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## Management System Certification Steps

### SUMMARY

**Purpose** - This document describes Management System Certification Steps including the issuance, recertification, extension, termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification.

It also describes the monitoring of certification.

### STEPS

#### Step 1. Preliminary investigation and application

When a client expresses interest in management system certification services, The Gambia Standards Bureau Certification Body (TGSB CB) determines whether the client is sufficiently prepared for the audit process. The client is requested to complete the *application form*.

If the client is found to be ready, a cost quotation is prepared based on the information given in the *application form* and issued to the client. If the client is found not to be ready, TGSB CB provides feedback on the gaps identified.

#### Step 2. Stage one audit

Initial certification audit is conducted in two stages, i.e., stage one and stage two.

This audit is carried out after the quotation is acceptable to the client. It includes both the desk audit (documentation review) and the on-site stage 1 audit, i.e., part of the stage one audit is conducted at the client's premises for initial audits.

This stage one audit shall be done to:

- audit the client's documentation against the normative document requirements
- provide focus for the stage 2 audit and agree with the client on the details for the stage 2 audit
- to confirm information given in the *application form* and collect information regarding the scope of the audit.

*The period between the stage 1 and the stage 2 audit is dependent on the gaps identified during the stage one audit and is mutually agreed between TGSB CB and the client, but it shall not be more than **6 months**. If the six months lapses before the stage 2 audit is done, another stage 1 audit must be performed. If a client's management system is found after the stage 1*

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*audit not to be ready for stage two, another stage 1 audit shall be performed at the appropriate time.*

### **Step 3. Stage two audit**

This is done on site and its main objective is to evaluate the implementation as well as the effectiveness of the client's management system, including an examination of at least the following:

- i) information and evidence about conformity to all requirements of the applicable management system standard or other relevant normative documents
- ii) the client's compliance to legal requirements
- iii) operational control of the client's processes

During this audit, nonconformities (NCs), classified as either **major** or **minor** may be raised.

- When major NCs are raised, the process of certification decision making shall not begin until the corrective actions have been undertaken by the auditee and effectiveness thereof been evaluated and found to be effective.
- For minor NCs, the recommendation for certification can be made based on an acceptable corrective action plan (CAP) and the effectiveness of the corrective action shall then be evaluated at the next audit. The time for carrying out of the corrective action shall therefore be determined by the auditee/client and submitted as part of the CAP.

CAPs must be submitted for all NCs by the auditee/client at a maximum of 15 working days and the auditor/CB must indicate acceptance of the plan before the client undertakes the actions therein.

### **Step 4. Follow-up audits**

These shall be performed within 60 days from the date of the audit to check if corrective actions for NCs have been effectively undertaken.

### **Step 5. Certification decision**

After the follow-up audit, during which time the corrective actions from the stage two audit are confirmed to have been carried out, the audit findings and conclusions are evaluated by a peer evaluator who then forwards the evaluation report to the certification officer enabling him to make recommendations to a certification committee. The committee makes the certification decision.

Once certified, the certificate is valid for 3 years.

If the certification committee does not grant certification, the client shall be informed about the decision. If not pleased with the decision outcome, the client can make an appeal.

**Step 6. Surveillance**

For the first contract period, surveillance audits are carried out every **ten months**.

**Step 7. Recertification**

This is virtually identical to the initial audit except that the stage one audit does not have to be on site.

**Step 8. Extension of certification**

The scope of a certification shall be expanded by TGSB CB, in response to an application for expanding an already granted certificate by the client.

Upon review of the application, any necessary audit activities shall be determined by TGSB CB to decide whether the extension may be granted. This shall be conducted in conjunction with a surveillance audit or on its own.

**Step 9. Reduction, suspension or withdrawal**

TGSB CB has a policy for suspension, withdrawal, or reduction of the scope of certification. Certification shall be suspended in cases when, for example:

- the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements
- 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.

Under suspension, the client's certification is temporarily invalid.

TGSB CB shall restore the suspended certification if the issue that has resulted in the suspension has been resolved. Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension in a time established by the TGSB CB shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification.