AUDITS AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

1.   Purpose

Purpose of this procedure is to ensure that audit and certification processes are implemented according to requirements of ISO 17021-1 International Standard: Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.

2.   Scope

This procedure covers operational control of each step of certification audit, starting from identification and appointment of audit team members, ending with Management System Certificate award.

3.   Responsibilities

3.1   Apply for details to info@qcs.az

4. Audit programme

The applicant shall be informed about audit programme for the full certification cycle which shall be developed to clearly identify the audit activity/activities required to demonstrate that the client's management system fulfils the requirements for certification to the selected standard(s) or other normative document(s). The audit programme for the certification cycle shall cover the complete management system requirements. The standard certification cycle is indicated in clause 4.1.

4.1   Standard certification cycle

This document is uncontrolled if printed
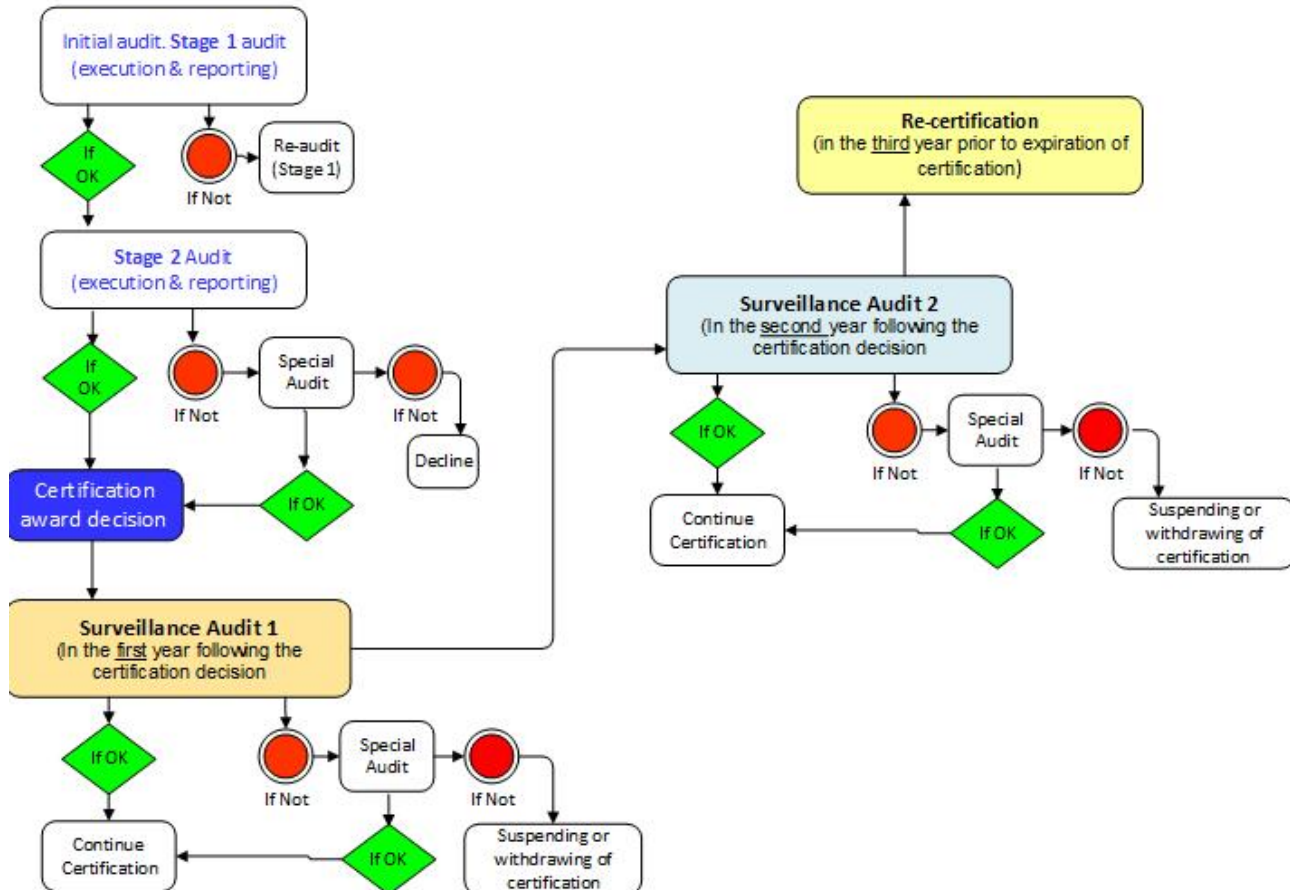
Preparation stage is the stage comprising the audit preparation. Prior to audit our organization delegates the audit team which is responsible for superior audit execution. In deciding the size and composition of the audit team, consideration shall be given to the following:

- Audit objectives, scope, criteria and estimated audit time;

- Whether the audit is a combined, joint or integrated;

- The overall competence of the audit team needed to achieve the objectives of the audit

- Certification requirements (including any applicable statutory, regulatory or contractual requirements);

- Language and culture.

Information about auditors shall be communicated to client with warning that they can object to any member of the audit team (auditor or expert).

The members of the audit team must fulfil the requirements described in "Competence and Requirements of Auditor".

6. Audit plan

Upon receipt of the signed contract the audit team leader (lead auditor) will prepare an audit plan for Stage 1, which includes all management system requirements to be audited, the names of the relevant units within the customer`s organization and a timescale for the audit. In determining the audit timescale, the following aspects shall be considered:

- The shifts, the different shifts must be taken into consideration during audit planning (processes and control mechanisms).

- Multiply sites, all sites must be taken into consideration during audit planning (processes and control mechanisms).

- Integrated audits (i.e. more than one standard at one audit) where the audit team consists of more than one auditor, names and roles of all auditors in the respective current audit are to be stated in the audit plan

- The requirements of the relevant management system standard;

- Complexity of the client and its management system;

- Technological and regulatory context;

- Any outsourcing of any activities included in the scope of the management system;

- The results of any prior audits;

- The risks associated with the products, processes or activities of the organization

- Other aspects as appropriate to audit nature

The lead auditor shall coordinate the audit plan with the audit team and the customer`s representative. The audit objectives shall be determined; audit scope and criteria, including any changes, shall be established after discussion with the client The audit objectives shall include the following:

- Determination of the conformity of the client's management system, or parts of it, with audit criteria;

- Determination of the ability of the management system to ensure the client meets applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements;

- Determination of the effectiveness of the management system to ensure the client can reasonably expect to achieving its specified objectives;

- As applicable, identification of areas for potential improvement of the management system.

6.1 Communication of audit team tasks

Once an audit plan is finalized then the tasks given to the audit team shall be defined. An audit team shall be requested to:

- Examine and verify the structure, policies, processes, procedures, records and related documents of the client relevant to the management system standard;

- Determine that these meet all the requirements relevant to the intended scope of certification;

- Determine that the processes and procedures are established, implemented and maintained effectively, to provide a basis for confidence in the client's management system;

- Communicate to the client, for its action, any inconsistencies between the client's policy, objectives and targets.

7. Stage 1 audit

The client should be informed of the date for stage 1 audit which is carried out at client's location to assess the client's management system.

Stage 1 is performed to obtain sufficient information and verification that the basic requirements for the proper function of management system were applied in order to verify that the management system is designed to achieve the organization's policies and objectives, to assess the capability of the organization to manage compliance with statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements and to confirm the planned arrangements for the Stage 2 audit.

An opening meeting shall be held with the auditees in the beginning of the audit in order to provide a short summary of how the audit will be undertaken and give an opportunity to auditee to ask questions.

Necessary information relevant to the audit objectives, scope and criteria shall be obtained via interviews, observation of activities and review of documents.

Areas of concern identified during the stage 1 shall be communicated to client on closing meeting and submitted in audit report.

While determining the interval between stage 1 and stage 2 audits, audit team considers the convenience and needs of the client to resolve the areas of concern identified during the stage 1 audit. Accordingly, lead auditor will revise its plan & arrangements for stage 2 audit.

The interval between stage 1 and stage 2 audits should not be longer than 3 months. The stage 1 audit should be repeated if a longer interval is taken. It is necessary that client completes appropriate correction and corrective actions latest before the start of the Stage 2 Audit.

8. Stage 2 audit

The audit team leader (lead auditor) will prepare an audit plan for Stag 2 and communicate it to client. Stage 2 certification audit shall take place at the site of the client and individual workstations. The audit team will review the practical application of the management system and to asses it for fulfilment of the requirements of the standard. This is carried out by means of questions put to the staff, viewing of other documents, records, orders and guidelines as well as by an on-site visits to the relevant areas. Stage 2 audit shall confirm the following aspects:

- Addressing of the areas of concern identified in Stage 1 audit

- The implementation, including the effectiveness of the client's management system to the requirements of the certification

- Capability of the management system to perform key activities, such as processes & activities including production methods, controls, plans & procedures as well as competency of personnel

managing and involved in the operational functions, in conformity with applicable ISO standard(s)

- Compliance of the client's management system with statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements

At the end of the audit, a final closing meeting shall be conducted. At the closing meeting with the clients management representatives the audit team shall evaluate the audit process and shall determine the dates for non-conformities (if any) elimination.

Identified nonconformities shall be discussed with the client in closing meeting to ensure that the evidence is accurate and that the nonconformities are understood. The auditor, however, shall avoid suggesting the solutions of nonconformance(s).

If case of major nonconformance(s) found during the stage 2 audit, the effectiveness of the corrective action will be verified by an on-site follow up audit.

9. Audit report

As an output document from the audit the certification audit report shall be submitted to client. Report is elaborated by lead auditor, who is responsible also for its completeness and precision. Lead auditor is obligatory to incorporate all comments from auditors and technical experts, who participated at the audit, to the report, after the personal consulting.

Nonconformities and potentials for improvement are documented in the audit report. Action plans for nonconformities are prepared by the customer in consultation with the audit team leader.

A finding of nonconformity shall be recorded against a specific requirement of the audit criteria, contain a clear statement of the nonconformity and identify in detail the objective evidence on which the nonconformity is based.

The action plan with root cause analysis, specific corrections and corrective actions regarding the nonconformities must be submitted by the client within 30 calendar days following the last day of the audit.

10. Certification

Audit results shall be reviewed by technical staff for decision about certification or declining. The persons (technical staff) that make the decisions for granting or refusing certification shall be different from those who carried out the audits but they shall understand the applicable standard and certification requirements, and shall have demonstrated competence to evaluate the outcomes of the audit processes including related recommendations of the audit team.

Certification decision shall be based on information provided by audit team. This information shall include at least the following:

- Audit Plan
- Audit Report
- Samples of client's manuals, procedures, policies, documents
- Comments on non-conformities (if any) and corrective actions
- A recommendation whether or not to grant certification, together with any conditions or observations.
- Other issues as appropriate

All provided information shall be reviewed prior to making a decision for granting certification. The following aspects shall be considered:

- Is the information provided by the audit team sufficient with respect to the certification requirements and the scope for certification

- Correction and corrective actions for any major nonconformities
- Client's plan for any minor nonconformities

If the Technical Department does not discover any serious facts which would contradict lead auditor findings stated in the certification audit report and proposal of lead auditor for certificate awarding, Director shall issue the consistent statement to the lead auditor´s statement and shall award the certificate.

The validity the validity of the certificate is not exceed three years from the issue date. Expiry of validity depends on the date of certificate decision.

11. Surveillance audits

Surveillance audits shall be conducted for first year within calendar year from certification decision date and second year within calendar year from first surveillance audit date.

Surveillance audits are performed and documented analogical way like certification audit: the client shall be informed about audit programme for the surveillance audit and audit team members. Once programme and audit team are accepted by client the audit team leader (lead auditor) will prepare an audit plan for surveillance.

Upon completion of audit the lead auditor shall elaborate the surveillance audit report and technical department shall confirm or decline it.

12. Re-certification audits

Recertification audits have to be completed upon the expiry date of the certificate. A tolerance period of maximum of 3 months is then available for the evaluation of the corrective actions and any necessary re-audits, as well as for the decision regarding recertification within the framework of the veto procedure.

If specified by the industry specific certification scheme, the certification cycle can be different from three years.

The client shall be informed about audit programme for the recertification and audit team members. Once programme and audit team are accepted by client the audit team leader (lead auditor) will prepare an audit plan for recertification.

Recertification audit include a review of management system documentation with confirmation of the review in the audit report. If there have been significant changes, the result of the review must be documented separately and an on-site audit carried out. The results of the previous surveillance program over the course of the certificate validity shall be taken into account. All requirements of the standard must be audited. The audit methodology is equivalent to the methodology of a Stage 2 audit.

Upon completion of audit the lead auditor shall elaborate the recertification audit report and technical department shall confirm or decline it.

13. Suspending or withdrawing of certification

Our organization reserves the right to suspend, withdraw or reduce the client's scope. It can be done in following events:

- The client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system

- The certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies

- The certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension

The following issues shall be considered when making decision to suspend, withdraw the certification and/or on developing or revising an audit programme:

- Complaints received by the certification body about the client;

- Combined, integrated or joint audit

- Changes to the certification requirements;

- Changes to legal requirements;

- Changes to accreditation requirements;

- Organizational performance data (e.g. defect levels, key performance indicators data);

- Relevant interested parties' concerns.

The persons that make the decisions for granting or refusing certification, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, suspending or restoring certification, withdrawing certification or renewing certification are different from those who carried out the audits.

The group or individual that takes the decision on granting, refusing, maintaining, renewing, suspending, restoring, or withdrawing certification, or on expanding or reducing the scope of certification, shall understand the applicable standard and certification requirements, and shall have demonstrated competence to evaluate the outcomes of the audit processes including related recommendations of the audit team.

End of the document