



CO₂ PERFORMANCE LADDER

Transition arrangement for certification and procurement with the CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0

Note: On 26 June 2025, this transition arrangement was amended. The following changes have been made compared to the previous transition arrangement, which is hereby replaced (version 1.0, 5 December 2024):

- The term “best price quality ratio MEAT” has been replaced by “CO₂ Performance Ladder award criterion” to support international applicability;
- It has been added that contracting authorities intending to apply the CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion between 14 January 2026 and 14 January 2027 must communicate this in a timely and comprehensive manner to their (prospective) tenderers;
- Sample texts have been added for use in procurement documents.

1 Introduction

This transition arrangement describes what certificate holders, contracting authorities and certification bodies must allow for during the *transition period* from Handbook 3.1 to Handbook 4.0 and from CO₂ Performance Ladder award criterion 3.1 to CO₂ Performance Ladder award criterion 4.0.

2 Concepts (insofar as these are not listed in the Handbook 4.0 glossary)

- *CO₂ Performance Ladder 3.1 award criterion:* The award criterion corresponding to Handbook 3.1 that allows contracting authorities to use the CO₂ Performance Ladder in procurement. See the Procurement Guide Version 3.1.;
- *CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion:* The award criterion corresponding to Handbook 4.0 that allows contracting authorities to use the CO₂ Performance Ladder in procurement. See the Procurement Guide – CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion¹;
- *Transition period:* the period from 14 January 2025 to 14 January 2027. This period starts on the Handbook 4.0 publication date and continues until the date on which the 3.1 audits are no longer allowed. This period lasts for 24 months.

3 Transition arrangement for certification with Handbook 4.0

- On 14 January 2025, Handbook 4.0 was published for Step 1, Step 2 and Step 3 including the certification scheme. As of this date, all interested parties can access the contents;

¹ The publication of this new procurement guide is expected in September 2025.



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- As of 14 July 2025, certification bodies with appropriate accreditation can perform audits for Steps 1, 2 and 3 of Handbook 4.0;
- Audits for Handbook 3.1 may still be performed until 14 January 2027. These certificates remain valid until the next (annual) audit. This means that there may be valid certificates for Handbook 3.1 until 14 January 2028 (36 months after the publication date of Handbook 4.0);
- Organisations with a valid 3.1 certificate that will have a 4.0 audit performed for Step 1 may continue their 3.1 audit cycle. That is, if the next 3.1 audit would be an annual audit, then the first 4.0 audit may also take place as an annual audit including any audit time reduction;
- 4.0 audits for Step 2 and Step 3 are always an initial audit.

4 Transition arrangement for procurement with MEAT 4.0

- Contracting authorities are advised to use the *CO₂ Performance Ladder 3.1 award criterion* in their procurement until 14 January 2027 and then use the *CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion* for new tenders. Earlier deployment of the *CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion* is recommended only if the contracting authority is convinced that the (international) market in which the tender is being launched is ready. This may be so when enough expected tenderers already have a 4.0 certificate. Contracting authorities intending to apply the *CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion* between 14 January 2026 and 14 January 2027 must communicate this in a timely and comprehensive manner with their (prospective) tenderers. In any case, it is not recommended to deploy the *CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion* earlier than 14 January 2026.
- Contracting authorities using the *CO₂ Performance Ladder 3.1 award criterion* in procurement during the *transition period* and receiving a valid 4.0 certificate as evidence from a bidder are advised to accept it in the following manner:
 - Handbook 4.0 Step 1 is accepted as Handbook 3.1 Level 3
 - Handbook 4.0 Step 2 is accepted as Handbook 3.1 Level 5
 - Handbook 4.0 Step 3 is accepted as Handbook 3.1 Level 5
- Contracting authorities using the *CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion* for procurement are advised to accept only valid 4.0 project declarations or 4.0 certificates as proof (see the Procurement Guide 4.0 for this), and therefore no 3.1 certificates.

5 Sample texts for procurement using the CO₂ Performance Ladder 3.1 and 4.0 award criteria during the transition period

Sample text – CO₂ Performance Ladder 3.1 award criterion:

The CO₂ Performance Ladder 3.1 award criterion is used in this tender. If a CO₂ Performance Ladder certificate is used to demonstrate compliance with the CO₂ Performance Ladder 3.1 award criterion, this may also be done with a certificate based on Handbook 4.0 of the CO₂ Performance Ladder. The following applies:

- A certificate based on CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 – Step 1 will be accepted as proof for CO₂ ambition level 3 of the CO₂ Performance Ladder 3.1 award criterion.



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- A certificate based on CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 – Step 2 or Step 3 will be accepted as proof for CO₂ ambition level 5 of the CO₂ Performance Ladder 3.1 award criterion.

Sample text – CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion:

The CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion is used in this tender. If a CO₂ Performance Ladder certificate is used to demonstrate compliance with the CO₂ Performance Ladder 4.0 award criterion, this may NOT be done with a certificate based on Handbook 3.1 of the CO₂ Performance Ladder.

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