Cascale

Member FAQs: Higg FEM Verification Access Fee

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The purpose of this document is to provide members with information on the Verification Access Fee process for Higg FEM. If you have questions that are not addressed below, please contact us at verification@cascale.org and a member of our team will be in touch soon.

What is the Verification Access Fee and what does it cover?

The Higg FEM Verification Access Fee is used by Cascale (formerly Sustainable Apparel Coalition) to support the ongoing content and methodology development of the Higg Index, associated programs, and verification protocols, which are essential to drive collective action in the industry.

How is the fee collected?

The fee collection process differs for Cascale members and nonmembers:

- **For Cascale members**, the VBs will not collect any money. VBs will utilize the Manufacturer Membership Check website to verify if a facility is a Cascale member. Cascale will true-up any overage directly with the relevant member at the end of their membership year. To reiterate, VBs should not collect the Verification Access Fee from a Cascale member.

- **For all other Higg FEM users**, the Verifier Body will collect the Higg FEM verification fee on Cascale's behalf directly from Verifier Body's clients (facility, brand, etc.) with which the Verifier Body has entered into a separate verification services agreement and pay such fee to Cascale.

What is the cost of the Verification Access Fee?

Effective January 1, 2026, after thoughtful consideration, there will be a modest $50 increase for the Verification Access Fee to account for inflation, align with other

industry initiatives, and provide essential resources for Cascale members and Higg Index users. The fee will be $350.

Cascale acknowledges the concerns regarding rising costs and has carefully considered this modest adjustment to maintain our credible, adequately resourced, and well positioned verification program and continue to deliver high-quality service to manufacturers, verifiers, and the broader industry.

Are Cascale members exempt from paying the $350 Verification Access Fee?
As a benefit of being a part of Cascale, our members receive a certain number of Higg FEM verification assessments free of charge as a membership benefit. Our members will only pay the $350 Verification Access Fee if they exceed their assessment quota. In the event that you exceed your quota, Cascale will invoice you at the close of the Higg FEM cadence.

For example, if you joined Cascale in 2023 and enjoy 10 verification assessments, your 10 assessments will be honored at the beginning of the Higg FEM cadence. If you verify 13 facilities in 2024, the Verification Access Fee will be waived for the first 10 facilities, and the Verification Access Fee will be charged for the three facilities that go over your quota. In this example, you would be charged $1,050 USD for three verification assessments (3 x $350 = $1,050) at the end of the Higg FEM cadence.

How will the VBs know which facilities to charge?
Cascale members receive a number of Higg FEM assessments as a benefit of membership (25 if joined before 2021, 10 if member joined after 2021). VBs should not charge Cascale members the verification access fee and can use the Manufacturer Membership Check site, hosted by Sumerra, to confirm whether a facility is owned by a Cascale member by inputting the Worldly ID number. For members that exceed the number of of allocated vFEMs for their member benefit, Cascale's finance department will true up the overages at the end of the Higg FEM cadence during the next member renewal period. VBs should only charge non-members the Verification Access Fee.

Where can I find more information?

To help support our members and community, we invite you to access key resources to help guide you through these important changes:

- Higg FEM Verification Program
- Verification webpage
- Verification one pagers

If you have any questions regarding the Higg FEM price increase, please see our FAQ on Cascale Connect.

For any questions about the verification process or how the fee is used, please reach out to verification@cascale.org.