

	Intellcert Quality Management Standard Operating Procedure SOP	Doc.-ID: IQM_000301 Revision: 00.10 Effective date: 29.08.2025 Author: Process Owner Reviewer: Quality Manager Approver: CEO
<i>“Process Requirement: P 1.7 Certification” “Certification Decision”</i>		

Legal Scope: intellcert GmbH & all related locations / organizations of which the processes are under the control of IQM Business Scope: Certification Process Scope: Certification of Systems, Management Systems, Products, Processes, Services, Persons
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1. Objectives

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to define the process by which intellcert GmbH, as certification body, makes certification decisions in accordance with ISO 9001, ISO/IEC 17021, ISO/IEC 17065, and ISO/IEC 17024. The SOP outlines the key steps in the certification decision-making process and provides guidance on how to conduct the process effectively and consistently.

2. Main-Process:



3. Principles, Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations

Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations	Description
Applicant	Organization or individual seeking certification.
Certification	Process of providing written assurance that a product, service, process, or management system conforms to specified requirements.
Certification Body	Organization that conducts certification activities and is accredited in accordance with ISO/IEC 17021, ISO/IEC 17024, or ISO/IEC 17065.
Certification Decision	Determination made by the certification body regarding whether to grant, deny, or suspend certification.
Competence	Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results.
Impartiality	Presence of objectivity, freedom from conflicts of interest, and absence of undue influence.
ISO	International Organization for Standardization.
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission.
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure.

4. Scope of Application

This SOP applies to all certification decisions made by the certification body for management systems, products, processes, services, and persons in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021, ISO/IEC 17024, and ISO/IEC 17065.

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5. Process Flow

5.1 Application

The applicant applies for certification to the certification body.

5.2 Document Review

The certification body conducts a review of the application and supporting documentation to determine whether the applicant meets the initial requirements for certification.

5.3 Audit / Assessment / Examination

The certification body conducts an audit, assessment, or examination respectively to verify the applicant's conformity to the requirements of the relevant standard(s) and any additional certification scheme requirements.

5.4 Review of Assessment Findings

On behalf of the certification body, a duly appointed person reviews the results and corrective actions from audits, assessments, or inspections and decides whether the applicant meets the requirements of the relevant standard(s) as well as any additional requirements of the certification scheme. Based on this, the reviewer makes a preliminary certification decision, which may include the granting, refusal, maintenance, renewal, suspension, restoration, or withdrawal of the certification, depending on the circumstances. It may also involve an extension or reduction of the technical and/or geographical scope of the certification. This pre-decision is documented in a specific document (IQM_011364 Audit Review Report_en).

5.5 Certification Decision

The certification body makes its (final) decision regarding the granting, refusal, maintenance, renewal, suspension, restoration, or withdrawal of certification, as well as the extension or reduction of the technical and/or geographical scope of certification, based on the results of audits, assessments, or inspections, the review outcomes (preliminary certification decision), and any other information obtained during the certification process. This final certification decision may not be outsourced. It is made by a person (“Field Certifier”) who is under the organizational control of the certification body.

5.6 Communication of Certification Decision

The certification body communicates the certification decision to the applicant and, if applicable, issues, suspends or withdraws a certificate of conformity.

6. Requirements for Certification Decision

6.1 Impartiality

The certification body ensures that the certification decision is made impartially and is free from any conflicts of interest.

6.2 Competence

The certification body ensures that the personnel involved in decision-making possess the necessary technical competence, as well as the required knowledge and skills, to make sound and well-reasoned certification decisions.

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The certification decision is made in two stages:

Stage 1 – Technical Preliminary Review by Reviewer:

A reviewer examines the audit documentation using a comprehensive checklist, assessing it from both a technical and formal perspective, and makes a preliminary technical decision regarding certification (pre-certification decision). Reviewers must be thoroughly familiar with all relevant regulations (including the applicable standards and their scopes) and must be officially designated for this task.

Reviewers may be external personnel. However, they must operate entirely independently from the audited management system, just like the audit team, and must commit not to perform the same activity for the same standard for other certification bodies – a particularly high requirement for their independence and a stronger affiliation with the certification body.

Stage 2 – Final Decision by Field Certifier:

A so-called "Field Certifier" makes the final certification decision based on the formal review of the audit documentation and the checklist items recorded by the reviewer. A separate checklist is used for this review. Field Certifiers must have the required competence to properly conduct the formal assessment of the audit documentation in terms of scope, completeness, and structure.

The Field Certifier must be an internal employee of the certification body.

6.3 Confidentiality

The certification body ensures that confidential information related to the certification decision-making process is protected and only disclosed to authorized parties.

6.4 Responsiveness

The certification body ensures that the certification decision is made in a timely and efficient manner, with appropriate communication to the applicant.

7. Process Roles & Responsibilities

Process Roles	Responsibilities
Lead Auditor / Assessor / Examiner	• Conducting an impartial evaluation of the audit / assessment / Examination results and all other relevant information. • Providing the Certification Body with a recommendation on the certification decision based on the evaluation of the results and all other relevant information. • Ensuring that any conflicts of interest that may affect the impartiality of the certification decision process are disclosed.
Verification Committee	• Reviewing the documents / information provided by the Lead Auditor / Assessor and conforming that it is based on objective evidence and made in accordance with the organization's procedures. This is performed by appointed reviewers on behalf of Verification Committee. Reviewer makes a preliminary decision on certification and forwards this as a recommendation to the Certification Committee.

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	• Providing feedback to the Certification Committee and Lead Auditor / Assessor / Examiner and other involved roles on the process to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the process.
Certification Committee	• Making the final certification decision based on the formal evaluation of the audit / assessment / examination results and all other relevant information and regulations. This is performed by Field Certifiers on behalf of the Certification Committee
Compliance Committee	By surveillance of the processes and activities ensuring, that.. • the certification decision process is carried out in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021, ISO/IEC 17024, and ISO/IEC 17065. • the certification decision is made based on the evaluation and verification of the audit / assessment / examination results and all other relevant information and regulations. • the certification decision is made in accordance with the organization's procedures. • the confidentiality of the certification decision process is maintained. • the certification decision is made in a timely manner. • Ensuring that the certification decision is communicated to the client in writing and that the client understands the decision and the reasons for it. • any appeals related to the certification decision process are handled in accordance with the appeals process defined in the organization's procedures. • any conflicts of interest that may affect the impartiality of the certification decision process are disclosed.
Client	• Providing accurate and complete information to the certification body. • Cooperating with the certification body during the certification process. • Informing the certification body of any changes that may affect the certification status. • Complying with the requirements of the standard or scheme for which certification is sought.

8. Records

The certification body maintains records and documentation of the “Certification Decision” process in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001, 17024, and 17065 and the quality management system of intellcert GmbH.

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The certification body ensures that records and documentation are accurate, complete, and maintained in a manner that ensures their confidentiality, integrity, and availability.

9. SOP control

This document shall be controlled in accordance with the certification body's document control procedure. Intellcert GmbH will continually improve the “Certification Decision” process using feedback from certified organizations, audit / assessment team members, and other interested parties. The certification body will also monitor changes in the regulatory environment and adjust the “Certification Decision” process as necessary to ensure compliance.

10. Key Process Indicators

- Refer to IQM_000015 Handbuch Part G - Process Radar

11. Attachments

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12. Related Documents

- IQM_000011 Quality Manual – General Part
- IQM_000202 WP Certification of Management Systems
- IQM_000015 Handbuch Part G - Process Radar
- IQM_000117 Prozess-Turtle-Diagramm P1.7 Certification
- INS_111112 ACROL - Part A (17021 Relevancy)
- INS_111113 ALTA - Part A (17021 Relevancy)
- IQM_011364 Audit Review Report_en
- IQM_011370 Final Certification Decision Template_de

13. External Reference Documents

- ISO 9001
- ISO/IEC 17021
- ISO/IEC 17065
- ISO/IEC 17024
- Relevant accreditation standards and guidelines, as applicable