

# **IREG Ranking Re-Audit**

October 2017

**SUPPLEMENT** to  
**IREG Ranking Audit Manual**

## Introduction

In 2011 IREG presented the concept of an international ranking quality audit. Since 2013 four rankings have been successfully audited. The aim of the audit is to award quality stamp which is easy to understand and in case of positive evaluation, rankings are entitled to use the quality label and corresponding logo - "**IREG approved**".

In the IREG Ranking Audit Manual the **criteria, the method of assessing the criteria as well as the process of audit** in its various steps from the application for an audit to the decision making process within the IREG Observatory have been described.

According to the Audit Manual audited rankings have to undergo a re-audit after four years in order to stay entitled to use the label "IREG approved". Since the first ranking have been audited in 2013 the first re-audits are to be undertaken now.

***In order to keep the re-audit "light" the process of re-auditing will be shorter and successfully audited rankings do not have to produce a full report again for re-audit. The re-audit should focus on:***

- Changes in the ranking (methodology, indicators, presentation, impact) since the first audit,
- An evaluation of the way the ranking has reacted on recommendations listed in the first audit report, and how this corresponds with the changes in the ranking since the first audit.

## The re-audit process

Major conditions of the re-audit process will be the same as for the first audit.

Actors involved are:

- The *IREG Executive Committee* has an overall responsibility for the audit in order to assure the highest standards and impartiality of the process and takes the decision about approval of rankings.
- The *IREG Ranking Audit Teams* are nominated by the Executive Committee in consultation with the *Coordinator of IREG Audit* out of a pool of auditors. The Audit Team is preparing a report and recommendation on the approval of a ranking to the Executive Committee.
- The *Coordinator of IREG Ranking Audit*. In order to assure the impartiality and the highest professional and deontological standards of the audit process, the Executive Committee appoints for a period of 3 years a coordinator of IREG Audit. He/she is not a member of the Executive Committee and is not involved in doing rankings. His/her task is to guarantee that all stages of the process as well as the collected evidence (i.e. the self-reports submitted by ranking organisations and the audit reports drafted by the Audit Teams) meet the standards set by this manual. He/she is providing advice on the composition of the audit teams. He/she reviews a report drafted by the Audit Teams and submits a recommendation to the Executive Committee but does not participate in the vote. The Coordinator of IREG Ranking Audit receives organisational support from the Secretariat of the IREG Observatory.

- The IREG Observatory Secretariat is giving administrative and technical support to the Audit Teams and the Audit Coordinator. The Secretariat is the contact address for the ranking organisation.

### **Production of a self-report by the ranking organisation**

The production of the self-report by the ranking organisation is an essential part of the re-audit process and is the major portion of the evidence which the Audit Team will draw on in forming its report and suggestion regarding the audit decision. All claims, judgments and statements made by the ranking organisation should be backed up by the facts necessary to corroborate them.

The re-audit self-report should not exceed 10 to 15 pages and should be submitted within six weeks after applying for re-audit.

The self-report has to apply the structure which is determined by IREG and which is sent to the ranking organisation. According to the model structure issues to be dealt with in the report include two major parts:

- Changes in the ranking since the first audit, particularly with regard to changes in:
  - the ranking organisation (incl. governance and advisory bodies),
  - the purpose and target groups of the ranking,
  - the basic approach and the methodology of the ranking,
  - the set of indicators and their calculation (incl. changes in the weighting scheme),
  - internal quality assurance of the ranking
  - the presentation and publication of the ranking.
  - In addition the ranking organisation should provide an update on the impact of the ranking.
- An overview on how the ranking has reacted to the recommendations given in the first ranking audit, and how this corresponds with the changes in the ranking since the first audit.

### **Nomination and Appointment of a Re-Audit Team**

The nomination of an Re-Audit Team will be made by the Executive Committee after the decision made about the start of an audit process. The Re-Audit Team consists of two to three members. If possible, at least one member of the Re-Audit Team has been involved in the first audit. In order to guarantee independence, the majority of auditors should not be actively involved in doing rankings.

The IREG Executive Committee appoints one member of the Re-Audit Team to chair the team. If possible, the chair of the Re-Audit Team should be the same as in the first audit. In order to guarantee neutrality and independence of the Audit Teams, the chairs are not formally associated with an organisation that is doing rankings.

All further specifications on the audit team are described in the (first) audit manual.

## **Interaction Ranking Audit Team and Ranking Organisation**

The chair of the audit team and the ranking organisation are in a time table of the re-audit process. Specification of the interaction process:

- After a first check of the report by the IREG Ranking Audit Coordinator, the Audit Team will react on the self-report least within six (6) weeks by written questions, comments and demands for additional information and materials. This feedback will be sent electronically to the ranking organisation by the IREG Secretariat.
- The ranking organisation is expected to answer to the additional questions within one month. The answer by the ranking organisation should be submitted electronically to the whole mailing list described above and in hard-copy to the IREG Secretariat.
- In order to avoid a flood of information at this stage the ranking organisation should send any additional material to the Audit Team beyond the written answer to the additional questions only after consultation with the IREG Ranking Audit Coordinator.

At the end of the interaction process the IREG Secretariat informs the ranking organisation about the formal closing of interaction.

## **Production of an Re-Audit Report**

The basis for the Re-Audit Report are the self-report and additional materials provided by the ranking institution, communication between ranking organisation and the Audit Team (including site visit if it was part of the process) and the Audit Team's findings. The review report will be drafted by the chair of the Audit Team. The Re-Audit Report should not exceed 10 pages (font size 11). The draft report will be sent to the members of the Re-Audit Team by the IREG Secretariat for comments and approval. They should submit their comments within four (4) weeks. The whole report should be finalised and sent to the ranking organisation not later than three months after the formal statement of the end of interaction.

The final Re-Audit Report provided by the Re-Audit Team is the main basis for the decision about the approval of the ranking made by the Executive Committee.

## **Ranking Re-Audit Decision**

Based on a statement of the IREG Ranking Audit Coordinator the Executive Committee testifies that the report applies the criteria for ranking re-audit. The Executive Committee decides about the approval of the ranking on the basis of the Audit Report delivered by the Audit Team and the reaction on the report submitted by the ranking organisation.

Decision is made by simple majority of the members of the Executive Committee. Members of the Committee who are associated or used to be associated with the ranking under audit (either directly or as member of any body of the ranking organisation) are excluded from the vote. The vote can take place either in a meeting of the Executive Committee or electronically.

## Proposed Time Schedule

	Step	Deadlines
1	Formal application for re-audit by ranking organisation and confirmation by IREG secretariat and submission of self-report	
2	Implementation of Re-Audit Team	3 weeks after application
4	Review by Re-Audit Team	6 weeks after application
5	Communication with ranking organisation on open issues (if necessary)	Directly after review process
6	Drafting of the Re-Audit Report by Re-Audit Coordinator	2 weeks after finishing the communication process
7	Finalisation of the Re-Audit Report by Re-Audit Team	2 weeks after receiving the draft of the Re-Audit Report by Re-Audit Coordinator
8	Statement by the ranking organisation	2 weeks after receiving the final audit report
9	Finalisation of decision proposal by Audit coordinator	3 weeks after receiving the statement by the ranking organisation
10	Decision of Executive Committee	

