

Competence Requirements for Personnel Reviewing Audit Reports and Making Certification Decisions Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the competence requirements for personnel involved in reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions, as per Annex A, Section A3, Clauses A.3.1, A.3.2, A.3.3 and A.3.4 of ISO 17021. This policy ensures that individuals in these roles possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and judgment to make impartial and informed certification decisions.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all personnel within ICB International Certification Body LLC responsible for reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions. It ensures that personnel meet the required competencies to maintain the credibility and impartiality of the certification process.

3. Competence Requirements for Reviewing Audit Reports and Making Certification Decisions

3.1 Knowledge of Audit Principles, Practices and Techniques and Knowledge of Certification Requirements

Knowledge of audit principles, practices and techniques relates to knowledge of generic management systems audit principles, practices and techniques, as specified in ISO 17021 sufficient to understand a certification audit report. Personnel reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions must have the knowledge in accordance with our specified criteria from Table A1 of our General Required Knowledge and Skills Policy.

Personnel responsible for reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions must have a comprehensive understanding of certification requirements, including:

Management System Standards: In-depth knowledge of the relevant management system standards (e.g., ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 22000, ISO 22301, ISO 27001, ISO 27701, ISO 37001, ISO 37301, ISO 42001, ISO 45001, ISO 50001).

Certification Processes: Familiarity with the processes for granting, maintaining, suspending, and withdrawing certification, as well as our other responsibilities.

3.2 Knowledge of Specific Management System Standards/Normative Documents and Knowledge of Audit Principles

Knowledge of specific management system standards/normative documents related to knowledge of the management system standard or other normative documents being specified for certification sufficient to decide on the basis of a certification audit report. Personnel reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions must have the knowledge in accordance with our specified criteria from Table A1 of our General Required Knowledge and Skills Policy.

Personnel must have a solid understanding of auditing principles and processes to review audit reports effectively. This includes:

Audit Techniques: Knowledge of how audits are conducted, including planning, execution, and reporting.

Risk-Based Auditing: Familiarity with risk-based auditing principles to ensure that the audit report provides a comprehensive assessment of the client's management system.

Nonconformity Evaluation: The ability to evaluate the significance of nonconformities and determine whether they have been adequately addressed by the client.

3.3 Knowledge of Our Processes and Decision-Making Skills

Knowledge of certification body's processes refers to knowledge of our processes sufficient to determine if our expectations have been fulfilled on the basis of the information submitted for review. Personnel reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions must have the knowledge in accordance with our specified criteria from Table A1 of our General Required Knowledge and Skills Policy.

Personnel responsible for certification decisions must demonstrate sound decision-making skills. This includes:

Impartiality: The ability to make unbiased decisions based solely on the evidence presented in the audit report.

Judgment: The ability to assess the effectiveness of the client's corrective actions and determine whether the management system meets certification requirements.

Problem-Solving: The ability to address complex or ambiguous situations that may arise during the review process and determine appropriate actions.

3.4 Knowledge of Client's Business Sector and Communication Skills

Knowledge of client's business sector refers to knowledge of the terminology, practices and processes common to a client's business sector sufficient to understand an audit report in the context of the management system standard or other normative document. Personnel reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions must have the knowledge in accordance with our specified criteria from Table A1 of our General Required Knowledge and Skills Policy.

Personnel involved in reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions must possess strong communication skills, including:

Clear and Concise Reporting: The ability to document the rationale for certification decisions clearly and concisely.

Interpersonal Skills: The ability to communicate effectively with auditors, technical experts, and clients to ensure that the certification decision process is transparent and well-understood.

4. Competence Assessment and Maintenance

ICB International Certification Body LLC ensures that personnel reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions meet the required competencies through a structured competence assessment process. This includes:

Initial Competence Assessment: Personnel undergo an initial assessment of their knowledge, skills, and experience before being assigned to certification decision roles.

Ongoing Competence Development: Personnel participate in regular training and professional development activities to maintain and enhance their decision-making skills.

Performance Monitoring: The performance of personnel in certification decision roles is monitored through internal reviews and feedback from clients and auditors.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Personnel Reviewing Audit Reports and Certification Decision Makers

Role: Review audit reports to verify that audits have been conducted in accordance with certification requirements and to evaluate the findings. Make decisions regarding certification, including granting, maintaining, suspending, or withdrawing certification.

Responsibilities: Ensure that audit reports provide sufficient evidence to support certification decisions and that any nonconformities are properly addressed. Ensure that certification decisions are based on objective evidence and that they align with ISO 17021 requirements.

6. Documentation and Record Keeping

ICB International Certification Body LLC maintains records of the qualifications, competence assessments, and professional development activities for all personnel involved in reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions. This may include:

Training Records: Documentation of all training programs attended by personnel.

Competence Assessment: Records of initial and ongoing competence assessments.

Certification Decision Records: Documentation of all certification decisions, including the rationale for the decision and any supporting evidence from the audit report.

7. Supervision

Overall Supervision is carried out by the following person:

Prof. Dr. iur. Tinatin Erkvania, LL.M., Managing Director, info@cert-authority.com

9. Review and Updates

This policy is reviewed annually by top management to ensure compliance with ISO 17021 and to reflect any updates in the competence requirements for personnel reviewing audit reports and making certification decisions. Any changes to the policy are communicated to relevant personnel.

10. References

ISO 17021 – Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems