

CARTV IMPARTIALITY POLICY

A Preamble

The Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants (CARTV) is organized and operates in a manner that maintains the objectivity and impartiality of its decisions and services.

The CARTV policies and procedures are non-discriminatory and managed in a non-discriminatory way.

1. Introduction and purpose of the policy

This policy aims to describe the structural aspects and organizational mechanisms that maintain the objectivity and impartiality of its decisions and services.

2. Scope

This policy only covers the CARTV and the departments or services that it has set up, such as the Committee on Accreditation for Evaluation of Quality (CAEQ), members of Technical Committees and organization staff. It does not apply to CARTV-related organizations that have their own policies.

In general, the management, CAEQ staff (internal/external) and CARTV Board members are all responsible for maintaining impartiality.

3. Reference documents

- *Act respecting reserved designations and added-value claims (A20.03);*
- *ISO/IEC 17011;*
- *CARTV Internal By-Laws;*
- *Internal by-law on accreditation of certification bodies.*

4. Definitions

For general definitions, consult the CARTV internal by-laws (IN1RG3000).

5. Access and distribution

This document is distributed or made available to all Board members, members of the Accreditation Committee, staff involved in the accreditation process and any other interested parties.

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1. Structure that allows the participation of interested parties

To maintain impartiality and develop and uphold the general principles and policies on the functioning of the systems it has set up, including the accreditation system for certifiers, the *Act respecting reserved designations and added-value claims* provides for the implementation of a structure that allows the effective participation of interested parties and a balanced representation of interested parties without any predominance. This structure (CARTV Board) is described in the document *CARTV Internal By-Laws*.

The Board meets at least once a year to review impartiality.

2. Non-discrimination of certification bodies

The CARTV makes its services available to all applicants whose applications fall within the scope of activities and limits defined in its policies and rules. Accreditation applications cannot be rejected due to the size of the applicant organizations or their membership in associations or groups. The number of organizations that have previously benefited from a favourable decision regarding their accreditation application, recognition of a designation or authorized added-value claim has no impact on decisions that may be made. The denial of services to a certification body is not considered to be discriminatory if there is verified proof of fraudulent conduct, falsification of information, or deliberate violation of accreditation requirements.

3. Objectivity of staff and committees involved in assessment processes

The organization ensures that all staff and established committees, which may influence the assessment process, act objectively and without any commercial, financial or other pressures that may compromise their impartiality. The organization requires all Board members, external/internal staff and committee staff to declare any potential conflict of interest on an annual basis and whenever it may arise.

Every decision that is made by the organization under the regulations or agreements entered into by the organization with competent authorities is made by the Board, whose competent members are different from the staff and committee members who carried out the assessment. The list of Board members, staff members and technical committee members, published on the organization's website, attests to this commitment.

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4. Neutrality of the organization's service offering

The CARTV, including its accreditation department, the CAEQ, does not propose or provide services that undermine its impartiality or that could put it in a conflict of interest position, for example:

- a) assessment activities of the same type as those carried out by the bodies registered in a CARTV/CAEQ-managed program;
- b) services of the Board.

The CARTV's activities, including those of the CAEQ, are never presented as being associated with consulting services. The organization ensures that it never suggests that the process leading to a Board decision, be it accreditation, recognition of a designation, etc., would be simpler, easier, faster or less expensive if they call upon any specific individual(s) or consulting services.

5. Related organizations

The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) is a CARTV-related organization due to a funding agreement that provides it with public support to finance functions other than its accreditation program.

The Conseil de promotion de l'agriculture du Québec appoints seven of the nine Board members, according to the criteria set out in the *Act respecting reserved designations and added-value claims*.

The CARTV ensures that the activities of the aforementioned organizations do not compromise the confidentiality, objectivity, neutrality and impartiality of its decisions.

The Board continually ensures that its relationship with the aforementioned related organizations does not pose any potential conflicts of interest, whether they occur within the CARTV or within the context of activities of these organizations. If conflicts are identified, appropriate actions would be taken.

END OF POLICY

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