



CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE & RECERTIFICATION GUIDANCE

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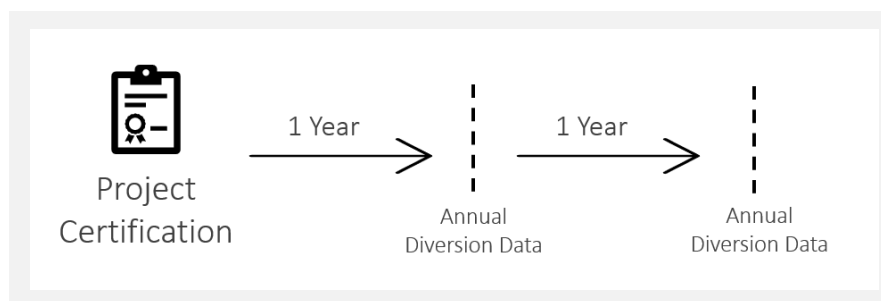
Green Business Certification, Inc (GBCI)
Washington, DC

Introduction

TRUE certification was designed for facilities to define, pursue and achieve their zero waste goals. Although it may seem to be a one-time measure of achievement, GBCI believes that it is important to view engagement in zero waste as a process of *continuous improvement*. It is anticipated that TRUE projects will continue to demonstrate leadership long after they are certified in order to sustain, and even improve, human and planetary health.

This *Certification Maintenance & Recertification Guidance* was developed to provide information and policies on maintaining and enhancing TRUE certification after it has been awarded. Recertification encourages project teams to monitor their performance data and demonstrate that their facilities are performing as intended and beyond. Project teams (and others) will use this document to understand how to keep their certification current, and when and how to recertify to recognize their continued leadership. This document should be used in conjunction with the most current version of the TRUE rating system and is not applicable to events, construction sites, or any other projects without ongoing operations.

Annual Certification Maintenance



To maintain certification, TRUE projects are required to annually submit their most recent diversion performance data and confirm that they are still in compliance with minimum program requirements (MPRs) and previously achieved credits. This information is due by the anniversary date of certification each year and the project will receive a reminder to submit this information in advance of this date (portfolios with multiple projects undergo a more streamlined process as outlined in the Certification Maintenance and Recertification section of the [TRUE Portfolio Guide](#)). While no additional documentation or verification will be required, GBCI reserves the right to conduct an audit and request additional documentation.

- Projects that submit information annually will receive the following benefits, in addition to maintaining their certification in good standing:
 - Priority consideration for showcasing in TRUE promotional materials, media highlights, participation in educational outreach, and speaking engagements.
 - Reduced fees for any future recertifications (see the “Recertification” section below).
- Projects that do not submit data annually will be required to pay additional fees to proceed with recertification and submit all missing annual diversion data at the time of recertification (see the “Recertification” section below).

- Projects that can no longer meet one or more TRUE MPRs should contact GBCI describing the situation and which MPR(s) are affected. GBCI is dedicated to supporting projects with challenges, while also helping them retain the recognition they received from TRUE, and solutions may be available.
- If space is added to an existing TRUE certified facility, the original boundary of the project must be adjusted to include it. All activities in that space must also comply with previously met TRUE requirements and be included in diversion data. Projects will be asked to fill out a brief survey in order to verify the project's scope has not been altered significantly with the expansion. In the instance the project's scope has not changed, no further review or recertification will be required, but the project must update GBCI about the changes during or before their next annual certification maintenance submission. If the project's scope is significantly altered, the project may be required to undergo the recertification process (see the "Recertification" section below).

Certification Validity

In addition to annual maintenance requirements, some projects may need to recertify every three years to maintain their TRUE certification.

Policies on when the certification expires and how to maintain certification will differ based on when the project was registered.

Projects registered on or after September 1, 2020

TRUE certification remains valid for three years. Projects maintain certification by complying with the annual maintenance requirements, as stipulated in the preceding section, and by recertifying every three years following the process outlined in the following section. Projects that do not provide annual data for three consecutive years and do not recertify at the three year anniversary will no longer be considered certified. The project will be required to apply for a new certification in order to reinstate the certification.

Projects registered before September 1, 2020

TRUE certification has no set term of validity and no additional fees are due, as long as the project maintains certification by complying with the annual maintenance requirements stipulated in the preceding section. Certified projects that registered before September 1, 2020 and do not provide annual data for three consecutive years will no longer be considered certified. The project will be required to apply for a new certification using the standard TRUE certification process.

If the project elects to recertify to showcase their continued commitment, increase their certification level, upgrade the certification to a new version, undergo a significant expansion, relocate their existing facility, the new certification will be valid for three years and subject to the certification validity policy for projects registered on or after September 1, 2020.

Closed facilities

Facilities that have closed and did not move to a new location will no longer be considered certified. The project should notify GBCI within sixty days of closure. Facilities that have closed but

moved operations to a new site must recertify at the new site to maintain certification, following the process and fees outlined in the following section.

Recertification

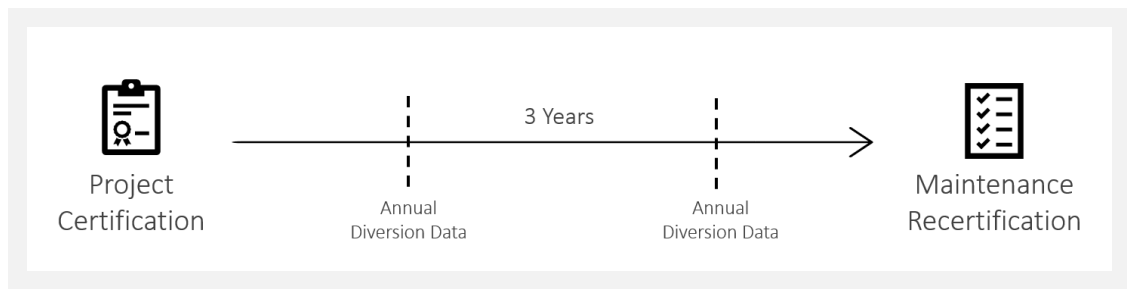
Recertification is available to certified TRUE projects that would like to update their certification in the following scenarios: every three years to maintain certification, to pursue additional points to upgrade the certification level achieved, to update their certification to a more current version, after the facility has moved, and after the facility has undergone a significant expansion. The recertification process is the same as the typical certification process outlined in the process section of the [Guide to Certification](#), with some key differences outlined below. Portfolios managing recertification for multiple sites undergo a more streamlined process as outlined in the Certification Maintenance and Recertification section of the [TRUE Portfolio Guide](#).

Registration

For all types of recertification, register your project by visiting the TRUE website, sign the certification agreement, and pay the applicable fees. The fees for recertifying a project differ from the standard fees for certifying a project. Please visit the [TRUE website](#) or [contact us](#) for more information on recertification fees.

Recertification requirements and process

1. Recertification to maintain certification status – Projects registered on or after September 1, 2020 who have reached the end of their three year validity term AND previously certified TRUE projects that wish to celebrate their continued compliance at their existing certification level.



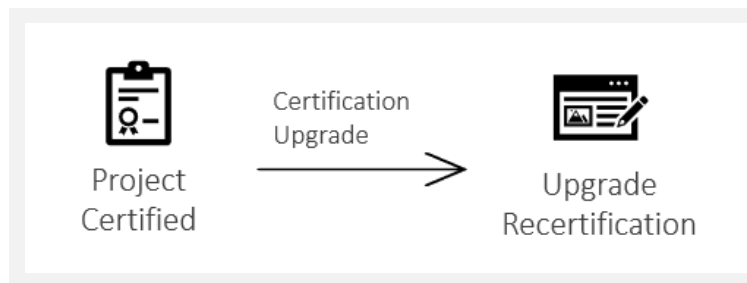
After registration, projects are required to complete a brief form to provide the following information:

- Submit diversion performance data for the most recent twelve months demonstrating 90% or greater overall annual diversion from landfill, incineration (WTE), and the environment.
- Confirm they are still in compliance with Minimum Program Requirements (MPRs) and previously achieved credits or if any significant updates have been made to the actions being taken to achieve MPRs or previously achieved credits. In the instance significant updates have been made to any actions, supporting documentation for these changes will be required and additional review may be needed.

All provided information will be reviewed by GBCI and the project will be recertified.

While no additional documentation verifying credit or other MPR compliance will be required if no significant updates have been made, GBCI reserves the right to conduct an audit. Documentation or a virtual assessment may be requested to confirm the project is still in compliance with credits and MPRs.

2. Recertifying to upgrade the certification level – previously certified TRUE projects that would like to increase point totals, diversion percentage, and/or certification level.



GBCI encourages all projects to continuously improve by increasing diversion and enhancing their zero waste programs so that they can recertify to recognize these additional achievements. Projects must continue to meet the requirements of all MPRs and of credits previously earned that are being attempted again, along with any newly attempted credits and/or diversion documentation. The process to recertify is outlined below.

Application

- Projects are required to utilize the most current version of the Rating System and the application form. If there is a newer version of the application form, the project will move all previous narratives and update them in the newer form.
- In the updated application form, indicate which credits are newly attempted, along with providing the required documentation for those new credits.
If only the diversion percentage is being updated and no additional credits are being applied for, only the diversion data and verification documentation will be required to be updated as outlined in Zero Waste Reporting Credit 1.
- MPRs and credits previously earned will be reviewed and revalidated to maintain the integrity and validity of the certification. Some documentation from the initial certification, such as policies, may not need to be resubmitted.
 - Provide updates to previously earned credits as applicable, indicating in the form which have been updated. See the “Technical guidance for upgrade and facility move recertifications” section below for more detailed guidance on what updates are required.
 - Where there are no updates, provide confirmation that the project continues to comply with the MPR or previously achieved credit.

Review

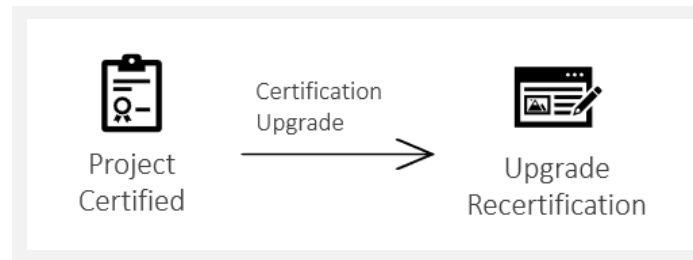
- The review timelines are the same as for a standard TRUE project. After preliminary review, and once any virtual meetings or phone interviews are complete (as applicable), the project will have a set period to submit all additional documentation and updated narratives in response to the preliminary review comments. Once this is received, the final review will commence.

- The project will be expected to submit additional photographic evidence for some credits. GBCI reserves the right to conduct a conference call or virtual assessment if special circumstances necessitate it, such as an inability to validate requirements.

Post-recertification

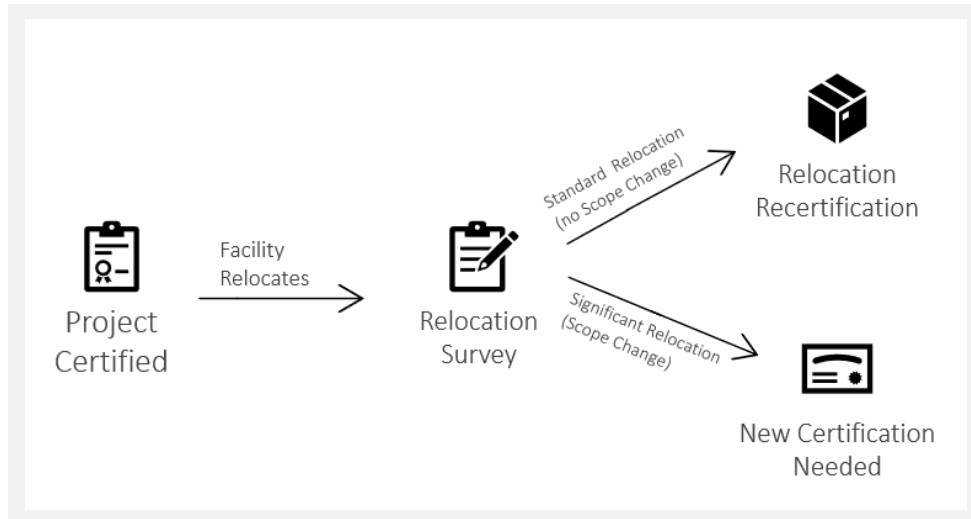
- If the point total changes enough to signify a new level, this will be updated in all public project listings.
- The project team may choose to update the project profile and case study to reflect new accomplishments, as applicable.
- The certification date/anniversary date for annual maintenance will be reset to the date recertification is issued for projects recertifying to change their level or after a move. Project teams will be expected to remain compliant with annual maintenance requirements as outlined in the “Certification Maintenance” section above.
- The project may choose to recertify again at any time. There is no limit to the number of recertifications a project can complete to upgrade their certification level or gain more points.

3. Recertifying to update the certification to the most current version – *previously certified TRUE projects that would like to update their existing certification to the most up-to-date TRUE certification version available.*



A previously certified TRUE project that would like to update their certification to meet the most recently published Addenda or an updated TRUE version may recertify to update their certification to the most current Rating System version. The recertification process and requirements are the same as outlined in #2 above.

4. Recertifying due to facility move – *previously certified TRUE projects that have moved to a new location.*

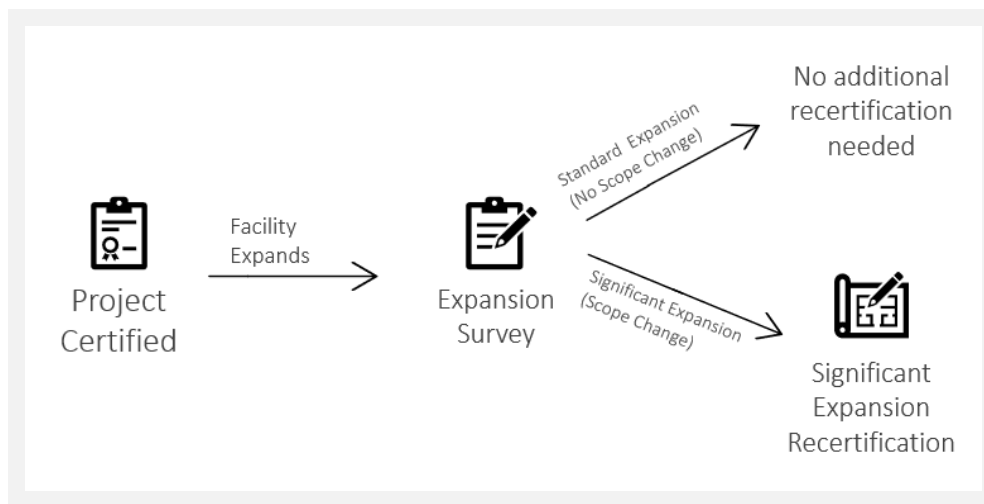


A previously certified TRUE project that relocates to another building must notify GBCI of this change in order to certify the project at the new location. Projects will be asked to fill out a brief survey to demonstrate if the new facility operates in the same manner as the previous location.

In the instance the new location is determined to operate in the same manner as the currently certified facility with limited to no scope change, the project will be required to undergo recertification in order to instate their certification to the new location. The project must register to recertify within sixty days of becoming fully operational at the new location. The recertification process and requirements are the same as outlined in #2 above.

In the instance a project is determined to be undergoing a relocation that results in a significant scope change, the project will be required to apply for a new certification in order to have the new location certified.

5. Recertifying due to a facility expansion – previously certified TRUE projects that have undergone a significant expansion.



A previously certified TRUE project that is undergoing a facility or campus expansion must notify GBCI of this change in order to ensure the certification accurately reflects the project boundary. Projects will be asked to fill out a brief survey to demonstrate if the expanded facility operates in the same manner as initially certified facility.

In the instance the expansion is determined not to significantly expand the facility footprint or modify the project scope, no additional recertification will be needed and project teams will simply be requested to include the newly expanded area in all annual and recertification maintenance reporting.

In the instance the expansion is determined to significantly expand the facility footprint or modify the project scope, the project may be required to recertify in order to demonstrate the facility is still in compliance with the previously awarded certification. In this instance, the project must demonstrate compliance with all MPRs and applicable credits at the updated facility. The project must register to recertify within sixty days of the completion of the expansion. The recertification process and requirements are the same as outlined in #2 above.

Technical guidance for upgrade, facility move, and significant expansion recertifications

MPRs and credits have varying requirements for updates upon recertification, depending on the nature of the actions that constitute the credit. Use the information below to guide the updates made.

MPRs

- To meet MPR #5, provide a narrative describing current contamination levels and types, and how it is addressed, along with completing one of the following:
 1. Conduct a waste audit and a recycling audit within the three months preceding submittal for recertification. Submit the audit results in a written report. Contamination levels meeting the required threshold must be achieved.
OR
 2. Submit letters from every applicable service provider confirming the most recent contamination levels of materials currently leaving the site. The contamination rate by weight and percentage should be included for at least the most recent month of loads of each material type. Estimates are accepted as long as the methodology to calculate the estimates is explained. Overall hauler MRF (material recovery facility) contamination or diversion rates will not be accepted, as data on the performance of the materials from the individual project site is required.

Credits

- Credits related to policies, goals, reviews, or other one-time actions are not required to be revised or repeated, unless there are any changes or updates.
- For any credits requiring baseline data, or a comparison against a baseline, the baseline data from the original certification may be used and does not need to be resubmitted.
- For all credits regarding actions that are ongoing or periodic (annual, monthly, quarterly), provide an updated narrative, photographs and/or documentation as applicable confirming the action is still occurring or the related item is still in use.
- Provide recent photographs of all service provider bins (e.g. dumpsters, roll-offs, carts, or compactors), and the contents of those bins. If your site is large (more than five acres or five buildings), photographs of a sampling of bins will be accepted.

- For all credits modified by addenda, updated narrative and documentation will only be required if the requirements of the credit have changed what is required to achieve compliance.