"Process Requirement: P1.7 Certification"
"Certification of Management Systems"

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 Management Systems

1. Objectives

This work procedure defines the Certification Program with the target to issue a certificate after a successful completion of an Audit Process.

The Audit Process belongs to the certification service "Certification of Management Systems".

2. Terms and Abbreviations

Terms/Abbreviations	Description
CB	Certification Body
IQM	intellcert Quality Management
ISO	International Organization for Standardization

3. Scope of Application

These work procedure for the certification of management systems applies to companies that have implemented a management system such as a quality management system according to ISO 9001 or an environmental management system according to ISO 14001 and are aiming for certification according to the 17021 standard. The procedural instruction is applicable to organizations of all sizes and industries.

The scope of certification normally includes all processes, activities and locations of the organization that are related to the management system and are the subject of certification. This includes defining the scope of the management system as well as identifying the relevant legal and regulatory requirements and the needs and expectations of the interested parties.

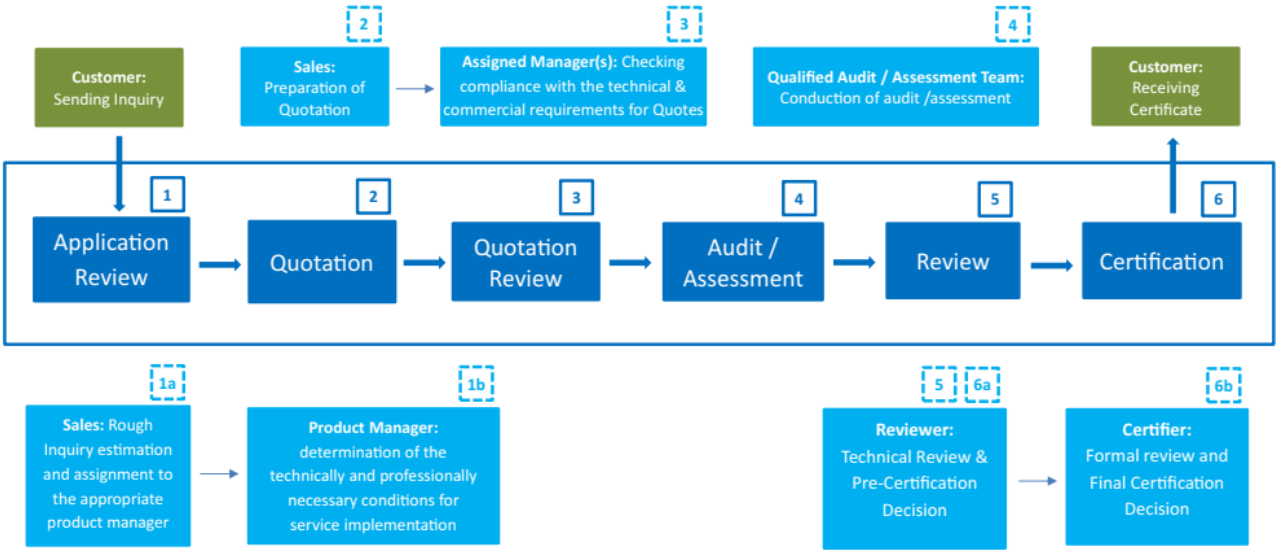
The work procedure is applicable to all stages of the certification process, including the assessment of the documentation and the implementation of the management system, the performance of the surveillance audits and the re-certification.

4. Roles & Responsibilities[1]

Activity	Responsibilities
4.1 Inquiry	Customer
4.2 Application Review	Sales / Product Manager
4.3 Offer	Sales / Marketing
4.4 Contract	Sales / Marketing
4.5 Preparation	Master Planer Management Systems
4.6 Certification Audit	Auditors
4.7 Review	Verification Committee (Reviewer)
4.8 Certification	Certification Committee (Field Certifier; CB)
4.9 Surveillance	Certification Committee (CB)
4.10 Re-certification	Certification Committee (Field Certifier; CB)

5. General internal Procedure for Certification

The general process of certification runs within the organization as shown in the following diagram:



6. Activities

The certification of management systems usually follows the internally defined process, which consists of the following steps:

[1] Refers to different parts of chapter 5.

6.1 Inquiry

The customer is interested in certification of his management system and submits an inquiry to a certification body.

6.2 Contract Review and Preparation of Quote

The certification body reviews the customer inquiry based on the internal documents *IQM_000302 SOP Contract Review & Preparation of Quote_en* and *IQM_000203 WP Determining the Audit Time & Competency of AuditAssessment Team_en*, and subsequently prepares an appropriate quote. This quote includes, among other things, a description of the certification process, the scope of the certification, and a cost overview.

6.3 Contract

If the customer accepts the offer, a contract is concluded between the customer and the certification body.

6.4 Preparation

The customer prepares for the certification by aligning its management system with the requirements of the relevant standard and by preparing for the certification audit.

6.5 Certification Audit

The certification audit consists of 2 stages:

6.5.1 The stage 1

This audit serves to check the customer's management system and ensure that it meets the requirements of the relevant standard. The auditor checks whether the management system is fully and correctly documented and whether it is tailored to the needs of the company and stakeholders. The aim of the stage 1 audit is to:

- audit the client's management system documentation;
- assess the location and particular conditions of the customer's site and undertake an exchange of information with the customer's staff in order to establish the degree of preparedness for the stage 2 audit;
- Review the customer's status and understanding of the requirements of the standard, with particular reference to the identification of key performance or significant aspects, processes, objectives and operation of the management system;
- collect the necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, processes and location(s) of the client, including legal and regulated aspects thereof and compliance with them (e.g. quality, environment, legal aspects related to the client's business, associated risks, etc.);
- review the allocation of resources for the phase 2 audit and agree with the client the details of the stage 2 audit;
- focus the planning of the phase 2 audit, acquiring sufficient knowledge of the management system and the activities of the client's site, with reference to possible significant aspects;
- assess whether the internal audits and management review have been planned and executed and whether the level of implementation of the management system provides evidence that the client is ready for the Phase 2 audit.

The results of the Stage 1 audit, conducted by an auditor or audit team that is independent of the client’s management system and appropriately qualified, are properly documented and communicated to the organization in a timely manner. Following this, the audit team and the organization coordinate the details of the Stage 2 audit and carry out the necessary planning, including the development of a detailed audit plan. It must be ensured that sufficient time is allocated between Stage 1 and Stage 2 to address any identified weaknesses.

If the Stage 1 audit reveals significant findings that could have a major impact on the management system, it may be necessary to adjust the planning of the Stage 2 audit. In such cases, it should be assessed whether parts of Stage 1 or the entire Stage 1 audit need to be repeated. The client must be clearly informed if the results of Stage 1 could lead to a postponement or cancellation of Stage 2.

6.5.2 Stage 2 Audit

The Stage 2 audit is an on-site audit conducted by an auditor or audit team that is independent of the client’s management system and appropriately qualified. The objective of this audit is to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of the management system. It assesses whether the management system fully complies with the applicable standard requirements and whether it is suitable for achieving the intended results in line with the organization's objectives and the expectations of relevant interested parties.

The audit specifically includes the assessment of the following aspects:

- Conformity with all requirements of the applicable management system standard or other relevant normative documents.
- Monitoring of performance, including measurement, reporting, and evaluation in relation to defined objectives and key performance indicators.
- The management system’s ability to fulfill applicable legal, regulatory, and contractual requirements.
- Operational control and management of all relevant processes within the defined scope of the management system.
- The conduct and effectiveness of internal audits and management reviews.
- Leadership commitment and accountability for the organization’s policy and strategic direction in relation to the management system.

The Stage 2 audit covers all processes, departments, locations, shifts, etc., that are intended to be included within the scope of certification. The audit is only conducted after a positive outcome of the Stage 1 audit, which confirms the organization’s readiness for Stage 2. Any necessary corrections identified during Stage 1 must be addressed beforehand.

During the audit, the audit team verifies through appropriate evidence that the documented procedures are not only in place but are also effectively implemented and embedded in day-to-day operations. Particular attention is given to the effectiveness, efficiency, and suitability of the management system in achieving its intended outcomes.

If major nonconformities identified during the Stage 2 audit are not effectively corrected within six months after the last day of the Stage 2 audit, and if the corrective actions taken cannot be verified by the audit team, the Stage 2 audit must be fully repeated before a certification decision can be made.

Upon completion of the audit, an audit report is prepared summarizing the results. For this purpose, standard-compliant and pre-approved report templates are used. Any identified deviations or weaknesses must be corrected by the client through appropriate corrective actions. Evidence of the effectiveness of these actions must be submitted to the certification body. Certification will only be granted once the management system fully meets all requirements of the applicable standard.

6.6 Review

After the audit has been conducted and the audit report has been prepared, the review process begins. This process is carried out by a technically qualified individual (Reviewer) **who is a member of the Verification Committee**.

The Reviewer must be **independent of the audit team** and possess the necessary qualifications in accordance with the relevant standards and the scope of the certification.

The qualification requirements for Reviewers are defined in the following internal documents:

- INS_111112 ACROL – Part A (17021 Relevancy)
- INS_111113 ALTA – Part A (17021 Relevancy)
- INS_111115 ACROL – Part B (17020 Relevancy)
- INS_111116 ACROL – Part C (17024 Relevancy)
- INS_111117 ACROL – Part D (17065 Relevancy)
- INS_111122 ALTA – Part B (17020 Relevancy)
- INS_111123 ALTA – Part C (17024 Relevancy)
- INS_111124 ALTA – Part D (17065 Relevancy)

The current appointments, including scopes and the respective validity periods, are documented in the following internal registers:

- IQM_111115 INTAR (17021 Relevancy)
- IQM_111116 INTEX – Part A (17020 Relevancy)
- IQM_111121 INTEX – Part B (17024 Relevancy)
- IQM_111122 INTEX – Part C (17065 Relevancy)

As part of the review process, the Reviewer examines the audit report and evaluates the audit results. Particular attention is given to whether all requirements of the standard have been met and whether any deviations and nonconformities have been appropriately corrected.

If the Reviewer concludes that the customer’s management system meets the requirements of the standard, a technical certification decision is made and documented by the Reviewer.

The result of the Reviewer’s activity, which involves assessing the audit documentation and findings, constitutes a preliminary decision within the certification process.

For this reason, Reviewers – in addition to being independent from the audit team and the client – must enter into a legally binding agreement with the certification body, confirming that they will not perform this type of

activity for any other certification body, unless they are employed by Intellcert GmbH and are carrying out the review activity under an official assignment.

6.7 Certification / Scope

If the reviewer has made a positive technical certification decision, the field certifier (member of “Certification Committee”) conducts a formal check and -provided no formal deviation is detected- make the final certification decision. Based on this a certification document is issued for the respective scope.

The scope of a certification defines the scope of the management system to which the certification applies. This can be, for example, a specific location, a specific department, or a specific business area.

As part of the certification process, it is important to clearly define the scope and determine which part of the management system is to be certified. The definition of the scope is crucial for conducting the audit and assessing the conformity of the management system with the requirements of the standard.

It is therefore important to define and document clearly and precisely the scope of the certification. The scope should also be clearly stated in the certification document to avoid misunderstandings.

It is also important to note that the scope of certification may be adjusted over time, for example if the auditee's business activities change or if new requirements are placed on the management system. In this case, the auditee must inform the certifier about the changes in the scope and adapt the management system accordingly.

6.8 Surveillance

Following the certification decision, the client’s management system is subject to regular surveillance by the certification body. This includes at least one on-site audit per year, which must commence no later than 12 months after the certification decision. Depending on the risk profile, certification type, or previously identified nonconformities, more frequent surveillance may be required.

The purpose of the surveillance audit is to evaluate whether the certified management system remains effective and continues to meet the applicable standard requirements. The audit covers, among other aspects:

- Conduct of internal audits and management reviews,
- Effectiveness of corrective actions for previous nonconformities,
- Handling of complaints,
- Achievement of objectives and intended outcomes of the management system,
- Progress on actions aimed at continual improvement,
- Ongoing operational control,
- Evaluation of relevant changes and their impact,
- Proper use of certification marks and references.

Auditors select a representative sample of processes, areas, and shifts based on a risk-based approach. Over the full certification cycle, all elements within the certification scope must be appropriately covered. This is

ensured through a client-specific audit program aligned with standard requirements and maintained throughout the cycle.

To prepare for surveillance, the certification body gathers relevant information from the client, e.g., via a structured questionnaire. In addition, other surveillance activities may be conducted, such as direct inquiries, review of promotional materials or websites, or requesting documented information, to verify the ongoing conformity and effectiveness of the management system.

After each surveillance audit, results are evaluated and any necessary actions are determined. Certification is maintained only if no critical nonconformities are found or effective corrective actions have been implemented and accepted.

6.9 Certification Cycle and Re-certification

The certification cycle describes the period during which the certified management system of the client is regularly reviewed through surveillance and recertification audits. The exact cycle depends on various factors, such as the type of certification, the client's risk profile, and the applicable standard. As a rule, surveillance audits are conducted annually, while a recertification audit is carried out every three years. For organizations with a higher risk profile or based on specific standard requirements, shorter cycles may be required.

The aim of recertification is to ensure that the client’s management system continues to meet the requirements of the standard over a defined period and that the continuous improvement of the system is maintained. During the recertification audit, the auditor or audit team reassesses the management system based on the standard’s requirements and compares the current results with those from previous audits. Changes in the organization and its context are also considered to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

The recertification audit is planned and conducted in due time before the certificate expires to allow for uninterrupted renewal. Planning includes the review of all surveillance audit results from the expiring certification cycle, ensuring a holistic assessment of system performance.

The audit is conducted on-site and covers all processes, areas, and shifts within the certification scope. The following aspects are specifically addressed:

- the overall effectiveness of the management system considering internal and external changes;
- its continued relevance and applicability to the defined scope;
- the demonstrated commitment to maintaining and improving system performance;
- whether the certified management system contributes to the achievement of the organization’s policies and objectives.

If there are significant changes in the organization, the management system, or relevant external factors (e.g., legislation), a Stage 1 activity may be required prior to recertification to assess audit readiness.

Recertification is particularly important as it not only extends the certificate's validity but also demonstrates the organization's continued commitment to the management system and its improvement. It is thus a key element in maintaining the trust of customers, employees, and other interested parties.

The decision to renew certification is based not only on the results of the recertification audit but also on an evaluation of the management system over the entire previous certification period. This includes, in particular, the results of surveillance audits, corrective and improvement actions taken, any known systemic weaknesses, and complaints received from users of the certification.

In cases of major nonconformities, the certification body sets deadlines for corrective actions and their implementation. These must be completed and verified before the current certificate expires in order for recertification to be granted.

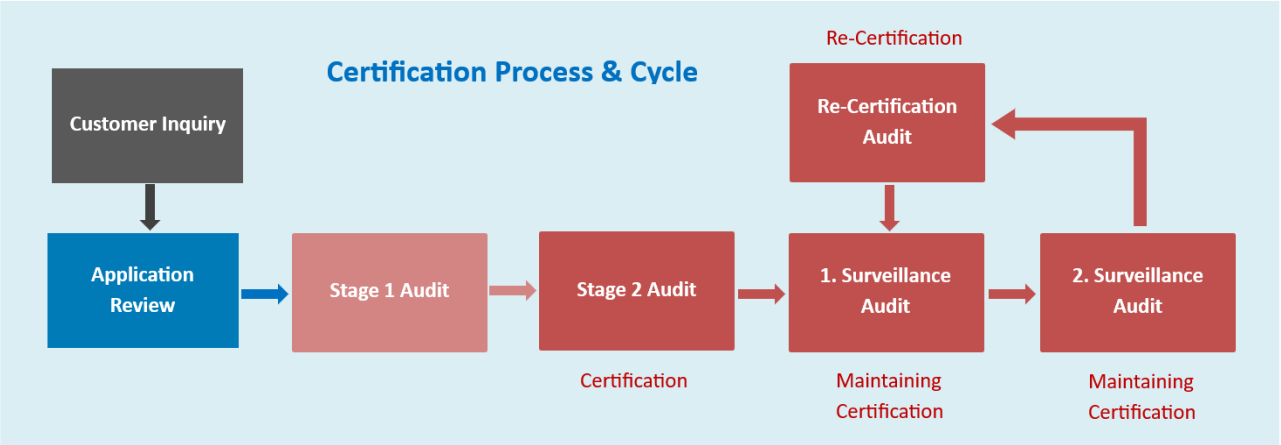
This holistic evaluation forms the basis for the technical decision to extend the certification and ensures that the client's management system has been effective and compliant throughout the entire certification cycle.

The results of the recertification audit must be approved by the reviewer and the field certifier in the same manner as outlined in sections 6.6 and 6.7 for the initial certification.

Successful completion of the recertification audit results in the issuance of a new certificate for the next cycle. Any changes to the scope or other relevant updates compared to the previous certificate are reflected in the new document.

If recertification is not completed in time, or if corrective actions for major nonconformities cannot be verified before expiry, the certificate cannot be extended. In this case, the client is informed and the implications are explained.

Provided that all outstanding recertification activities are completed within 6 months after expiry, the certificate may be reinstated. If not, at least a full Stage 2 audit is required. The issue date of the new certificate must correspond to the date of the recertification decision or later, while the expiry date is based on the previous certification cycle.



6.10 Consideration of Existing Certifications and Audit Results from Other Certification Bodies

As part of transfer audits, the certification body takes into account existing certifications and audit results obtained by the client from another accredited certification body. To ensure the standard-compliant adoption of these results, the following procedure is mandatorily applied:

1. **Use of the Certification Transfer Checklist:**
   The certification body uses a standardized checklist to systematically assess the available documents and audit results from the previous certification body. This checklist is completed in full and documented as part of the transfer audit.
2. **Collection and Review of Relevant Evidence:**
   Sufficient evidence is obtained and documented, including in particular:
   - Audit reports from the previous certification body,
   - Documentation of identified nonconformities,
   - Action plans and evidence of the implementation of corrective actions.
3. **Assessment and Documentation of Conformity:**
   The information received is evaluated with regard to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1. Special attention is paid to whether the available evidence is sufficient to continue certification in compliance with the standard.
4. **Adjustment and Justification of the Audit Program:**
   Based on the evaluated information, the certification body makes adjustments to the existing audit program as necessary. These changes are clearly justified and documented.
5. **Follow-up on Corrective Actions:**
   All known, open, or recently closed nonconformities from previous audits are reviewed, and the processing and implementation of corrective actions are actively followed up. The results are documented accordingly.

The proper execution and documentation of these steps ensure full compliance with the standard's requirements and maintain the integrity of the certification.

6.11 Certification of Management Systems with Multiple Sites (Group Certification)

The certification of a management system that extends across multiple sites is generally possible. In such cases, it must be verified that all included sites meet the relevant requirements of the applicable standard and that the management system processes are effectively implemented at all locations.

To obtain group certification, all participating sites must comply with the requirements of the relevant standard. This is usually verified through audits conducted at each site, during which the audit team assesses the implementation and effectiveness of the management system on site.

Sampling Procedure According to IAF MD1 and Other Regulations

As an alternative to auditing every individual site, a **sampling procedure** may be applied under certain conditions. This is permissible if the requirements outlined in **IAF MD1** are fulfilled. These include, among others:

- a central organization with a uniform management system,

- an internal audit and management review process that covers all sites,
- the obligation to adhere to consistent processes and procedures at all locations.

In addition, other normative documents—such as **ISO/TS 22003**—may define industry-specific criteria for the application of sampling procedures.

As part of the sampling approach, not all sites are audited individually. Instead, a representative selection of sites is chosen based on defined criteria (e.g., number of sites, size, risk profile, performance). The number of sites to be audited is determined according to the relevant regulatory framework.

The sampling plan and the justification for its selection are documented for each client.

Surveillance and Recertification

To maintain group certification, regular surveillance and recertification audits are required. The audit frequency depends on various factors, such as the number and complexity of the sites, the scope of certification, industry-specific risks, and findings from previous audits.

Note on Effort and Benefit

Group certification may involve increased organizational complexity and additional costs compared to single-site certification. It is therefore recommended that the client conduct a comprehensive assessment of the associated risks, benefits, and economic considerations before deciding to pursue group certification.

6.12 Certification of Integrated Management Systems

The certification of integrated management systems (IMS) refers to the simultaneous assessment and certification of multiple management system standards that are implemented by the client within a unified, integrated system (e.g., ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 45001).

An integrated management system is characterized by shared structures, processes, and resources, as well as uniform documentation and control mechanisms. The objective is to leverage synergies, avoid duplication of effort, and ensure a holistic approach to management.

Relevant Requirements and Conditions

In order to certify an integrated management system, the following conditions must be met:

- The applicable management system standards must be effectively integrated into a single, cohesive system.
- The integrated implementation must be verifiable through internal audits and management reviews.
- Separate, isolated systems must not exist side by side—shared processes, responsibilities, and interfaces must be clearly defined and demonstrably implemented.

Qualification of the Audit Team

The audit team must be qualified for all applicable standards being assessed. This can be achieved either through a single auditor with multi-standard qualifications or through a multidisciplinary team. It must be ensured that all relevant requirements are evaluated competently and comprehensively.

An additional factor influencing the extent of possible audit time reduction is the **overlap of auditor competence**: the better auditors of one standard are familiar with the requirements of the other integrated

standards, the more efficiently the audit can be conducted. Multi-competent auditors significantly enhance synergies and enable a more targeted evaluation of integrated processes.

Audit Time and Possible Reduction

The total audit time for integrated management systems may be reduced under specific conditions. This is governed by **IAF MD11 – Application of ISO/IEC 17021 for Audits of Integrated Management Systems**. A reduction is permitted when:

- A verifiably integrated management system is in place,
- Synergies are demonstrably utilized through shared processes, common documentation, and centralized management reviews,
- All applicable standard requirements are adequately covered,
- And the audit team has the necessary multi-standard competence.

The potential reduction depends on several factors, including:

- The number and compatibility of the integrated standards,
- The degree of integration of the management system,
- And the extent of cross-standard expertise among the auditors.

Any reduction in audit time must be justified, clearly documented, and transparently reflected in the audit planning and reporting.

Documentation and Traceability

The planning, execution, and reporting of an integrated management system audit must clearly document:

- Which standards were included in the scope of the audit,
- How audit time was calculated and, if applicable, reduced,
- Which auditors were involved and their qualifications,
- And how the integrated system as a whole was evaluated.

The certification of integrated management systems provides clients with the opportunity to meet multiple normative requirements efficiently through a single, consolidated audit process. This requires a consistently integrated system, a qualified audit team with significant cross-standard competence, and adherence to international guidelines on audit time reduction (e.g., IAF MD11).

6.13 Evaluation of Applications for Extension of the Scope

When the certification body receives a request to extend the scope of an existing certification, the application is systematically reviewed to determine whether the additional scope can be assessed in compliance with the applicable normative requirements.

Based on the nature and extent of the requested extension, the certification body defines whether additional audit activities are necessary. These activities may be conducted in conjunction with a scheduled surveillance or recertification audit, where appropriate.

The decision to grant the extension is made only after a complete evaluation of the additional requirements and based on the audit findings.

6.14 Prerequisites

To obtain a certificate, the customer must agree to the " Certification Regulations Management Systems" This agreement is given by accepting the offer (contract placement), which includes the "Certification Regulations Management Systems" as integral documents. He must also sign the "Certification Agreement".

This agreement is a prerequisite for the start of the certification process. It governs, among other things, the parties involved, the local and technical scope of the certification, pricing, confidentiality, contract duration, termination conditions, and the publication of certified companies.

The *Certification Regulations Management Systems* obligate both the customer and intellcert to comply with the defined guidelines, roles, and responsibilities.

Once the customer accepts the offer for initial certification, recertification, or a surveillance audit, the certification or audit process begins based on the currently valid Certification Terms and Conditions for Management Systems.

6.15 Publishing of Certificates

After completing of the certification, recertification process, or in case of revisions, certificates agreed to be published within the Certification Contract are made available on the website of intellcert GmbH. This website is publicly accessible and maintained by the certification body. It displays information on all successfully audited certifications for different services, including the certificate reference number, certification scope, and validity status.

7. Summary of certification requirements

In order to receive certification, the customer's management system must meet the requirements of the relevant standard. The exact requirements vary by standard and may include the following:

- A clear definition of responsibilities and accountabilities within the management system
- The definition of goals and strategies to achieve these goals
- The implementation of measures to continuously improve the management system
- Conducting regular internal audits to monitor the effectiveness of the management system
- Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements
- Comprehensive documentation of the management system
- A systematic monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the management system
- The involvement and training of all employees with regard to the management system

During the certification audit, the certification body checks whether the customer's management system meets all the relevant requirements for certification.

8. Withdraw of Certificates

Refer to IQM_000204 WP suspension, withdrawal, or reduction of scope of certification, and subsequent actions_en.

9. Records

The certification body maintains records and documentation of the “Certification of Management Systems” process in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001, 17021, 17024, and 17065 and the quality management system of intellcert GmbH.

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

10. Work Procedure Control

Intellcert GmbH will continually improve the “Certification of Management Systems” 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 of Management Systems” process as necessary to ensure compliance.

11. Attachments

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12. Related Documents

- IQM_000011 Quality Manual – General Part
- IQM_111111 Internal Document Master List
- IQM_011395 Checkliste Transfer Audit _en
- INS_111133 Certification Regulations Management Systems_en
- IQM_000302 SOP Contract Review & Preparation of Quote_en
- IQM_000203 WP Determining the Audit Time & Competency of AuditAssessment Team_en
- IQM_000204 WP suspension, withdrawal, or reduction of scope of certification, and subsequent actions_en
- IQM_011324 Template Certification Agreement English
- INS_111112 ACROL - Part A (17021 Relevancy)
- INS_111113 ALTA - Part A (17021 Relevancy)
- INS_111115 ACROL - Part B (17020 Relevancy)
- INS_111116 ACROL - Part C (17024 Relevancy)
- INS_111117 ACROL - Part D (17065 Relevancy)
- INS_111122 ALTA - Part B (17020 Relevancy)
- INS_111123 ALTA - Part C (17024 Relevancy)
- INS_111124 ALTA - Part D (17065 Relevancy)
- IQM_111115 INTAR - (17021 Relevancy)
- IQM_111116 INTEX - Part A (17020 Relevancy)
- IQM_111121 INTEX - Part B (17024 Relevancy)
- IQM_111122 INTEX - Part C (17065 Relevancy)
- IQM_011364 Audit Review Report_en
- IQM_011370 Final Certification Decition Template_de
- IQM_011263 Current Situation Declaration (CSD) 9001_en
- IQM_011278 Current Situation Declaration (CSD) EN 9100_en

- IQM_011280 Current Situation Declaration (CSD) EN 9120_en
- IQM_011264 Current Situation Declaration (CSD) 14001_en
- IQM_011276 Current Situation Declaration (CSD) FSSC 22000_en
- IQM_011273 Current Situation Declaration (CSD) ISO 22000_en
- IQM_011270 Current Situation Declaration (CSD) 27001_en
- IQM_011266 Current Situation Declaration (CSD) 45001_en
- IQM_011268 Current Situation Declaration (CSD) 50001_en

13. External Reference Documents

- ISO/IEC 17021: Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ISO/IEC 17000: Conformity assessment -- Vocabulary and general principles
- ISO 19011: Guidelines for auditing management systems