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# GUIDANCE FOR CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

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NIPPON KAIJI KYOKAI

This Guidance is intended to provide guidelines as to details of the requirements of the "Rules for Certification of Management Systems" in the course of the certification services, and published in order to execute the services with better understanding among the concerned.

Any modifications of guidelines regarded as equivalent to the guidelines in this Guidance will be accepted flexibly in the services.

The numbers at the heads of each provision correspond to the Chapter, Clause and Sub-clause in the "Rules for Certification of Management Systems" for the convenience.

In this Guidance, the certain details are omitted for Selected Chapter, Clauses and Sub-clauses of the Rules.

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# GUIDANCE FOR CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

## CHAPTER 2 CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

### 2.1 General

-1 When making an application of the management systems certification, the organization shall conclude the certification agreement with the Society about the matter to be agreed each other.

-2 When making an application of the management systems certification, the organization shall provide the following information:

(1) required scope for certification,

(2) relevant details of the organization,
To include the name and addresses of its site(s) (sometimes, more than one), processes and operations, human and technical resources, functions, relationships and any relevant legal obligations,

(3) identification of outsourced processes used by the organization that will affect conformity to requirements,

(4) applicable standard to be certified, and

(5) whether consultancy relating to the management system to be certified has been provided and, if so, by whom.

Upon receipt of the application, the Society shall check and confirm the applied business scope and activities of the organization, and thereupon, the Society may request modification to the contents of the application through mutual consultation if necessary.

When a relationship between the Society and the organization poses an unacceptable threat to impartiality, then the Society shall not receive the application.

-3 The objective scope of the organization for certification should be decided in consideration of the systems, functions and other necessary matters of the organization.

When defining the scope, the Society should confirm the following matters.

(1) The organizations having more than one operating units may be regarded as a single object for certification if they satisfy all the following conditions:

a) All organizations belong to one complex organization and are located in a limited area,

b) All organizations are in operation under the control of the common management or comprehensive management of the complex organization,

c) The management systems in each organization is properly operated under the control of common management representative or comprehensive management representative, and

d) All organizations have the same management systems and have similar procedures based on the same management systems.

(2) Where the organization has more than one sorts of the activities, the certification may be limited to some sorts of the activities.

(3) Sub-contractors are not included in the scope of the audit in principle.

However, the actual management statuses in the sub-contractors should be audited as deemed necessary by the Society.

## 2.4 Use of Certification Mark and Reference to Certification

### 2.4.1 Use of Certification Mark

The Society is to provide the criteria for use certification mark and the figure of the reproduction proof to the certified organizations.

### 2.4.2 Reference to Certification

-1 The certified organization shall conform to the following requirements when making reference to its certification status in communication media such as the internet, brochures or advertising, or other documents

(1) does not make or permit any misleading statement regarding its certification;
(2) does not use or permit the use of a certificate or any part thereof in a misleading manner;
(3) does not use or permit the use of audit reports or any part thereof in a misleading manner;
(4) upon withdrawal of its certification, discontinues its use of all advertising matter that contains a reference to certification, as directed by the Society;
(5) amends all advertising matter appropriately when the scope of certification has been reduced;
(6) does not allow reference to its management system certification to be used in such away as to imply that the Society certifies a product (including service) or process;
(7) does not imply that the certification applies to activities and sites that are outside the scope of certification;
(8) does not use its certification in such a manner that would bring the Society and/or certification system into disrepute and lose public trust.

-2 When the certified organization uses any statement on product packaging or in accompanying information that it has a certified management system, the statement shall in no way imply that the product, process or service is certified by this means.

The statement shall include reference to:

a) identification (e.g. brand or name) of the certified organization;
b) the type of management system (e.g. quality, environment) and the applicable standard;
c) the certification body issuing the certificate.

Product packaging is considered as that which can be removed without the product disintegrating or being damaged. Type labels or identification plates are considered as part of the product. Accompanying information is considered as separately available or easily detachable.

-3 When the incorrect references to certification status or misleading use of certificates or audit reports are identified, the certified organization shall take corrections and corrective actions. Where the adequate actions cannot be verified, the Society shall take such actions could include suspension, withdrawal of certification, publication of the transgression and, if necessary, legal action.

## 2.5 Maintaining certification

-2 The certified organization shall inform the Society, without delay, of changes that may affect the capability of the management systems to continue to fulfill the requirements of the standard used for certification.

Changes include those relating to:

(1) the legal, commercial, organization status or ownership,

(2) organization and management,

(3) contact address and sites,

(4) applied scope of the management systems, and

(5) major change to the management systems and the process.

-3 When the certified organization finds fraudulent behaviour, it shall report to the Society without delay.

-5 The certified organizations of occupational, health and safety management systems shall inform the Society, without delay, of occurrence of the followings:

(1) serious incident necessitating the involvement of the competent regulatory authority

(2) breach f regulation necessitating the involvement of the competent regulatory authority

## 2.7 Refusing, Withdrawing, Suspending, Restoring following Suspension, Expanding or Reducing the Scope of Certification

-1 With regard to the provision of 2.5 -3 and others in the Rules, the “fraudulent behaviour” means “any intentional misrepresentation, concealment of information or provision of false information to a relevant interested party, resulting in the deliberate violation of accreditation or certification rules”.

-2 With regard to the provision of 2.7.2 -1(6) of the Rules, what the organization’s activities have been suspended for a long time means the organization’s activities suspended for one year and more.

-3 With regard to the provision of 2.7.3 -2 of the Rules, a time of the suspension the Society sets should not exceed 6 months.

-4 In case where the certification has been withdrawn due to the reason of the provision (3) or (4) of 2.7.1 and the provision (3) or (7) of 2.7.2 -1 of the Rules, the Society would in principle not accept the application for recertification to be submitted by the same organization for the period of one year since the date of the withdrawal.

-5 With regard to the provision of 2.7.2 -3, the period specified by the Society is the period until the reason for withdraw have been resolved and sufficient actions have been taken to prevent recurrence. The period is set for each case and is usually one year or more.

## 2.8 Transfer of Certification

The “specified requirements” written in the provision of 2.8 of the Rules are the following, and necessary confirmation shall be made for fulfillment of the situation with these requirements

through the review of documents submitted by the applicant organization, visiting to the site(s) of the organization or communication with the issuing certification body, etc.:

(1) the organization's certification being fallen within the accredited scope of the issuing certification body and the Society;
(2) the issuing certification body's accredited scope being fallen within its accreditation body's MLA (Multilateral Recognition Arrangement) scope;
(3) Reasons for transfer of certification;
(4) Availability of a valid accredited certification;
(5) the initial or most recent renewal audit reports, the latest annual audit report and relevant documentation;
(6) Complaints received and actions taken by the organization;
(7) Current stage in the certification cycle, and considerations relevant to establishing an audit plan and an audit program;
(8) any current engagement by the transferring organization with regulatory bodies relevant to the scope of the certification in respect of legal compliance.

# CHAPTER 3 CERTIFICATION

## 3.1 General

-1 Application for an initial audit, a renewal audit, an annual audit or an occasional audit shall be made by using the form specified by the society. Application for a renewal audit or an annual audit shall be made, as a rule, well in advance to the date specified in the provision of 3.1-2 and 3.1-3 of the Rules. Date for the renewal audit or the annual audit shall be notified to the relevant organization in writing, as a rule, no later than 7 days prior to executing such audit, at consultation with the relevant organization.

-2 The Society may bring forward the date of a renewal audit at the request by a certified organization.

## 3.2 Initial Audit

### 3.2.2 Documents to be submitted

-1 Catalogues of products, pamphlets for guidance of the organization and documents for activities in the organization may be used for as the "Documents to be submitted" under (4) and (5) of the provision of 3.2.2-1, under (5) and (6) of the provisions 3.2.2-2, under (5) and (6) of the provision of 3.2.2-3 of the Rules, under (5) and (6) of the provision of 3.2.2-4 of the Rules, under (5) and (6) of the provision of 3.2.2-5 of the Rules, under (3) and (4) of the provision of 3.2.2-6 of the Rules, and under (2) and (3) of the provision of 3.2.2-7 of the Rules.

-2 Arrangement plans of the facilities in the operating units, process flow charts, lists of major equipment, etc. are desirable to be submitted as reference documents in addition to the documents under (2) of the provision of 3.2.2-2 and under (2) of the provision of 3.2.2-3 of the Rules.

### 3.2.3 Stage 1 audit

-1 Result of the stage 1 audit (document) related to the submitted management system documents should be notified to the organization in writing.

-2 Schedule and plan for the stage 1 audit shall be notified to the organization, no later than 7 days prior to the first day of the stage 1 audit in writing, at consultation with the organization.
In general, the following matters should be conferred and checked at the stage 1 audit (visit):

(1) to evaluate the organization's location and site-specific conditions and to undertake discussions with the organization's personnel to determine the preparedness for the stage 2 audit;

(2) to review the organization'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;

(3) to obtain necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, including:

a) the organization's site(s);

b) processes and equipment used;

c) levels of controls established (particularly in case of multisite clients);

d) applicable statutory and regulatory requirements;

(4) to review the allocation of resources for stage 2 audit and agree with the client on the details of the stage 2 audit;

(5) to provide a focus for planning the stage 2 audit by gaining a sufficient understanding of the organization's management systems and site operations in the context or the management system standard or other normative document; and

(6) to evaluate if the internal audits and management review are being planned and performed, and that the level of implementation of the management system substantiates that the organization is ready for the stage 2 audit.

-3 The results of the stage 1 on-site audit shall be reported to the organization in writing.

-4 In determining the interval between stage 1 and stage 2 audit, consideration shall be given to the needs of the organization to resolve areas of concern identified during stage 1.

-5 If any significant changes which would impact the management system occur, all or part of stage 1 audit shall be repeated. The organization shall be informed that the results of stage 1 may lead to postponement or cancellation of stage 2.

### 3.2.4 Stage 2 audit (visit)

-1 Schedule and plan for the stage 2 audit shall be notified to the organization, no later than 7 days prior to the first day of the stage 2 audit in writing, at consultation with the organization.

-2 Management representatives and the related personnel to the management systems of the organization should attend the stage 2 audit.

-3 The purpose of stage 2 audit is to evaluate the implementation, including effectiveness, of the organization's management system.

-4 On completion of the stage 2 audit the audit team shall verbally inform the results of the audit to the organization. When any nonconformities are found during the stage 2 audit, the audit team should prepare “corrective action request” and request the management representative to confirm it.

-5 The dead line of the completion of the corrective actions should be determined at consultation with the management representative according to the contents of non-conformities.

-6 Result of the stage 2 audit should be notified to the organization by means of the audit report, in principle within 14 days from after completion of the stage 2 audit.
An initial audit is completed at distribution of the audit report to the organization except where corrective actions are requested.

-7 When any requested items for the corrective action exist, the organization shall prepare plans of the corrective actions and entry them at the appropriate location in the corrective action report sent to the organization as the attachment to the audit report, and thereupon, submit them to the Society. The Society reviews them and notifies the organization of the review result.

-8 When any requested items for the corrective action exist, the society shall conduct the follow-up audit for verifying the results of corrective action taken.
The Society shall notify the organization of procedures of the follow-up audit.
When the follow-up audit is conducted on-site, its program shall be notified to the organization in writing.
The follow-up audit shall be limited to the matters related to the corrective action request and the result of the audit shall be notified to the organization, in principle, within 14 days after the completion of the audit.

-9 When the implementation of corrections and corrective actions of any nonconformity cannot be successfully verified within 6 months after the last day of stage 2 audit, another stage 2 audit shall be conducted.

## 3.3 Renewal audit

### 3.3.1 Items, scope and extent of renewal audit

-1 Renewal audit shall include an on-site audit including the review of the following:

(1) 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;

(2) demonstrated commitment to maintain the effectiveness and improvement of the management system in order to enhance overall performance; and

(3) the effectiveness of the management system with regard to achieving the certified organization's objectives and the intended results of the respective management system(s).

-2 Renewal audit activities may need to have a stage 1 audit in situations where there have been significant changes to the monument system, the organization, or the context in which the management system is operating (e.g. changes to legislation).

### 3.3.3 Actions for non-conformities

For any major nonconformity(s), a follow-up audit shall be conducted for verifying corrections and corrective actions taken. The follow-up audit processes shall be notified to the organization.
When the follow-up on-site audit is necessary, an audit plan notification shall be sent to the organization in writing. The follow-up audit shall be conducted for the concerned area of the nonconformity(s) and results of it shall be reported to the organization in writing.
For any minor nonconformity(s), a plan for corrections and corrective actions shall be confirmed. When it is appropriate, its implementation and effectiveness shall be verified during the next annual audit.

## 3.4 Annual audit (surveillance audit)

### 3.4.1 Items, Scope and extent of audit

-1 Annual audit shall include an on-site audit including the review of the following:

(1) internal audits and management review,
(2) a review of actions taken on nonconformities identified during the previous audit,
(3) treatment of complaints,
(4) effectiveness of the management systems with regard to achieving organization's objectives,
(5) progressing of planned activities aimed at continual improvement,
(6) continual operational control,
(7) review of any changes, and
(8) use of the Marks and/or any other reference to certification.

-2 When an annual audit is being planned to conduct twice in a calendar year, the audit shall be conducted in accordance with the following:

(1) The requirements and relevant locations in the management system of the organization are appropriately selected, and it shall be confirmed that selected elements of the management system are effectively maintained in accordance with the applied standard;
(2) When the requirements and locations of the system are selected and with regard to the above (1), some consideration shall be taken so as to confirm that all requirements for the applied standard have been adequately maintained in the representative locations controlling the relevant processes through consecutive two times audits; and
(3) When conducting the audit for the selected requirements and locations, the Society shall confirm that the relevant documents in the management systems amended after previous audit have been complied with the applied standards.

-3 At an annual audit, the Society shall notify the certified organization of the audit program including the date of the audit specified in the provision of 3.4.2 above.
The auditors may however add further requirements and locations for further audits if they consider it necessary to do so based on the audits according to the program.

### 3.4.3 Actions for non-conformities

For any major nonconformity(s), a follow-up audit shall be conducted for verifying corrections

and corrective actions taken. The follow-up audit processes shall be notified to the organization.

When the follow-up on-site audit is necessary, an audit plan notification shall be sent to the organization in writing. The follow-up audit shall be conducted for the concerned area of the nonconformity(s) and results of it shall be reported to the organization in writing.

For any minor nonconformity(s), a plan for corrections and corrective actions shall be confirmed. When it is appropriate, its implementation and effectiveness shall be verified during the next annual audit or renewal audit.

### 3.5 Occasional audit

-1 Occasional audit specified in the provision of 3.1 -4(1) of the Rules shall be made according to the following:

(1) The term "Major Changes" of the management systems specified in the provision of 3.1 -4(1) of the Rules means any change of the following;

a) serious changes in the management systems and processes,

b) changes of activities and operational areas in the scopes of certification,

c) major changes of organization and management, or

d) the legal, commercial, organizational status or ownership.

(2) The certified organization shall inform the Society of any major changes if made without delay;

(3) The Society shall review the documents whether the major changes made are complied with the requirements of the applicable standards, and thereupon, inform the organization of the result; and

(4) In case where the changes could be considered to affect the effective maintenance of the management system substantially, the Society shall carry out the on-site investigation promptly at the organization prior to the occasional audit subject to the consent of it, and notify it of the result.

(5) The Society shall notify the certified organization of the program and plan for an occasional audit concerning the changes as mentioned in (1) above, if deemed necessary by the Society.

-2 Occasional audit specified in the provision of 3.1 -4 (2) of the Rules shall be made according to the following:

(1) When the requirements of the applied standards and/or the Rules of the Society are changed, the Society shall notify the certified organization of the contents and the date of application of the relevant changes; and

(2) The Society shall notify the certified organization of the program and plan for an on-site audit, if deemed necessary by the Society.

-3 Occasional audit specified in the provision of 2.5 -3 of the Rules may postpone the audit while an investigation by law enforcement or regulatory authorities is in progress.

-4 An occasional audit may be conducted at the occasion of an annual audit or a renewal audit, if deemed appropriate by the Society.

-5 The Society conducts an “occasional audit without advance notice” written in the provision of 3.5 -5 of the Rules in the following cases:

(1) The Society received any information such as an internal denunciation which could be justified to affect to the management system seriously;

(2) An advance notice may result in a situation where the objectives of an occasional audit cannot be achieved.

## CHAPTER 5 MISCELLANEOUS

### 5.1 Provision of information

-1 When receiving audit, the organization or certified organization shall show the records regarding the following to the auditors at their request:

(1) All communication received from the interested parties for the management systems,

(2) All non-conformities,

(3) Internal audits conducted for the management systems,

(4) Management review, and

(5) Corrective actions taken in operation of the management systems.

-2 The organization or certified organization shall take appropriate actions for the matters mentioned in (1) to (5) of -1 above, and also shall record the results thereof.

-3 The Society is to maintain and make public the following information.

(1) audit processes;

(2) processes for granting, refusing, maintaining, renewing, suspending, restoring or withdrawing certification or expanding or reducing the scope of certification;

(3) types of management systems and certification schemes in which it operates;

(4) the use of the Society's name and certification mark;

(5) processes for handling requests for information, complaints and appeals;

(6) policy on impartiality.

(7) geographical areas in which the Society operates;

(8) the status of a given certification;

(9) the name, related Standards, scope and geographical location (city and country) for a specific certified organization.

### 5.4 Appeals and complaints

-1 Appeals and complaints for audit shall be informed to the Society within 45 days from the day after completion of the audit in writing.

-2 When receiving an appeal, the Society shall handle it impartially at the Appeal Committee consisting of members with neutral position.

-3 When receiving a complaint, the Society shall investigate it, and send a reply based on the investigation to the complainant. If the complainant dissatisfies with the reply, and requests

further investigation, and if the Society considers it necessary, it shall handle the complaint impartially at the Appeal Committee consisting of members with neutral position.

-4 When deemed needs to appeal and complaints, an organization or relevant third party may appeal the member of the “Appeal Committee”.

**Supplements**

The revised notifications become effective on 1 April 2026.