

## **Guidelines**

### **For Organising the Visit to Advisory Body (VA) as Requirement for Obtaining the CECRA Certificate (for the Agency)**

#### **Annex 4**

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CECRA (Certificate for European Consultants in Rural Areas) is a certificate that can be obtained by advisors in rural areas.

According to CECRA guidelines (see [www.cecra.net](http://www.cecra.net)), a requirement for this certificate is the visit (VA) – the (2-day-minimum) visit to an advisory body in another country, or in another German federal state.

The aim of this document is to make specific guidelines for the VA available to the agencies approached by the VA candidates wishing to arrange a visit, in order to provide support with the following items:

- I. Formulation of the aims of the VA for the visitors and their hosts
- II. Determination of the content sequences and creation of the VA programme
- III. Organisation and conduct
- IV. Sorting out financial aspects in advance
- V. Further rights and duties of the hosting agency

**IALB-Geschäftsstelle:  
Porschestraße 5a  
84030 Landshut  
Deutschland**

**[kontakt@cecra.net](mailto:kontakt@cecra.net)    Tel.: +49 (0)871/9522-4318  
[www.cecra.net](http://www.cecra.net)    Fax: +49 (0)871/9522-4399**

### **I. Formulation of the aims of the VA for the visitors and their hosts**

The aims of the VA are defined in line with the visitors' expectations.

### **II. Determination of the content sequences and creation of the VA programme**

Depending on the specific situation of the agency and the visitors, different thematic priorities may be set. An overall programme is created: Sequences, schedule, responsible individuals, farms to be visited, etc. (Changes can be made at the beginning of the VA, if need be.)

The following are important points of the programme:

- Presentations and dialogue on:
  - Organisation, management and quality assurance of the work, as well as client communication at the agency
  - Specific framework conditions of local agricultural policy and administration (if these differ from the visitors' situation)
  - Focal points of expertise at the agency (*Caution: Don't present everything that the agency does!! -> This would overtax the receptivity of the visitors*)
  - Methodological approach and distinctive features of the agency: Individual consultation, group events, working groups, process support, etc.
  - Project work and approaches to innovation at the agency
- Gaining an insight into at least one advisory case / one local project
  - Farm visit(s) / Insight into local project(s)
  - Dialogue with farm managers / project stakeholders on benefits, form and role of advisory services in the case in question
- Aspects for evaluating the advisory work at the hosting agency
  - Extent to which performance targets were achieved?
  - Effect of the advisory work?
- Ensuring contacts with key persons at the agency
- Framework programme (social, tourist) where possible and in agreement with the visitors
- Systematic scheduling of processing and recovery breaks for the visitors
- Enabling reflection and dialogue vis-à-vis the advisory process at the visited agency in comparison with the situation at one's own agency
- Evaluation / Post-visit debriefing / Working out 'takeaways' for one's own everyday life.

### **III. Organisation and conduct**

- Providing the visitors with recommendations on: Options for travel to and from the hosting agency, accommodation, food, etc.
- Sending the VA programme to the visitors in a timely manner, asking for their response, making any necessary modifications to the programme
- Drawing up a checklist for the individual activities: before, during and after the visit
- Specifying a contact person for the duration of the VA; informing the visitors

### **IV. Sorting out financial aspects in advance:**

- Costs borne by the visitors are usually the following:
- Travel out and back, own food, accommodation, further direct costs of their own
- Costs borne by the hosting agency are usually the following::
- Time spent on the planning, preparation and execution of the VA by members of the hosting agency and the farms visited, Travel costs to project sites and farms, documentation supplied to the visitors
- Any further cost-sharing on the part of the visitors is to be clarified in advance.

**V. Further rights and duties of the hosting agency**

- In the event of multiple enquiries, the approached agency is entitled to time the visits of their various visitors to coincide with one another. The agency may ask individual requesters to join the visitors as part of the IALB Network Week.
- The approached agency is in principle entitled to deny requests.
- The approached agency shall support visitors in their planning of the VA, especially in their search for accommodation.
- The hosting agency shall provide visitors with relevant summary documents on the agency and region.
- Visitors may be asked to sign a data protection agreement to ensure the proper handling of business secrets during the course of the VA (e.g. in accordance with the attached specimen copy based on the agreement used by the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy, Vienna).

*As at 2025-09-13*

## **Data Protection Agreement (Specimen copy)**

**Concerning all of the insights gained into agencies, farms and projects resulting from the visit to an advisory body (VA) made for the attainment of the CECRA Certificate**

Name and address of the person visiting the body:

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Start and finish date of the visit (VA):

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Name of the agency:

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As part of the VA to be completed in accordance with CECRA guidelines, visitors gain an insight into internal business affairs and data, as well as into the business and personal data of clients and members of the institutions in question. The Data Protection Law prohibits the improper use of personal data.

With their signature, agency visitors therefore undertake to maintain the confidentiality of all business and company matters of which they have gained knowledge that pertain to those institutions and farms permitting them an insight into their enterprise as part of the VA. Personal data may only be used in the legally prescribed form, and for the performance of duties entrusted to the signatory. The unauthorised acquisition of business or personal data as well as the transfer of said data to external third parties in any form is prohibited.

I hereby undertake to maintain the confidentiality of all circumstances of which I have become aware over the course of my visit to an advisory body, which regard either the internal affairs and data of the institution enabling the VA, or the business and personal data of affected third parties (clients, members, etc.), including after the conclusion of my VA.

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Place, Date

Signature

One copy remains with the hosting agency.

One copy remains with the visiting individual.

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