

SOCIETY FOR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND SCREENERS (SPBS)

Corporate & Individual Members' Accreditation Requirements

Guidelines & Procedures

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1. Introduction

The Society for Professional background Screeners [SPBS] is an independent non-profit umbrella trade association of organizations and individuals that provide background checks, verification, investigation, and identity management services in Nigeria, working in partnership with international associations in this space.

The SPBS members' accreditation program establishes standards and advances professionalism in background checks, verification, and screening, through the promotion of best practices, statutory and legal compliance, the protection of end users of the services, the evaluation of companies and individuals engaged in the industry and practice and the award of accreditation to those deemed to meet the accreditation requirements.

2. Governance & Issuance of Accreditation Certificates

a. Issuance of accreditation certification falls under the governance purview of the SPBS's Board of Trustees [Board], through its **Accreditation Committee**

b. The terms of reference of and for the accreditation committee shall be decided by the Board

c. Key functions of the Accreditation Committee shall include;

- Implementation and regular review of the accreditation guidelines and procedures and effect changes that reflect best practices, new legislative requirements and developments
- Periodical review of the accreditation fees and effect modifications as approved by the Board
- Review complaints of/from companies that apply for accreditation or re-accreditation and take appropriate actions;
- Engage stakeholders about the accreditation processes
- Ensure there is a portal to manage the accreditation processes and regularly review the portal for necessary upgrades
- Ensure compliance and audit of submissions made by companies and individuals for accreditation
- And such other duties as delegated to it by the Board

3. Eligibility Criteria

- a. Companies - All companies applying to be accredited **must** fulfill all the eligibility criteria as listed in **Schedule A**.
- b. Individuals - All individuals applying to be accredited **must** fulfill all the eligibility criteria as listed in **Schedule B**.

4. Accreditation Processes

- a. Any company or individual applying for accreditation (Applicant) must ensure that it meets the eligibility criteria
- b. The Applicant must first submit an online application using the official portal of SPBS
- c. There shall be a non-refundable application fee payable by the Applicant
- d. The Applicant is then required to submit documentation and evidence of eligibility as detailed in **Schedules A and B** and make payment(s) as detailed in **Schedule C**.
- e. The Accreditation Committee shall review submitted applications to determine eligibility
- f. The applicant shall be assigned a unique identification number which will be used in all subsequent correspondence.
- g. The Accreditation Committee may seek clarification and/or additional information from the Applicant, if and/or where required.
- h. For companies, after the application has been reviewed, a date shall be fixed for an accreditation audit.

- i. The Accreditation Committee shall commission an accreditation audit - physical or online - on the applicant's submissions
- j. The Accreditation Committee shall prepare an initial accreditation report within 10 working days of the accreditation audit
- k. If an applicant is deemed fully eligible for accreditation, the Accreditation Committee shall make recommendations to the Board
- l. If an applicant is deemed not eligible, the Accreditation Committee shall issue the Applicant an "Opportunity for Improvement(s)" report (OFIs).
- m. Any applicant issued an OFI shall respond to the Accreditation Committee on the OFI within 10 working days of receipt of the OFI.
- n. This decision on eligibility shall always be stated in writing
- o. An Applicant that is accredited shall be granted an accredited status for a period of **two (2) years** only, after which the applicant must apply for a renewal of the accreditation following the same processes detailed above.
- p. All accredited Companies and individuals shall be awarded with an accreditation certificate with **SPBS accreditation logo**, including an explanation of limitations and proper use of this mark.
- q. If accreditation is denied, the Applicant has the right to appeal. **See the section for appeal procedures**

5. Fees

Accreditation fees shall be determined by the Board

6. Renewal of Accreditation

- a. Accredited status shall be for a period of **two (2) years** only.
- b. An Accredited company and individual must apply for a renewal of the accreditation following the same processes detailed in Section 4 above
- c. Renewal of Accreditation shall commence at least 6 months before the expiration of the current accreditation

7. Use of Logo

- a. Only Accredited Companies are authorized to use the Accreditation Program's logo.
- b. An Accredited Company may only use the approved logo in the form and the manner specified by SPBS
- c. The logo shall be used only by the Accredited Company itself and shall not be used by affiliated organizations, partners, or any other entity that has not been granted accreditation by SPBS.
- d. If an Accredited Company chooses to utilize the Accreditation Program's logo electronically, whether on a website, for on-line advertising, or in an email signature, it must be hyperlinked as directed by SPBS to permit viewers to verify the Company's accredited status.
- e. Misuse of Logo: The Accreditation Program's logo is the sole and exclusive property of SPBS and may be used only by Accredited Companies. Any misuse of the logo shall be subject to sanctions as prescribed by SPBS.

8. Circumstances Requiring Notice by Accredited Companies

- a. In the event of a change of legal name or change in ownership such that there is a change in controlling interests for privately held organizations, the Accredited Company is required to provide written notice of the same to SPBS within

ninety (90) days of the effective date of the change. Upon receipt of written notice, SPBS shall carry out the appropriate inquiry. Such written notice shall include a detailed description of the change, review, and confirmation of compliance with the Accreditation Program, noting any distinctions or changes that have occurred due to the aforementioned change. Failure to provide such notice may result in the automatic suspension of the accreditation of the Company, which may result in revocation if not resolved.

- b. Change due to Merger, Acquisition, or Asset Sale: In the event of a change due to a Merger, Acquisition, or Asset Sale of or by an Accredited Company, the Accredited Company is required to provide written notice of the same to SPBS within ninety (90) days of the effective date of the change. Upon receipt of written notice, SPBS shall carry out an appropriate inquiry. Such written notice shall include a detailed description of the change, review, and confirmation of compliance with the Accreditation Program noting any distinctions or changes that have occurred due to the aforementioned change. Failure to provide such notice may result in automatic suspension of the accreditation of the Company, which may result in revocation if not resolved.
- c. Upon receipt of the notice, SPBS shall review, and schedule an on-site audit if appropriate for proper decision. The final decision shall be provided to the Accredited Company which shall be required to comply with any directives made in the same. SPBS has the authority to suspend, revoke or grant a continuation of the accreditation status for the original accreditation period of the Accredited Company at any time during the proceedings. SPBS has the authority to require a surveillance audit or on-site audit any time after the proceedings prescribed in this section up to one (1) year from the change.
- d. Notice of Legal Actions: If an Accredited Company has been the subject of litigation or a governmental investigation that includes allegations which, if proven, would constitute a violation of the Accreditation Program, the Accredited Company is required to provide written notice of the same to SPBS within thirty (30) days of the resolution. Such written notice shall include a detailed description of the allegation as it applies to the Accreditation Program, noting any distinctions or changes that have occurred due to the allegation. Failure to provide such notice may result in the suspension of the accreditation of the Company, which may result in revocation if not resolved.

9. Appeals to the Standards Board on Accreditation

- a. If accreditation is denied, the Applicant has the right to appeal
- b. To appeal, the company or individual shall submit a written letter that specifies the grounds on which the appeal is based within 30 days of the receipt of the written decision of SPBS
- c. SPBS shall invite necessary stakeholders as required for any appeal process.
- d. The appeal shall be reviewed and investigated within 30 working days of receipt from the company or individual
- e. Final decisions on any appeal rest with the Board

10. Voluntary Withdrawal of Accreditation

- a. An Accredited Company or individual may withdraw from the accreditation program at any time.
- b. A written letter signed by an authorized officer of the Company or the individual himself/herself should be sent to SPBS requesting withdrawal from the Accreditation Programme.
- c. The withdrawal shall be effective upon SPBS's receipt of the written request for the same.
- d. No accreditation fees shall be refunded in the case of voluntary withdrawal of accreditation and the Company or individual shall remain liable to pay any fees due as of the date of voluntary withdrawal.

- e. All rights to use the Accreditation logo or any other positive claim of accreditation shall cease as at the date of the voluntary withdrawal and proof that such use has ceased shall be provided by the Company.

11. Complaints Regarding Accredited Companies

- a. SPBS shall intervene when complaint(s) is/are levied against an accredited company or individual with regards to any violation of the Accreditation requirements.
- b. Complaints must be in writing and shall identify the complainant
- c. A Complaint shall contain a comprehensive description of the nature and scope of the complaint and/or alleged violation and a citation to the particular section(s) or clause(s) of the Accreditation requirement that had been violated
- d. Person(s) bringing Complaints to SPBS is/are not entitled to any relief or damages by this process, although they may receive notice of the actions taken as provided herein.
- e. SPBS shall investigate all complaints
- f. Upon receipt and preliminary review of a Complaint, an acknowledgment of receipt will be provided to the Complainant(s) by SPBS.
- g. If a Complaint is deemed potentially actionable, SPBS shall see that written notice is provided to the Accredited Company or individual, advising the Accredited Company or individual that an investigation is being initiated.
- h. For each potentially actionable Complaint, SPBS shall authorize an investigation into its specific facts or circumstances to whatever extent is necessary to clarify, expand or corroborate the information provided by the Complainant, and to assist SPBS in determining whether charges (and, if so, what charges) against the Accredited Company or individual should be brought. SPBS may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by a legal counsel.
- i. Both the Complainant and the Accredited Company or individual may be contacted by SPBS concerning the Complaint. In addition, SPBS may contact such other person(s) who may know the facts and circumstances surrounding the Complaint.
- j. All investigations and deliberations shall be conducted with the highest level of confidentiality, except permitted to disclose any relevant information when compelled by law or to parties essential to the review and investigation of the alleged misconduct. All investigations and deliberations shall be conducted objectively, without prejudice of any kind.
- k. SPBS's hearing may be held by telephone, electronically, or video conference at discretion
- l. If a violation is established, SPBS may impose sanction(s) on the accredited company or individual. The sanction(s) applied must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of the conduct of the affected Company or individual and deterrence of the same or similar conduct by others.
- m. Communication of decision(s) to accredited Company or individual – any accredited Company or individual subject to complaints shall receive written notification of findings and/or decision(s) in writing
- n. The potential sanctions include:
 - Written reprimand to, or censure of, the Accredited Company or individual (combined with any probationary period, if deemed appropriate);
 - Suspension or revocation of accreditation for a designated period (combined with any probationary period, if desired);
 - Suspension or permanent expulsion or from re-applying for accreditation.
- o. Sanctions shall not be appealed

12. Records

- a. All information submitted by a Company and individual during the accreditation process shall be managed in line with statutory regulations and requirements.
- b. SPBS shall maintain all records

13. Conflicts of Interest

- a. All individuals involved in the accreditation shall sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest statement.
- b. SPBS shall maintain all records and **signed confidentiality and conflict of interest statements.**

SCHEDULE A: Eligibility Criteria - COMPANIES

	Key Lines of Inquiries	Definitions of Requirements
1	Filing system - physical and/or digital - of and for all background checks, verification, and screening carried out by the company, including clients' records	The company must have a system – hard or soft - of all clients that services have been provided for. These files/records must be kept in line with the requirements of NDPR
2	SPBS certification(s)	Evidence of at least one member of staff with BBSC and/or ABSC, issued by SPBS
3	Membership of other relevant professional association (s) and/or partnership with other associations and/or institutions: e.g. professional affiliations, universities, institutes, etc.	Evidence of membership of relevant professional association in the field of security and/or risk management or similar/relevant OR copy of MoU that indicated formal partnership(s) with institution(s) or professional association (s)
4	Health&Safety policy	Documented
5	Business Registration Certificate	Copy of certificate of incorporation
6	Corporate Governance	E.g. certificate of incorporation
7	Governance and Management	Sample of organization structure

SCHEDULE B: Eligibility Criteria - INDIVIDUALS

	Key Lines of Inquiries	Definitions of Requirements
1	Certification(s)	Current BBSC and/or ABSC, issued by SPBS
2	Other certification(s) / qualifications and/or Membership of relevant professional association (s)	Issued by credible institutions - professional and/or academic OR Evidence of membership of relevant professional association in the field of security and/or risk management or similar/relevant Or intent to become a member
3	CV	Up-to-date curriculum vitae
4	National I.D.	Driving license, international passport, NIN, etc
5	Reference	Minimum one reference from a professional and/or current employer

Schedule C: Accreditation Fees

	Company	Individual
Application fee	N25, 000.00	N2,500.00
Accreditation Audit Fee	N50,000.00	N/A
Issuance of Accreditation Certificate	N25,000.00	N10,000.00

SPBS