included, but inverters, AC outputs/outlets, or AC appliances are not covered.

¹ The Manufacturer and contract testing lab will enter into a separate agreement for each manufacturer's product that is tested against the VeraSol Quality Standards (the "Testing Agreement"). The VeraSol Certification Agreement and Certification Program Rules and Procedures do not alter, limit, or expand any rights of the manufacturer or contract testing lab pursuant to the Testing Agreement.

VeraSol Certification Program Rules and Procedures

- All electrical connections, except for permanent connections made at the time of installation, can be made using plug-and-socket (plug-and-play) connectors without the use of tools.

CLASP will conduct primary due diligence on each company submitting products for testing in advance of signing an agreement, and will require that the following information be provided with the product certification application:

- Company ownership and key points of contact
- Membership of the Board of Directors, executives, and key managers
- Principle place of business and physical address
- Corporate identity including the incorporated name, brand and trade names, and any affiliates including parent and subsidiary companies associated with the product, its marketing, and distribution
- Website/domain ownership information for the Clients (manufacturers and/or other companies submitting products) websites and any affiliated companies' websites
- Self-certification that the manufacturer complies with the relevant counter terrorist financing legislation and anti-money-laundering legislation
- Review of applicable product documentation
- If applicable, copy of patent application for cases when a company is in the process of obtaining the required IP pertaining to a product.

CLASP also recognizes the importance of intellectual property (IP) protection. Accordingly, manufacturers submitting products for certification must own the IP rights with respect to the submitted product(s) or have an appropriate license from the formal IP rights owner(s) with respect to the submitted product(s). In addition to the document listed above, also the following documents must be provided during the due diligence review:

- Declaration of product(s) intellectual property rights;
- Letter of authorization for manufacturer to use the IP rights ("licensee") of relevant product(s); or
- Where applicable, written formal permission from IP rights owner to rebrand and test the relevant product(s); and
- Permission for representatives of CLASP to contact any licensor of IP rights to confirm the licensee's right to use the licensor's IP.

If CLASP is notified that a credible allegation of infringement of intellectual property rights has been made against the product(s) of a manufacturer/company, and such product(s) currently meet the Quality Standards, VeraSol reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to suspend the certification of such products for such time as CLASP deems appropriate while it evaluates the infringement claim in accordance with its policies, rules and procedures as it deems necessary. CLASP reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to either reinstate the certification status of such products or maintain the revoked status of such products after such evaluation has been completed.

Please note that CLASP may, in its discretion, require additional documents as it deems appropriate at any point during the Certification process.

Companies with products that meet CLASP's [screening requirements/pass preliminary due diligence] will be required to enter into a VeraSol Certification Agreement before submitting the product for testing and evaluation.

Product Testing and Evaluation

CLASP oversees all aspects of the certification process, including adoption of the Quality Standards, developing the test plan, establishing product sampling and testing procedures, designation of qualified contract testing laboratory, and evaluation of the test results to determine whether the product conforms with the Quality Standards. The product must be tested by a CLASP contracted testing laboratory according to the Quality Test Method (QTM) or the Accelerated Verification Method (AVM) in the latest edition of IEC TS 62257-9-5. The testing laboratory must have demonstrated competence, metrological traceability, and impartiality, for example by accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025, using randomly procured samples. The lab must also have a signed agreement with CLASP and be part of the VeraSol test laboratory network. CLASP and the contracted testing lab will evaluate the product's quality performance using the current international Quality Standards for standalone solar energy kits (Lighting Global Quality Standards or IEC TS 62257-9-8). Products that conform with the standards are issued a VeraSol certificate and standardized specification sheet and are posted on the VeraSol website.

CLASP makes no (and expressly disclaims all) warranties, express, implied or statutory, with respect to the product(s) certified under VeraSol Certification Agreement or otherwise evaluated by CLASP or a contracted testing lab, including without limitation any implied warranty of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, no infringement, or arising from course of performance, dealing, usage or trade, to the extent permitted by applicable law. Additionally, CLASP disclaims any warranty or representation that the product will perform in certain ways and that it meets any national standards. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, CLASP makes no claim, representation, or warranty of any kind as to the utility of the products for customer's intended uses.

Obligations of Companies with Certified Products

To maintain a product's certification, manufacturers must:

- Comply with the terms of the VeraSol Certification Agreement;
- Maintain conformity with VeraSol Quality Standards
- Maintain conformity with the Policies of the VeraSol Quality Assurance Program during the 2-year period of validity of the certificate;
- Cooperate with CLASP if, at any time during the validity period of your product's certification, Market Check Testing and other surveillance activities suggest that the product may not conform to the quality standards;
- Provide Sales Data with respect to such Product to CLASP covering the duration of the Certification Term;
- Supply CLASP with a list of distributors from whom random samples of the product could be obtained;

VeraSol Certification Program Rules and Procedures

- Use the VeraSol brand in accordance with the VeraSol Communication and Branding Guidelines and VeraSol Certification Agreement; and
- Notify CLASP of any change in your company name or in the event your company merges with or is acquired by another company.

These and other obligations are enumerated in the agreement with CLASP and in the certification program policies housed on VeraSol.org.

Reservation of Rights and Appeal Process

CLASP reserves the right to refuse any product for testing, to deny certification, and/or to revoke its certification for any reason, including, but not limited to: (i) a product does not meet eligibility criteria; (ii) the product does not meet or does not fully meet the applicable Quality Standards; (iii) a product no longer meets the Quality Standards (including, without limitation, via Market Check Testing in accordance with the [Market Check Testing Policy](#); (iv) a product violates the intellectual property rights of any third party; (v) any fraud or misconduct on the part of the Affected Party (Client or prospective client) with respect to the testing of any such product; (vi) misconduct on the part of the Affected Party with respect to the proper use of product documentation such as the Test Report, Certification Letter, and Standardized Specification Sheet; (vii) Affected Party fails to provide Sales Data to CLASP; or (viii) Affected Party fails to follow all of the requirements specified in the VeraSol Certification Agreement.

Affected Party Notice and Opportunity for Appeal. When CLASP determines that circumstances may warrant a product's de-certification, denial of certification, and/or CLASP's refusal to allow product certification testing, CLASP will notify the Affected Party at the email address provided by the Affected Party and allow 15 business days for a written response from the date of the email sent by CLASP to the address provided by the Affected party.

Any fees required to investigate the appeal will be at the sole responsibility of the Affected Party requesting the appeal. Appeals are only applicable to decisions made by CLASP based on initial eligibility criteria screening, Quality Standard testing, Market Check Testing, and/or a breach of the VeraSol Licensing Agreement.

The content of the Appeal is subject to the following requirements. The appeal request shall be submitted in writing to CLASP at info@verasol.org, and shall contain the following, at a minimum:

- Name, Contact Details, and Address of the Affected Party;
- The Affected Party's view of the facts and arguments with sufficient information to address and justify the reason upon which they rely in seeking a reversal or a modification of the CLASP decision;
- Agreement to pay any costs or fees associated with the appeal, including costs associated with any additional testing and product sampling required for resolving the appeal.

Appeal Process and Outcomes. CLASP will give prompt and fair consideration to each appeal that meets the requirements above. CLASP reserves the right to ask for additional information or reject the appeal if sufficient information to explain the situation cannot be provided.

Possible Outcomes of the Appeal Process: The appeal can be either accepted or rejected.

VeraSol Certification Program Rules and Procedures

- **Acceptance:** An accepted appeal may require additional product testing. If so, CLASP will inform the company of required next steps. New test results will be used to make a final determination of the original decision.
- **Rejection:** If an appeal is rejected, the original decision will stand and the product(s) will not be certified by CLASP or, as applicable, the product's certification will be revoked and it will be de-listed from the VeraSol website.

In each case, the CLASP will provide a written decision that accepts or rejects the appeal that includes the following:

- An explanation in writing as to why the basis for the decision applied to the facts/issues raised by the Appellant necessitates Acceptance or Rejection, if applicable.
- State clearly the resolution of the Appeal

The affected party acknowledges that CLASP will determine necessary corrective measures based on relevant program policies to reconsider a decision, and that those measures cannot be appealed.

Once the appeal review is finalized, the outcome decision is to be considered final. However, this does not prevent a company from making improvements on their product and adding information when, or if, they decide to re-submit the product for certification.

About VeraSol

An evolution of Lighting Global Quality Assurance, the VeraSol program supports high-performing, durable off-grid products that expand access to modern energy services. VeraSol builds upon the strong foundation for quality assurance laid by the World Bank Group and expands its services to encompass off-grid appliances, productive use equipment, and component-based solar home systems. Like Lighting Global Quality Assurance, the VeraSol program is managed by CLASP in collaboration with the Schatz Energy Research Center at Humboldt State University. Foundational support is provided by the World Bank Group's Lighting Global program, UKaid, IKEA Foundation, Good Energies Foundation, and others.

Please visit VeraSol.org for more information.