

Maintaining voluntary certification, a public interest stake

Voluntary certification in the construction sector contributes to transparency and confidence; it reinforces the clarity of exchanges. It (influences in) (participates to) the reliability of the entire value chain.



Voluntary certification

> Innovation with confidence

In a context of constantly changing regulatory, technical and technological environments, it is necessary to be able to adapt evaluation criteria.

The needs of market actors are regularly reviewed, as are the solutions offered to them: the capabilities or possibilities of their suppliers or service providers.

In this sense, scientific and technical developments and **best practices are regularly highlighted.**

Voluntary certification implements a proactive and reactive working methodology. Its certification provisions and certified data evolve regularly, in line with the respective needs and capacities of the actors involved. It **reactively accompanies the development of the sector and allows for innovation with confidence.**



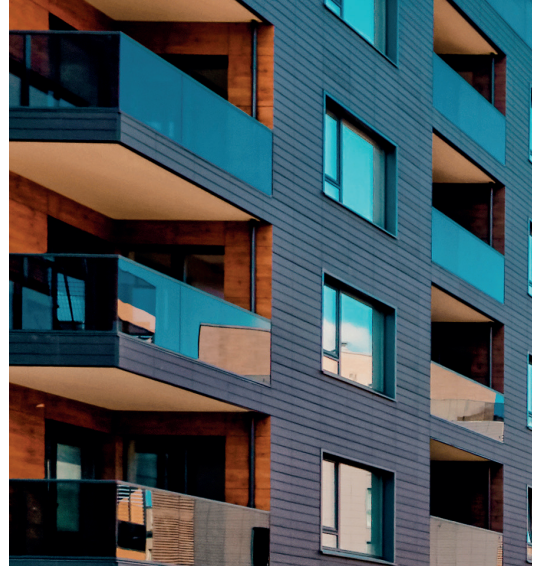
AFOCERT is the representative and consultative body for construction product certification bodies in France. It gathers about twenty members and promotes, with the support of the AIMCC, the added value of voluntary certification. The certification bodies gathered within AFOCERT operate a certification activity in the field of products, services or works in the construction sector.

Each certification body attests that a product, service or work complies with the characteristics described in a reference system which it may or may not own. This activity is duly accredited.

www.afocert.fr

The construction sector

> Specificities



A construction operation is a special economic project in that it is usually unique.

Indeed, this operation combines multiple factors that make it unique by:

- **its financial** and economic stakes;
- **its uses**, functions and type of operation;
- **the construction environment** (legal/urban planning framework, geo-climatic conditions, environment, etc.);
- the numerous and diversified **technical solutions**, both in terms of construction systems and construction products;

- **the numerous actors in the project**, with multiple skills involved in all phases of design, construction, installation, operation/maintenance, etc.;

■ ...

This great diversity leads to a need for the market to have **guarantees of quality and sustainability throughout the value chain**, in full transparency.



Voluntary certification

> What is it?

Voluntary certification is:

- **the recognition** by an independent, impartial and competent body of the technical quality of a product, service or construction work;
- **requirements in terms of control of the design and manufacturing processes** of products and building works;
- **requirements shared** by all interested parties;
- **regular checks** to guarantee the same level of requirements at all times;
- **an improved safety** for users;
- **contributing to the reliability** and value of products, services and works and to ensure that the expectations of all those involved in construction are met.



Within the framework of a voluntary certification, the applicants or holders of a certification **choose to submit to a complete and regular examination** (audits, tests ...), systematically carried out by independent, third-party organisations and specialists in the sector: the certification bodies.

In France, in accordance with the Consumer Code, **these certification bodies are accredited by COFRAC** for the certification of products, services and construction works. They meet **quality requirements set out in international standards** and are subject to periodic assessment.

Voluntary certification **brings together the main actors concerned in order to gather their needs and establish objective criteria** to demonstrate both the quality, durability and safety of the services, products and construction works delivered, and the mastery

of the design, manufacturing, product control and construction works execution processes.

These requirements, shared with all interested parties, will ultimately be **understood, recognised and accepted** by a majority of the profession. Without voluntary certification, each user would have to establish his own methods and criteria for the evaluation, selection and acceptance of the solutions proposed or provided to him.

Voluntary certification is therefore the result of the will and free commitment of actors who wish to make their technical exchanges more reliable.

Voluntary certification

> Its benefits

Voluntary certification:

- is a **differentiation criterion**, an aid to choose;
- **provides proof** that the product, service or work meets the requirements;
- **promotes a longer lifespan** for construction products and construction works;
- **attests to the advertised characteristics** and increases confidence for buyers and users;
- **facilitates contractual relationships** between all parties involved;
- **facilitates the acceptance** of products, services or works;
- **minimises the risk of defects** and reduces claims;
- **contributes to improving** energy performance and participates in the environmental transition.

In the context of a construction project, voluntary certification provides the various actors with **reliable, verifiable and easily accessible information**, in complete transparency, which informs and facilitates their choices and decisions.

It **reinforces confidence** in certified products, services and works, as their characteristics are regularly tested.

It thus **facilitates the prescription and selection** of products or services by reducing the mobilisation of the prescriber or user, who has numerous products or services to refer to. It **simplifies the acceptance or verification of products on site** or during the acceptance of the work, leading to savings in time and resources.

It generates **savings on the overall cost of the project** and the work through its methodological contribution and the requirements relating to the products, services or works, including, in particular, the suitability and durability of the products and equipment; this benefit is also reflected in the longer term in the operating or maintenance costs of the construction work.

It **also increases the asset value of a certified building**, in particular by reinforcing the visibility of the environmental performance of

this building: studies on the green value, i.e. the additional asset value associated with the environmental performance of a property, show that it is in the order of 3 to 9%.

Through these numerous verification actions, voluntary certification also allows the certified organisation to **reinforce the control of its processes** (design and manufacture of a product, realisation of a service, management of a project and execution of a construction work...); it thus gains in **confidence** and **efficiency**.

The company applying for certification increases market confidence in the products, services and construction works delivered. This certification is part of its own marketing approach, which it strengthens and gives credibility to.



**Building trust
together**