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Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Part 1: Requirements (ISO/IEC/DIS 17021-1:2014)

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Évaluation de la conformité - Exigences pour les organismes procédant à l'audit et à la certification des systèmes de management - Partie 1: Exigences (ISO/IEC/DIS 17021-1:2014)

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Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems —

Part 1:
Requirements

Évaluation de la conformité — Exigences pour les organismes procédant à l'audit et à la certification des systèmes de management —

Partie 1: Exigences
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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. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

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.

ISO/IEC 17021 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC CASCO, , Subcommittee SC , .

This second/third/... edition cancels and replaces the first/second/... edition (), [clause(s) / subclause(s) / table(s) / figure(s) / annex(es)] of which [has / have] been technically revised.

Introduction

Certification of a management system, such as a quality or environmental management system of an organization is one means of providing assurance that the organization has implemented a system for the management of the relevant aspects of its activities, in line with the organisation's policy.

This International Standard specifies requirements for bodies providing audits and certification of management systems. Observance of these requirements is intended to ensure that certification bodies operate management system certification in a competent, consistent and impartial manner, thereby facilitating the recognition of such bodies and the acceptance of their certifications on a national and international basis. This International Standard serves as a foundation for facilitating the recognition of management system certification in the interests of international trade.

Certification of a management system provides independent demonstration that the management system of the organization

a) conforms to specified requirements,

b) is capable of consistently achieving its stated policy and objectives, and

c) is effectively implemented.

Conformity assessment such as certification of a management system thereby provides value to the organization, its customers and interested parties.

In this International Standard, Clause 4 describes the principles on which credible certification is based. These principles help the reader to understand the essential nature of certification and they are a necessary prelude to Clauses 5 to 10. These principles underpin all the requirements in this International Standard, but such principles are not auditable requirements in their own right. Clause 10 describes two alternative ways of supporting and demonstrating the consistent achievement of the requirements in this International Standard through the establishment of a management system by the certification body.

This International Standard is intended for use by bodies that provide audit and certification of management systems. It gives generic requirements for such bodies performing audit and certification in the field of quality, environmental and other forms of management systems. Such bodies are referred to as certification bodies.

Certification activities involve the audit of an organization's management system. The form of attestation of conformity of an organization's management system to a specific management system standard or other normative requirements is normally a certification document or a certificate.

This International Standard is applicable to the auditing and certification of any type of management system. It is recognized that some of the requirements, and in particular those related to auditor competence, can be supplemented with additional criteria in order to achieve the expectations of the interested parties.

In this International Standard, the following verbal forms are used:
- "shall" indicates a requirement;
- "should" indicates a recommendation;
- "may" indicates a permission;
- "can" indicates a possibility or a capability.
Further details can be found in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

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Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

Part 1:
Requirements

1 Scope

This International Standard contains principles and requirements for the competence, consistency and impartiality of the audit and certification of management systems of all types (e.g. quality management systems, environmental management systems) and for bodies providing these activities. Certification bodies operating to this International Standard need not offer all types of management system certification.

Certification of management systems (named in this International Standard "certification") is a third-party conformity assessment activity (see ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.5). Bodies performing this activity are therefore third-party conformity assessment bodies (named in this International Standard "certification bodies").

NOTE 1   A certification body can be non-governmental or governmental (with or without regulatory authority).

NOTE 2   This International Standard can be used as a criteria document for accreditation or peer assessment or other audit processes.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application 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 9000, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

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

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000, ISO/IEC 17000 and the following apply.

3.1
certified client
organization whose management system has been certified

3.2
impartiality
presence of objectivity

NOTE 1   Objectivity means that conflicts of interest do not exist or are resolved so as not to adversely influence subsequent activities of the certification body.

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NOTE 2   Other terms that are useful in conveying the element of impartiality are: objectivity, independence, freedom from conflict of interests, freedom from bias, lack of prejudice, neutrality, fairness, open-mindedness, even-handedness, detachment, balance.

3.3
management system consultancy
participation in establishing, implementing or maintaining a management system

EXAMPLES

a)   preparing or producing manuals or procedures, and

b)   giving specific advice, instructions or solutions towards the development and implementation of a management system.

NOTE   Arranging training and participating as a trainer is not considered consultancy, provided that, where the course relates to management systems or auditing, it is confined to the provision of generic information that is freely available in the public domain; i.e. the trainer should not provide company-specific solutions.

3.4
third-party certification audit
audit carried out by an auditing organization independent of the client and the user, for the purpose of certifying the client's management system

NOTE 1   In the definitions which follow, the term "audit" has been used for simplicity to refer to third-party certification audit.

NOTE 2   Third-party certification audits include initial, surveillance, re-certification audits, and can also include special audits.

NOTE 3   Third-party certification audits are typically conducted by audit teams of those bodies providing certification of conformity to the requirements of management system standards.

NOTE 4   A joint audit is when two or more auditing organizations cooperate to audit a single client.

NOTE 5   A combined audit is when a client is being audited against the requirements of two or more management systems standards together.

NOTE 6   An integrated audit is when a client has integrated the application of requirements of two or more management systems standards into a single management system and is being audited against more than one standard.

3.5
Client
organization whose management system is being audited for certification purposes

3.6
auditor
person who conducts an audit

3.7
competence
ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results

3.8
guide
person appointed by the client to assist the audit team

3.9
observer
person who accompanies the audit team but does not audit

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3.10
technical area
area characterized by commonalities of processes relevant to a specific type of management system and its desired intent

3.11
Non Conformity
Non fulfillment of a requirement

NOTE   A non conformity exists when an applicable requirement has not been addressed, a practice differs from the defined management system or the management system is not effective.

3.12
Major non conformity
Non fulfilment of one or more requirements of the management system that impacts the capability of the management system to achieve the intended outcomes.

NOTE   classifying non conformities as major could be as follows:
- a significant doubt that effective process control is in place or products or services will meet specified requirements.
- a number of minor non conformities associated with the same requirement or issue could demonstrate a systemic failure and thus constitute a major non conformity
- a minor non-conformity that is persistent (or not corrected as agreed by the organisation) may be up-graded to major non conformity

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3.13
Minor non conformity
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Non fulfillment of one or more requirement which does not impact the capability of the management system to achieve the intended outcomes.

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3.14
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technical expert
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person who provides specific knowledge or expertise to the audit team

NOTE 1   Specific knowledge or expertise is that which relates to the organization, the process or activity to be audited, or language or culture.

NOTE 2   A technical expert does not act as an auditor in the audit team

3.15
certification scheme
conformity assessment system related to management systems to which the same specified requirements, specific rules and procedures apply

3.16
audit time
time needed to plan and accomplish a complete and effective audit of the client organization's management system

3.17
duration of management system certification audits
part of audit time spent conducting audit activities from the opening meeting to the closing meeting, inclusive

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Note 1 to entry: Audit activities normally include:

— conducting the opening meeting;

— performing document review while conducting the audit;

— communicating during the audit;

— assigning roles and responsibilities of guides and observers;

— collecting and verifying information;

— generating audit findings;

— preparing audit conclusions;

— conducting the closing meeting.

4 Principles

4.1 General

4.1.1   These principles are the basis for the subsequent specific performance and descriptive requirements in this International Standard. This International Standard does not give specific requirements for all situations that can occur. These principles should be applied as guidance for the decisions that may need to be made for unanticipated situations. Principles are not requirements.

4.1.2   The overall aim of certification is to give confidence to all parties that a management system fulfils specified requirements. The value of certification is the degree of public confidence and trust that is established by an impartial and competent assessment by a third-party. Parties that have an interest in certification include, but are not limited to

a)   the clients of the certification bodies,

b)   the customers of the organizations whose management systems are certified,

c)   governmental authorities,

d)   non-governmental organizations, and

e)   consumers and other members of the public.

4.1.3   Principles for inspiring confidence include

⸺   impartiality,

⸺   competence,

⸺   responsibility,

⸺   openness,

⸺   confidentiality, and

⸺   responsiveness to complaints

⸺   risk-based approach.

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NOTE   This International Standard sets out the principles of certification in clause 4, whereas the corresponding principles related to auditing can be found in ISO 19011 clause 4

4.2 Impartiality

4.2.1   Being impartial, and being perceived to be impartial, is necessary for a certification body to deliver certification that provides confidence. It is important that all internal and external personnel are aware of the need for impartiality.

4.2.2   It is recognized that the source of revenue for a certification body is its client paying for certification, and that this is a potential threat to impartiality.

4.2.3   To obtain and maintain confidence, it is essential that a certification body's decisions be based on objective evidence of conformity (or nonconformity) obtained by the certification body, and that its decisions are not influenced by other interests or by other parties.

4.2.4   Threats to impartiality may include but are not limited to

a) Self-interest: threats that arise from a person or body acting in their own interest. A concern related to certification, as a threat to impartiality, is financial self-interest.

b) Self-review: threats that arise from a person or body reviewing the work done by themselves. Auditing the management systems of a client to whom the certification body provided management systems consultancy would be a self-review threat.

c) Familiarity (or trust): threats that arise from a person or body being too familiar with or trusting of another person instead of seeking audit evidence.

d) Intimidation: threats that arise from a person or body having a perception of being coerced openly or secretively, such as a threat to be replaced or reported to a supervisor.

4.3 Competence

Competence of the personnel supported by the management system of the certification body is necessary to deliver certification that provides confidence.

4.4 Responsibility

4.4.1   The client organization, not the certification body, has the responsibility for conformity with the requirements for certification.

4.4.2   The certification body has the responsibility to assess sufficient objective evidence upon which to base a certification decision. Based on audit conclusions, it makes a decision to grant certification if there is sufficient evidence of conformity, or not to grant certification if there is not sufficient evidence of conformity.

NOTE   Any audit is based on sampling within an organization's management system and therefore is not a guarantee of 100 % conformity with requirements.

4.5 Openness

4.5.1   A certification body needs to provide public access to, or disclosure of, appropriate and timely information about its audit process and certification process, and about the certification status (i.e. the granting, refusing, maintaining of certification, extending or reducing the scope of certification, renewing, suspending or restoring, or withdrawing of certification) of any organization, in order to gain confidence in the

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integrity and credibility of certification. Openness is a principle of access to, or disclosure of, appropriate information.

4.5.2 To gain or maintain confidence in certification, a certification body should provide appropriate access to, or disclosure of, non-confidential information about the conclusions of specific audits (e.g. audits in response to complaints) to specific interested parties.

4.6 Confidentiality

To gain the privileged access to information that is needed for the certification body to assess conformity to requirements for certification adequately, it is essential that a certification body keep confidential any proprietary information about a client.

4.7 Responsiveness to complaints

Parties that rely on certification expect to have complaints investigated and, if these are found to be valid, should have confidence that the complaints will be appropriately addressed and that a reasonable effort will be made to resolve the complaints. Effective responsiveness to complaints is an important means of protection for the certification body, its clients and other users of certification against errors, omissions or unreasonable behaviour. Confidence in certification activities is safeguarded when complaints are processed appropriately.

NOTE   An appropriate balance between the principles of openness and confidentiality, including responsiveness to complaints, is necessary in order to demonstrate integrity and credibility to all users of certification.

4.8 Risk-based approach

Certification Bodies need to take into account the uncertainty of achieving their objectives. Risks may include those associated with:
- the objectives of the audit
- real and perceived impartiality
- legal, regulatory and liability issues
- the risks of the client organization being audited and its operating environment
- impact of the audit on the client organization and its activities
- health and safety of the audit teams
- perception of interested parties
- claims of the client
- use of marks

5   General requirements

5.1 Legal and contractual matters

5.1.1   Legal responsibility

5.1.1.1   The certification body shall be a legal entity, or a defined part of a legal entity that can be held legally responsible for all its certification activities. A governmental certification body is deemed to be a legal entity on the basis of its governmental status.

5.1.2   Certification agreement

The certification body shall have a legally enforceable agreement for the provision of certification activities to its client. In addition, where there are multiple offices of a certification body or multiple sites of a client, the certification body shall ensure there is a legally enforceable agreement between the certification body granting certification and issuing a certificate, and all the sites covered by the scope of the certification.

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The certification body shall ensure its certification agreement requires that the client comply at least, with the following:

a) the client always fulfils the certification requirements, including implementing appropriate changes when they are communicated by the certification body;

b) the client agrees to facilitate all necessary arrangements for

   1) the conduct of the audits;

   2) investigation of complaints and makes records available to the certification body when requested;

   3) the participation of observers and technical experts, if applicable;

c) the client makes claims regarding certification consistent with the scope of certification;

d) the client does not use its certification in such a manner as to bring the certification body into disrepute and does not make any statement regarding its certification that the certification body may consider misleading or unauthorized;

e) upon suspension, withdrawal, or termination of certification, the client discontinues its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference thereto;

f) if the client provides copies of the certification documents to others, the documents shall be reproduced in their entirety or as specified in the certification scheme;

g) in making reference to its certification in communication media such as documents, brochures or advertising, the client complies with the requirements of the certification body or as specified by the certification scheme;

h) the client complies with any requirements that may be prescribed by the certification body or the certification scheme relating to the use of marks of conformity and on other information (See also ISO/IEC 17030).

i) the client informs the certification body, without delay, of changes that may affect its ability to conform with the certification requirements (see 8.5.2 and 8.5.3).

5.1.3 Responsibility for certification decisions

The certification body shall be responsible for, and shall retain authority for, its decisions relating to certification, including the granting, refusing, maintaining of certification, extending or reducing the scope of certification, renewing, suspending or restoring, or withdrawing of certification.

5.2 Management of impartiality

5.2.1 Conformity assessment activities shall be undertaken impartially. The certification body shall be responsible for the impartiality of its conformity assessment activities and shall not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise impartiality.

5.2.2 The certification body shall have top management commitment to impartiality in management system certification activities. The certification body shall have a policy that it understands the importance of impartiality in carrying out its management system certification activities, manages conflict of interest and ensures the objectivity of its management system certification activities.

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