

## Zewo Certification

Are you interested in the Zewo quality seal? The Zewo quality seal is awarded to charitable non-profit organizations which are trustworthy, use their donations economically, effectively and for their designated purpose and provide transparent information. It is a useful guide for individual and institutional donors as well as for the public sector.

To retain the quality seal, organizations have to pass the full assessment for compliance with the Zewo standards.

These standards promote a high level of quality in the charitable sector and help to maintain trust in the sector and maintain generous donation levels.



# How to get the Zewo quality seal

## 1 Meet prerequisites

To apply for the Zewo quality seal, you must meet certain basic requirements. Only then can we check whether your organization complies with the 21 Zewo standards and award it the quality seal. These prerequisites include:

- Carrying out a **charitable activity** (in the social, humanitarian or socio-cultural sector or the environmental, nature or animal protection sector)
- Present a current **tax exemption**
- Legal entity based in **Switzerland**
- Evidence that the organization has been active **for 2 years**
- Audited annual financial statements in accordance with **Swiss GAAP FER 21**

## 2 Study information and select procedure

If you meet the prerequisites, we recommend that you study the **21 Zewo standards** in detail. They contain all the requirements which organizations have to meet. **In the Zewo quality seal regulations** you will find further provisions relating to the Zewo quality seal. These documents are available at **www.zewo.ch** or from Zewo's administrative office and are mandatory for the assessment.

You can then apply for an initial **non-binding assessment** by Zewo. Take advantage of this opportunity, especially if you are not sure whether your organization meets the 21 Zewo standards. By studying your basic documentation and in a one-to-one interview, Zewo will assess on a non-binding basis whether or not your organization meets key aspects of the standards. This initial assessment will help you decide whether your organization can pass the full assessment. It will give you an early indication of possible adjustments you can make on important issues and how best to prepare for a successful full assessment. After receiving Zewo's initial non-binding assessment, you can apply for the full assessment within 12 months. For a **non-binding initial assessment, go to Step 3.**

If you are certain that your organization meets the 21 Zewo standards, you can also apply directly for a full assessment. Zewo decides whether to start the full assessment process based on the documents submitted or whether to carry out an initial non-binding assessment first. To **apply directly, go to step 4.**

### ALL ADVANTAGES AT A GLANCE

Organizations with the quality seal can benefit from the following:

- increased trust in the charitable sector and the organization
- awareness and protection of the Zewo quality seal
- inclusion in the database of certified organizations by online search at [www.zewo.ch](http://www.zewo.ch)
- regular news updates on Zewo and its standards
- access to Zewo events at reduced prices
- purchase of Zewo studies and publications at reduced prices
- free advice and recommendations and useful tools
- access to offers by/with third parties on the terms published at [www.zewo.ch](http://www.zewo.ch)
- exclusive advertising opportunities in the fundraising supplement
- access to the donation platform [letshelp.ch](http://letshelp.ch)

For more information on individual advantages and other current offers go to [www.zewo.ch/service](http://www.zewo.ch/service).

3

## Apply for an initial non-binding assessment

For an initial assessment to find out whether or not your organization meets key aspects of the standards, contact us or download an application form at zewo.ch. We will discuss the scope of the assessment with you: we will either make a standard assessment or focus on specific questions, where you might wish to clarify your organization's possible deviations from the standards.

For an initial non-binding assessment, simply submit the following basic documentation of your organization:

- **By-laws or statutes / foundation charter**
- **Tax exemption**
- **Annual report**
- **Annual financial statements in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER 21 including auditor's report**

We will examine the submitted documents and invite you to a **one-to-one interview** at Zewo's offices. This will allow us to clarify any outstanding questions or uncertainties and discuss **already identifiable deviations** from the Zewo standards, as well as the necessary adjustments. Once you have received our notification on the initial non-binding assessment in writing, you can apply for the full assessment within 12 months.

### DURATION AND COSTS

There is a flat fee for an initial non-binding assessment of CHF 500 (excl. VAT). After the documents have been submitted, we normally invite you within thirty days to an interview at the Zewo offices.

4

## Submit complete application for a full assessment

If you believe that your organization meets the requirements or would like to continue the certification procedure after the initial non-binding assessment, you can request the **questionnaire** for the full assessment or download it at zewo.ch. Your application will be considered following receipt of the fully completed and validly signed questionnaire with all the required documents.

We will then check whether you meet all **21 Zewo standards** in full. At a **one-to-one interview** we will jointly clarify outstanding points and any deviations from the standards. We will record the result in a written **assessment report**. This will state what steps your organization has to take, if any, in order to fully comply with the Zewo standards, and give you a deadline for implementation. You will have the opportunity to comment on the report. We will then draft the application to **Zewo's Board of Trustees**. If all the essential conditions have been implemented, we will request that the quality seal be awarded. If important conditions have not been met, we will unfortunately request that the quality seal not be awarded.

### DURATION AND COSTS

Generally from 6 to 12 months pass from direct submission of an application until the decision of the Zewo Board. After an initial non-binding assessment, 3 to 9 months pass from application to full assessment.

The costs for certification are based on time spent (CHF 150 per hour) and from experience will be around CHF 5,000 for the first time certification.

When the process starts, you receive an on-account invoice (CHF 2,500 if no initial assessment has been made, CHF 1,500 if initial assessment has been made), followed by an interim invoice with the full assessment report. You receive the final invoice after certification is complete.

5

## Awarding of the quality seal

In response to the office's application, Zewo's Board of Trustees decides whether to accept or reject an application. We will inform you of the decision in writing. It may come with:

- **Conditions:** if there are minor problems that can be quickly remedied, the Board of Zewo may approve the application subject to meeting outstanding conditions. In order to retain the right to use the Zewo quality seal, these conditions must be implemented by a specific deadline.
- **Recommendations:** The decision may contain information on desirable improvements.

The right to use the Zewo quality seal is normally limited to **five years**. In exceptional cases the Board of Zewo may also specify a different validity period. If the quality seal is not awarded, the organization can apply for re-assessment two years after the Board of Trustees' decision at the earliest.

### ANNUAL FEE

The minimum annual fee is CHF 500 and the maximum CHF 13,000 (excl. VAT) and comprises a basic amount of CHF 250 and a turnover fee of 0.333% of total income.

A reduced turnover fee of 0.143% applies to homes, schools and workshops.

An annual flat fee of CHF 300 is billed for legally autonomous, regional or themed sections of a national network (sub-organizations) with the Zewo quality seal.

6

## Regular monitoring

After certification, your organization must be regularly monitored for compliance with the requirements. This indicates to donors that your organization meets the Zewo standards. This regular monitoring includes:

- **Annual checks:** Your organization sends us the annual report and annual financial statements plus auditor's report for our inspection. Zewo can ask to view other documents at any time.
- **Recertification:** Your organization is re-assessed every five years. Only organizations which still meet the 21 Zewo standards are allowed to use the Zewo quality seal for five more years. In the event of deviations, the right to use the Zewo quality seal is awarded subject to conditions, which must be met within a specified period. In special cases Zewo may carry out recertification earlier.
- **Check on conditions:** We check that you have complied with any conditions for recertification within the specified period. If we find that you have not complied by the deadline, have repeatedly and seriously breached the Zewo standards or have not or only partially fulfilled your cooperation obligations despite repeated reminders, we initiate withdrawal of the quality seal.

If we find that you have not complied by the deadline, have repeatedly and seriously breached the Zewo standards or have not or only partially fulfilled your cooperation obligations despite repeated reminders, we initiate **withdrawal of the quality seal**.

### OBLIGATIONS OF QUALITY SEAL HOLDERS

You are obliged to comply with the Zewo standards at any time.

You also have a duty of cooperation. You notify us of significant changes (amended by-laws, change of name, merger, outsourcing of tasks, etc.), allow us to inspect relevant documents at any time on special incidences and provide information.

For recertification, you provide us truthfully with the necessary information.

You should ensure the Zewo quality seal is clearly visible on all publications, as this will help to strengthen the Zewo quality seal.



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**Can we withdraw our organization from ongoing inspection?**

You may halt the process at any time and withdraw your organization's application. You will be billed for the expenses incurred up to that point.

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**What are the advantages and drawbacks of a non-binding initial assessment?**

**Advantages**

Uncertainties and outstanding issues can be clarified during the initial non-binding assessment. In addition, you find out before the full assessment whether you need to make significant adjustments. You can resolve these points prior to inspection. We get to know your organization and can use this knowledge for the full assessment. The initial non-binding assessment saves time and money when it comes to the full assessment. It also reduces the risk of failing the inspection.

**Drawbacks**

The initial non-binding assessment is carried out without obligation. Some essential and fundamental points of the 21 Zewo standards are examined, insofar as they can be assessed from the basic documentation submitted. The written notification on the initial non-binding assessment does not give a judgement including all standards and does not guarantee that your organization will pass the full assessment. Zewo reserves the right to examine all aspects of the standards during the full assessment and if necessary to reassess them.

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**What are the advantages and drawbacks of a direct application for a full assessment?**

**Advantages**

If your organization meets all requirements of Zewo, the direct process saves you time, because you do not have to wait for the notification of the initial non-binding assessment.

**Drawbacks**

The risk of your organization failing the inspection is greater, because it may not be possible to rectify significant problems in time. If the quality seal is not awarded, your organization will not be able to apply for re-assessment until two years after the Zewo Board's decision.

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**Why is the initial non-binding assessment only valid for 12 months?**

The initial non-binding assessment is based on your organization's current annual report and most recent annual financial statements. After 12 months, new documents must be submitted. Organizations also change over time. For donors to have confidence that the organization meets Zewo's criteria, the assessment must be based on the most recent documents. After more than 12 months, the process therefore starts again from the beginning.

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**Which way is the most cost-effective and shortest?**

The costs and duration of an assessment depend largely on your organization's preparation and cooperation. If your organization meets the Zewo standards in full, a direct application without initial non-binding assessment is quicker and more cost-effective overall. Your organization will not have to wait for the notification on the initial non-binding assessment. However, if your organization does not meet individual Zewo requirements, then a direct application may extend the full assessment process and incur additional costs. We therefore recommend undergoing an initial non-binding assessment in case of any uncertainties or outstanding issues. There will of course be an additional flat-rate charge for this assessment, but your organization can save time and money on the full assessment by independently rectifying problems ahead of time.

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**What happens if I do not comply with the conditions in the full assessment report?**

If your organization does not comply with the conditions stipulated in the final assessment report, an application will have to be made for non-award of the quality seal. If minor points are involved, which are likely to be rectified, certification with conditions is also possible. The Board of Zewo ultimately decides whether or not the quality seal is awarded to your organization. If the decision is negative, your organization can reapply 2 years after the Board of Trustees' decision at the earliest.

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**Is certification reported to the public?**

Zewo informs the general public which organizations may use the quality seal and which organizations are no longer entitled to use it. However, Zewo does not provide any information to third parties about an ongoing assessment process. When the process is complete, it may provide information on conditions subject to which the right to use the quality seal was granted or renewed.

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**How long does the interview for certification last?**

Outstanding issues and possible problems are discussed. The length of the interview varies depending on the number of points to be discussed. Based on experience, an interview for a full assessment lasts about 2 hours, but could take longer. 1 hour is scheduled for the interview for an initial non-binding assessment. If documents are missing, your organization can submit them after the interview. You receive a file memo summarising the discussion and the results.

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**What legal recourse do I have?**

You can file an objection to non-award or withdrawal of the quality seal within 30 days after receipt of the decision, by contacting Zewo's appeal court. The appeal process is set out in the appeal court's regulations.