TECHNICAL REPORT

ISO/IEC TR 17028

Conformity assessment — Guidelines and examples of a certification scheme for services

Évaluation de la conformité — Lignes directrices et exemples d'un schéma de certification pour les services

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. In the field of conformity assessment, ISO and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) develop joint ISO/IEC documents under the management of the ISO Committee on Conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO).

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by the ISO Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) and circulated for voting to the national bodies of both ISO and IEC, and was approved by both organizations.

Introduction

The term "product certification" has been used traditionally to cover not only tangible products but also services and processes. With the growing importance of services within the overall economic activity, current thinking is that a service is sufficiently different from a tangible product to require a different approach when it comes to specifying requirements (e.g. in international standards) and to assessing conformity of services with those requirements.

The principal differences between a service and a product are the following:

— a service is generally intangible;

— a service requires an interface between the provider and the customer;

— each instance of a service is transient even though it can be repeated many times;

— a service is often provided and used at the same time;

— the success of a service is related to the interaction with customers.

While services are recognized in the scheme type 6 in ISO/IEC 17067, ISO/IEC 17067 does not provide sufficient information on the process for the certification of services. This document is intended to help those involved in the development and operation of service certification schemes.

The range of conformity assessment activities used, and the intensity with which they are applied, needs to be proportionate to the likelihood of a service failing to fulfil a specified requirement and the consequences of such a failure. Factors such as the particular characteristics of the marketplace, the nature of the service and the service delivery methods also need to be taken into account.

The principal stakeholders, who are most affected by the rules, procedures and management of the scheme, are the following:

— the scheme owner;

— the certification body/bodies;

— the providers of certified services;

— the customers for the certified services and entities that rely on certification.

NOTE   Where a certification body develops and operates its own scheme, the certification body is the scheme owner.

Other stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

— regulatory authorities;

— specifiers, and purchasers of certified services;

— conformity assessment bodies (e.g. inspection bodies and management system auditing bodies) involved in the service certification process;

— accreditation bodies and peer assessment groups;

— organizations that facilitate the recognition of certification status from one scheme owner to another.

This document is informative in nature and provides guidelines accompanied by examples which are used to illustrate ways in which the guidelines could be used, without precluding other approaches as decided by the scheme owner in consultation with the other stakeholders.

Annex A contains examples of existing certification schemes for services.

Conformity assessment — Guidelines and examples of a certification scheme for services

1 Scope

This document provides guidelines and principles of service certification schemes.

NOTE 1   In the context of this document, the assessment of a management system as part of service certification does not constitute the certification of the management system.

NOTE 2   This document is not intended to limit in any way the decisions of scheme owners when developing and operating their own schemes.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 17000:2004, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17065:2012, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*

ISO/IEC 17067:2013, *Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 17000, ISO/IEC 17067, ISO/IEC 17065 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at http://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
service
output of a service provider with at least one activity necessarily performed between the service provider and the customer

Note 1 to entry: The dominant elements of a service are generally intangible.

Note 2 to entry: Service often involves activities at the interface with the customer to establish customer requirements as well as upon delivery of the service and can involve a continuing relationship, such as services provided by banks, accountancies or public organizations, e.g. schools or hospitals.

Note 3 to entry: Provision of a service can involve, for example, the following:

— an activity performed on a customer-supplied tangible product (e.g. a car to be repaired);

— an activity performed on a customer-supplied intangible product (e.g. the income statement needed to prepare a tax return);

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— the delivery of an intangible product (e.g. the delivery of information in the context of knowledge transmission);

— the creation of ambience for the customer (e.g. in hotels and restaurants).

Note 4 to entry: A service is generally experienced by the customer.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.7.7, modified — The word "organization" has been replaced by "service provider" in two places in the definition, and the words "services provided by" have been added before "banks" in Note 2 to entry.]

3.2
customer
person or organization that could or does receive a service that is intended for or required by this person or organization

EXAMPLE   Consumer, client, end-user, retailer, receiver of service from an internal process, beneficiary and purchaser.

Note 1 to entry: A customer can be internal or external to the organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.2.4, modified — The words "product or" have been deleted before "a service" in the definition, and the words "product or" have been deleted before "service" in the Example.]

4   Fundamentals of certification of services

4.1   General

4.1.1   Certification of services is third-party attestation that fulfilment of specified requirements for a service and the provision of that service has been demonstrated. This is the result of the process described in 4.2. Certification of services is carried out by certification bodies that should conform to ISO/IEC 17065.

4.1.2   Certification of services is intended to provide confidence to customers, regulators, industry and other interested parties that the organization providing the service has fulfilled specified service requirements. Specified requirements for services are generally contained in standards or other normative documents.

4.1.3   Certification schemes cover a variety of services, which can include tangible elements, process elements, competence elements and intellectual elements.

4.1.4   Although services are considered as being generally intangible, the certification of those services is not limited to the evaluation of intangible elements. In some situations, the tangible elements of a service can support the evidence of conformity indicated by the assessment of processes, outputs, resources and controls involved.

4.1.5   Certification of services can facilitate trade, market access, fair competition and customer acceptance of services at national, regional and international levels.

4.2   Functional approach

4.2.1   Certification schemes for services should implement the functional approach as described in ISO/IEC 17000:2004, Annex A. In ISO/IEC 17065, the term "evaluation" is a combination of "selection and determination". The functions are as follows:

— **selection**, which includes planning and preparation activities in order to collect or produce all the information and input needed for the subsequent evaluation function;

— **determination**, which may include conformity assessment activities such as testing, measuring, inspection, assessment of services and processes and auditing to provide information regarding the requirements for the service as input to the review and attestation functions;

— **review**, which means verification of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of selection and evaluation activities, and the results of these activities, with regard to fulfilment of specified requirements (see ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.1);

— **decision** on certification;

— **attestation**, which means issue of a statement of conformity, based on a decision following review, that fulfilment of specified requirements has been demonstrated (see ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.2);

— **surveillance** (where specified by the scheme), which means systematic iteration of conformity assessment activities as a basis for maintaining the validity of the statement of conformity (see ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 6.1).

NOTE 1　　Further information about the functions is given in ISO/IEC 17000.

NOTE 2　　In ISO/IEC 17065, the function of "attestation" is related to the subclause on "certification documentation" (see ISO/IEC 17065:2012, 7.7).

4.2.2　Whenever certification of services is performed, a certification scheme is in place.

NOTE　　See ISO/IEC 17065:2012, 7.1.1.

5　Development and management of certification schemes for services

5.1　General

Service certification schemes can be developed for different purposes. Schemes may have the purpose of assisting service customers to differentiate between service providers and make informed decisions. Other purposes may include schemes established by regulators to achieve health, safety or environmental outcomes.

5.2　Scheme owner

5.2.1　The following main types of scheme owners can be identified:

a)　certification bodies which develop a service certification scheme;

b)　organizations that are not certification bodies, such as regulatory bodies, trade associations or other organizations which develop a service certification scheme in which one or more certification bodies participate.

A group of certification bodies or organizations, perhaps in different countries, can together set up a certification scheme. In that case, a management structure should be established so that the scheme can be operated effectively.

NOTE　　The publication of a service standard or a standard relating to a conformity assessment scheme for a service by a national, regional or international standards body or standards development organization (SDO) does not make it a scheme owner. This does not preclude the standards body or SDO from being a scheme owner in addition to being a standards body or SDO.

5.2.2　The scheme owner should:

— be a legal entity or part of a legal entity;

　　NOTE 1　　A governmental scheme owner is deemed to be a legal entity on the basis of its governmental status.

— be able to take on full responsibility for the objectives, the content and the integrity of the scheme;

— make arrangements to protect the confidentiality of information provided by the parties involved in the scheme;

— evaluate and manage the risks/liabilities arising from its activities;

NOTE 2   Evaluating risks does not imply risk assessments as outlined in ISO 31000.

— understand the assumptions, influences and consequences involved in establishing, operating and maintaining a scheme on an ongoing basis;

— ensure that the scheme is developed by persons competent in both technical and conformity assessment aspects;

— document the content of the scheme;

— have adequate arrangements (e.g. insurance or reserves) to cover liabilities arising from its activities, i.e. arrangements should be appropriate (e.g. for the range of activities and schemes undertaken and in the geographic regions in which the scheme operates);

— have the financial stability and resources required for it to fulfil its role in the operation of the scheme;

— set up a structure for the management of the scheme;

— maintain the scheme and provide guidance when required.

5.3   Stakeholder engagement

5.3.1   In developing a scheme, the scheme owner should have a clear understanding of the objectives of the scheme and the assumptions that underlie the need for, and the acceptance of, the scheme. To assist in this, the scheme owner should identify stakeholders and seek their opinions and participation in scheme development.

5.3.2   Before developing the specific content of the scheme, fundamental scheme principles should be agreed among the stakeholders. Such principles may include the following:

— confirmation of the ownership;

— confirmation of the governance and decision making mechanisms that may or may not provide for direct involvement of stakeholders;

— confirmation of the underlying business and funding model;

— providing an outline for monitoring and periodic review of the scheme.

5.3.3   Once developed, the scheme owner should ensure that information about the scheme is made publicly available upon request to ensure transparency, understanding and acceptance. The scheme owner should ensure that the scheme is regularly reviewed, including confirmation that it is fulfilling its objectives, in accordance with a process that includes stakeholders.

5.4   Scheme management

5.4.1   Scheme documentation

The scheme owner should create, control and maintain adequate documentation for the operation, maintenance and improvement of the scheme. The documentation should specify the rules and the operating procedures of the scheme, and in particular the responsibilities for governance of the scheme.

5.4.2   Reporting to the scheme owner

When reporting to the scheme owner is required, the content and frequency of reporting should be defined. Such reporting may be for the purpose of scheme improvement, for control purposes and for monitoring the extent of conformity by service providers.

5.4.3   Subcontracting of the administration of the scheme

If the scheme owner subcontracts all or part of the administration of the scheme to another party, it should have a legally binding contract defining the duties and responsibilities of both parties. A governmental scheme owner can subcontract administration of the scheme by regulatory provisions.

5.4.4   Marketing

The scheme should define the policies and procedures related to marketing, including the extent to which certification bodies and service providers can make reference to the scheme.

5.4.5   Fraudulent claim of certification

Actions and responsibilities for situations where certification under the scheme is being claimed fraudulently should be described.

5.4.6   Complaints and appeals

5.4.6.1   The scheme owner should define the complaints and appeals process and who is responsible for undertaking this process.

5.4.6.2   Appeals against the decision of the certification body and complaints about the certification body should be addressed to the certification body in the first instance.

5.4.6.3   Appeals and complaints that have not been, or cannot be, resolved by the certification body can be addressed to the scheme owner.

6   Content of a certification scheme for services

6.1   General

This clause provides guidelines on elements to be considered when developing and operating a certification scheme for services. It is particularly relevant to those persons and organizations that are considering the establishment of a scheme or acting as a stakeholder (e.g. service provider, certification body, customer or public authority).

6.2   Scope of the scheme

The scope of the scheme is defined in terms of the types of service, the service requirements and other requirements specified by the certification scheme and the conditions under which it is intended to be applicable (e.g. technical or geographical areas).

6.3   Elements of a certification scheme

A certification scheme for services should specify the following elements:

a)   the scope of the scheme;

b)   the requirements against which the service and service provision are certified, by reference to standards or other normative documents; where it is necessary to elaborate upon the requirements

to remove ambiguity, the explanations should be formulated by competent people and should be made available to all interested parties;

NOTE 1   Further guidance on how to formulate specified requirements is provided in ISO/IEC 17007.

NOTE 2   Consideration needs to be given before use and reference of any proprietary material, research publication or similar other information prevalent in the sector.

c)   any other requirements to be met by the service provider, e.g. the operation of a management system or process activities to ensure the demonstration of fulfilment of specified requirements is valid for the ongoing provision of certified services;

d)   the requirements for certification bodies and other conformity assessment bodies involved in the certification process; these requirements should not be in contradiction to the requirements of the applicable standards for conformity assessment bodies;

e)   whether conformity assessment bodies involved in the scheme are to be accredited, are to participate in peer assessment or are to be recognized in another manner, if the scheme is to require that conformity assessment bodies are accredited, the appropriate references should be specified, e.g. that the accreditation body is a member of a mutual recognition arrangement between accreditation bodies;

f)   the methods and procedures to be used by the conformity assessment bodies and other bodies involved in the certification process, so as to ensure the integrity and consistency of the outcome of the certification process;

g)   the information to be supplied to the certification body by an applicant for certification;

h)   the content of the statement of conformity (e.g. certificate, online database) which unambiguously identifies the service to which it applies and a period of validity;

i)   the conditions under which the service provider may use the statement of conformity or marks of conformity;

j)   where marks of conformity may be used, the ownership, use and control of the marks, the requirements of ISO/IEC 17030 should be applied;

k)   the resources required for the operation of the scheme, including impartiality and competence of the personnel (internal and external), the evaluation of resources, and the use of subcontractors;

l)   how the results of the selection and evaluation are to be reported and used by the certification body and the scheme owner;

m)   how nonconformities with the certification requirements, which include service requirements, are to be dealt with and resolved;

n)   surveillance procedures, where surveillance is part of the scheme;

o)   the criteria for participation of certification and other bodies in the scheme and for the access of service providers to certification in accordance with the scheme;

p)   content, conditions and responsibility for publication of a directory of certified services by the certification body or the scheme owner;

q)   the need for, and content of, legally enforceable arrangements, e.g. between scheme owner and certification body, scheme owner and service providers, certification body and service providers: the rights, responsibilities and liabilities of the various parties should be defined in such arrangements;

r)   general conditions for granting, maintaining, continuing, extending the scope of, reducing the scope of, suspending and withdrawing certification (including requirements for discontinuation

of advertising and return of certification documents and any other action if the certification is suspended, withdrawn or terminated);

s) the way in which records of complaints to the service providers are to be verified if such verification is part of the scheme;

t) the way in which the service providers make reference to the scheme in their publicity material;

u) retention of records by scheme owner and certification bodies.

6.4 Selection elements in the scheme

6.4.1 Certification requirements

Within the declared scope (see 6.2), the scheme specifies the requirements that the services are intended to fulfil. These requirements are specified by reference to standards or other normative documents that have been developed in accordance with the guidance in ISO/IEC 17007.

Certification requirements are comprised of:

— service requirements;

— other requirements for the service provider to fulfil, including the following:

— signing a certification agreement;

— agreeing to the arrangements for the evaluation (including sampling);

— payment of necessary fees;

— signing a licensing agreement for the use of the certification mark;

— providing service information.

NOTE 1   Service requirements can include obligations contained in regulations, contractual agreements, service level agreements, etc.

NOTE 2   Specified requirements for services can be based on features such as:

a) physical (e.g. mechanical, electrical, chemical or biological characteristics);

b) sensory (e.g. related to smell, touch, taste, sight, hearing);

c) behavioural (e.g. courtesy, honesty, veracity);

d) temporal (e.g. punctuality, reliability, availability, continuity);

e) ergonomic (e.g. physiological characteristic, or related to human safety);

f) functional (e.g. maximum speed of an aircraft).

Specified requirements can be qualitative or quantitative and may include criteria related to customer experience and customer satisfaction.

6.4.2 Sampling

6.4.2.1   Where applicable, the scheme should define the extent to which sampling of the service to be certified is required, and on what basis such sampling should be undertaken. The scheme should define when sampling is required and who is permitted to undertake it.

NOTE   Useful information on this topic is given in ISO 10576-1, ISO 2859-10, ISO 3951-1 and ISO 22514-1.