

# OPQIBI Qualification

The engineering services company quality mark

**OPQIBi**  
L'INGÉNIERIE QUALIFIÉE

# L'OPQIBI :

## The Engineering Qualification Body

**The OPQIBI issues qualification certificates to engineering services companies operating in the construction, environment, energy and industrial process sectors.**

### **Milestones:**

- 1969:** the OPQIBI formed by the CICF and SYNTEC-INGÉNIERIE
- 1975:** protocol signed with the Ministries of Industry and Equipment
- 1976:** first qualifications granted
- 1996:** protocol signed with the Ministry of the Environment
- 2002:** creation of a 'new OPQIBI' with a new list of qualifications
- 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009:** OPQIBI accredited by COFRAC (French Accreditation Committee)
- June 22, 2009:** new protocol signed with the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Town and Country Planning

### **The OPQIBI: an independent body acknowledged by the public authorities**

The OPQIBI is a non-profit making independent legal structure (association operating under the law 1901 status).

The OPQIBI's mission is officially acknowledged by the Public Authorities, through protocols with the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Town and Country Planning, and the Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Employment, which are represented in the body's various decision-making authorities.





### The OPQIBI: a body accredited by COFRAC



The OPQIBI was formally accredited by COFRAC, under number 4-0526, on 1st January 2009. The accreditation was granted on the basis of standard NF X50-091 and confirms the transparency, independence and impartiality of the OPQIBI's operation. The following points are particularly important:

- all the sectors concerned by the qualification granted are represented within the OPQIBI's decision-making authorities, where they are evenly divided into three colleges: college A (customers), college B (engineering services companies) and college C (institutional bodies and general interest).
- the processors and committee members who grant the qualifications are professionals acknowledged for their ethical and professional standards.

### The OPQIBI: a body serving sustainable development

As part of its mission, the OPQIBI promotes quality engineering, which stimulates an overall and durable quality of construction.

Very early, in 1996, qualifications were created that identified service companies able to assess the environmental impact of development projects.

In 2003, the OPQIBI worked with the ADEME - French Environment and Energy Management Agency - to design qualifications in the field of renewable energies (thermal solar, photovoltaic solar, bio-energies, etc.). Finally, since 2008, the OPQIBI has been developing specific qualifications, within the context of the objectives defined by the Grenelle de l'Environnement, France's Environment Round Table, relating to the energy efficiency of buildings (building energy audit, energy diagnostics in industry, etc.).

#### OPQIBI key statistics:

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6 permanent employees

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6 qualification committees

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250 benevolent professional staff

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1100 structures qualified:

- representing an annual turnover of 3.9 billion euros
- and with almost 29,000 employees

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11,000 qualifications granted are currently valid

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# The OPQIBI qualification: an acknowledgement of skill and professionalism

## Purpose of the OPQIBI qualification

An OPQIBI qualification certifies the **skills** and **professionalism** of an engineering structure to deliver a given service, whether it be a main or coordinating service (consulting engineer, main design work, engineering company) or a secondary service.

## Objective qualification criteria

An OPQIBI qualification is granted on the basis of the following three criteria:

- an **“identification”** criterion, relating to the meeting of legal, administrative and financial requirements (upward trend of turnover and personnel, administrative and financial compliance, insurance, etc.),
- a **“resources”** criterion, applied to check and confirm the skills and experience of a structure’s technical staff, its equipment and its methods,
- a **“references”** criterion, based on the presentation of three references per qualification requested, certified by works owners or customers.

These criteria are defined in the OPQIBI **qualification reference system**. Where necessary, for certain qualifications, specific supplementary criteria have to be met. These are then referenced in the list of OPQIBI qualifications.

## A very stringent qualification procedure

The qualification procedure comprises the following phases:

1. **The application documents are deposited** by a services company.
2. An **acceptability** analysis is conducted on the documents by the general secretariat.
3. **The documents are examined** by one or more competent processors.
4. **A decision** is taken by the qualification committee(s) concerned.
5. A **certificate** is issued.

The qualification procedure is described in the OPQIBI **qualifications granting, follow-up and renewal procedures manual**.





### Certificates issued

A **qualification certificate** is issued to an engineering services company that meets the three qualification criteria. This certifies that a structure has the capability to deliver, and has already delivered with complete customer satisfaction, the deliverables for which it is qualified.

For recently formed structures, notably those with insufficient references, the OPQIBI issues a **trial qualification**. This certificate certifies that a structure has the capability to deliver the services for which it is qualified, but has not yet completed them in sufficient volume.

### Validity, follow-up and renewal

A qualification is granted for a renewable period of **four years**. An **annual follow-up** is conducted, to confirm that the original "identification" and "resources" criteria, on which the qualification was based, remain valid.

The renewal procedure is identical to the initial qualification procedure.

A trial qualification is granted for a period of **one year**, and cannot be renewed more than twice.

A qualification can be withdrawn at any time, if a structure no longer meets the criteria defined in the OPQIBI qualification reference system.

### Identification certificates

In addition to its qualification, the OPQIBI also issues specific identification certificates.

An identification certificate may be issued to a group or holding company. This certificate notably mentions the contact information for the various OPQIBI-qualified subsidiaries, their qualifications (or trial qualifications), and their common services and resources.

An identification certificate also exists for organised groups (networks).

# The OPQIBI qualification: an instrument of confidence in the customer - service company relationship

## A decision aid tool for customers

The main objective of the OPQIBI qualification is to provide **security** for public and private customers in their **selection** of skilled engineering services companies.

A works owner or customer can refer to the list of **OPQIBI qualifications** and issue calls for tender that request, or even demand if necessary, the presentation of a certificate, specifying the appropriate level of qualification for the contracts concerned.

Within the context of such searches, the customer can also consult the **qualified companies directory**, that the OPQIBI has put online for customers, for free on its website. This directory is also published every 2 years.

The Public Contracts Law created by the decree of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006, officially acknowledges qualification certificates as proof of a tendering company's capability (articles 45-I and II).

## Advantages for engineering services companies

The OPQIBI qualification acknowledges the skills and professionalism of services companies who have sought certification, which facilitates the establishing of a confidence-based relationship with customers.

The qualification also allows the services company to benefit from OPQIBI promotional activities directed at customers (qualified companies directory, website, etc.) and to obtain preferential rates from certain insurance companies.

Finally, the qualification also enables the company to implement a continuous improvement approach involving all employees.

## The OPQIBI qualification and auxiliary legal practice

A Ministry of Justice act of 18th December 2000, amended on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003, specifies the holding of an OPQIBI qualification as one of the two conditions to be met for an engineering services company (without a qualified lawyer) to be authorised to give **legal consultations** directly related to the company's main activity and **draft private contract documents between the parties**, which constitute auxiliary actions necessary to the main activity (e.g. drafting specifications, issuing calls for tender, etc.).



## List of OPQIBI qualifications



Qualifications granted by the OPQIBI are referenced in a **list**, in which they are classified by activity, as shown below:

- 01: Customer Assistance (AMO)
- 02: Programming
- 03: Miscellaneous Planning and Coordination
- 04: Project Management
- 05: Leisure - Culture - Tourism (LCT)
- 06: Environmental assessment
- 07: Environment-related techniques
- 08: Protection of the environment
- 09: Pollution and decontamination
- 10: Earth-related techniques
- 11: Earthworking - Roads - Underground networks
- 12: Construction - Structure - Fitting and finishing
- 13: Fluids and Climatic engineering (networks and installations)
- 14: Electricity: high current and low current
- 15: Specific techniques and processes
- 16: Acoustics
- 17: Works engineering and industrial systems
- 18: Works engineering and infrastructure systems
- 19: Works engineering and building systems
- 20: Works engineering and energy systems
- 21: Works engineering and environment systems
- 22: Cost management

The content of each of the above qualifications is defined in detail in respective data sheets, to facilitate their understanding by both engineering services companies and works owners or customers.

The OPQIBI qualifications list is permanently being adapted and updated as a function of market requirements, new technical developments or regulatory requirements.

## Documents published by the OPQIBI:

- The OPQIBI statutes
- OPQIBI in-house regulations
- Rules of conduct for OPQIBI qualified companies
- Identification certificate granting and qualification reference system
- List of OPQIBI qualifications
- Qualifications and identification certificates granting, follow-up and renewal procedures manual
- Directory of OPQIBI qualified companies

## Documents published with the qualification bodies:

- Qualification information brochure
- “The requirement for a professional qualification certificate in public contracts (Stipulations of the Law of 2006)”
- “The French qualification system for suppliers of intellectual services” (document in French and English)

## Useful links:

- The OPQIBI website: [www.opqibi.com](http://www.opqibi.com)
- Company qualification information website: [www.qualientreprises.com](http://www.qualientreprises.com)



### For further information

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