

***Industry Compliance & Certification Authority of
South Africa (Pty) Ltd***

QSP01 MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION PROCESS



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1. Scope

This document covers the requirements relating to the implementation, control and maintenance of the system certification schemes administered by ICCASA, referred to in this document as ICCASA Certification. The provisions of this document are binding on persons who are involved with the various management system certification schemes.

This document follows the structure of ISO/IEC 17021 and is based on the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021, the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) Guidelines/Mandatory documents and other management system standards, as applicable.

The management system certification schemes administered by ICCASA Certification are available to all organizations of all types and sizes of industries whose systems conform with the requirements of the relevant system standard.

2. Aim of Certification

In order to fulfil its mission and vision, ICCASA seeks to ensure that certification is conducted in a non-discriminatory manner as follows:

- Encourage organizations to introduce and apply in a cost-effective manner, management systems that will lead to more efficient use of resources and improved financial performance; improved risk management and protection of people and the environment; and increased capability to deliver consistent and improved services and products that increase value to customers and stakeholders.
- Follow prescribed processes/procedures to conduct independent audits of such systems to determine and ensure continued compliance with the requirements of the relevant management system standard.
- Certify that the system/s of the registered organization satisfies the requirements of the relevant management system standard and publish and update at regular intervals, a publicly available register of such organizations.
- Comply with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021 and its associated guidance documents and shall maintain an acceptance of its management system certification scheme through accreditation.
- Not place any undue financial or other marketing conditions on the certified organizations or their certification personnel that provide the management certification scheme services; not limit access to applicants on conditions such as the size of the organization, its membership of any representative association or group, nor the number of organizations or sites already certified.

3. Limitation of Liability

ICCASA ensures that verification is carried out, on the basis of the initial audit and continued recertification audits, that the management system of the certificated organization, satisfies the requirements of the relevant management system standard/s. ICCASA however does not assume responsibility for, or guarantee the quality of the services rendered by the registered organization.

4. Responsibility

The certified client, and not ICCASA, has the responsibility for consistently achieving the intended results of implementation of the management system standard and conformity with the requirements for certification. ICCASA carries out its responsibility in assessing sufficient objective evidence from the client upon which to base a certification decision on. This is based on the audit conclusions which allows ICCASA to make a decision to grant certification, if there is sufficient evidence of conformity, or not to grant certification if there is not sufficient evidence of conformity. It must be noted that any audit is based on sampling within an organization's management system and therefore is not a guarantee of 100 % conformity with requirements.

5. Impartiality

Being impartial, and being perceived to be impartial, is necessary for ICCASA to deliver certification that provides confidence. All internal and external personnel involved in the management system certification activities are aware of the need for impartiality. ICCASA recognizes that a source of revenue is its client paying for certification and that this is a potential threat to impartiality. So, to obtain and maintain confidence ICCASA's decisions are based on objective evidence of conformity (or nonconformity) obtained by ICCASA, and decisions are not influenced by other interests or by other parties.

6. Competence

Competence of ICCASA personnel in all functions involved in certification activities is necessary to deliver certification that provides confidence. ICCASA has an implemented process for the establishment of competence criteria for the personnel involved in the audit and other certification activities and to perform evaluation against the criteria.

7. Openness

ICCASA provides public access to, or disclosure of, appropriate and timely information about its audit process and certification process, and about the certification status (i.e. the granting, maintaining of certification, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, renewing, suspending or restoring, or withdrawing of certification) of any organization, in order to gain confidence in the integrity and credibility of certification. To gain or maintain confidence in certification, ICCASA will provide appropriate access to, or disclosure of, non-confidential information about the conclusions of specific audits (e.g. audits in response to complaints) to specific interested parties.

8. Responsiveness to Complaints

ICCASA maintains an appropriate balance between the principles of openness and confidentiality, including responsiveness to complaints, in order to demonstrate integrity and credibility to all users of ICCASA. ICCASA investigates all complaints and establishes whether these complaints are valid. Complaints are appropriately addressed, and reasonable efforts are made by ICCASA to resolve them. Effective responsiveness to complaints is an important means of protecting ICCASA, our clients and other users of certification against errors, omissions or unreasonable behaviour.

9. Risk-based Approach

ICCASA recognises the risks associated with providing competent, consistent and impartial certification and manages them accordingly. Such risks include, but are not limited to, those associated with the objectives of the audit; the sampling used in the audit process; real and perceived impartiality; legal, regulatory and liability issues; the client organization being audited and its operating environment; impact of the audit on the client and its activities; health and safety of the audit teams; perception of interested parties; misleading statements by the certified client; use of marks.

10. ICCASA Regulatory Requirements

As audit and registration of certification schemes are two distinct processes, these processes are regulated through an independent Approvals Board known as the AACI Board, which verifies the recommendations for certification, suspension and withdrawals of certificates. ICCASA's certification conditions are granted and regulated through a formal certification agreement. ICCASA reserves the right to decline an application for certification if any conflict of interest or conflict with other policies, resources or impartiality exists.

10.1. Transferring Organizations

Organizations which have been registered by accredited certification bodies other than ICCASA who wish to transfer such registration to ICCASA, must formally apply to ICCASA for such transfer. A transfer review and recommendation are then made taking into consideration the status, stability and maturity of the organization's management system before such transfer is affected. Certificates remain current at the time of transfer. The minimum requirements of IAF MD 2:2017 Mandatory Document for the Transfer of Accredited Certification of Management Systems, in terms of Eligibility of a Certification for Transfer, Pre-transfer Review and Transfer of Certification will be used.

11. Outsourcing

ICCASA does not outsource any part of its certification activities to any other certification body. Decisions for granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification are not outsourced or subcontracted.

12. Directory of Certified Clients

A list of organizations which have been registered by ICCASA is publicly accessible on the ICCASA website. Details of organizations whose management system have been suspended or withdrawn is available on request

13. Reference to Certification and Use of Marks

All requirements with respect to the use of ICCASA logos, certification marks, processes with regards to granting, suspending or withdrawal of certification, confidentiality, changes to client information and the scope of registration is documented in the contract between ICCASA and the client.

There shall be no ambiguity in the use of the mark or its accompanying text. The organization may not imply that the certification applies to activities that are outside the scope of certification. The organizations' use of the mark in communication media such as the Internet, brochures, advertising, billboards, etc. shall not make any statement that is misleading in any manner whatsoever.

The certification mark shall not be used on a product or product packaging in any way that may be interpreted as denoting product conformity. When placed under suspension, the organizations' management system is temporarily invalid. The organization shall for the period of suspension, refrain from further promotion of their certification. Organizations certified by ICCASA are not entitled to use the logos of ICCASA' accredited bodies in any way.

Subsequent to the cancellation of its certification, the organization shall discontinue all use of advertising material that contains any reference to a certified state. ICCASA will exercise proper control of ownership and shall take action to deal with incorrect references to certification status or misleading use of certification documents, marks or audit reports.

14. Confidentiality

Any information gained in the course of certification activities about a particular commodity or organization shall be confidential to the organization and ICCASA will not disclose to a third party without the written consent of the organization. Where the law requires information to be disclosed to a third party, the organization shall be informed of the information provided as permitted by the law.

15. Legal Responsibility and Authority for Certification Decisions

ICCASA is a registered legal entity and operates as an independent (Pty) Ltd company as defined by the Companies Act, Act no. 71 of 2008. ICCASA is legally responsible for all its decisions relating to certification, including the granting, refusing, maintaining of certification, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, renewing, suspending or restoring following suspension, or withdrawing of certification.

16. Certification Agreement

ICCASA has a legally enforceable agreement with each client for the provision of certification activities in accordance with the relevant requirements of this part of ISO/IEC 17021.

In addition, where there are multiple sites of a client, ICCASA will ensure that there is a legally enforceable agreement between ICCASA granting certification and the client which covers all the sites within the scope of the certification.

17. Management System Certification Process Precertification Activities

17.1. Application for Initial Audit

The applicant organisation shall provide the relevant information to ICCASA by completing the management system certification application form (FN-C01), enabling ICCASA to establish the desired scope of the certification and providing relevant details required by the specific certification scheme, information on the location and number of sites, processes and operations, human and technical resources, functions, relationships, outsourced processes and any relevant legal obligations. ICCASA reserves the right to also request supplementary information, where additional information is required. ICCASA will further determine whether consultancy relating to the development of the management system to be certified has been provided and if so, by whom.

17.2. Application Review

The application is reviewed by the certification Manager to ensure that the information about the applicant organisation and its management system is sufficient to develop and audit programme. Any known differences in understanding between ICCASA and the applicant organization, is also resolved during the application review. The Certification Manager will determine:

- the required competency and ability to perform the certification activity is available and justified
- The scope of certification sought, the site(s) of the applicant organization's operations
- The time required to complete audits
- Any other points influencing the certification activity are taken into account (language, safety conditions, threats to impartiality, etc.).
- That the requirements for the certification are clearly defined and documented
- Other conditions are considered e.g. scope, location, language, safety conditions, threats to impartiality, multi-site registration etc.

Following the application review, ICCASA will either accept or decline an application for certification. When ICCASA declines an application once the review has been concluded, reasons for the declined application will be documented and made available to the Client applicant.

17.3. Audit Programme

The audit programme for the initial certification will include a two-stage initial audit, surveillance audits in the first and second years following the certification decision, and a recertification audit in the third year prior to expiration of certification. The first three-year certification cycle begins with the certification decision. Subsequent cycles begin with the recertification decision.

When recertification activities are successfully completed prior to the expiry date of the existing certification, the expiry date of the new certification can be based on the expiry date of the existing certification. The issue date on a new certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision.

However, where a Client receives certification in one management system and later in that year, obtains certification in other management systems which have a commonality between them all, ICCASA may synchronize the management system certificates in order to conduct integrated management system audits. Where such integration of management systems occurs, the integrated management system surveillance audit must be completed not more than 6 months after the expiry date on the current management system certificate that must be synchronized to align with the other integrated management system certificate expiry dates.

17.4. Determination of Audit Duration

The determination of the audit time for a client will consider the time needed to plan and accomplish a complete and effective audit of the client's management system. In determining the audit duration ICCASA will consider the size of the client, the location, the scope and complexity of its management system, products and processes as well as demonstrated level of management system effectiveness and the results of any previous audits.

The following aspects will also be considered:

- Requirements of the relevant standard
- Activities included in the scope of the management system
- Risks associated with the products, processes or activities of the client organization
- Culture of the client organization
- Maturity and effectiveness of the management system
- Size and complexity of the organisation
- Technological and regulatory context
- Any outsourcing of any activities included in the scope of the organization
- Results of any prior audits and demonstrated level of management system effectiveness
- Number of sites and multi-site consideration
- For an integrated management system, factors such as:
 - The level of integration
 - The number of management systems included in the integrated management system
 - The complexity of the integrated management system in comparison to a single management system
 - The availability and capability of auditors as well as the composition of the audit team auditing more than one management system

17.4.1. Integrated Audit Approach - Standard Audit Approach of Integrated MS

- a) The audit will be conducted by one or more auditors.
- b) The auditors are qualified for one or more management system standards/specifications relevant for the scope of the audit.
- c) The audit will be managed by a team leader, competent in at least one of the audited standards/specifications.
- d) Sufficient time shall be allocated to accomplish a complete and effective audit of the organization's management system for the management system standards/specifications covered by the scope of the audit.
- e) Audit time for integrated management systems audits will be determined in accordance with IAF MD 11:2019 IAF Mandatory Document for the Application of ISO/IEC 17021-1 for Audits of Integrated Management Systems.

17.5. Multi-site Sampling

Where multi-site sampling is used for the audit of a client's management system covering the same activity in various geographical locations, ICCASA will develop a sampling programme to ensure proper audit of the management system. The rationale for the sampling plan will be documented for each client.

17.6. Multiple Management Systems Standards

When certification to multiple management system standards is being provided by ICCASA, the planning for the audit will ensure adequate on-site auditing to provide confidence in the certification.

18. Planning the Audits

18.1. Determining Audit Objectives, Scope and Criteria

ICCASA will determine the audit objectives for each audit activity. The audit scope and criteria, including any changes, will be established by ICCASA after discussion with the client organization. The audit objectives describe what is to be accomplished by the audit and will include the determination of the conformity of the client's management system, or parts of it, with audit criteria; the determination of the ability of the management system to ensure the client meets applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements; determination of the effectiveness of the management system to ensure the client can reasonably expect achieving their specified objectives; the identification of areas for potential improvement of the management system, where applicable.

The audit scope shall describe the extent and boundaries of the audit, such as sites, organizational units, activities and processes to be audited. Where the initial or re-certification process consists of more than one audit (e.g. covering different sites), the scope of an individual audit may not cover the full certification scope, but the totality of audits shall be consistent with the scope in the certification document. The audit criteria shall be used as a reference against which conformity is determined and will include the requirements of a defined normative document on management systems and the defined processes and documentation of the management system developed by the client.

18.2. Audit Team Selection and Assignments

ICCASA will follow its process for selecting and appointing the audit team, including the audit team leader and technical experts where necessary, taking into account the competence needed to achieve the objectives and requirements for impartiality. Where there is only one auditor, the auditor must have the competence to perform the duties of an audit team leader applicable for that audit. In deciding the size and composition of the audit team, consideration will be given to the following:

- a) audit objectives, scope, criteria and estimated audit time
- b) whether the audit is a combined, joint or integrated
- c) certification requirements (including any applicable statutory, regulatory or contractual requirements)
- d) language and culture

The necessary knowledge and skills of the audit team leader and auditors may be supplemented by technical experts, translators and interpreters who shall operate under the direction of an auditor. Where translators or interpreters are used, they shall be selected such that they do not unduly influence the audit. The criteria for the selection of technical experts are determined on a case-by-case basis by the needs of the ICCASA audit team and the scope of the audit. Auditors-in-training may participate in the audit, provided an auditor is appointed as an evaluator. The evaluator shall be competent to take over the duties and have final responsibility for the activities and findings of the auditor-in-training.

The audit team leader, in consultation with the audit team, must assign to each team member responsibility for auditing specific processes, functions, sites, areas or activities. Such assignments shall take into account the need for competence, and the effective and efficient use of the audit team, as well as different roles and responsibilities of auditors, auditors-in-training and technical experts. Changes to the work assignments may be made as the audit progresses to ensure achievement of the audit objectives.

18.3. Observers, Technical Experts and Guides

18.3.1. Observers

The presence and justification of observers during an audit activity shall be agreed to by ICCASA and the client prior to the conduct of the audit. The audit team shall ensure that observers do not unduly influence or interfere in the audit process or outcome of the audit.

Observers can be members of the client's organization, consultants, witnessing accreditation body personnel, regulators or other justified persons.

18.3.2. Technical experts

Where technical experts are used, the role of technical experts during an audit activity shall be agreed to by ICCASA and client prior to the conduct of the audit. A technical expert shall not act as an auditor in the audit team. The technical experts shall be accompanied by an auditor. The technical experts may provide advice to the audit team for the preparation, planning or audit.

18.3.3. Guides

Guide(s) may be assigned to the audit team to facilitate the audit. The audit team shall ensure that guides do not influence or interfere in the audit process or outcome of the audit. The responsibilities of a guide can include establishing contacts and timing for interviews; arranging visits to specific parts of the site or organization; ensuring that rules concerning site safety and security procedures are known and respected by the audit team members; witnessing the audit on behalf of the client and providing clarification or information as requested by an auditor. Where appropriate, the auditee can also act as the guide.

19. Audit Plan

ICCASA will ensure that an audit plan is established prior to each audit identified in the audit programme to provide the basis for agreement regarding the conduct and scheduling of the audit activities.

19.1. Preparing the Audit Plan

The audit plan must be appropriate to the objectives and the scope of the audit. The audit plan will include or refer to the following where applicable: a) the audit objectives; b) the audit criteria; c) the audit scope, including identification of the organizational and functional units or processes to be audited; d) the dates and sites where the on-site audit activities will be conducted, including visits to temporary sites and remote auditing activities, where appropriate; e) the expected duration of on-site audit activities; f) the roles and responsibilities of the audit team members and accompanying persons, such as observers or interpreters.

19.2. Communication of Audit Team Tasks

The tasks given to the audit team shall be defined, and require the audit team to: a) examine and verify the structure, policies, processes, procedures, records and related documents of the client relevant to the management system standard; b) determine that these meet all the requirements relevant to the intended scope of certification; c) determine that the processes and procedures are established, implemented and maintained effectively, to provide a basis for confidence in the client's management system; d) communicate to the client, for its action, any inconsistencies between the client's policy, objectives and targets.

19.3. Communication of Audit Plan

The audit plan shall be communicated on email to the client and to the audit team. The dates of the audit will be agreed upon, in advance, with the client.

19.4. Communication concerning audit team members

ICCASA shall provide the name of and, when requested, make available background information on each member of the audit team. ICCASA will provide 7 working days for the client to object to the appointment of any particular audit team member and for ICCASA to reconstitute the team in response to any valid objection.

19.5. Conducting the opening meeting

A formal opening meeting is conducted by the audit team leader and is held with the client's management and the person/s responsible for the functions and processes to be audited. The purpose of the opening meeting is to provide a short explanation of how the audit activities will be undertaken. The degree of detail will be consistent with the familiarity of the client with the audit process and will consider various elements outlined in the opening meeting agenda items (FRM12).

19.6. Communication during the audit

During the audit, the audit team leader will periodically assess audit progress and exchange information. He/she will reassign work as needed between the audit team members and periodically communicate the progress of the audit and any concerns to the client. Where the available audit evidence indicates that the audit objectives are unattainable or suggests the presence of an immediate and significant risk (e.g. safety), the audit team leader will report this to the client and to ICCASA, to determine appropriate action to be taken. Such action may include reconfirmation or modification of the audit plan, changes to the audit objectives or audit scope, or termination of the audit. The audit team leader will report the outcome of the action taken to ICCASA. The audit team leader will review with the client any need for changes to the audit scope which becomes apparent as on-site auditing activities progress and report this to ICCASA.

19.7. Obtaining and verifying information

During the audit, information relevant to the audit objectives, scope and criteria (including information relating to interfaces between functions, activities and processes) shall be obtained by appropriate sampling and verified to become audit evidence. Methods to obtain information may include: interviews; observation of processes and activities; review of documentation and records; etc.

19.8. Identifying and recording audit findings

Audit findings summarizing conformity and detailing nonconformity will be identified, classified and recorded to enable an informed certification decision to be made or the certification to be maintained. Opportunities for improvement may be identified and recorded, where permitted. Audit findings, however, which are nonconformities, may not be recorded as opportunities for improvement. A finding of nonconformity will be recorded against a specific requirement, and will contain a clear statement of the nonconformity, identifying in detail the objective evidence on which the nonconformity is based. Nonconformities will be discussed with the client to ensure that the evidence is accurate and that the nonconformities are understood. The audit team may not offer suggestions for the cause of nonconformities or their solution. The audit team leader will attempt to resolve any diverging opinions between the audit team and the client concerning audit evidence or findings, and unresolved points will be recorded.

19.9. Preparing audit conclusions

Prior to the closing meeting, the audit team leader is responsible for: reviewing the audit findings, and any other appropriate information obtained during the audit, against the audit objectives and audit criteria and classify the nonconformities; agree upon the audit conclusions, taking into account the uncertainty inherent in the audit process; agree any necessary follow-up actions; confirm the appropriateness of the audit programme or identify any modification required for future audits (e.g. scope of certification, audit time or dates, surveillance frequency, audit team competence).

19.10. Conducting the closing meeting

A formal closing meeting, where attendance shall be recorded, is held with the client's management and with those responsible for the functions or processes audited. The purpose of the closing meeting, which is conducted by the audit team leader, is to present the audit conclusions, including the recommendation regarding certification. Any nonconformities shall be presented in such a manner that they are clearly understood, and the client will be informed of the timeframe for responding to the audit report (which is within 30 days). The degree of detail shall be consistent with the familiarity of the client with the audit process and will consider various elements outlined in the closing meeting agenda items (FRM12). The client will be given opportunity for questions. Any diverging opinions regarding the audit findings or conclusions between the audit team and the client shall be discussed and resolved where possible. Any diverging opinions that are not resolved shall be recorded and referred to ICCASA.

19.11. Audit report

ICCASA will provide a written report for each audit to the client. The audit team may identify opportunities for improvement but will not recommend specific solutions. Ownership of the audit report will be maintained by ICCASA. The audit team leader will ensure that the audit report is prepared and will be responsible for its content. The audit report will provide an accurate, concise and clear record of the audit to enable an informed certification decision to be made and the audit report template (FRM22) will meet the requirements of ISO 17021-1 standard, clause 9.4.8.

19.12. Cause analysis of nonconformities

ICCASA will require the client to analyse the cause and describe the specific correction and corrective actions taken, or planned to be taken, to eliminate detected nonconformities. The corrective action plan must be sent to ICCASA within 30 days of receipt of the first issue of the audit report.

19.13. Effectiveness of corrections and corrective actions

ICCASA will review the corrections, identified causes and corrective actions submitted by the client to determine if these are acceptable. ICCASA will verify the effectiveness of any correction and corrective actions planned or taken and provide feedback to the client. The verification may be done by the client submitting evidence to ICCASA which will be recorded electronically, or through an onsite verification which could be conducted through an additional full audit or an additional limited audit. that will be conducted. Feedback will be given to the client of the result of the review and verification. The client shall be informed if an additional audit, or documented evidence (to be confirmed during future audits) will be needed to verify effective correction and corrective actions.

20. Initial Certification Audit

The initial certification audit of a management system shall be conducted in two stages: stage 1 and stage 2.

20.1. Stage 1 Audits

The stage 1 audit planning seeks to ensure that the objectives of stage 1 can be met. The client will be informed of any onsite activities during stage 1. The objectives of the stage 1 audit are to:

- a) review the client's management system documented information
- b) evaluate the client's site-specific conditions and to undertake discussions with the client's personnel to determine the preparedness for stage 2
- c) review the client's status and understanding regarding requirements of the standard, in particular with respect to the identification of key performance or significant aspects, processes, objectives and operation of the management system
- d) obtain necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, including:
 - the client's site(s)
 - processes and equipment used
 - levels of controls established (particularly in case of multisite clients)
 - applicable statutory and regulatory requirements
- e) and agree the details of stage 2 with the client
- f) provide a focus for planning stage 2 by gaining sufficient understanding of the client's management system and site operations in the context of the management system standard or other normative document
- g) evaluate if the internal audits and management reviews are being planned and performed and that the level of implementation of the management system verifies that the client is ready for stage 2

Document conclusions with regard to fulfilment of the stage 1 objectives and the readiness for stage 2 audit will be communicated to the client, including identification of any areas of concern that could be classified as a nonconformity during stage 2.

In determining the interval between stage 1 and stage 2, consideration will be given to the needs of the client to resolve areas of concern identified during stage 1. If any significant changes which would impact the management system occur, ICCASA shall consider the need to repeat all or part of stage 1. The client shall be informed that the results of stage 1 may lead to postponement or cancellation of stage 2. For a multi-site registration it is not practical to conduct the stage 1 audit on all sites that are to be included as part of the stage 2 audit activities but in addition to the Head Office, it may be required to visit one or two sites in order to collect necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, location processes and related statutory and regulatory compliance.

Should the findings raised during an stage 1 audit i.e. those nonconformities raised against statutory and regulatory compliance require a longer time frame for the effective implementation of the corrective actions, the team leader in conjunction with the certification manager may decide to grant up to a maximum of 12 months period between stage 1 and stage 2. The decision shall be documented and communicated to the organization in writing. Stage 1 audit to be repeated if a longer interval is required.

20.2. Stage 2 Audits

The stage 2 audit evaluates the implementation, including effectiveness, of the client's management system. The stage 2 will take place at the site(s) of the client. It shall include the auditing of the following:

- a) information and evidence about conformity to all requirements of the applicable management system standard or other normative documents
- b) performance monitoring, measuring, reporting and reviewing against key performance objectives and targets (consistent with the expectations in the applicable management system standard or other normative document)
- c) the client's management system ability and its performance regarding meeting of applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements
- d) operational control of the client's processes
- e) internal auditing and management review
- f) management responsibility for the client's policies

20.3. Initial Certification Audit Conclusions

The audit team will analyse all the information and audit evidence gathered during the stage 1 and stage 2 and agree on the audit conclusions. That for any major nonconformities, it has reviewed, accepted and verified the correction and corrective actions and that for any minor nonconformities it has reviewed and accepted the client's plan for correction and corrective action. Thereafter a recommendation on whether or not to grant certification shall be made.

20.4. Information for Granting Initial Certification

The information provided by the Certification Manager to the Approvals Board shall include all relevant documents. The Approvals Board making the certification decision shall be independent from those who carried out the audit. The Approvals Board shall make the certification decision on the basis of an evaluation of audit findings and conclusions and any other relevant information.

21. Certification Decision

ICCASA shall ensure that the persons that make the decisions for granting or refusing certification, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, suspending or restoring certification, withdrawing certification or renewing certification are different from those who carried out the audits. The individual(s) appointed to conduct the certification decision shall have appropriate competence.

The person(s) assigned by ICCASA to make a certification decision shall be under a legally enforceable arrangement ICCASA under the organizational control of ICCASA. The person under contract with ICCASA shall fulfil the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021 as persons employed under contract with ICCASA. ICCASA will record each certification decision including any additional information or clarification sought from the audit team or other sources.

21.1. Actions Prior to Making a Decision

ICCASA shall conduct an effective review prior to making a decision for granting certification, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, renewing, suspending or restoring, or withdrawing of certification, including, that the information provided by the Certification Manager (including the audit team) is sufficient with respect to the certification requirements and the scope for certification; that for any major nonconformities, it has reviewed, accepted and verified the correction and corrective actions and that for any minor nonconformities it has reviewed and accepted the client's plan for correction and corrective action.

21.2. Information for Granting Initial Certification

The information provided by the audit team to ICCASA for the certification decision shall include, as a minimum: the audit report; comments on the nonconformities and, where applicable, the correction and corrective actions taken by the client; confirmation of the information provided to ICCASA used in the application review and confirmation that the audit objectives have been achieved and a recommendation whether or not to grant certification, together with any conditions or observations.

If ICCASA is not able to verify the implementation of corrections and corrective actions of any major nonconformity within 6 months after the last day of stage 2, ICCASA shall conduct another stage 2 prior to recommending certification.

When a transfer of certification is envisaged from one certification body to ICCASA, as the accepting certification body, ICCASA shall obtain sufficient information in order to take a decision on certification.

21.3. Information for Granting Recertification

ICCASA shall make decisions on renewing certification based on the results of the recertification audit, as well as the results of the review of the system over the period of certification and complaints received from users of certification.

22. Maintaining Certification

ICCASA shall maintain certification based on demonstration that the client continues to satisfy the requirements of the management system standard. ICCASA may maintain a client's certification based on a positive conclusion by the audit team leader without further independent review and decision provided that the Certification Manager monitors the auditor's surveillance activities, including monitoring the reporting by its auditors, to confirm that the certification activity is operating effectively.

ICCASA may maintain a client's certification based on a positive conclusion by the audit team leader without further independent review and decision provided that for any major nonconformity or other situation that may lead to suspension or withdrawal of certification, this is reported to ICCASA by the audit team leader. Should the audit team leader raise the need to initiate a review, the Certification Manager will ensure that the review shall be done by competent personnel different from those who carried out the audit, to determine whether certification can be maintained.

22.1. Surveillance Activities

ICCASA conducts surveillance activities so that representative areas and functions covered by the scope of the management system are monitored on a regular basis and take into account changes to the certified client and its management system. Surveillance activities include on-site auditing of the certified client's management system's fulfilment of specified requirements with respect to the standard to which the certification is granted. Other surveillance activities may include enquiries from ICCASA to the certified client on aspects of certification; reviewing any certified client's statements with respect to its operations (e.g. promotional material, website); requests to the certified client to provide documented information (on paper or electronic media) and any other effective means of monitoring the certified client's performance.

22.2. Surveillance Audit

Surveillance audits are on-site audits, and are not necessarily full system audits and shall be planned together with the other surveillance activities so that ICCASA can maintain confidence that the client's certified management system continues to fulfil requirements between recertification audits. Each surveillance for the relevant management system standard shall include:

- a) internal audits and management review
- b) a review of actions taken on nonconformities identified during the previous audit
- c) complaints handling
- d) effectiveness of the management system with regard to achieving the certified client's objectives and the intended results of the respective management system (s)
- e) progress of planned activities aimed at continual improvement
- f) continuing operational control
- g) review of any changes
- h) use of marks and/or any other reference to certification

22.3. Recertification Audit Planning

The purpose of the recertification audit is to confirm the continued conformity and effectiveness of the management system as a whole, and its continued relevance and applicability for the scope of certification. A recertification audit shall be planned and conducted to evaluate the continued fulfilment of all of the requirements of the relevant management system standard or other normative document. This shall be planned and conducted in due time to enable for timely renewal before the certificate expiry date.

The recertification activity shall include the review of previous surveillance audit reports and consider the performance of the management system over the most recent certification cycle. Recertification audit activities may need to have a stage 1 in situations where there have been significant changes to the management system, the organization, or the context in which the management system is operating (e.g. changes to legislation). Such changes can occur at any time during the certification cycle and may therefore require ICCASA to perform a special audit which might or might not be a two-stage audit.

22.4. Recertification Audit

The recertification audit shall include an on-site audit that addresses the following:

- a) the effectiveness of the management system in its entirety in the light of internal and external changes and its continued relevance and applicability to the scope of certification
- b) demonstrated commitment to maintain the effectiveness and improvement of the management system in order to enhance overall performance
- c) the effectiveness of the management system with regard to achieving the certified client's objectives and the intended results of the respective management system (s)

For any major nonconformity, ICCASA will provide time limits for correction and corrective actions. These actions shall be implemented and verified prior to the expiration of certification. When recertification activities are successfully completed prior to the expiry date of the existing certification, the expiry date of the new certification can be based on the expiry date of the existing certification. The issue date on a new certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision. If ICCASA has not completed the recertification audit or is unable to verify the implementation of corrections and corrective actions for any major nonconformity prior to the expiry date of the certification, then recertification shall not be recommended, and the validity of the certification shall not be extended. The client shall be informed, and the consequences shall be explained.

Following expiration of certification, ICCASA will restore certification within 6 months provided that the outstanding recertification activities are completed, otherwise at least a stage 2 shall be conducted. The effective date on the certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision and the expiry date shall be based on prior certification cycle.

22.5. Special audits

22.5.1. Expanding Scope

ICCASA shall, in response to an application for expanding the scope of a certification already granted, undertake a review of the application and determine any audit activities necessary to decide whether or not the extension may be granted. This may be conducted in conjunction with a surveillance audit.

22.5.2. Short-notice Audits

It may be necessary for ICCASA to conduct audits of certified clients at short notice or unannounced to investigate complaints, or in response to changes, or as follow up on suspended clients. In such cases

ICCASA will make known in advance to the certified clients the conditions under which such audits will be conducted. ICCASA will exercise additional care in the assignment of the audit team because of the lack of opportunity for the client to object to audit team members.

22.5.3. Suspending, withdrawing or reducing the scope of certification

ICCASA shall suspend certification in cases when the client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system; when the certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies; when the certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension.

Under suspension, the client's management system certification is temporarily invalid. ICCASA 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 ICCASA shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification.

ICCASA shall reduce the scope of certification to exclude the parts not meeting the requirements, when the certified client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements for those parts of the scope of certification. Any such reduction shall be in line with the requirements of the standard used for certification.

23. Client records

ICCASA shall maintain records on the audit and other certification activities for all clients, including all organizations that submitted applications, and all organizations audited, certified, or with certification suspended or withdrawn. Records on certified clients shall include the following:

- a) application information and initial, surveillance and recertification audit reports
- b) certification agreement
- c) justification of the methodology used for sampling of sites, as appropriate
- d) justification for auditor time determination
- e) verification of correction and corrective actions
- f) records of complaints and appeals, and any subsequent correction or corrective actions
- g) committee deliberations and decisions, if applicable
- h) documentation of the certification decisions
- i) certification documents, including the scope of certification with respect to product, process or service, as applicable
- j) related records necessary to establish the credibility of the certification, such as evidence of the competence of auditors and technical experts
- k) audit programmes

ICCASA shall keep the records (retained information) on applicants and clients secure to ensure that the information is kept confidential. Records shall be transported, transmitted or transferred in a way that ensures that confidentiality is maintained. Records of certified clients and previously certified clients shall be retained for the duration of the current cycle plus one full certification cycle.

24. Validity of Certificates

The management system certificates are valid for a period of 3 years. Formal continuation of certification shall be subject to at least one annual surveillance audit in year 1 and year 2 with a full recertification audit in year 3. The three-year certification cycle begins with the initial certification decision and the three-year certification cycle shall be maintained over the life span of the certificate.

The certification document(s) shall identify the following:

- a) the name and geographical location of each certified client (or the geographical location of the headquarters and any sites within the scope of a multi-site certification)
- b) the effective date of granting, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, or renewing certification which shall not be before the date of the relevant certification decision
- c) the expiry date or recertification due date consistent with the recertification cycle
- d) a unique identification code
- e) the management system standard and/or other normative document, including indication of issue status (e.g. revision date or number) used for audit of the certified client
- f) the scope of certification with respect to the type of activities, products and services as applicable at each site without being misleading or ambiguous
- g) the name, address and certification mark of the certification body; other marks (e.g. accreditation symbol, client's logo) may be used provided they are not misleading or ambiguous
- h) any other information required by the standard and/or other normative document used for certification
- i) in the event of issuing any revised certification documents, a means to distinguish the revised documents from any prior obsolete documents

ICCASA will keep the original certification date on the certificate when a certificate lapses for a period of time provided that:

- the current certification cycle start, and expiry date are clearly indicated
- the last certification cycle expiry date be indicated along with the date of recertification audit

25. Documents and Records

An index to the formal management system documentation for the accredited certification schemes of ICCASA Certification has been placed on the ICCASA electronic folder that is maintained up to date by the Certification Manager.