

Certification Procedure

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Purpose

The Certification procedure is to clarify the process followed a request for certification has been received



Scope

This will apply to all client interested in certification in the various ISO standards offered by ISO Global Certification



Reference

ISO IEC 17021-2015 Certification Bodies Management System



Responsibility

Top Management

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1. Contract Review

For the contract review (ISO Global Certification) IGC will seek information in its (Question for Preparation of Quote) QPOQ 001 format to-

- a) Determine if the offered certificate is within the scope of accreditation and make sure that needed auditing competence is available with it for the required scope. If the scope of certification does not fall within the accredited scope of IGC, IGC upon acceptance by client may provide self-accredited (non-accredited) Certificate.
- b) Determine the effective manpower at the client facility to be audited to calculate the audit man-days required.
- c) The man-days calculated in this review are subject to change based on the perception of the auditor in the stage 1 audit. This may also happen during any surveillance audit if the client organization has undergone any significant change to necessitate this change.
- d) For any significant change in the number of man-days required for the audit, the client will bear the cost of the increased number of man-days.
- e) Upon client request, IGC shall provide audit time determination and the justification.
- f) general MS requirements; or
- g) MS requirements in accordance with ISO 9001.

2. Upon acceptance of IGC as its Certification body the client shall-

- a) Issue the required document to accept the financial terms and conditions
- b) Sign an agreement with IGC
- c) where there are or multiple sites of a client, the agreement shall cover all the sites within the scope of the certification
- d) Mutually decide with IGC the timeframe for the certification process.
- e) The client shall comply with any changes to the requirements of certification as notified by IGC to its certified clients from time to time as these changes become applicable. Client shall ensure that such changes are compiled within stipulated time frame. IGC shall verify that each certified client complies with the new requirements.

3. Normative requirements for certification

- a) The organization to be certified should be a legal entity.
- b) The organization should comply with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.
- c) The organization should have a documented and implemented management system in accordance with the selected scheme of certification.
- d) It should have conducted at least one cycle of internal audit covering all requirements of the management system standard followed up by a Management review prior to the initial certification audit by IGC.
- e) It should have nominated a management representative.

4. The client undertakes to-

- a) Inform IGC, without delay, of major changes to client management that affect the current status of certification to enable IGC to evaluate the same. For example, changes related to contact details, organization, ownership, business activities, scope of operation, locations, processes (e.g. addition or deletion of design function), legal / commercial status of the organization etc.
- b) Extend necessary cooperation during the assessment and provide information on health, safety and environmental requirements to be fulfilled by IGC auditors including appropriate office space for working.
- c) Allow IGC Auditors to perform audit as per schedule and provide access to technical experts / interpreter / observers (from IGC or Accreditation Body, where necessary), as well as access to documents, records and sites in order to assess the management system to determine compliance /continuing compliance to the designated standard and provide information necessary for evaluation by IGC.
- d) Provide necessary auditable documents as requested by IGC well in advance of the audit.
- e) Allow short notice audits (refer to short notice audits section of this document).
- f) Maintain a complete and clear record of all received complaints, Environmental or Occupational Health and Safety incidents resolution thereof and provide access to IGC to evaluate action taken.

- g) Provide access to investigate into any complaints received by IGC from any interested parties.
- h) Ensure that the Certificate of compliance, Certification mark or audit report, or any part thereof issued by IGC, is not used in a misleading manner violating rule prescribed by IGC and accreditation body.
- i) Comply by the IGC transition / migration policy for the revised normative standards / audit criteria (for example, ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018 are already published on website)
- j) The Certificate or Audit Report issued by IGC shall always be used, reproduced, published and distributed in entirety.
- k) Inform IGC, without delay, of the occurrence of a serious incident or breach of regulation necessitating the involvement of the competent regulatory authority.
- l) Ensure that the management system implemented across all the locations under the scope is one and that a central function (The central function is part of the organization and shall not be subcontracted to an external organization) is identified where from management system is primarily operated and controlled.

5. Certification audit (Initial audit)

The flow chart for the entire certification process is on page 6. The initial certification audits for all new applications are performed in two parts (Stage 1 and Stage 2).

STAGE 1

The stage 1 is conducted by making a visit to the client premises and covers the followings:

- a) Review the client's management system documented information against audit criteria
- b) Evaluate the client's location and site-specific condition and to undertake discussions with the client's personnel to determine the preparedness for the stage 2 audit.
- c) To review the client's status and understanding regarding requirements of the standard, in particular with respect to the identification of key processes, objectives, key performance indicators, significant aspects-risks, and operational controls as applicable.
- d) Collect necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, processes and location(s) of the client, outsourced processes exclusion and justifications and related statutory aspects and compliances (e.g. legal aspects of quality, environmental and safety related client's operation, etc.)
- e) Obtain necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, such as sites, processes and equipment used, levels of controls established (particularly in case of multisite clients) and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements
- f) Review the allocation of resources for stage 2 audit and agree with the client on the details.
- g) Provide a focus for planning the stage 2 audit by gaining a sufficient understanding of the client's management system and site operation in the context of possible significant aspects.
- h) Check if the internal audits and management review are performed and the level of implementation of management is adequate
- i) In case any discrepancies are noticed, the Lead Auditor (LA) will give suitable findings and the client shall have close the gaps and inform IGC before taking of the stage 2 audits. If any significant changes which would impact the management system occur, IGC shall consider the need to repeat all or part of stage 1. If sufficient confidence is not perceived by the audit team, results of stage 1 may lead to postponement or cancellation of stage 2.

STAGE 2 Audit

Client management system is assessed to establish effectiveness of the implementation of the system across the organization by taking samples of records, reviewing/witnessing on-going process/ operations and by interviewing personnel performing the tasks. Any significant finding of stage 1 is taken into consideration while finalizing the audit plan for stage 2. NCRs of stage 1 are reviewed and closed. Stage 2 audit shall address the following, as a minimum:

- a) Information and evidence about conformity to all requirement of the management system standard.
- b) Performance monitoring, measuring, reporting and reviewing against key performance objectives and targets.
- c) Performance as regards legal compliance.
- d) Operational control of the client's processes
- e) Internal auditing and management review.
- f) Management responsibility

- g) Links between the normative requirements, policy, performance objectives and targets (consistent with the expectations in the applicable management system standard or other normative document), any applicable legal requirements, responsibilities, competence of personnel, operations, procedures, performance data and internal audit findings and conclusions.

At the end of the stage 2 audit, the LA shall present the audit findings to the client management and also inform the audit recommendation to the IGC Certification Decision Committee. The classification of audit findings is explained to the client during the opening and at the closing meeting. The non-conformance(s) are documented in the format for non-conformance note (NCN) and issued to the client for initiating investigation and action. The client is expected to propose corrective actions for each NCN issued. The LA will make his recommendation only when the proposed corrective actions are acceptable to him/her. Depending on the nature of the findings the LA may indicate the requirement of a follow-up audit prior to recommending for certification. Follow-up audit shall be performed on agreed date(s) and fees charged as per agreed man-day rates in the accepted quotation.

If IGC is not able to verify the implementation of corrections and corrective actions of any major nonconformity within 6 months after the last day of stage 2, another stage 2 audit shall be conducted prior to recommending certification.

The LA may modify the scope of certification based on the audit findings.

An audit may be aborted only in extra ordinary situations, the decision for which shall be taken by the LA in consultation with the client.

6. Certification decision

The Certification Decision Committee shall make the final decision for granting certification. The LA shall forward the audit report and other documentation for review by the certification decision committee clearly stating the audit recommendation. When recommendation is approved by the committee a Certificate of Compliance shall be issued by IGC. The decision committee may seek additional clarifications from the LA or the client before accepting the recommendation. A draft Certificate of Compliance shall be forwarded to the client for review prior to issue of the Original Certificate. The Certificate of Compliance shall be valid for a period of three years from certification date. The validity of the certificate is verified at least yearly in surveillance.

7. Surveillance activities

After Certification, surveillance audits will be carried out at intervals indicated in the accepted quotation. Surveillance audits are carried out periodically to verify that the certified management system continue to comply with the requirements and are effectively in place. Non-conformances identified during the Surveillance audits shall be documented and classified as described in 5.0 above. The Surveillance audit program shall address, as a minimum:

- a) internal Audits and management review,
- b) a review of actions taken on nonconformities identified during the previous audit,
- c) handling of complaints,
- d) effectiveness of the management system with regard to achieving the established objectives,
- e) progress of planned activities aimed at continual improvement,
- f) continuing operational control.
- g) review of any changes,
- h) use of certification marks and/or any reference to certification.

The LA shall submit the audit report and providing recommendation for continual validity of certification to the IGC certification decision committee. First surveillance shall be conducted between 9th and 12th month of the certification/recertification audit.

IGC may undertake additional surveillance activities as necessary such as client web site review, client product packaging information review, use of certification mark by client, advertisement displays by client etc.

8. Recertification

Before the expiry of the existing certificate, fresh contract review shall be carried out. IGC will have an extensive relook at the client's management system during recertification audit. It will be binding for the client to have recertification audit, close all resulting major NCs (if any) and propose correction - corrective action plans for any minor NCs before expiry of the existing certificate.

If IGC has not completed the recertification audit or is unable to verify the implementation of corrections and corrective actions for any major nonconformity prior to the expiry date of the certification, then recertification shall not be recommended, and the validity of the certification shall not be extended.

Following expiration of certification, the IGC can restore certification within 6 months provided that the outstanding recertification activities are completed, otherwise at least a stage 2 shall be conducted. The effective current date on the certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision and the expiry date shall be based on prior certification cycle.

Upon request by client, IGC can keep the original certification date on the certificate when a certificate lapses for a period of time. In such cases, the renewed certificate shall indicate:

- the current certification cycle start and expiry date
- the previous certification cycle expiry date and the date of recertification audit

9. Scope expansion or reduction

Upon request by the client for scope expansion, fresh contract review shall be performed. Special audit may be planned for such expansion or may be clubbed together with upcoming surveillance audit. Stage 1 and stage 2 requirements shall be verified during the audit for the requested extended scope. Compliance to the requirements would result in issue of revised certificate with extended scope.

Client may request for scope reduction voluntarily. In such cases, it may not be necessary to conduct special audit, unless the reduced scope is exclusive of the existing scope in defining client's business activity.

During any audit, if the LA is not provided with sufficient evidence of documentation and implementation of a part of the certified scope, LA has right to recommend to the decision committee to reduce the scope by eliminating that part of the scope for which evidence was not made available.

10. Transfer of certification

IGC may accept to transfer the existing certification under following conditions:

- Only certification which is covered by an accreditation of an IAF. Organizations holding certification that is not covered by such accreditations shall be treated as new clients.
- Pre Transfer Review shall be carried out to verify the validity of the existing certificate and to confirm that the current certification is not under threat of suspension or withdrawal.
- IGC will communicate with the existing CB to obtain necessary information about the status of existing certification.
- Transfer will be accepted only if requirements of TACMS 001 (Transfer of Accredited Certification of Management Systems) are complied with.

11. Short notice audits

It may be necessary for IGC to conduct short notice / unannounced audits of certified clients at short notice under following circumstances:

- to investigate complaints from clients or other interested parties of the certified client
- to verify and validate the integrity of the client management system in case of significant changes to the client management system / organization

- to investigate if the management system has not been compromised and did function effectively in the event that IGC becomes aware that there has been a serious incident related to occupational health and safety, for example, a serious accident, or a serious breach of regulation

Because of the lack of opportunity for the client to object to audit team members, IGC ensures that the members of audit team assigned have not been party to any complaint or appeal from the client under consideration.

12. Suspension, restoring or withdrawal of Certificate

IGC certification decision is final binding on the client and IGC shall have full right to suspend a certification, reduction of scope of Certification. Suspension of certification can occur when one or more of the following situations, as applicable,

- Unresponsiveness of the client to the audit notifications and non cooperation in conduct of surveillance audits in time.
- No actions/objective evidence submitted on major non-conformity (nonconformity that affects the capability of the management system to achieve the intended results) issued during re-certification and/or Surveillance audits within the specified time.
- Recurring major non-conformity noticed by the audit team indicating ineffective controls.
- Failure of the client to inform IGC of any major changes in its organization that may affect the status of certificate.
- No evidence of conducting planned internal audit and/or management review in two successive surveillance audits.
- IGC comes to know that the client no longer complying with the IGC Rules of Certification and/or found misusing the Certification Marks or Certificate or Scope of Certification is misreported.
- If IGC learns of any legal / public action against the client that violates the credence of certification.
- Failure to demonstrate integrity of management system in handling incidents such as a serious accident, or a serious breach of regulation
- Payment is overdue
- Certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension

The status of suspension of any client has validity for maximum of 6 months after which the certificate will be withdrawn unless the conditions for which the suspension was enforced are effectively reversed, that may be verified through a short notice audit. On confirmation that the conditions resulting in suspension are reversed, suspension will be lifted (certification will be restored) by IGC.

Withdrawal of Certificate: The client shall comply with post withdrawal actions requested by IGC within the time frame determined by IGC. Withdrawal will necessitate Client -

- To return the original certificate and
- Discontinue with immediate effect the certification and accreditation marks and confirm the same failing which IGC may take recourse of a legal action.

If the client wants Certification again (for the Certificate withdrawn or automatically expired) fresh application review followed by initial audit would be required. The original date and unique number of the withdrawn Certificate shall not be carried forward to the new Certificate.

13. Requirements for use of Certification mark and reference to certification

- IGC has established rules for use of Certification mark.
- Clients that hold certification shall be provided with soft copy of IGC Certification mark. IGC Certification mark may be used in conjunction with the accreditation body mark (only if provided by IGC). The applicable rules for use of marks issued by accreditation body will be valid at all times.
- For an accredited certified client when the combined mark of IGC and accreditation body is issued, the size of the accreditation body mark must not exceed the size of the IGC Certification mark. These shall always be printed side by side.
- The certification mark shall be used only on correspondence, Letter heads, visiting cards, advertising, website and promotional material and must not be directly used on products and product packages. The mark shall not be more conspicuous compared to the certified client logo. (Note: Product packaging is considered as that which can be removed without the product disintegrating or being damaged. Accompanying information is

considered as separately available or easily detachable. Type labels or identification plates are considered as part of the product).

- e) Promotional or informative statement used to communicate the certified status shall include reference to identification of certified client, type of management system, applicable standard and IGC. The statement shall in no way imply that the product, process or service is certified by this means.
- f) Proportional increase shall be allowed on stationary of larger size than A4. Client shall ensure that the marks, including the standard and the Certificate number are legible with no distortion or overlapping.
- g) The Certificate marks shall be used only as per color specified in IGC rules.
- h) The certified organization undertakes to discontinue any use of certification mark that is unacceptable to IGC and any form of statement that in the opinion of IGC might be misleading.
- i) Upon withdrawal of the Certification by IGC the client shall immediately discontinue use of all marks. The client shall not use certification in such a manner as to bring IGC into disrepute.
- j) IGC shall initiate direct communication with the client to rectify any misuse of the Certification mark and/or certification mark or improper reference to certification noticed by their auditors including those violations brought to the notice of IGC by any interested parties and general public subject to thorough investigation as per laid down procedures. Failure to address or rectify reported misuse might lead to suspension and ultimately withdrawal of Certification.
- k) The Certification Mark shall be issued by IGC through UOCL 001 and specific terms and conditions shall be described in the document.
- l) The Certification mark shall not be applied by certified clients to laboratory test, calibration or inspection reports or certificates.
- m) The certified client shall amend all advertising material when the scope of certification has been reduced.
- n) In the event that the Accreditation Body or IAF changes their symbol (or requirements), IGC shall communicate the changed requirements and replace the Certification Mark. Client shall ensure to replace the changed Certification Mark in the time frame allocated by IGC.

14. Appeal and Complaints

Definition of Appeal: Client request for reconsideration of a decision, IGC has made relating to certification result.

Definition of Complaint: Communication from client (or other interested party) expressing dissatisfaction, other than appeal, relating to the activities of IGC, where a response is expected.

Processes at IGC ensure that complaints / appeals are received, evaluated and validated impartially. Validated complaints are investigated impartially to determine and ensure that effective corrective action(s) are taken, where applicable. Appeals are handled and investigated impartially by Appeals Committee. The committee may hear evidence from the client representative.

IGC ensures to acknowledge the receipt of complaint / appeal and further keep the complainant / appellant informed about the status of proceedings of complaint / appeal handling process until the end of the process. IGC shall ensure that the decision to be communicated to the complainant or appellant are made by, or reviewed and approved by, individual(s) not involved in the certification activities in question.

IGC shall be responsible for all decisions at all levels during handling complaints and appeals. IGC shall ensure that investigation and decisions on appeal / complaint do not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant / complainant.

In the event of any valid complaint about a certified client, IGC shall refer to the certified client in question at an appropriate time.

Detailed procedure could be made available to the interested party on request.

15. Fee Structure & Terms of Payment

Fees and associated costs shall be paid as per rates agreed in the quotation. All payments shall be made within 30 days from the date of invoice. Certificate of Compliance or Certificate of Continuation shall not be issued by IGC unless all payments as per invoice are made as above. Commission, bank transfer charges or similar expenses incurred while effecting payment shall be borne by the client.

16. Limits of Liability

In any hitherto unforeseen situation for any claim, loss, damage or expense however arising, IGC’s liability to the client shall in no circumstances exceed the fee amount paid by the client to IGC. Under no circumstances IGC be liable for any consequential losses. IGC is covered by professional insurance for this.

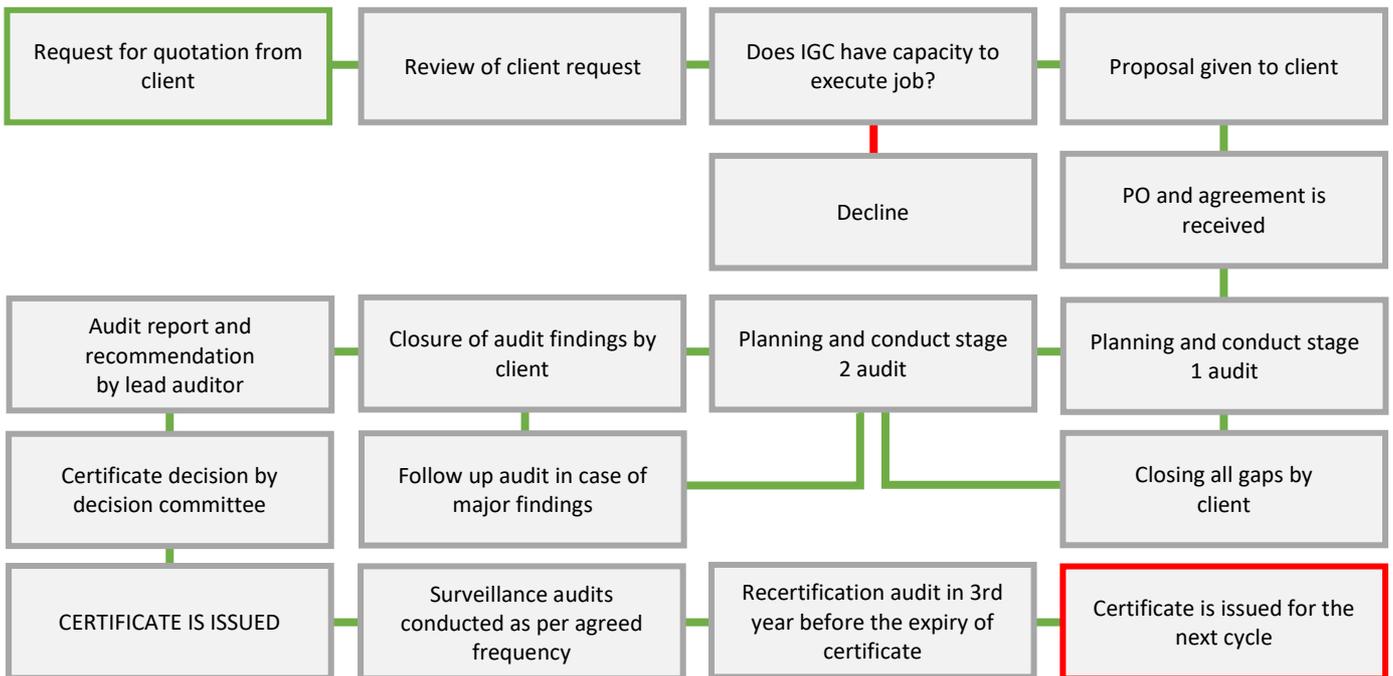
17. Indemnification

The client will completely indemnify IGC against any loss suffered by it.

18. Revisions

IGC completely reserves the right to amend and/or revise this “Rules of Certification” and conditions stipulated herein and any other associated procedure or documents of IGC. Any unforeseen situation will be dealt with by CSM, GM and / or the Committee in the ascending order of responsibility, authority and gravity.

19. IGC Certification process



Documents



Revision

Rev. 01 - New System