INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO/IEC 17021

Second edition
2011-02-01

Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

Évaluation de la conformité — Exigences pour les organismes procédant à l'audit et à la certification des systèmes de management

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

ISO/IEC 17021:2011

a93495f8cfaf/iso-iec-17021-2011

Reference number
ISO/IEC 17021:2011(E)

© ISO 2011

PDF disclaimer

This PDF file may contain embedded typefaces. In accordance with Adobe's licensing policy, this file may be printed or viewed but shall not be edited unless the typefaces which are embedded are licensed to and installed on the computer performing the editing. In downloading this file, parties accept therein the responsibility of not infringing Adobe's licensing policy. The ISO Central Secretariat accepts no liability in this area.

Adobe is a trademark of Adobe Systems Incorporated.

Details of the software products used to create this PDF file can be found in the General Info relative to the file; the PDF-creation parameters were optimized for printing. Every care has been taken to ensure that the file is suitable for use by ISO member bodies. In the unlikely event that a problem relating to it is found, please inform the Central Secretariat at the address given below.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW



COPYRIGHT

© ISO 2011

All rights reserved. Unless otherw
electronic or mechanical, includin
ISO's member body in the country

Published in Switzerland

Contents

Page

Foreword v
Introduction vi
1 Scope 1
2 Normative references 1
3 Terms and definitions 1
4 Principles 3
4.1 General 3
4.2 Impartiality 3
4.3 Competence 4
4.4 Responsibility 4
4.5 Openness 4
4.6 Confidentiality 4
4.7 Responsiveness to complaints 4
5 General requirements 5
5.1 Legal and contractual matters 5
5.2 Management of impartiality 5
..... 6
..... 7
..... 7
..... 7
..... 8
..... 8
..... 9
..... 10
..... 10
..... 10
..... 11
..... 11
..... 11
..... 12
..... 12
..... 13
..... 13
..... 14
..... 14
..... 22
..... 25
..... 26
..... 27
..... 27
..... 28
..... 28
..... 29
..... 30
..... 30
9001 30
..... 30

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

Annex A (normative) **Required knowledge and skills** **34**
Annex B (informative) **Possible evaluation methods** **35**
Annex C (informative) **Example of a process flow for determining and maintaining competence** **37**
Annex D (informative) **Desired personal behaviours** **39**
Annex E (informative) **Third-party audit and certification process** **40**
Annex F (informative) **Considerations for the audit programme, scope or plan** **42**
Bibliography **44**

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work. In the field of conformity assessment, the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO) is responsible for the development of International Standards and Guides.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

Draft International Standards are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO/IEC 17021 was prepared by the *ISO Committee on conformity assessment* (CASCO).

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

nd was approved by both

which has been revised to
r until the systematic review

ion indicating changes from

Introduction

Certification of a management system, such as a quality or environmental management system of an organization, is one means of providing assurance that the organization has implemented a system for the management of the relevant aspects of its activities, in line with its policy.

This International Standard specifies requirements for certification bodies. Observance of these requirements is intended to ensure that certification bodies operate management system certification in a competent, consistent and impartial manner, thereby facilitating the recognition of such bodies and the acceptance of their certifications on a national and international basis. This International Standard serves as a foundation for facilitating the recognition of management system certification in the interests of international trade.

Certification of a management system provides independent demonstration that the management system of the organization

a) conforms to specified requirements,

b) is capable of consistently achieving its stated policy and objectives, and

c) is effectively implemented.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

Conformity assessment s
organization, its customers

In this International Standar
principles help the reader t
to Clauses 5 to 10. These
principles are not auditabl
supporting and demonstrati
through the establishment o

This International Standard
systems. It gives generic r
field of quality, environme
certification bodies. This wo
with other designations that

Certification activities invol
conformity of an organizati
normative requirements is n

The publication of this Inter
to delete relevant referen
certification auditing and th

Specific market needs ha
requirements for third-part
environmental managemen
auditor competence and th
key interested parties, inclu

This International Standard
level, aimed at providing a
conducted by a competent
results reported in a consist

This International Standard is applicable to the auditing and certification of any type of management system. It is recognized that some of the requirements, and in particular those related to auditor competence, can be supplemented with additional criteria in order to achieve the expectations of the interested parties.

In this International Standard, the word “shall” indicates a requirement and the word “should” a recommendation.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

ISO/IEC 17021:2011

a93495f8cfaf/iso-iec-17021-2011

Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

1 Scope

This International Standard contains principles and requirements for the competence, consistency and impartiality of the audit and certification of management systems of all types (e.g. quality management systems or environmental management systems) and for bodies providing these activities. Certification bodies operating to this International Standard need not offer all types of management system certification.

Certification of management systems (named in this International Standard “certification”) is a third-party conformity assessment activity (see ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.5). Bodies performing this activity are therefore third-party conformity assessment bodies (named in this International Standard “certification body/bodies”).

NOTE 1 Certification of a management system is sometimes also called “registration”, and certification bodies are sometimes called “registrars”.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

egulatory authority).

n or peer assessment or other

this document. For dated
t edition of the referenced

s

0, ISO/IEC 17000 and the

as not to adversely influence

NOTE 2 Other terms that are useful in conveying the element of impartiality are: objectivity, independence, freedom from conflict of interests, freedom from bias, lack of prejudice, neutrality, fairness, open-mindedness, even-handedness, detachment, balance.

3.3
management system consultancy
participation in designing, implementing or maintaining a management system

EXAMPLES

a) preparing or producing manuals or procedures, and

b) giving specific advice, instructions or solutions towards the development and implementation of a management system.

NOTE Arranging training and participating as a trainer is not considered consultancy, provided that, where the course relates to management systems or auditing, it is confined to the provision of generic information that is freely available in the public domain; i.e. the trainer should not provide company-specific solutions.

3.4
third-party certification audit
audit carried out by an auditing organization independent of the client and the user, for the purpose of certifying the client's management system

NOTE 1 In the definitions which follow, the term “audit” has been used for simplicity to refer to third-party certification audit.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

NOTE 2 Third-party certific
audits.

NOTE 3 Third-party certific
conformity to the requirements

NOTE 4 A joint audit is whe

NOTE 5 A combined audit
systems standards together.

NOTE 6 An integrated au
management systems standar

3.5
client
organization whose manag

3.6
auditor
person who conducts an au

3.7
competence
ability to apply knowledge a

3.8
guide
person appointed by the cli

3.9
observer
person who accompanies t

3.10
technical area
area characterized by commonalities of processes relevant to a specific type of management system

4 Principles

4.1 General

4.1.1 These principles are the basis for the subsequent specific performance and descriptive requirements in this International Standard. This International Standard does not give specific requirements for all situations that can occur. These principles should be applied as guidance for the decisions that may need to be made for unanticipated situations. Principles are not requirements.

4.1.2 The overall aim of certification is to give confidence to all parties that a management system fulfils specified requirements. The value of certification is the degree of public confidence and trust that is established by an impartial and competent assessment by a third-party. Parties that have an interest in certification include, but are not limited to

a) the clients of the certification bodies,

b) the customers of the organizations whose management systems are certified,

c) governmental authorities,

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

certification body to deliver

lient paying for certification,

dy's decisions be based on
body, and that its decisions

4.2.4 Threats to impartiality include the following.

a) Self-interest threats: threats that arise from a person or body acting in their own interest. A concern related to certification, as a threat to impartiality, is financial self-interest.

b) Self-review threats: threats that arise from a person or body reviewing the work done by themselves. Auditing the management systems of a client to whom the certification body provided management systems consultancy would be a self-review threat.

c) Familiarity (or trust) threats: threats that arise from a person or body being too familiar with or trusting of another person instead of seeking audit evidence.

d) Intimidation threats: threats that arise from a person or body having a perception of being coerced openly or secretively, such as a threat to be replaced or reported to a supervisor.

4.3 Competence

Competence of the personnel supported by the management system of the certification body is necessary to deliver certification that provides confidence.

4.4 Responsibility

4.4.1 The client organization, not the certification body, has the responsibility for conformity with the requirements for certification.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

4.4.2 The certification bo
base a certification decisio
sufficient evidence of confor

NOTE Any audit is based
of 100 % conformity with requir

4.5 Openness

4.5.1 A certification bod
information about its audit
granting, extending, maintai
of any organization, in ord
principle of access to, or dis

4.5.2 To gain or maintain
to, or disclosure of, non-c
response to complaints) to

4.6 Confidentiality

To gain the privileged acce
requirements for certificati
proprietary information abo

4.7 Responsiveness t

Parties that rely on certific
should have confidence tha
be made to resolve the
protection for the certificati
unreasonable behaviour. C
appropriately.

NOTE An appropriate balance between the principles of openness and confidentiality, including responsiveness to complaints, is necessary in order to demonstrate integrity and credibility to all users of certification.

5 General requirements

5.1 Legal and contractual matters

5.1.1 Legal responsibility

The certification body shall be a legal entity, or a defined part of a legal entity, such that it can be held legally responsible for all its certification activities. A governmental certification body is deemed to be a legal entity on the basis of its governmental status.

5.1.2 Certification agreement

The certification body shall have a legally enforceable agreement for the provision of certification activities to its client. In addition, where there are multiple offices of a certification body or multiple sites of a client, the certification body shall ensure there is a legally enforceable agreement between the certification body granting certification and issuing a certificate, and all the sites covered by the scope of the certification.

5.1.3 Responsibility for certification decisions

The certification body shall be responsible for, and shall retain authority for, its decisions relating to certification, including the granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

ality in management system
ment that it understands the
tivities, manages conflict of
s.

ities for conflict of interests
nships. Having relationships
r, if any relationship creates
nstrate how it eliminates or
ittee specified in 6.2. The
entified, whether they arise
rganizations.

ed on ownership, governance,
f a sales commission or other

a wholly owned subsidiary
hall not be provided.

gement system certification

fer or provide management
ertification body.

5.2.6 The certification body and any part of the same legal entity shall not offer or provide internal audits to its certified clients. The certification body shall not certify a management system on which it provided internal audits within two years following the end of the internal audits. This also applies to that part of government identified as the certification body.

NOTE See Note to 5.2.2.

5.2.7 The certification body shall not certify a management system on which a client has received management system consultancy or internal audits, where the relationship between the consultancy organization and the certification body poses an unacceptable threat to the impartiality of the certification body.

NOTE 1 Allowing a minimum period of two years to elapse following the end of the management system consultancy is one way of reducing the threat to impartiality to an acceptable level.

NOTE 2 See Note to 5.2.2.

5.2.8 The certification body shall not outsource audits to a management system consultancy organization, as this poses an unacceptable threat to the impartiality of the certification body (see 7.5). This does not apply to individuals contracted as auditors covered in 7.3.

5.2.9 The certification body's activities shall not be marketed or offered as linked with the activities of an organization that provides management system consultancy. The certification body shall take action to correct inappropriate claims by any consultancy organization stating or implying that certification would be simpler, easier, faster or less expensive if the certification body were used. A certification body shall not state or imply that certification would be simpler, easier, faster or less expensive if a specified consultancy organization were used.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

5.2.10 To ensure that the
consultancy, including thos
part in an audit or other cer
towards the client in questio

5.2.11 The certification bo
actions of other persons, bo

5.2.12 All certification bod
certification activities, shall
compromise impartiality.

5.2.13 Certification bodies
them that may present the
this information as input to i
organizations that employ
demonstrate that there is n

5.3 Liability and finan

5.3.1 The certification bo
certification activities and t
arising from its operations i

5.3.2 The certification b
committee specified in 6.2 t
not compromise its impartia

6 Structural requirements

6.1 Organizational structure and top management

6.1.1 The certification body shall document its organizational structure, showing duties, responsibilities and authorities of management and other certification personnel and any committees. When the certification body is a defined part of a legal entity, the structure shall include the line of authority and the relationship to other parts within the same legal entity.

6.1.2 The certification body shall identify the top management (board, group of persons, or person) having overall authority and responsibility for each of the following:

a) development of policies relating to the operation of the body;

b) supervision of the implementation of the policies and procedures;

c) supervision of the finances of the body;

d) development of management system certification services and schemes;

e) performance of audits and certification, and responsiveness to complaints;

f) decisions on certification;

g) delegation of authority to committees or individuals, as required, to undertake defined activities on its

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

f reference and operation of

ity of the activities of the

ies,

al or other considerations to

public perception, and

ication and decision-making

onal tasks or duties do not

embers and responsibilities
agement of the certification

inates (internal or external
hall not predominate),