

# **AWS Accreditation Requirements**

**Requirements for Conformity Assessment Bodies, Training Service Providers,  
and Consultants**

**Version 1.1**

**August 2018**

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## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set forth AWS requirements for accreditation of conformity assessment bodies, training service providers, and consultants providing AWS-related services. This document is a normative reference which will be used alongside other normative AWS documents to evaluate service providers against AWS competency criteria. Initially, AWS will use this document for the purposes of accrediting service providers (i.e. AWS accreditation). Over the longer term, AWS will consider designating an independent accreditation body that will use a revised and updated version of this document for the purposes of accrediting AWS service providers.

## Responsibility for these Requirements

The AWS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is the body responsible for the *AWS Accreditation Requirements*. The TAC will review the contents of this document on an ongoing basis. A record of amendments is shown below.

### *Amendment Record*

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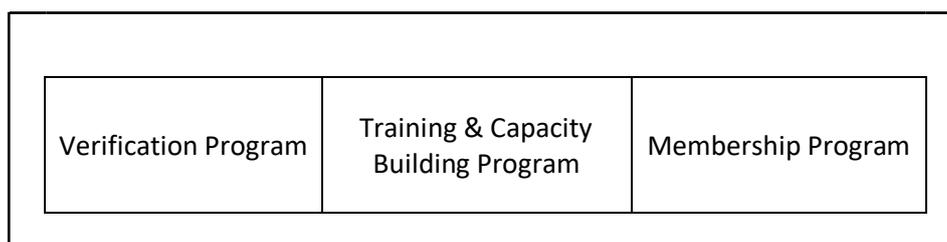
Version No.	Date of Publication	Description of Amendment
1.0	July 2015	Approved
1.1	Aug 2018	Remove references to 'interim' accreditation.

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## AWS Standard System

AWS is the standards system owner and keeper of *The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard*. As such, AWS is responsible for implementation of the AWS Standard, including standard setting, capacity building, assurance, labelling and monitoring. To achieve these goals, AWS has structured its standards system into three programs: verification program, training & capacity-building program, and membership program (Figure 1). These three programs are complementary. They serve to reinforce one another to ensure that the AWS Standard System provides credible and robust implementation of the AWS Standard.

Figure 1. Diagram of the AWS Standard System.



## AWS Standard Framework

The AWS Standard System is rooted in four normative documents which comprise the AWS Standard Framework. The scope and interrelationship of these normative documents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Interrelation of the four normative documents of the AWS Standard System.

Normative Document	Purpose	Program	Primary Target Audience
AWS Standard	Sets the Standard	AWS Verification Program	Implementers CABs
AWS Self-Verification Requirements	Sets the process for self-verification	AWS Verification Program	Implementers
AWS Certification Requirements	Sets the process for certification	AWS Verification Program	CABs
AWS Accreditation Requirements	Sets the criteria and the process for accreditation	AWS Accreditation Program AWS Verification Program & AWS Training & Capacity Building Program	AWS or AB
			CABs
			Trainers
			Consultants

First and foremost is *The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard* which lays the foundation of the AWS Standard System by establishing the actions, criteria and indicators for how sites should

manage water at the site level and how water should be stewarded beyond the boundaries of the site. This is a normative document which is applicable, on a voluntary basis, to any site wishing to demonstrate its conformity with the AWS Standard.

The second normative document of the AWS Standard Framework is the *AWS Self-Verification Requirements*. This document describes the mandatory requirements for the processes of self-verification which are to be followed by implementers.

The third normative document of the AWS Standard Framework is the *AWS Certification Requirements*. This document describes the mandatory requirements for certification which are to be followed by CABs.

The *AWS Accreditation Requirements* is the fourth normative document of the AWS Standard Framework. It sets out the mandatory criteria that AWS (or accreditation body) will use to evaluate the competency of AWS service providers (CABs, trainers and consultants). Scope is therefore applicable at two program levels - verification and training & capacity-building.

During the first phase of implementation, AWS may produce additional normative documents in support of program-level objectives. Such objectives may include establishing rules and requirements for membership, branding and claims, training, capacity-building, and related topics.

In addition to normative documents, AWS may also produce guidance documents from time to time. The purpose of guidance is to help implementers, service providers, and stakeholders to better understand AWS requirements and how to implement them effectively. For example, AWS intends to produce a guidance document entitled *AWS Verification System* which provides an overview of how all the different elements of the AWS Verification Program interact to deliver a credible assurance to stakeholders on AWS claims.

## **A Introduction**

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) is a global, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing water stewardship around the world. As part of this mission, AWS developed *The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard*. The AWS Standard was the result of an international, four-year, ISEAL compliant, multi-stakeholder process which responded to the growing need for evidence of robust water risk and impact mitigation efforts. It is built around the notion of implementing water stewardship at the site level in a way that understands and engages with the broader catchment to work with other water stakeholders to address shared water-related challenges and opportunities.

AWS has developed a verification system for implementing the AWS Standard which is consistent with the ISEAL Assurance Code, providing consistency, rigour, competence, impartiality, transparency, and accessibility. A central feature of the AWS Standard System is the role of independent certification by third-party Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs).

AWS will implement the AWS Standard System in two phases: an initial phase (Phase 1: estimated 2015-2016) will be used work out any kinks and ensure capacity is sufficient to meet system needs. For the second phase (Phase 2: 2017+), AWS will update the AWS Standard System and add improved functionality (e.g. risk aspects, site pairing, etc.) pending AWS member input. Throughout Phase 1, AWS will itself run the accreditation program. This time will be used to gain experience with the system and examine the potential of transferring the accreditation function to an independent accreditation body. Therefore, the present document refers to the AWS accreditation function as an “ arrangement.

As an ISEAL member, AWS is committed to an equitable, open and transparent approach to setting and maintaining its standard. Accordingly, the AWS Standard System follows ISEAL’s *Standard Setting, Assurance, and Impacts Codes*. The AWS Standard is also intended to be complementary to existing systems such as ISO 14001. And AWS’s approach – utilizing the competencies of independent third-party entities to assess compliance with the standard - draws heavily on existing international norms which apply to conformity assessment bodies (e.g. ISO 17065).

The AWS requirements for certification are intended to align with the European Water Stewardship (EWS) Certification Scheme that is already in place. AWS has proposed a system of mutual recognition with EWS and efforts are being made to ensure that CABs which have already been approved by EWS for Europe are able to gain AWS Accreditation. It is noted that some aspects of the mutual recognition arrangement are not yet resolved (e.g., AWS and EWS need to reconcile criteria for accreditation/approval of trainers and consultants). It is expected that these issues will be worked out during Phase 1.

## **B Scope**

The requirements presented in this document apply to any organization wishing to provide AWS-related services in the fields of (1) conformity assessment, (2) training services, and (3) consultancy. Only organizations that meet AWS accreditation requirements on a continuing basis are eligible for AWS Accreditation and, hence, eligible to make claims about the provision of AWS services.

## **C Normative References**

AWS Certification Requirements, Version 1.1, Aug 2018

AWS Self-Verification Requirements, Version 1.0, July 2015

AWS Glossary of Terms, Version 1.0, July 2015

The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard, Version 1.0, April 2014

European Water Stewardship Standard, Version 4.8, December 2012

ISO/IEC 17065:2012(E) Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.

IAF Guidance on the application of ISO/IEC Guide 17065 (forthcoming).

## **D Associated Guidance**

The AWS Verification System, Draft for Stakeholder Review, December 2, 2014

ISO 19011:2011(E) Guidelines for auditing management system

ISO 9001:2008 Quality management systems - requirements

ISO 14001:2004 Environmental management systems - Requirements with guidance for use

## **E Terms and Definitions**

All terms are defined in the AWS Glossary of Terms.



# **1 Part 1 – General Requirements**

## **1.1 Applying for AWS Accreditation**

- 1.1.1 Service providers interested in obtaining AWS Accreditation should submit an expression of interest (EOI) to AWS detailing the organization’s relevant expertise and credentials.
- 1.1.2 The EOI shall indicate the service area(s) for which accreditation is sought.
- 1.1.3 AWS service areas are:
- a. Conformity Assessment;
  - b. Training Services; and
  - c. Consultancy.
- 1.1.4 An organization may seek accreditation for more than one services area, but conformity assessment bodies shall NOT provide both conformity assessment and consulting service to the same client.
- 1.1.5 The EOI shall also indicate:
- a. the geographic region(s) in which AWS services will be provided;
  - b. the industry sector(s) for which AWS services will be provided;
  - c. names and qualifications of all personnel involved in the provision of AWS-related services;
  - d. a description of the internal controls that the organization will use to monitor the integrity and continuity of AWS-related services;
  - e. how the organization will market its AWS services; and
  - f. a list of relevant accreditations and certifications held by the organization.
- 1.1.6 All organizations that successfully meet AWS requirements for accreditation will be required to enter into an agreement with AWS for accreditation.

## **1.2 Process for AWS Review of Accreditation**

- 1.2.1 AWS will not process an application for accreditation unless the service provider agrees to:
- a. arrange for key staff from the organization to attend AWS trainings as may be required by AWS;
  - b. ensure that staff participate in relevant online trainings, updates and examinations;

- c. provide AWS with access to all audit-related documentation (audit reports, checklists, notes, audit agendas, client communications, etc.) for review purposes; and
  - d. allow AWS to witness representative activities of the service provider as part of the review process for AWS Accreditation.
- 1.2.2 Note that the AWS witness audits specified in 1.2.1(d) will be contingent on availability of AWS resources and will be undertaken in the most economical manner possible.
- 1.2.3 During AWS' review of accreditation, applicant service providers shall make good faith efforts to keep AWS informed of upcoming AWS-related activities and provide AWS with access to sufficient information to evaluate progress towards successful completion of those activities.
- 1.2.4 If AWS determines that accreditation should be awarded, the service provider and AWS shall enter into an agreement for AWS accreditation.
- 1.2.5 The agreement for AWS accreditation shall be valid for a maximum of two years although it may be extended by mutual agreement.

### **1.3 Personnel**

- 1.3.1 Within the EOI, service providers shall identify the person(s) who work in each service area and nominate them for AWS registration. Nominations shall be supported by:
- a. evidence of relevant qualifications and experience in the service area (geographic region and industry sector) applied for;
  - b. evidence of current AWS training related to the service area; and
  - c. language skills and local knowledge (e.g. knowledge of local hydrological conditions or water management processes) appropriate in the context of the region of activity.
- 1.3.2 The organization shall promptly notify AWS of any changes in the status of AWS-registered staff.

### **1.4 Continuing Service under AWS Accreditation**

- 1.4.1 accredited service providers shall demonstrate a commitment to the principles of water stewardship.
- 1.4.2 Service providers shall adhere to all applicable rules governing the use of AWS assets (e.g., claims, logo, and trademarks) as specified in the AWS License Agreement or the agreement for AWS Accreditation, as applicable.
- 1.4.3 All service providers shall ensure that key personnel attend regular top-up training as may be required by AWS from time to time.
- 1.4.4 accredited service providers shall allow AWS sufficient access to AWS-related activities and information (see 1.2.1) as may be necessary for the purpose of ongoing

surveillance, including witnessing of AWS services (training, consultancy and/or conformity assessment).

## **1.5 Quarterly Summary**

- 1.5.1 The accredited service provider shall prepare a Quarterly Summary of AWS Services which gives a detailed account of all AWS-related activities that were provided during each quarter.
- 1.5.2 Accredited service providers shall submit the quarterly summary (in 1.5.1) to AWS within thirty (30) days of the end of each quarter.
- 1.5.3 Failure to fully and accurately disclose all AWS services in the Quarterly Summary of AWS Services will result in accreditation being suspended.

## **1.6 Fees and Costs**

- 1.6.1 Accredited service providers shall pay to AWS 10% of gross income from AWS-related services (excluding disbursements for travel and accommodation) to cover the costs of the AWS system.
- 1.6.2 Fees are to be paid each quarter following submission of the quarterly summary.
- 1.6.3 Failure to pay the relevant fee after sixty (60) days will result in the accredited service provider being suspended.
- 1.6.4 Failure to fully and accurately disclose income generated from AWS-related services will result in accreditation being suspended.
- 1.6.5 AWS will review the fee system at the conclusion of Phase 1.

## **1.7 Claims and Communications**

- 1.7.1 AWS accredited service providers will be entitled to use the statement: “AWS Accredited [service]” in association with the AWS logo.

## **2 Part 2 – Requirements for CABs**

### **2.1 General**

- 2.1.1 In addition to the general requirements given in Part 1, CABs shall follow the specified requirements in Part 2.
- 2.1.2 CABs shall not offer AWS conformity assessment services before being accredited by either:
  - 2.1.2.1 AWS ; or

- 2.1.2.2 an accreditation body that has been formally designated by AWS.
- 2.1.3 The CAB shall only provide AWS conformity assessment services in the geographic region(s) and industry sector(s) that fall within the CAB's approved scope of AWS Accreditation.
- 2.1.4 CABs shall conform with ISO/IEC 17065:2012.
- 2.1.5 CABs shall be accredited by an accreditation body (AB) that is a signatory of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) for Product Certification.
- 2.1.6 CABs shall comply with the legal requirements of the countries in which they operate.
- 2.1.7 CABs shall demonstrate knowledge of relevant legal and regulatory requirements, as well as knowledge of water issues, in the countries in which they operate.
- 2.1.8 CABs shall have documented internal procedures covering all aspects of AWS certification, including, at a minimum:
  - 2.1.8.1 Procedures for the assignment of suitably qualified auditors to audit teams;
  - 2.1.8.2 Procedures for conformity assessments;
  - 2.1.8.3 Procedures for assessment of group schemes; and
  - 2.1.8.4 Procedures for monitoring and control of the use of the AWS logo, the AWS claim or any other AWS assets by clients.
- 2.1.9 CABs shall have a credible dispute resolution process which may include procedures for handling complaints and appeals.
  - 2.1.9.1 The CAB's dispute resolution process shall function independently of the AWS Objection Procedure.
  - 2.1.9.2 The CAB's dispute resolution process shall not undermine in any way the scope of application of the AWS Objection Procedure.
- 2.1.10 CABs are expected to contribute to knowledge-building during Phase 1 of implementation by providing AWS with feedback on audit processes and other firsthand experiences.

## **2.2 Personnel**

- 2.2.1 CABs shall demonstrate that all lead auditors utilized for AWS conformity assessments meet the following minimum qualifications:
  - 2.2.1.1 degree in a relevant discipline (e.g., hydrology, environmental engineering, agriculture, forestry) or a minimum of 5 years of work experience in the industry sector to be audited;
  - 2.2.1.2 completion of an ISO lead auditor training course;

- 2.2.1.3 a minimum of 3 years of experience (combined) serving as a lead auditor for:
  - 2.2.1.3.1 environmental and social standards (e.g., RSPO, FSC);
  - 2.2.1.3.2 ISO 14001; and/or
  - 2.2.1.3.3 an equivalent standard; and
- 2.2.1.4 formal training in the application of the AWS Standard (i.e., at a minimum, completion of three levels of training required for gaining AWS Accreditation).

## **2.3 Applying for AWS Accreditation (CABs)**

- 2.3.1 The CAB's expression of interest (EOI) shall indicate:
  - 2.3.1.1 full name of the CAB;
  - 2.3.1.2 address of the CAB where accreditation will be held;
  - 2.3.1.3 name of the main contact person at the CAB for AWS services; and
  - 2.3.1.4 address and contact details of any affiliate offices used for AWS certification services.
- 2.3.2 EOI submissions to AWS shall also be accompanied by:
  - 2.3.2.1 evidence of accreditations held as described above (e.g. section 2.1.5); and
  - 2.3.2.2 internal procedures for AWS certification as described above (sections 2.1.7 and 2.1.10).

## **2.4 Process for AWS Review and Accreditation of CABs**

- 2.4.1 As part of AWS accreditation review, the CAB shall allow AWS or an AWS designee to:
  - 2.4.1.1 Review audit-related documentation (audit reports, checklists, etc.);
  - 2.4.1.2 witness one or more of the CAB's audits in the field; and
  - 2.4.1.3 perform a final accreditation visit to the CAB head office.
- 2.4.2 The CAB shall agree to cover all costs arising from AWS witness audits, however other financial arrangements (e.g., funded projects) may be utilized by prior agreement.
- 2.4.3 During the accreditation period (i.e., Phase 1), the number of witness audits and accreditation site visits described in section 2.3.1 will be contingent on CAB performance as well as availability of AWS resources.
- 2.4.4 If it is determined that the CAB should be awarded accreditation, the CAB and AWS shall enter into an agreement for AWS accreditation agreement (Section 1.4).

## **2.5 Certification Decision**

- 2.5.1 The CAB shall appoint an AWS Program Manager who is responsible for communications between the CAB and AWS. Responsibilities include seeking AWS approvals, supervising inspections, assigning auditors and coordinating the work of the AWS Certifier.
- 2.5.2 The CAB shall appoint an AWS Certifier (who may be the same person as the AWS Program Manager) who is responsible for review and approval or rejection of the audit report and the final certification decision.
  - 2.5.2.1 The AWS Certifier shall not make a certification decision regarding any client in which the Certifier was directly involved in the audit.

## **2.6 Certification Agreement**

- 2.6.1 CAB shall have a certification agreement.
- 2.6.2 The certification agreement shall specify:
  - 2.6.2.1 AWS is not responsible for costs associated with conformity assessment or certification;
  - 2.6.2.2 AWS has the right to change the certification requirements; and
  - 2.6.2.3 AWS may introduce new methodologies on a trial basis from time to time.
- 2.6.3 CAB shall require disclosure by applicants and clients of current enrolment with other assurance providers in AWS or another standards system.

## **2.7 Additions or Modifications to the General Requirements of ISO 17065**

- 2.7.1 CAB shall have a procedure for handling complaints that is open to all parties involved in the AWS conformity assessment process.
- 2.7.2 CABs shall operate an 'impartiality committee' charged with annual (at least) review of CAB management of conflict of interest. The committee must be comprised of at least three members who are independent of the CAB. Records of impartiality committee reviews, discussions, conclusions and recommendations for corrective actions must be maintained for at least five (5) years.
- 2.7.3 CABs shall ensure that all members of the audit team have maintained their independence from the client and organization under assessment. Declarations of potential conflict of interest shall be made.
- 2.7.4 CABs shall compel employees and sub-contractors (e.g., technical experts) to declare any potential conflict of interest in advance of engaging in an AWS conformity assessment.
- 2.7.5 CABs shall not assign any employee to an AWS conformity assessment if that person has previously provided management advice to the organization or if that person has an unmitigated potential conflict of interest with the organization under assessment.

## **2.8 Confidentiality**

- 2.8.1 CABs shall ensure that employees and sub-contractors, including technical experts, maintain as confidential the information received during an assessment and that such information will not be disclosed to any third parties with the exception of information that is required to be submitted to an AB and/or AWS for the purpose of attaining or maintaining the CAB's accreditation status.

## **3 Part 3 - Requirements for Trainers**

### **3.1 General**

- 3.1.1 In addition to the general requirements given in Part 1, training service providers (trainers) shall follow the specified requirements in Part 3.
- 3.1.2 The trainer shall only provide AWS services in the geographic region(s) and industry sector(s) that fall within the trainer's approved scope of AWS Accreditation.
- 3.1.3 Where the service provider develops new training materials for AWS course work, those materials shall be submitted to AWS for review and approval prior to first usage.
- 3.1.4 At the conclusion of each training course, the training service provider shall conduct a course evaluation which, at a minimum, shall include:
- 3.1.4.1 written feedback from course participants using a training course evaluation form which has been approved by AWS.
- 3.1.5 Trainers shall submit course evaluation summaries to AWS together with the Quarterly Summary of AWS Services (section 1.5.1).
- 3.1.6 During the accreditation period (i.e., Phase 1), the number of witness trainings will be contingent on trainer performance as well as availability of AWS resources.

### **3.2 Personnel**

- 3.2.1 Training service providers shall demonstrate that all personnel utilized for AWS training services meet the following minimum qualifications:
- 3.2.1.1 degree in a relevant discipline (e.g., hydrology, environmental engineering, agriculture, forestry) or a minimum of five (5) years of work experience in the industry sector where training services are to be provided;
  - 3.2.1.2 training skills as demonstrated by either of the following:
    - 3.2.1.2.1 successful completion of an AWS-recognized course of training; or

- 3.2.1.2.2 substantial experience with a related environmental scheme (e.g., ISO 9001, ISO 14001, GRI);
- 3.2.1.3 a minimum of one (1) year of work experience delivering training programs for environmental systems; and
- 3.2.1.4 formal training in the application of the AWS Standard (i.e., at a minimum, completion of three levels of training required for gaining AWS Accreditation).

### **3.3 Applying for AWS Accreditation (Trainers)**

- 3.3.1 Any professional training organization may apply to AWS for accreditation.
- 3.3.2 AWS will only accept applications from organizations that can show how they are suitably qualified to provide training in the proposed AWS service area.
- 3.3.3 AWS will give preference to applicants showing substantial experience in providing training in the following subject areas:
  - 3.3.3.1 hydrology, water-stewardship or similar themes which have a direct relationship to the application of the AWS Standard;
  - 3.3.3.2 implementation of social and environmental standards; and/or
  - 3.3.3.3 auditing of environmental management systems (e.g., ISO 19011).

## **4 Part 4 - Requirements for Consultants**

### **4.1 General**

- 4.1.1 In addition to the general requirements given in Part 1, consultants shall follow the specified requirements in Part 4.
- 4.1.2 The consultants shall only provide AWS services in the geographic region(s) and industry sector(s) that fall within the consultant's approved scope of AWS Accreditation.

### **4.2 Personnel**

- 4.2.1 Consultants shall demonstrate that all personnel utilized for AWS consulting services meet the following minimum qualifications:
  - 4.2.1.1 degree in a relevant discipline (e.g., hydrology, environmental engineering, agriculture, forestry) or a minimum of five (5) years of work experience in the industry sector where consulting services will be provided;
  - 4.2.1.2 knowledge of water issues including

- 4.2.1.2.1 a basic understanding of hydrology as demonstrated by completion of formal coursework, training program, work experience or the equivalent;
- 4.2.1.2.2 a minimum of three (3) years of work experience consulting on water-related issues;
- 4.2.1.3 a minimum of one (1) year of work experience in the industry sector(s) for which AWS consulting services are to be provided (e.g., agriculture, mining); and
- 4.2.1.4 formal training in the application of the AWS Standard (i.e., at a minimum, completion of three levels of training required for gaining AWS Accreditation).

### **4.3 Applying for AWS Accreditation (Consultants)**

- 4.3.1 AWS will accept applications for accreditation from consultants or consultancy firms which have significant experience working with businesses on water-related issues or sustainability. Relevant prior experience may include environmental management systems, corporate social responsibility, sustainability programs, sustainability disclosure and reporting frameworks, and social and environmental assurance/certification systems.
- 4.3.2 Consultants may seek accreditation from AWS for a scope of consulting activity in one or more of the following categories:
  - 4.3.2.1 System & Processes – for assisting clients in the development of systems or processes to meet the requirements of the AWS standard;
  - 4.3.2.2 Self-Verification – for facilitating or conducting self-verifications on behalf of clients;
  - 4.3.2.3 Group Scheme – for assisting clients with establishing and/or structuring groups;
  - 4.3.2.4 Technical Measures – for assisting clients with developing and/or implementing technical measures; and
  - 4.3.2.5 Other Services – other services which are directly related to the application of the AWS Standard.
    - 4.3.2.5.1 AWS and the consultant will agree on the nature and extent of “other services” before AWS will consider accrediting an organization for such a scope of consulting activity.
- 4.3.3 In the application for AWS accreditation, consultancies shall provide AWS with evidence of having relevant expertise for the chosen scope(s) of consulting activity, including:
  - 4.3.3.1 evidence of certifications or accreditations held in relevant fields;
  - 4.3.3.2 prior projects or accomplishments in the field or subject area; and
  - 4.3.3.3 the names and qualifications (see section 4.2) of those persons nominated to perform the activities.

- 4.3.4 Prior to entering into an agreement with a client for AWS-related services, consultants shall inform the client that the engagement of AWS-accredited services does not guarantee that the client will be awarded AWS certification.