



## Certification Process

The key stages of the certification process are described below.

### 1. Initial Certification Audit

The initial Audit is conducted in two Stages

#### Phase I Stage 1 Audit

CeSP will conduct a Stage 1 audit (Document Review) to ensure that management system has established all the mandatory documents required by the respective management system, ensure implementation of system and scope of certification is also reviewed. Prior to conduct of stage 1 audit, the client should have conducted at least one internal audit and management review covering the scope of certification. This result in maximum value addition during stage 2 audit and also ensures the organization readiness for the Stage 2 audit.

For ISMS audits, client make all necessary arrangements for the access to internal audit reports and reports of independent reviews of information security including:

- a) general information concerning the ISMS and the activities it covers
- b) a copy of the required ISMS documentation specified in ISO/IEC 27001 and, where required, associated documentation

CeSP will not perform back to back Stage 1 and Stage 2 audits and the interval between stage 1 and stage 2 will be at-least one week and interval shall not exceed 3 months (First day of Stage 2 not performed later than 90 days after last day of Stage 1 audit). On valid justification this may be extended to further 3 months considering needs of client to resolve areas of concern identified during Stage 1 audit. If stage 2 audit is not conducted within 6 months period, stage 1 audit will be re-conducted and mandays will be charged as applicable.

#### Phase II Stage 2 Audit (Certification Audit)

The CeSP's audit team will assess the client's management system and its onsite implementation. CeSP will provide an audit plan prior to the commencement of the audit. The CeSP audit team will discuss any non-conformity, observation if identified during the audit to the top management and corrective actions agreed with the client. The Client is required to take corrective actions within due time frame and subsequently closed by audit team leader. A follow up audit may be required depending upon the situation as will be described by the Audit Team Leader during closing meeting. In case the client fails to submit the corrective actions within due timeframe and is willing to continue with certification process, stage 2 audit would be re-conducted and applicable mandays will be charged. Otherwise the service agreement will be treated as cancelled and a new application would be required to re-initiate the certification process.

#### Issuance of Certificate

CeSP will issue the client's certificate(s) when all corrective actions agreed between the client and the audit team leader and objective evidence of closing of Non conformance(s) has been obtained. After closing of the non conformance(s) the audit team leader forward the corrective actions, audit report and related documents to the certification committee for recommendation of certification. The certificate is issued after recommendation by the



certification committee. The certificate will detail the certification scheme to which the Client has been found compliant at the time of audit, the scope of the management system and address of certification site. Additional certificates and true copies may be provided as per service agreement terms and conditions described in financials.

**2. Surveillance Audit**

Surveillance Audits are performed to maintain certification, ensure the on-going compliance and continual improvement of respective Management Systems. Surveillance Audit Frequency may vary depending on the respective management system and the Client’s requirements but the total man-days prescribed for the surveillance audits will remain constant. At minimum surveillance audits are performed annually. The client will be responsible to maintain and continually improve the management system. On recommendation of the audit team leader at surveillance audit the certification continuation will be maintained.

This Service Agreement is valid along-with “CeSP’s Service Agreement Terms and Conditions”. Duly signed and Stamped Service Agreement should be submitted within the 60 days from the date of issuance of this agreement. (Refer to clause 19 Certification Maintenance of CeSP Service Agreement’s Terms & Conditions).

**3. Recertification**

Recertification Audit is conducted for renewal of certification, before expiry of certification as per revised Service Agreement. Recertification audit is conducted to confirm the continued conformity and effectiveness of management system and its performance over the whole certification period including pervious audit to check effectiveness of the whole management system considering internal and external changes and the management system continual relevance and applicability to the scope of certification and complaints received from users of Certification (if any).

**4. Closure of Non Conformances**

Type of NC	Objective Evidence Required for Closure	Maximum Time for Submission of Corrective Actions		
		Initial Certification Audit	Surveillance Audit	Recertification Audit
Minor nonconformities	Documentary / as recommended by Lead Auditor	Initially 30 days, extendable with valid justification up to max 90 days after audit	30 days after audit OR before expiry of certificate (whichever comes first)	90 days after audit OR before expiry of certificate (whichever comes first)
Major nonconformities	Followup audit / as recommended by Lead Auditor			



## Audit Process

CeSP's Audit Team will conduct the certification audits (stage 1, Stage 2, Surveillance and Recertification) onsite as described in "The Certification Process" above. The activities of each audit will include:

a) Audit Program/Plan

CeSP establishes the audit program for 3 years certification cycle and based on this audit plan is issued prior to each audit containing information about audit scope, audit criteria, audit team and activities to be audited. The client is required to inform any changes in audit plan to CeSP immediately so that revised audit plan could be communicated. Acknowledgement of audit plan from client is required through any suitable means (fax, mail etc).

b) Opening Meeting

The audit team leader will chair the opening meeting with client's management for introduction, confirmation of scope & other details about audit activities to be undertaken.

c) Audit Team Meeting

Audit Team Leader will discuss the audit plan and assign the work between the audit team members.

d) Conduct of Audit

- i. Audit team shall be accompanied (during the entire duration of audit) by relevant personnel from each function to be audited having knowledge of relevant processes, procedures, documents and records.
- ii. Audit team will conduct the audit of their assigned areas during the audit as per audit plan. The client is responsible to ensure the availability of relevant personnel in each functional area as per audit plan which will be communicated prior to each audit. Audit may be terminated in case of non availability of relevant personnel during the audit, which may prevent the effective conduct of audit.
- iii. Audit team will collect the appropriate information/audit evidence relevant to the audit objective, scope and criteria by appropriate sampling.
- iv. Audit team will evaluate the audit evidence against the audit criteria to compile the audit findings.
- v. Audit team will record and report the audit findings in form of audit summary report.
- vi. In case of Stage 1 certification audit (Document Review) the audit findings including Areas of Concern are communicated to the client through audit summary report.
- vii. In case of Stage 2, surveillance and recertification audits the audit findings including observations, opportunities for improvement and non conformities (Minor, Major) are communicated to the client through audit summary report and corrective action request.
- viii. In case the audit is of more than 1 day the lead auditor will brief the client management about audit findings at the end of each day. The closing meeting will be held on the last day of audit, as communicated through audit plan.

e) Preparing Audit Conclusion

The audit team leader will conduct the team meeting prior to closing meeting to review the completion of audit activities including audit findings, agree upon audit conclusion, to identify necessary follow up actions and prepare audit summary report and corrective action requests (if any).

f) Closing Meeting

- i. Audit Team leader will hold closing meeting with clients management to present audit conclusion including recommendation regarding certification status. Audit team leader will present the audit findings like observations, opportunities for improvement, non conformances (Major or minor) and mutually agreed time for closure of non conformances.
- ii. In case of Stage 1 certification audit the client is required to address the areas of concerns and inform the CeSP through any suitable means that areas of concern have been addressed and request CeSP to plan the Stage 2 audit.
- iii. In case of Stage 2, surveillance and recertification audits, the client is required to close the identified corrective action requests/non conformances (if any) within agreed time period.
- iv. The client shall be given opportunity for questions. The audit team leader will brief about the complaint and appeal handling process of CeSP.

g) Termination of Audit

The Certification audit (Stage 1, stage 2, Surveillance and Recertification) may be terminated by lead auditor under conditions including but not limited to the following;

- Non availability of relevant personnel that may adversely impact the effective conduct of audit
- Major processes/activities under quality management system scope are not functional
- On the request of client itself
- Due to obligations as a result of any matter beyond the control (like flood, fire, earthquake etc) which could not be reasonably foreseen.
- If audit is terminated in case of reasons attributed to the client, the Certification audit charges of subsequent audit will be charged to the client.

h) Refusal of Certification

Certification may be refused at the stage of Application Review or throughout the certification process, due to the following reasons:

- Competence/capacity limitations of CeSP
- Geographical limitation
- In case of transfer from other certification bodies, organization not meeting the conditions for transfer of certification
- Client not meeting requirements for certification at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 audit
- Public complaints
- Legal and litigation matters
- Any other

The reason for refusal is informed to the client through any suitable means.



### **Certification Maintenance**

- i. CeSP operates a surveillance audit program to record whether the client's certification is found to be maintained. The program is ongoing and is agreed with the client in the agreement. Every 3 years CeSP will automatically review the client's certification and subject to the satisfactory results of the surveillance audits and or the re-certification audit, the certification will be reconfirmed.
- ii. The client is bound to allow CeSP to conduct 1<sup>st</sup> Surveillance Audit Plan at-most twelve months after last day of stage 2 audit date, failing to which the certification may be suspended.
- iii. Non-performance of surveillance visits at as per agreed Service Agreement results in certificate losing its validity.
- iv. Validity of the certificate cannot be extended beyond the expiry date indicated on the certificate and reassessment audit must be completed within the validity period.

### **Suspension, Withdrawal or Cancellation of Certificate**

- i. CeSP reserves the right to suspend, withdraw, reduce, extend or cancel the certificate at any time and will give 1 month written notice or such shorter notice as the situation may require depending upon the information available to CeSP. This will be carried out as per CeSP's defined procedure. If such actions are deemed necessary the Client will be fully briefed, the Client will be given every possible opportunity to take corrective action before a final decision is taken on what action CeSP should take.
- ii. CeSP will suspend certificate of Certified Client depending on the situation for a maximum period of 6 months in cases if the Client/Certificate holder:
  - a. Fails to close out nonconformity (ies) reported during audits (surveillance, recertification) within agreed time scale
  - b. Does not allow surveillance audits to be conducted at the planned frequency
  - c. Does not comply with the requirements of Policy for Use of Certification Mark (P-06, provided at time of Certification)
  - d. Persistently or seriously failed to maintain compliance with the certification requirements, including requirements for effectiveness of management system.
  - e. Has voluntarily requested a suspension.
  - f. Has not paid fees for certification.
- iii. Failing to rectify the conditions which led to suspension, within the due timeframe (after suspension or before expiry of certificate whichever comes first), would lead to withdrawal of certification. A client may also voluntarily request withdrawal.
- iv. On the event of withdrawal, this service agreement will be treated as cancelled and the client would be required:
  - a. To immediately discontinue its claim to be certified.
  - b. To return the certificate(s) and certification body marks and logos.
  - c. Not to promote business on the basis of withdrawn certificate(s).
- v. CeSP reserves the right to publish the fact that such action has been taken and make information available.

### **Special Follow up Visits**

When major non conformity or major changes occur in Client's Management System, CeSP undertakes a 'Special Follow up Visit', which is charged at CeSP's current rates. CeSP may also conduct unannounced audits to investigate any complaints from user of certification or short notice audits for evaluating compliance after events like major changes to the organization and/or system, follow up after suspension or transfers of certification to CeSP. In such a case, CeSP may nominate an audit team comprising of the already deployed audit team members.

### **Expanding Scope**

The client will apply through Application Form (QSP-10/F-01) available on CeSP's website, for expanding scope, which will be reviewed at CeSP to determine any audit activity necessary to decide whether or not extension may be granted. The most preferable option is to go for extension during surveillance audit. But special audit may be arranged to verify the extension of scope as per client request.

For ISMS: The activities necessary to perform special audits shall be subject to special provision if a client with a certified ISMS makes major modifications to its system or if other changes take place which could affect the basis of its certification.

### **Disputes, Appeals & Complaints**

- i. Any disputes arising between the auditor, client and interested parties may be resolved by mutual agreement. If disputes cannot be settled by mutual agreement the client may raise a complaint to the CeSP.
- ii. On receipt of a complaint the CeSP will process the complaint in accordance with its appeal & complaints procedure.
- iii. Should the client not accept the CeSP decision regarding their complaint they may appeal to the CeSP for a final decision it should do so in accordance with the CeSP appeals & complaint process (refer to CeSP's website).