

IQCS INTERNATIONAL LLP	PROCEDURE MANUAL
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ISSUE OF CERTIFICATES AND ITS CONTROL, QSP/11

1. PURPOSE

To establish documented guidelines for issue of Certificate to the client’s management system against the agreed audit standard, and its control.

2. SCOPE:

This procedure is applicable over all type of Certificate of conformities being issued by IQCS LLP

3. RESPONSIBILITY:

Director and QA.

4. PROCEDURE:

4.1 Certification decision

INSIGHT LLP ensures that certificate is issued only on the basis of evidence based recommendation received from a competent audit team. A competent Technical committee constituting one or more members is constituted by the CEO, Director and Application Reviewer, to review the submitted audit report and to take appropriate decision about certification.

It is ensured that the auditor who has carried out the audit does not participate in certification decision as a member of the Technical committee. The Technical committee takes its decisions on the basis of audit report and recommendation submitted by the audit team leader. If the committee feels that the audit report does not provide sufficient information required to make certification decision, additional audit, with specific objectives, by another audit team may be ordered.

Certification process control

1. We are not allowing branch offices, partnerships, agents, franchisees, etc., irrespective of their legal status, relationship or geographical location. We have considered the the risk that these activities pose to the competence, consistency and impartiality of the certification body. Currently we do not have branches. All certificates are issued from administrative office only.
2. All certificates are issued in hard copy form to the client. Soft copy certificates, if any required will be password protected and not editable.
3. The client data is fully uploaded using IQCS LLP software for certification process.
4. The software is protected with user ID and password.
5. The auditors who are going for audit shall enter data in the audit software only.

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6. The software controls are ensuring that the data is well protected and backed up effectively. The appropriate level and method of control of activities undertaken including its processes, technical areas of certification bodies' operations, lines of management control, reporting and remote access to operations including records and done using the software.
7. The employee competence is managed using the competency matrix.
8. The auditors are selected as per the competency matrix and trained by INSIGHT using training and mentoring format.
9. The data of customers are maintained confidential.
10. All data is backed up in the software itself.
11. Management (Director and CEO) have full accesses from enquiry review to certification and recertification process.

4.2 Action prior to making a decision

The Technical committee/Director confirms, prior to making a decision, that –

- a. the information provided by the audit team is sufficient with respect to the certification requirements and the scope for certification
- b. it has reviewed, accepted and verified the effectiveness of correction and corrective actions, for all major nonconformities that represent –
 - i) failure to fulfill one or more requirements of the audit standard
 - ii) a situation that raises significant doubt about the ability of the client's management system to achieve its intended outputs
- c. and it has reviewed and accepted the client's planned correction and corrective action for all minor nonconformities.
 - i) Closure of some of the minor non conformities may be verified by perusal of documentary evidence submitted to the INSIGHT LLP office/ audit team leader
 - ii) Closure of some of the minor non conformities may be verified during subsequent surveillance audit.

The Director makes the certification decision on the basis of evaluation of the audit findings and other relevant information (e.g. public information, comments on the audit report from the client).

4.3 Certification document

4.3.1 INSIGHT LLP provides certification documents to the certified clients normally by courier. When requested scanned copy or PDF file is also mailed.

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4.3.2 The certification document identifies the following:

- a) the name and geographical address/ location of the certified organization.
- b) the name and geographic location of the headquarter and any site/s within the scope of a multi-site certification) In case where the site addresses or scope details can't be accommodated in one page, these are documented as schedules to the certificate and are referenced in the certificate.
- c) the dates of granting, extending or renewing certification/ Planned surveillance audit dates.
- d) the expiry date or recertification due date consistent with the recertification cycle
- e) a unique identification code/ registration number or certification number (The certificate contains unique identification code (IQCS/FSMS/2023/001- (The first four alphabets are company abbreviation, FSMS is indicating the Food Safety management system, 2023 is indicating the year on which the certification year, 001 is client wise serial number)
- f) the audit standard, including issue number and/or revision, used for audit of the certified client
- g) the scope of certification with respect to product (including service) of the certified organization as applicable at each certified site, along with related NACE code/ codes;
- h) the name, address and certification mark of the INSIGHT LLP and other marks (like accreditation symbols, if applicable)
- i) The certificate contains the IQCS Logo, client logo, NABCB Logo (NABCB accredited FSMS certificate) client scope (Products/Services). The QR code in the certificate is a link given to NABCB to check the client regarding IQCS approval in NABCB.
- j) The Director's signature will be there in each the certificate (For first issue and re-issue cases)
- k) The reissued certificate – second cycle will contain the first cycle start date, end date and second cycle start date and end date

In case of issue of any revised certification document, a clear sign to distinguish the revised documents from any prior obsolete documents is put in the revised certificate.

4.3.3 When after delivery of the Certificate, if any prescribed information is found missing, or any typographical error is identified, the non-conformity is recorded, the Certificate is cancelled and withdrawn and a new correct certificate is issued which carries the same certificate / Registration number but also bears an appropriate sign denoting its revision status

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4.3.4 Care is taken to ensure that the date of issue of certificate is never prior to the date of certification decision.

4.5 INSIGHT LLP exercises proper control of ownership over use of certificate, marks/ logo and audit reports. We make this clear in our contract/ agreement with clients that we will take action to deal with incorrect references to certification status or misleading use of certification documents, marks (including accreditation symbol if applicable) or audit reports. This action could include requests for correction and corrective action, suspension, withdrawal of certification, publication of the transgression and, if necessary, legal action.

4.6 Maintaining certification

INSIGHT LLP maintains certification based on demonstration that the client continues to satisfy the requirements of the audit standard. It maintains a client's certification based on a positive conclusion by the audit team leader.

We have established a system which requires that for any nonconformity or other situation that may lead to suspension or withdrawal of certification, the Director/Technical committee appropriately decides the line of action regarding the certification. The Director and QA monitor the surveillance activities, and audit reports, to confirm that the terms of certification are being met by the client.

4.7 Recertification

Recertification process is initiated before the specified expiry date of the certificate. A tolerance period of maximum of 6 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 release procedure.

During this time period, the status of the affected organisation will be represented as "not certified"; this has corresponding consequences with regard to information. When the certification decision is made, the certificate is reinstated, i.e. the certificate is reinstated continued on from the old certificate, but with the date of the certification decision. The expiration date of the follow-up certificate corresponds to the 3-year time interval that was formerly applicable (expiration date of the old certificate + 3 years).

Gap-free recertification is also possible if the certification decision has been made 3 months at the most before the expiration date. Competence requirements for the auditors in a recertification audit will remain the same as for the initial audit.

Within the context of the audit preparation, a new calculation for the procedure must be carried out by the auditor, to ensure that the conditions of the contract still apply. The auditor asks the company about any changes in the structural and procedural organization of the company, the size

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of the company, the company activities and the scope. In determining the calculation of the audit effort / audit program he shall take into account the results of previous audits and decides to waive the audit stage 1. It may be necessary to perform a Stage 1 audit in the context of a recertification audit if there have been significant changes to the management system or in relation to the activities of the company (e.g. changes in the law). The documentation shall be in the calculation/ audit program.

Issue of certificates shall be performed in accordance with the rules applying to certification audits.

Normally the certification decision should be made before the expiration date of the certificate.

5.0 Transfer of certificates from other Certification Bodies

The following minimum requirements shall apply:

Prerequisites

As a general rule, only certificates issued by accredited certification bodies can be transferred. Companies with certificates from non-accredited certification bodies are to be treated as new customers.

Pre-Transfer Review

A Pre-Transfer Review must be conducted by a competent auditor always. This generally comprises review of important documents and a visit to the customer. Additional audit time might be necessary. The audit time depends on the size and complexity of the organisation. If necessary the additional audit time has to be documented in the Audit programme.

The Pre-Transfer Review must cover the following aspects:

- confirmation that the certified activities of the customer are covered by the scope of our own accreditation;
- the reasons for transfer of the certificate;
- confirmation that a valid management system certificate with regard to term of validity and performance profile of the customer, issued by an accredited certification body, is to be transferred
- review of the previous reports on the certification or recertification audit and the subsequent surveillance audits and of all nonconformities dealt with in these reports: this discussion should also include all other available relevant documents and records on the certification process, such as hand-written notes and checklists;

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- any complaints received and the action taken;
- the stage of the current certification cycle.

If the transfer is performed within the framework of a surveillance / recertification audit, the pre-transfer review can be performed in connection with the audit.

Performing the transfer audit in connection with the recertification audit, the form of the assessment of the certification period is substituted by the checklist / documentation on certificate transfer.

Certificates

As a general rule, only a valid certificate issued by an accredited certification body can be transferred. If that prerequisite is not satisfied, the individual case must be judged on its merits.

It is not possible to transfer suspended certificates or certificates which are under the threat of suspension.

Any unresolved nonconformities have to be clarified with the previous certification body prior to transfer wherever practicable. Such nonconformities must otherwise be reviewed in the course of the audit.

A certificate can be issued with the date of completion of the Pre-Transfer Review as date of issue (subject to the usual release process) if there are no longer any unresolved or potential problems. Future surveillance and recertification audits are based on the previous Surveillance and Recertification programme.

6.0 Procedure for Suspension of certificate

6.1 INSIGHT LLP suspends certification in cases when –

- The client’s certified food safety 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 deadline for nonconformity management (3 months) is exceeded
- The deadline of 12 months following the date of the certification decision for the first surveillance audit which follows the initial certification is exceeded,

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6.2 Under suspension, the client's management system certification is declared temporarily invalid. INSIGHT LLP makes enforceable agreement with its clients to ensure that in case of suspension the client refrains from further promotion of its certification.

6.3 INSIGHT LLP makes the suspended status of the certification publicly accessible by publishing its name in the list of those organizations whose certificates have been suspended.

6.4 INSIGHT LLP informs its client that failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension, within a time limit defined by INSIGHT LLP, would result in withdrawal of the scope of certification. This period can be extended on request of the client, within which the client must eliminate the deficiency that caused suspension, otherwise the certificate is withdrawn.

7. Withdrawal of Certification (After Granting Certification)

In case, Client is not complying with followings, INSIGHT LLP may withdraw Client’s Certification.

1. Failure to correct the reason for suspension within a time frame established by INSIGHT LLP (not greater than 6 months)
2. Client’s request
3. Client discontinues the activities (manufacturing, installation, etc.) related to the scope of certification.
4. The certified Client is no longer identified because of its dismantlement or communication disconnecting, etc
5. The suspension of Client’s Certification is more than 3 times during the term of validity of its Certification.
6. After receipt of INSIGHT LLP’s request to return the certificate(s), Client didn’t return its certificate(s) to INSIGHT LLP within one (1) month.
7. Failure to make payment of any audit activity in due date.

8.0 Policy on Reduction in scope

8.1 INSIGHT LLP has established a legally enforceable agreement with its clients where it has right to reduce the client's scope of certification to exclude the parts not meeting the requirements of the audit standard, when the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements for those parts of the scope of certification.

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8.2 This is done only after notifying the client giving 6 months’ time for taking effective corrective action. If the client does not take effective corrective action, the scope is reduced and a formal letter is issued to the client.

8.3 In case of reduction in scope the client’s new reduced scope is published in our website.

8.4 We have detailed in website, www.iqcsindia.org and made public, without request, in current geographical areas, information about

- a) audit processes;
- b) processes for granting, refusing, maintaining, renewing, suspending, restoring or withdrawing certification or expanding or reducing the scope of certification;
- c) types of management systems and certification schemes in which it operates;
- d) the use of the certification body’s name and certification mark or logo;
- e) processes for handling requests for information, complaints and appeals;
- f) policy on impartiality.

Upon request of the client, the details can be accessed to the client. Director will decide on this matter.

9.0 Reissue of certificate

9.1 The situations where re-issue of certificate can happen in the following ways;

1. Information from client regarding amendments
2. Urgent addition of scope
3. Changes in client location/address/site addition
4. Mistakes in the certificate issued by IQCS

9.2 In all the above situations, technical committee will review the details and approve the re-issuance. If additional audit is required in the site, that also will be considered and implemented. In all cases, if any corrective actions are to be taken by IQCS, technical committee will direct the same to QA and QA will handle corrective actions effectively.

The amended certificate will contain the changed serial number and Director’s signature and date of issue of amended certificate and validity period. In case of issue of any revised certification

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document, a clear sign to distinguish the revised documents from any prior obsolete documents is put in the revised certificate.

The revision status will be noted in the amended certificate.

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