

Contractor Certification & Classification Guideline

Ministry of Works and Housing (Ghana)

Date: 10.12.2025

Version: 1.0

1. Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to:

- Provide a clear and transparent framework for the certification and classification of contractors who intend to undertake building, civil, electrical and plumbing works under the oversight of the Ministry of Works and Housing (MWH).
- Ensure that contractors bidding for public-works projects meet the minimum technical, financial and administrative requirements to deliver quality, safe and sustainable infrastructure.
- Promote accountability, efficiency, and value for money in procurement of works by public agencies.
- Facilitate regular renewal and monitoring of contractor status to maintain competence and compliance with standards, including the Ghana Standards Authority building code and other regulatory requirements.
- Provide guidance on grading/classification, application process, renewal, monitoring and sanctions for non-compliance.

2. Scope

This guideline applies to:

- All companies, firms or individual contractors (sole proprietors, partnerships, limited liability companies) that wish to be certified by MWH (through its classification unit) to undertake building, civil works, electrical or plumbing contracts financed by the Government of Ghana or its agencies.
- Public agencies, ministries, departments and regional/municipal assemblies that engage contractors for works and require classification as part of their eligibility criteria. (See sample tender notices requiring certificate D1/K1 etc.)
- The classification, renewal and upgrading (or downgrading) of contractor certification.
- The establishment of monitoring, audit and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that certified contractors maintain required standards and ethical behaviour.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this guideline:

- **Certification:** The formal issuance of a “Contractor Classification Certificate” by the MWH, specifying category (building, civil, electrical, plumbing), class/grade (e.g., D1, D2 ... K1, K2 ... E1, E2 ...) and validity period.
- **Classification/Grading:** The assignment of a contractor to a category and class based on their technical capacity, financial strength, track record, equipment, manpower, etc.
- **Category:** Type of contract works the contractor is eligible to undertake (e.g., General Building Works, General Civil Works, General Electrical Works, General Plumbing Works)
- **Class/Grade:** Level of competence/scale of works the contractor may bid for (e.g., D1/K1 highest; D4/K4 lower)
- **Applicant:** A contractor applying for certification, classification, renewal, upgrade or reclassification.
- **Certificate Holder:** A contractor whose classification certificate has been issued and is valid.
- **Renewal:** The process by which a certificate holder applies to extend validity of their certificate beyond the initial period.
- **Upgrade:** The process by which a contractor applies to move to a higher class (e.g., from D3 to D2) based on improved capacity/track record.
- **Downgrade/Revocation:** The process by which the MWH reduces the class or revokes the certificate because of non-compliance, poor performance or misconduct.

4. Classification Categories and Classes

4.1 Categories

- General Building Works (Category D)
- General Civil Works (Category K)
- General Electrical Works (Category E)
- General Plumbing Works (Category G)

4.2 Classes / Grades

Typical grading structure:

- D1 / K1 (highest)
- D2 / K2
- D3 / K3

And for electrical: E1, E2, E3. Plumbing: G1, G2.

4.3 Scope of Work by Class

- Contractors classified as D1/K1 may bid for large scale government contracts, major infrastructure, multi-million cedi projects.
- Contractors at D4/K4 are restricted to smaller works, limited financial exposure, simpler technical requirements.
- Certification must clearly indicate the maximum contract value or class of works permissible for the contractor, based on vetted capacity.

5. Application Process (New Certification or Upgrade)

5.1 Pre-application steps

- The applicant must ensure they are registered with the Ghana Registrar General's Department (for companies) or appropriate business registration.
- Applicant should ensure valid tax clearance certificate, SSNIT clearance, VAT registration (if applicable), auditing records, proof of previous works, bank statements, vehicle/equipment register, and key technical staff CVs. (Based on standard requirements found in external summaries)
- The applicant should review the minimum requirements for their desired class (D1, D2 etc) to confirm they meet standards.

5.2 Submission of Application

- Application form to be obtained from the MWH Classification Unit (Room 39, 1st Floor, MWH Block, PO Box M43, Ministries, Accra) or via official website.
- Completed application form must be accompanied by required supporting documents (see Section 5.3).
- Application fee (including form cost) must be paid and proof of payment submitted. **5.3**

Required Documents

At minimum, the documents should include:

- Company Registration / Incorporation Certificate.
- VAT Registration Certificate (if applicable).
- Tax Clearance Certificate (last 3 years where applicable).
- SSNIT (Social Security & National Insurance Trust) clearance certificate.
- Bank reference or bank statement for last 3 months.
- Audited Accounts for the past 3 years.
- CVs of key technical personnel (engineers, architects, site managers).
- List of equipment/vehicles owned or leased: immovable equipment receipts, road-worthy certificates for vehicles.
- Letters of award for contracts executed in the past 5 years (or appropriate period), final payment certificates or latest interim certificates. [c](#)
- Company profile describing organisation, staffing, previous projects, and technical capacity.
- Any additional documentation as required by the specific class (for example, higher class may require larger contract history, more equipment, more staff).

5.4 Evaluation and Committee Vetting

- The submitted documents are reviewed by the Classification Unit.
- A Contractors Classification Committee evaluates the application, verifies documents, may follow up with site visits or references checks.

5.5 Decision and Payment

- The applicant is informed of committee decision: approved, conditionally approved (pending further verification), or rejected.
- If approved, contractor is informed of certificate fee and payment amount (as per prevailing rates).

• 5.6 Issuance of Certificate

- On payment, the Classification Unit issues the Contractor Classification Certificate indicating category, class/grade, validity period, unique certificate number, scope of works allowed.
- Certificate should also indicate obligations of the contractor (e.g., renewal conditions, compliance, reporting of changes).

5.7 Turnaround Time

- The Ministry aims to process new/upgrading certification within **21 working days** from complete submission of required documents.

• 6. Renewal and Upgrading

6.1 Renewal

- Certificate holders must apply for renewal before expiry (e.g., annually or as stipulated).
- Renewal application should include updated tax clearance certificate, SSNIT clearance, audited accounts (for latest year), list of current contracts, any changes in key personnel, equipment, address, etc.
- Renewal fees apply.

6.2 Upgrade

- Contractors may apply to upgrade class/grade when they have enhanced capacity, larger contract history, more equipment, improved finances.
- The upgrade application follows similar steps as new application but focuses on evidence of improved capacity.

6.3 Downgrade or Revocation

- If during monitoring or audit the contractor is found not to meet minimum requirements (poor performance, litigation, non-compliance with safety/standards, misrepresentation) the MWH may downgrade the class or revoke the certificate.
- The contractor will be notified of decision and given opportunity to respond or appeal (see section 8).
- Until revocation or downgrade is final, the contractor shall not bid for works exceeding the permissible scope of the downgraded class.

7. Compliance, Monitoring & Audit

7.1 Contractor Obligations

Certificate-holders must:

- Undertake works only within the category and class for which they are certified.
- Maintain the technical and financial capacity as submitted at application (e.g., key personnel remain qualified and active, equipment maintained).
- Comply with the Building Regulations, 2022 (LI 2465) and the Ghana Building Code (GS 1207:2018) for all works executed.
- Attend to health, safety and environmental requirements set by MWH and the relevant assemblies.
- Report changes in ownership, key personnel, equipment, business address, etc., within a stipulated time (e.g., 30 days).

7.2 Monitoring & Audit Mechanisms

- MWH Classification Unit may conduct periodic audits (e.g., annually or bi-annually) of certificate holders to verify capacity, performance and compliance.
- On-site inspections may be carried out in collaboration with the contracting agency and the Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies (MMDAs).
- Evidence of poor performance, complaints, safety breaches or regulatory violation may trigger expedited audit and potential revocation.

7.3 Integration with Procurement/Contracts

- Public procurement notices should clearly state certification and class requirements (e.g., “Contractors with MWH Certificate D2/K2 or above”).
- Contracting authorities must verify certificate validity (category, class, expiry date), and ensure the contractor is in good standing before award.

7.4 Reporting & Transparency

- MWH should maintain and publish an updated register of certified contractors (category, class, expiry date) accessible to public and contracting agencies.
- Any contractor found false or misrepresented shall be flagged, and information shared with procurement agencies.

8. Appeals, Grievances and Sanctions

8.1 Appeals

- Applicants whose application is refused, or certificate downgraded or revoked, may submit a formal appeal within **14 working days** of receipt of decision.
- The appeal should include reasons for reconsideration, any additional evidence, and be addressed to the Director of the Classification Unit, MWH.
- An Appeals Committee within MWH shall review appeals and communicate decisions within **10 working days** of receipt.

8.2 Sanctions for Non-Compliance

Possible sanctions include:

- Suspension of certificate until remedial measures are taken.
- Downgrading of class.
- Revocation of certificate.
- Exclusion from bidding for public contracts for a defined period (e.g., 1 year).
- Publication of sanction in register and notification to procuring agencies.

8.3 Consequences for Bidding Beyond Class

- If a contractor with a certain class bids for (and wins) contracts beyond that class, the award may be set aside, the contractor may be penalised, and they may forfeit performance bonds.
- Repeat offenders may face longer exclusion periods or permanent debarment.

9. Fees, Validity & Renewal Period

- Application fee: As per prevailing rates at time of submission (e.g., application form cost).
- Certificate validity: Typically **one year** from date of issuance. (According to summaries)
- Renewal must be applied for **at least 30 days** before expiry to avoid lapse in certification.
- Upgrading may incur additional fees or differential payment.
- Late renewal may attract penalty or require full re-application.

10. Roles & Responsibilities

10.1 Ministry of Works and Housing (MWH)

- Overall stewardship of certification and classification regime.
- Maintenance of contractor register, review and update of policy.
- Oversight of monitoring and audit mechanisms.

10.2 Classification Unit (MWH)

- Receipt, processing and evaluation of applications.
- Coordination of Contractors Classification Committee.
- Issuance of certificates, management of renewals, upgrades, downgrades.

- Publication of contractor register and status updates.

10.3 Contractors Classification Committee

- Technical review and vetting of applicant documentation.
- Recommendation to Management of MWH for certificate issuance or denial.

10.4 Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies (MMDAs) & Contracting Agencies

- Verification of contractor classification status before awarding contracts.
- Reporting of contractor non-performance or misconduct to MWH for action.

10.5 Contractors

- Compliance with the scope of classification, maintenance of capacity, submission of required renewal updates, reporting of changes, and cooperation with audits.

11. Risk Management & Quality Assurance

- The classification system must guard against the risk of **inadequate capacity** (technical or financial) of contractors being awarded large public works, which may lead to cost overruns, delays or safety issues.
- The system should enforce **quality standards**, including mandatory adherence to Ghana Building Code (GS 1207:2018) and Building Regulations (LI 2465) which include accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- Periodic review of classification criteria and thresholds is necessary to align with evolving market conditions, inflation, and evolving technology.
- Ensure **transparency** in application, decisions, and appeals to minimise corruption risk and promote competition.
- Maintain data on contractor performance (track record, defaults, litigation) and feed back into classification decisions (including downgrades).
- Promote **capacity-building** of smaller contractors to allow upgrading and entry into higher classes over time.

12. Review and Amendment

- This guideline shall be reviewed every **two years** to reflect changes in policy, regulation, industry capacity, inflation, or international best practice.
- Any amendments shall be approved by the Minister for Works and Housing and published to stakeholders.
- A transitional period of at least **six months** shall apply when major changes to classification criteria are introduced.

13. Annexes

Annex A: Sample Application Checklist

- ☐ Completed Application Form (MWH Classification Unit)
- ☐ Company Registration/Certificate of Incorporation
- ☐ VAT Registration Certificate
- ☐ Tax Clearance Certificate (last 3 years)
- ☐ SSNIT Clearance Certificate
- ☐ Audited Financial Statements (last 3 years)
- ☐ Bank Statements / Bank Reference (last 3 months)
- ☐ Equipment/Vehicle Register (with receipts/road-worthy certificates)
- ☐ CVs of Key Technical Personnel
- ☐ List of Completed Contracts (last 5 years) + final payment certificates or latest interim certificates
- ☐ Company Profile and Organisational Chart
- ☐ Proof of payment of application/form fee
- ☐ Any other documents as specified for desired class

Annex B: Sample Certificate Format

- Certificate Number: ...
- Contractor Name: ...
- Registration Number: ...
- Category: (e.g., General Building Works)
- Class/Grade: (e.g., D2)
- Valid From: ...
- Valid To: ...
- Scope of Works: Maximum contract value: GHC ... (or as per class)
- Conditions/Notes: ...
- Signature: Director, Classification Unit, MWH
- Date of issue: ...

Annex C: Renewal Form Checklist

- Updated Tax Clearance
- Updated SSNIT Clearance
- Latest Audited Accounts
- Updated list of contracts in progress
- Declaration of no change in ownership/key staff (or list of changes)
- Payment of renewal fee

Annex D: Appeals Form Template

- Reference number of decision being appealed
- Grounds for appeal (new evidence, error in evaluation, etc)
- Documents submitted in support
- Signature of appellant

- Date

Annex E: Monitoring / Audit Report Template

- Contractor Name & Certificate No.
 - Date of audit/visit
 - Site visited (if any)
 - Key personnel present
 - Equipment verification (list)
 - Contract list verification
 - Compliance with class scope (Yes/No)
 - Non-compliance issues and recommended action
 - Follow-up date
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14. Implementation Tips for MWH

- Publish this guideline on your website and publicise it widely (contractors’ associations, engineering/architectural societies, MMDA procurement units).
- Develop an electronic system (or upgrade existing system) to manage contractor data: application tracking, certificate issuance, renewal alerts, register of certified contractors, performance database.
- Integrate classification-certificate verification with procurement portals so contracting agencies automatically verify eligibility (category/class/expiry) when evaluating bids.
- Provide training sessions for smaller contractors to understand the classification system, how to meet requirements and build capacity for upgrading.
- Maintain a feedback mechanism: contractors may raise concerns or propose improvements. Regular stakeholder consultation is beneficial.
- Consider periodic evaluation of contractor performance and publishing a “black-list” or “non-performer list” (with caution for reputational and legal implications) to deter poor performance.
- Ensure that the classification criteria are reviewed and updated to suit evolving construction industry norms, inflation, technological advances and safety standards.

15. Conclusion

A robust certification and classification regime under the MWH helps ensure that only suitably qualified and resourced contractors engage in public works, which promotes transparency, quality, safety and value for money. By following the procedures and criteria set out in this guideline, the Ministry—and its contracting agencies—can strengthen procurement outcomes and contractor performance. Moreover, by publishing and enforcing these guidelines, the Ministry sends a strong signal to the industry about standards and expectations.