

White Paper

What is Third Party Verification?



Third party verifications are an independent 'tick in the box', confirming either a product or a set of products' compliance with a particular standard. In the Structured cabling industry, this verification testing, is performed by a small number of expert test laboratories, and can incorporate testing of components for communication cabling, i.e. horizontal / backbone cables, connecting hardware, patch cords, and permanent links and channels consisting of these components.

Testing is carried out in laboratory conditions using highly sophisticated, extremely accurate network analyzers and test rigs.

Who Carries Out The Verification Testing

There are a small number of well known verification organisations, each of which offer a range of test and certification services, some of the most recognised service providers include , Delta, 3P, Intertek, GHMT.

Excel has chosen to work closely with Delta and the majority of the products offered by Excel which hold third party verification are part of Delta's EC VERIFIED programme.

EC VERIFIED is a globally recognised approval programme for cables and connecting hardware. It confirms that the products have been tested to, and meet, the relevant standard by Delta, whose processes and model are approved by the Danish quality standards body DANAK, as an accredited independent third party testing laboratory.



Are There Different Types of Certification programmes ?

Broadly speaking, there are two types of approval programmes available:

- Full Maintenance Approval
- Certificate of Compliance

The specific names for these approvals can be different from one test house to another, - for example attestation of conformance has the same general meaning as certificate of compliance but the details of them are very similar. The table opposite highlights the general difference between the two.

Certification	Certification of Compliance	Full Maintenance Approval
Validity of Certificate	One year	As long as the programme is running, renewed annually
Branding	Cannot use the official logo of the test house	Can use the official Logo of the test house
Statement in Literature	May state that the product has been tested by the test house	The product can be accompanied by the Official Logo (E.g.: 3P Verified / EC Verified)
Listing on the website of the Test House	N/A	Listed until the approval is discontinued
Sample Approval	One time testing of production sample	Initial approval of production samples
Factory Inspection	N/A	Factory inspection will be required before qualification can be granted
Follow up Activities	N/A	Factory inspection and sample approval every 6 or 12 months

Factory Inspections:

It can be seen that a major difference between the approval processes, is the use of factory inspection as part of the full maintenance option.

Approval certificates without factory inspections do not take into account or review the stability required in continued production performance. Factory inspection visits help develop understanding and confidence that the required production and quality control processes are in place before concluding that testing is done on representative samples from regular production. To summarise, Factory inspections by third party test houses will demonstrate that tested quality is in fact production performance, day in day out.

In comparison, products which list certification or attestation based approval are effectively confirming that a single sample provided to the test house has successfully passed the required test criteria. This method of gaining verification is sometimes referred to as a 'golden sample' due to the process of providing single samples once, to gain certification.

A further consideration is the level of certification gained by the product set being considered. Specifically, has the highest possible testing available – known as component compliance – been achieved, or the 'easier' channel verification. This is the subject of separate Excel white paper which can be found online and within the Excel Encyclopaedia.

How can Consultants / End Users verify the Certification?

The test houses referred to in this document are generally happy to support end users if they are uncertain about any approvals. They understand that it is important to offer quick and efficient response to end users as this is key to secure market trust in their approvals. This service is generally offered free of charge for products that have 'Full Maintenance Approval'.

The validity and the authenticity of an approval can be confirmed by visiting the website of the relevant third party test house, or, by an e-mail / phone call. Listed below are the website addresses of the test providers referenced in this document of some of the major test houses:

- **Delta** - http://www.madebydelta.com/delta/Business_units/LAN/LAN+Frontpage.page?
- **3P** - <http://www.3ptest.dk/index.php/3ptest/3P-Qualified-Products/Introduction>
- **Intertek** - <http://www.intertek.com/cabling-products/>
- **GHMT** - http://www.ghmt.de/ghmt2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=76&lang=en

As an example, visitors can visit the Delta web site and browse through the links on the left index of the page to a specific manufacturer (EC Verified Companies), or, to view a list of companies that have a valid approval for a specific product type they could use EC Verified Components to navigate their way through easily.

Screen shots of Delta, 3P websites are shown below.



Conclusion:

Third Party approvals provide assurance and peace of mind for End users and Consultants before choosing a product. End clients will benefit by going the extra mile to ensure that the approval shown by a manufacturer is a 'Full Maintenance Approval' that includes factory inspection and random sample selection, that the verifications are valid – specifically check validation period and standards against which certification that is offered to ensure most recent versions.

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