

	<h1 style="margin: 0;">MSA Certification</h1>		
	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Certification Process</h2>		
Prepared by	Mr. George Cutajar		
Approved by	Ing. Francis Farrugia		
Document Reference	MSAC-P08	Issue Date	2007-07-03
Revision Number	05	Revision Date	2009-11-02

1.0 Scope and responsibilities

MSA Certification has documented this procedure to identify the main stages of the certification process. The Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of MSA Certification is responsible to prepare, update and maintain this procedure. MSA Certification personnel involved in auditing is responsible to follow and apply this procedure.

2. Related Documents

MSAC-F01 – Application Form

MSAC-F05 – Audit Plan

MSAC-F15 – Certification Board Report

MSAC-F25 - Re-certification (Strategic Review) Planning

MSAC-A03 – Service Agreement

MSAC-P09 – Audit Procedure

MSA EN ISO 9001, MSA EN ISO 14001

MSAC-P10 – Design and Development Procedure

MSAC-P11 – Transfer of Certification

MSAC-S06 – Audit Time Allocations

IAF-MD5 - IAF Mandatory Document For Duration of QMS and EMS Audits

3. Certification Process

3.1 Request for certification by client

Clients can make requests for certification or transfer of certification (from an existing Certification Body) to any of the MSA Certification personnel however such requests shall be directed to the Head of MSA Certification. Requests shall be recorded by e-mail.

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3.2 Application Information Pack

The Head of certification shall send the Application Information Pack to the prospective client and if necessary hold an initial meeting with the client. During this initial meeting, the client may be briefed on the certification process, continuing certification, re-certification, timeframes, MSA Certification Terms and Conditions and Service Agreement.

3.3 Application Form and Service Agreement

The client shall fill in the details in the application form MSAC-F01 (QMS) and **MSAC-F24 (EMS)** and sign the service agreement MSAC-A03. Hardcopies of the filled and signed application form and the signed service agreement shall be submitted by the client to the Head of MSA Certification.

3.4 Application/Contract Review

MSA Certification carries out an application contract review based on the details given in the application form to establish;

- The competence requirements of the scope of certification
- NACE Code(s) for the Client
- Whether the NACE code(s) are under the Accreditation Scope
- Whether the existing Certification schemes cover these NACE Code(s). (If not, the Head of Certification shall proceed as documented in the Design and Development Procedure MSAC-P10.
- The required and available resources
- The Audit program
- The Audit Team Leader (according to the corresponding NACE Code defined in the Certification Database

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- The Timeframes for the certification process as per MSAC-S06 and IAF-MD5-2009-QMS-EMS_Audit_Duration.

During the review and evaluation of the client's application, the Head Of Certification shall, where necessary discuss non clear issues with the client. In the case of Transfer of certification, the Head of Certification shall refer to procedure MSAC-P11.

The Head of Certification shall notify the Quality Manager to establish a client file and shall send an e-mail to the Assigned Lead Auditor to take over the certification process. The client file including the application record and the application contract review shall be handed to the Lead Auditor. In the case of transfer of certification the lead auditor shall follow procedure MSAC-P11 in line with this procedure.

3.5 Issuing of a quotation

The Lead Auditor shall issue a quotation using MSAC-F02 to the client.

3.6 Stage 1 Audit – Desk Review and On-Site Visit

The Lead Auditor shall carry out a review of the management system documentation that the client shall submit upon confirmation to be certified. The Lead Auditor shall also make a visit to client to check the preparedness of the client for certification. The Lead Auditor shall compile a stage 1 audit report which includes the result of the desk audit and the outcome of the site visit including the recommendations for the stage 2 Audit.

3.7 Appointment of the Audit Team

If following the Stage 1 audit the Lead Auditor recommends to proceed with the certification process, the Lead Auditor shall appoint the Audit Team members from

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the approved list of auditors and technical experts. These auditors and technical experts may be also indicated in the contract review.

3.8 Stage 2 Audit – On-Site Visit

The Lead Auditor shall compile an audit plan MSAC-F05 and distribute it by e-mail to the audit team members and the client. The Lead Audit shall ask the client for any objections of the audit team in this e-mail. Upon a common agreement of the audit plan and the audit team, the Lead Auditor shall brief the audit team members of the client requirements, the requirements of MSA Certification and shall supply all the client's recorded information. The Audit team shall carry out the audit as documented in procedure MSAC-P09. The audit shall address all the management system of the client including all operational processes, together with regular and statutory requirements.

3.9 Certification Decision

After the stage 2 audit, the Lead Auditor shall submit the audit report and other relevant documentation to the Certification Board. The certification shall also have the client's file available and if necessary access to the audit team to clarify any issue related to the certification process they have undertaken. The decision of the Certification Board shall be minuted by the Head of Certification in MSAC-F15. If decision to award certification is made, the Head of Certification prepares the Certificate (MSAC-F15) which is signed by the Chairman of MSA.

3.10 Communication of Decision and Issuing of Certificate

The Lead Auditor shall communicate the decision of the Certification Board by e-mail to the client and shall issue a hardcopy certificate to the client together with the Electronic MSA Certification Logo including the Client Unique Reference Number.

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3.11 Surveillance Visits – Confirmation of Continued Certification

Surveillance visits shall be carried out at least ever twelve months. It is the policy of MSA Certification to carry out Surveillance visits every 6 months. However, if a client makes a formal request to increase the periodic time for such visits, this request shall be submitted to the certification board to take the final decision. During these visits, the Lead Auditor shall carry out a stage 2 audit and follow the audit procedure documented in MSAC-P08. This audit may not include all the management system and operational processes of the client. However, the requirements set out by clause 4 of the international standard MSA EN ISO 9001 shall be reviewed in all surveillance visits. Surveillance visits shall be distributed over a period of three years. The audit plans for all the surveillance visits shall cover all the management system including both the QS processes and the operational processes of the client over the three years. **The audit report shall include audit programs for the three year certification period.**

3.12 Re-Certification

After a three year period, the lead auditor shall carry out a re-certification audit **to evaluate the continued fulfillment of all of the requirements of the relevant management system standard or other normative document. Before a conducting a re-certification audit, the lead auditor shall carry out a re-certification plan as per MSAC-F25.** A recertification audit shall include at least a Stage 2 audit (as described in 3.8 above). If major changes and/or problems are encountered, both stage 1 and stage 2 shall be carried out. Following the re-certification process a new certificate shall be issued.

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