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## GUIDE 66

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**General requirements for bodies  
operating assessment and  
certification/registration of  
environmental management  
systems (EMS)**

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

Draft Guides adopted by the responsible Committee or Group are circulated to national bodies for voting. Publication as a Guide requires approval by at least 75 % of the national bodies casting a vote.

ISO/IEC Guide 66 was prepared by the ISO Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO).

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## Introduction

Certification/registration of the environmental management system (EMS) of an organization is one means of providing assurance that the certified/registered organization has implemented a system for the management of the environmental aspects of its activities, products or services in line with the organization's environmental policy.

This Guide specifies requirements, the observance of which is intended to ensure that certification/registration bodies operate third-party certification/registration systems in a consistent and reliable manner, thereby facilitating their acceptance on a national and international basis. This Guide should serve as a foundation for the recognition of relevant national systems in the interests of international trade.

This Guide is intended for use by bodies, however described, which carry out the functions of assessment and certification/registration of EMS. For convenience of drafting, such bodies are referred to as "certification/registration bodies". This wording should not be an obstacle to the use of this Guide by bodies with other designations which undertake activities which it covers. Indeed, this Guide should be usable by any body involved in EMS assessment.

EMS certification/registration involves the assessment of an organization's EMS but does not imply achievement of specific levels of environmental performance of its activities, product(s) or service(s). Evidence of conformity to the appropriate EMS standard or other normative document and any supplementary documentation will be in the form of a certification/registration document or an EMS certificate.

While this Guide is intended for use by bodies concerned with recognizing the competence of certification/registration bodies, many provisions contained herein may be useful in second-party assessment procedures.

# General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification/registration of environmental management systems (EMS)

## 1 Scope

This Guide specifies general requirements for a third-party body operating EMS certification/registration to meet if it is to be recognized as competent and reliable in the operation of EMS certification/registration.

The requirements contained in this Guide are written, above all, to be considered as general requirements for any body operating certification/registration of EMS.

NOTE In some countries, the bodies which verify conformity of EMS to specified standards are called “certification bodies”, in others “registration bodies”, in others “assessment and registration bodies” or “certification/registration bodies” and, in still others, “registrars”. For ease of understanding, this Guide always refers to such bodies as “certification/registration bodies”. This should not be understood to be limiting.

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## 2 Normative references

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The following normative documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this Guide. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this Guide are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the normative documents indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO and IEC maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, *General terms and their definitions concerning standardization and related activities*.

ISO 8402:1994, *Quality management and quality assurance — Vocabulary*.

ISO 10011-1:1990, *Guidelines for auditing quality systems — Part 1: Auditing*.

ISO 14010:1996, *Guidelines for environmental auditing — General principles*.

ISO 14011:1996, *Guidelines for environmental auditing — Audit procedures — Auditing of environmental management systems*.

ISO 14012:1996, *Guidelines for environmental auditing — Qualification criteria for environmental auditors*.

ISO 14050:1998, *Environmental management — Vocabulary*.

### 3 Definitions

For the purposes of this Guide, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2, ISO 8402, ISO 14050 and the following definitions apply.

#### 3.1

##### **organization**

company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private, that has its own functions and administration

NOTE For organizations with more than one operating unit, a single operating unit may be defined as an organization.

#### 3.2

##### **certification/registration body**

third party that assesses and certifies/registers the EMS of organizations with respect to published EMS standards or other normative documents and any supplementary documentation required under the system

#### 3.3

##### **certification/registration document**

document indicating that an organization's EMS conforms to specified EMS standards and any supplementary documentation required under the system

#### 3.4

##### **certification/registration system**

system having its own rules of procedure and management for carrying out the assessment leading to the issuance of a certification/registration document and its subsequent maintenance.

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### 4 Requirements for certification/registration bodies

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#### 4.1 Certification/registration body

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##### 4.1.1 General provisions

4.1.1.1 The policies and procedures under which the certification/registration body operates shall be non-discriminatory, and they shall be administered in a non-discriminatory manner. Procedures shall not be used to impede or inhibit access by applicants other than as specified in this Guide.

4.1.1.2 The certification/registration body shall make its services accessible to all applicants. There shall not be undue financial or other conditions. Access shall not be conditional upon the size of the organization or membership of any association or group, nor shall certification/registration be conditional upon the number of organizations already certified/registered.

4.1.1.3 The criteria against which the EMS of an applicant is assessed shall be those outlined in the EMS standards or other normative documents relevant to the function performed. If an explanation is required as to the application of these documents to a specific certification/registration programme, it shall be formulated by relevant and impartial committees or persons possessing the necessary technical competence, and shall be published by the certification/registration body.

4.1.1.4 The certification/registration body shall confine its requirements, assessment and decision on certification/registration to those matters specifically related to the scope of the certification/registration being considered.

4.1.1.5 The maintenance and evaluation of legal compliance is the responsibility of the organization. The certification/registration body shall restrict itself to checks and samples required in order to establish confidence that the EMS functions in this regard. The certification/registration body shall verify that the organization has evaluated legal and regulatory compliance and can show that action has been taken in cases of non-compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

#### 4.1.2 Structure

The structure of the certification/registration body shall be such as to give confidence in its certifications/registrations.

In particular, the certification/registration body shall

- a) be impartial;
- b) be responsible for its decisions relating to the granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing of certification/registration;
- c) identify the management (committee, group or person) which will have overall responsibility for all of the following:
  - 1) performance of assessment and certification/registration as defined in this Guide,
  - 2) the formulation of policy matters relating to the operation of the certification/registration body,
  - 3) decisions on certification/registration,
  - 4) supervision of the implementation of its policies,
  - 5) supervision of the finances of the certification/registration body,
  - 6) delegation of authority to committees or individuals, as required, to undertake defined activities on its behalf;
- d) have documents which demonstrate that it is a legal entity;
- e) have a documented structure which safeguards impartiality, including provisions to assure the impartiality of the operations of the certification/registration body; this structure shall enable the participation of all parties significantly concerned in the development of policies and principles regarding the content and functioning of the certification/registration system;
- f) ensure that each decision on certification/registration is taken by a person or persons different from those who carried out the assessment;
- g) have rights and responsibilities relevant to its certification/registration activities;
- h) have adequate arrangements to cover liabilities arising from its operations and/or activities;
- i) have the financial stability and resources required for the operation of a certification/registration system;
- j) employ a sufficient number of personnel having the necessary education, training, technical knowledge and experience for performing certification/registration functions relating to the type, range and volume of work performed, under a responsible senior executive;
- k) have a quality system, as outlined in 4.1.4, giving confidence in its ability to operate a certification/registration system for organizations to which it offers certification/registration;
- l) have policies and procedures that distinguish between certification/registration of organizations and any other activities in which the body is engaged;
- m) together with its senior executive and staff, be free from any commercial, financial and other pressures which might influence the results of the certification/registration process;
- n) have formal rules and structures for the appointment and operation of any committees which are involved in the certification/registration process or the development and maintenance of the certification/registration system; such committees shall be free from any commercial, financial and other pressure that might influence decisions (see note 1);
- o) ensure that activities of related bodies do not affect the confidentiality, objectivity or impartiality of its certifications/registrations and shall not offer or provide
  - 1) those services that it certifies/registers others to perform,
  - 2) consulting services to obtain or maintain certification/registration,

- 3) services to design, implement or maintain EMS or related management systems (see note 2);
- p) have policies and procedures for the resolution of complaints, impartial and independent resolution of appeals, and disputes received from organizations or other parties about the handling of certification/registration or any other related matters.

NOTE 1 A structure where members are chosen to provide a balance of interests, where no single interest predominates, will be deemed to satisfy provision n).

NOTE 2 Other products, processes or services may be offered, directly or indirectly, provided they do not compromise the confidentiality, objectivity or impartiality of its certification/registration process and decisions.

#### 4.1.3 Subcontracting

When a certification/registration body decides to subcontract work related to certification/registration (e.g. audits) to an external body or person, a properly documented agreement covering the arrangements, including confidentiality and conflict of interests, shall be drawn up. The certification/registration body shall

- a) take full responsibility for such subcontracted work and maintain its responsibility for granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification/registration;
- b) ensure that the subcontracted body or person is competent and complies with the applicable provisions of this Guide and is not involved, either directly or through its employer, with the design, implementation or maintenance of an EMS or related management system(s) in such a way that impartiality could be compromised;
- c) obtain the consent of the applicant or certified/registered organization.

NOTE Requirements a) and b) are also relevant by extension, when a certification/registration body uses, for granting its own certification/registration, work provided by another certification/registration body with which it has signed an agreement.

#### 4.1.4 Quality system

4.1.4.1 The management of the certification/registration body with executive responsibility for quality shall define and document its policy for quality, including objectives for quality and its commitment to quality. The management shall ensure that this policy is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels of the organization.

4.1.4.2 The certification/registration body shall operate a quality system in accordance with the relevant elements of this Guide and appropriate to the type, range and volume of work performed. This quality system shall be documented and the documentation shall be available for use by the staff of the certification/registration body. The certification/registration body shall ensure effective implementation of the documented quality system procedures and instructions. The certification/registration body shall designate a person with direct access to its highest executive level who, irrespective of other responsibilities, shall have defined authority to

- a) ensure that a quality system is established, implemented and maintained in accordance with this Guide;
- b) report on the performance of the quality system to the management of the certification/registration body for review and as a basis for improvement of the quality system.

4.1.4.3 The quality system shall be documented in a quality manual and associated quality procedures, and the quality manual shall contain or refer to at least the following:

- a) a quality policy statement;
- b) a brief description of the legal status of the certification/registration body, including the names of its owners, if applicable, and, if different, the names of the persons who control it;
- c) the names, qualifications, experience and terms of reference of the senior executive and other certification/registration personnel influencing the quality of the certification/registration function;
- d) an organizational chart showing lines of authority, responsibility and allocation of functions stemming from the senior executive and, in particular, the relationship between those responsible for the assessment and those taking decisions regarding certification/registration;



- e) a description of the structure of the certification/registration body, including details of the management (committee, group or person) identified in 4.1.2 c), its constitution, terms of reference and rules of procedure;
- f) the policy and procedures for conducting management reviews;
- g) administrative procedures including document control;
- h) the operational and functional duties and services pertaining to quality, so that the extent and limits of each person's responsibility are known to all concerned;
- i) the policy and procedures for the recruitment and training of certification/registration body personnel (including auditors) and monitoring their performance;
- j) a list of its subcontractors and details of the procedure for assessing, recording and monitoring their competence;
- k) the procedures for handling nonconformities and for assuring the effectiveness of any corrective actions taken;
- l) the policy and procedures for implementing the certification/registration process, including
  - 1) the conditions for issue, retention and withdrawal of certification/registration documents,
  - 2) verifying the use and applicability of documents used in the certification/registration of the EMS,
  - 3) the procedures for assessing and certifying/registering the organization's EMS,
  - 4) the procedures for surveillance and re-assessment of certified/registered organizations;
- m) the policy and procedure for dealing with appeals, complaints and disputes;
- n) the procedures for conducting internal audits based on the provisions of ISO 10011-1.

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#### **4.1.5 Conditions for granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing certification/registration**

**4.1.5.1** The certification/registration body shall specify the conditions for granting, maintaining, reducing and extending certification/registration, and the conditions under which certification/registration may be suspended or withdrawn, partially or in total, for all or part of the organization's scope of certification/registration. In particular, the certification/registration body shall require the organization to notify it promptly of any intended changes to the EMS or other changes which may affect conformity.

**4.1.5.2** The certification/registration body shall require the organization to have a documented EMS which conforms to applicable EMS standards or other normative documents.

**4.1.5.3** The certification/registration body shall have procedures to

- a) grant, maintain, withdraw and, if applicable, suspend certification/registration;
- b) extend or reduce the scope of certification/registration;
- c) conduct re-assessment in the event of changes significantly affecting the activity and operation of the organization (such as change of ownership, changes in personnel or equipment), or if analysis of a complaint or any other information indicates that the certified/registered organization no longer complies with the requirements of the certification/registration body.

**4.1.5.4** The certification/registration body shall have documented procedures which shall be made available on request for

- a) the initial assessment of an organization's EMS, in accordance with the provisions of ISO 14010 and ISO 14011 and other relevant documents;
- b) surveillance and re-assessment of an organization's EMS, in accordance with ISO 14010 and ISO 14011 on a periodic basis for continuing conformity with relevant requirements and for verifying and recording that an organization takes corrective action on a timely basis to correct all nonconformities;

- c) identifying and recording nonconformities and the need for corrective action by organizations on a timely basis for such items as incorrect references to the certification/registration or misleading use of certification/registration information.

#### 4.1.6 Internal audits and management reviews

**4.1.6.1** The certification/registration body shall conduct periodic internal audits covering all procedures in a planned and systematic manner, to verify that the quality system is implemented and is effective. The certification/registration body shall ensure that

- a) personnel responsible for the area audited are informed of the outcome of the audit;
- b) corrective action is taken in a timely and appropriate manner;
- c) the results of the audit are recorded.

**4.1.6.2** The body's management with executive responsibility shall review its quality system at defined intervals sufficient to ensure its continuing suitability and effectiveness in satisfying the requirements of this Guide and the stated quality policy and objectives. Records of such reviews shall be maintained.

#### 4.1.7 Documentation

**4.1.7.1** The certification/registration body shall document, update at regular intervals, and make available (through publications, electronic media or other means), on request, the following:

- a) information about the authority under which the certification/registration body operates;
- b) a documented statement of its certification/registration system including its rules and procedures for granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing certification/registration;
- c) information about the assessment and certification/registration process;
- d) a description of the means by which the certification/registration body obtains financial support, and general information on the fees charged to applicants and certified/registered organizations;
- e) a description of the rights and duties of applicants and certified/registered organizations, including requirements, restrictions or limitations on the use of the certification/registration body's logo and on the ways of referring to the certification/registration granted;
- f) information on procedures for handling complaints, appeals and disputes;
- g) a directory of certified/registered organizations, including their locations, date of certification/registration and the certification/registration number or similar code, and describing the scope of certification/registration granted to each.

**4.1.7.2** The certification/registration body shall establish and maintain procedures to control all documents and data that relate to its certification/registration functions. These documents shall be reviewed and approved for adequacy by appropriately authorized and competent personnel prior to issuing any documents following initial development or any subsequent amendment or change being made. A listing of all appropriate documents with the respective issue and/or amendment status identified shall be maintained. The distribution of all such documents shall be controlled to ensure that the appropriate documentation is made available to personnel of the certification/registration body or organization, when required to perform any function relating to the activities of an applicant or certified/registered organization.

#### 4.1.8 Records

**4.1.8.1** The certification/registration body shall maintain a record system to suit its particular circumstances and to comply with existing regulations. The records shall demonstrate that the certification/registration procedures have been effectively fulfilled, particularly with respect to application forms, assessment reports, and other documents relating to granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification/registration. The records shall be identified, managed and disposed of in such a way as to ensure the integrity of the process and confidentiality of the information. The records shall be kept for a period of time so that continued confidence may be demonstrated for at least one full certification/registration cycle, or as required by law.

**4.1.8.2** The certification/registration body shall have a policy and procedures for retaining records for a period consistent with its contractual, legal or other obligations. The certification/registration body shall have a policy and procedures concerning access to these records consistent with 4.1.9.

#### **4.1.9 Confidentiality**

**4.1.9.1** The certification/registration body shall have adequate arrangements, consistent with applicable laws, to safeguard confidentiality of the information obtained in the course of its certification/registration activities at all levels of its structure, including committees and external bodies or individuals acting on its behalf.

**4.1.9.2** Except as required in this Guide, information about a particular organization shall not be disclosed to a third party without the written consent of the organization. Where the law requires information to be disclosed to a third party, the organization shall be informed beforehand of the information provided, as permitted by the law.

## **4.2 Certification/registration body personnel**

### **4.2.1 General**

**4.2.1.1** The personnel of the certification/registration body involved in certification/registration shall be competent for the functions they perform.

**4.2.1.2** Information on the relevant qualifications, training and experience of each member of the personnel involved in the certification/registration process shall be maintained by the certification/registration body. Records of training and experience shall be kept up-to-date.

**4.2.1.3** Clearly documented instructions shall be available to the personnel describing their duties and responsibilities. These instructions shall be maintained up-to-date.

### **4.2.2 Qualification criteria for auditors and technical experts**

**4.2.2.1** In order to ensure that assessments are carried out effectively and uniformly, the minimum relevant criteria for competence shall be defined by the certification/registration body.

**4.2.2.2** Auditors shall meet the requirements of the appropriate international documentation. For the assessment of an EMS, the relevant guidelines for auditing are those defined in ISO 14010 and ISO 14011, and the relevant criteria for auditors are those defined in ISO 14012.

**4.2.2.3** Technical experts are not required to comply with the requirements for auditors covered in ISO 14012. Guidance on their personal attributes may be obtained from ISO 14012:1996, clause 7.

### **4.2.3 Selection procedure**

#### **4.2.3.1 Selection of auditors and technical experts in general**

The certification/registration body shall have a procedure for the following:

- a) selecting auditors and, if applicable, technical experts, on the basis of their competence, training, qualifications and experience;
- b) initially assessing the conduct of auditors and technical experts during assessments, and subsequently monitoring the performance of auditors and technical experts.

#### **4.2.3.2 Assignment for a specific assessment**

When selecting the audit team to be appointed for a specific assessment, the certification/registration body shall ensure that the skills brought to each assignment are appropriate. The team shall

- a) have appropriate knowledge of the applicable legal regulations, certification/registration procedures and certification/registration requirements;