

VERITEX®

CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

LABORATORY AND TESTING RULES

Version 1.0 | June 2026

Issued by: SMC Slovensko a.s.s - VERITEX® Scheme Owner

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1	30/06/2026	changes	RSQ	AU
0	30/06/2025	First edition	RSQ	AU
Rev.	Date	Type of Change	Controlled by	Approved by

1. Purpose and Relationship to the General Regulation

This document sets out the requirements applicable to laboratories used for testing under VERITEX PURE® and, where relevant, VERITEX ECOFLOW® and VERITEX ELITE®, implementing the laboratory recognition requirement of Section 2.13 and the product sampling and verification requirements of Sections 5.8, 5.12 and 5.13 of the VERITEX® General Regulation. It shall be read together with Section 6.7 of the VERITEX® Technical Standards (document VERITEX-09), which defines the substances and limits to be tested.

2. Laboratory Approval Requirements

2.1 Accreditation

A laboratory shall not be used to generate results for certification purposes unless it holds current accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 for the specific test methods and substances relevant to the VERITEX® Restricted Substances List, issued by an accreditation body that is a signatory to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement, in accordance with Section 2.13 of the General Regulation.

2.2 Scope Verification

The Certification Body shall verify, before accepting any test report, that the laboratory's accredited scope explicitly covers the substance, matrix (e.g. textile, leather, trim) and test method used, and shall reject reports issued outside the laboratory's accredited scope.

2.3 Recognition Process

A laboratory seeking recognition under the VERITEX® scheme shall submit its accreditation certificate and scope, evidence of participation in relevant proficiency testing schemes (Section 5), and a declaration of independence from the organizations it tests for, to the Scheme Owner or its delegated body for inclusion in the Approved Laboratory Register.

3. Approved Laboratory Register

The Scheme Owner shall maintain a public, current register of approved laboratories, including each laboratory's accredited scope, accreditation body and date of last proficiency testing participation. Certification Bodies shall only accept test reports from laboratories listed on the register, or shall document an equivalent verification of accreditation where a laboratory is not yet listed.

4. Sampling Requirements

4.1 Sampling Plan

Product sampling shall follow the frequency and sample size requirements of Section 5.8 of the General Regulation, applying a risk-based approach that considers product category, prior nonconformity history and the substances applicable under Section 6 of the VERITEX® Technical Standards.

4.2 Sample Selection and Chain of Custody

Samples shall be selected by the auditor or an authorized sampling agent during the on-site audit wherever practicable, sealed and labelled at the point of collection, and accompanied by a chain-of-custody record identifying the sampler, date, location and product description. Any break in the chain of custody shall be documented and assessed for its effect on the validity of the result.

4.3 Sample Retention

Laboratories shall retain a counter-sample, where feasible given the product type, for a minimum of three (3) months following issuance of the test report, to allow for retesting in the event of a dispute.

5. Test Methods

Testing shall be performed using the internationally recognized methods applicable to each substance group defined in Sections 6.2 and 6.5 of the VERITEX® Technical Standards, including standard methods for heavy metals extraction and analysis, azo dye cleavage and detection, formaldehyde extraction (water or vapour method as applicable to the product category), and chlorinated phenol analysis. Where more than one recognized method exists, the laboratory shall record the specific method used on the test report so that results remain comparable across laboratories.

6. Reporting Requirements

Every test report submitted for certification purposes shall include, at minimum:

Report Field	Description
Laboratory name and accreditation number	Identification of the issuing accredited laboratory
Sample identification	Reference linking the report to the chain-of-custody record
Test method(s) used	Specific standard method applied per substance
Result and unit	Measured value, detection limit and unit of measure

Applicable VERITEX® limit	Limit from Section 6 of the Technical Standards, for direct comparison
Conformity statement	Explicit pass/fail statement against the applicable limit
Date of testing and date of report	For traceability and timeliness verification

Laboratories shall issue reports within fifteen (15) working days of sample receipt, or notify the Certification Body of any delay and its cause.

7. Non-Conforming Results Management

A result exceeding the applicable limit shall be managed as a nonconformity under the classification criteria of Appendix C of the General Regulation and the chemical verification procedure of Section 5.12. The certified organization shall investigate the root cause, implement corrective action, and, where required by the Certification Body, submit a retest from an approved laboratory before closure is confirmed. Certification shall not proceed, or shall be suspended, while a Major Nonconformity arising from a non-conforming result remains open, in accordance with Section 4.16 of the General Regulation.

8. Confidentiality and Data Integrity

Laboratories shall treat all samples, results and related organizational information as confidential, disclosing results only to the submitting Certification Body and the tested organization, and shall maintain data integrity controls (secure record-keeping, restricted access, tamper-evident reporting) consistent with their ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation.

9. Laboratory Performance Monitoring

The Scheme Owner shall monitor approved laboratories through periodic review of proficiency testing results, comparison of split-sample results across laboratories where available, and complaint investigation. A laboratory found to produce unreliable results may be suspended from the Approved Laboratory Register, with affected certifications reviewed under Section 5.12 of the General Regulation.

10. Revision Control

These Laboratory and Testing Rules shall be reviewed by the Technical Committee together with the VERITEX® Technical Standards, following the governance and stakeholder consultation process defined in Sections 2.5 to 2.8 of the General Regulation.