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## 1. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this procedure is to define the methods and responsibilities to be applied for conducting system certification audits.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Major Nonconformity:** A nonconformity that affects the management system's ability to achieve its intended outcomes.

**Minor Nonconformity:** A nonconformity that does not affect the management system's ability to achieve its intended outcomes.

**Observation:** Positive or negative opinions regarding the management system used for certification, provided by the audit team to assist in the next audit or to help the client organization improve its system.

## 3. APPLICATION

### 3.1. Types of Audits

#### 3.1.1. Initial Certification Audits

The initial certification audits for ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 are carried out in two stages, namely "Stage" and "Stage" (2).2"

#### Stage 1

The primary purpose of Phase 1 is to determine whether the organization is ready for Phase 2. The objectives of Phase 1 are to achieve the following:

- a) Reviewing the documented information in the client organization's management system ,
- b) To assess the client organization's location and site-specific conditions, and to conduct interviews with the client organization's personnel to determine readiness for Phase 2.
- c) Reviewing the client organization's status and understanding the standard requirements, in particular regarding the definition of key performance or significant aspects, processes, objectives, and the operation of the management system.
- d) Obtaining the necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, including the following:
  - Customer's site(s) ,
  - Processes and equipment used,
  - The control levels established (especially for customers with multiple sites),
  - Applicable situational and regulatory conditions,
- e) To review the resource allocation for Phase 2 and reach an agreement with the client organization on the details of Phase 2.
- f) Focusing on planning Phase 2 by ensuring a sufficient understanding of the customer's management system and field operations within the context of management system standards or other relevant documentation.
- g) To assess whether internal audits and management reviews have been planned and conducted, and to evaluate the level of implementation of the management system and whether the client organization is ready for Phase 2.

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<i>Management Representative</i>	<i>General manager</i>

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In cases where Stage 1 is conducted without visiting the client's site, an Audit Plan is not required. During these audits, the organization's documents and other information obtained from the organization are reviewed by the assigned Lead Auditor . The Lead Auditor may contact the organization being audited to request detailed information regarding any unclear points, if necessary.

Whether Stage 1 is conducted on-site or without a site visit, a Stage 1 Audit Report is generated and sent to the client, including the identification of areas that could be classified as nonconformities in Stage 2.

Corrective actions related to nonconformities identified during Stage 1 must be completed before Stage 2. Stage 2 will not proceed until it is confirmed that the corrective actions have been carried out.

Where Stage 1 is carried out at the client's premises, Stage 1 is performed in accordance with the prepared Audit Plan and in line with section 3.2 of this procedure.

## **Stage 2**

The purpose of Phase 2 is to evaluate the implementation, including the effectiveness of the client organization's management system. Phase 2 is conducted in all sites of the client organization, in accordance with the sampling plan . Phase 2 includes at least the following aspects:

- a) Information and evidence regarding compliance with the requirements of applicable management system standards or other governing documents .
- b) Monitoring, measuring, recording, and reviewing performance toward key performance goals and objectives (consistent with expectations in applicable management system standards or other governing documents).
- c) The client organization's management system capabilities and performance in meeting applicable statutory, regulatory, and structural requirements.
- d) Operational control of the client organization's processes,
- e) Internal audit and management review,
- f) Management is responsible for customer organization policies.

Stage 2 is an audit aimed at determining compliance with relevant standards, governing documents, and system documentation . It examines all clauses of the reference standards or governing documents and the implementation of all activities within the scope of the organization's application for certification.

Following Stage 2, an Audit Report is generated and sent to the client, containing the audit findings and any identified nonconformities related to the issues outlined above.

Corrective actions related to the nonconformities identified in Stage 2 must be identified and reported to ASCERT by the organization within a maximum of 2 (two) weeks .

Minor nonconformities must be completed within a maximum of (1) one month, and major nonconformities within a maximum of (3) three months.

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Minor discrepancies can often be closed through document or record review, without the need for follow-up audits.

In addressing major and critical nonconformities , on-site audits can be conducted in addition to document or record reviews.

incomplete non-conformities are not reported to ASCERT , action will be taken according to the Certification Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure.

### **3.1.2. Surveillance Activities**

Surveillance activities include on-site audits of the certified client organization's management system to ensure it meets the specified requirements of the reference standard for certification. Other surveillance activities include:

- a) Regarding certification matters, these are the questions ASCERT poses to its certified client organization.
- b) Statements regarding certification in the activities of the certified client organization (e.g., promotional materials, website)
- c) documented information (in paper or electronic format) from certified customer organizations ,
- d) Other tools for monitoring the performance of certified customers.

### **Surveillance Inspection**

In surveillance audits, auditing the entire system is not mandatory. It is carried out alongside other surveillance activities to provide confidence that certified management systems meet the requirements leading up to the recertification audit. A surveillance audit includes at least the following:

- 1) Internal audits and management review,
- 2) Reviewing the actions taken to address the nonconformities identified during the previous audit,
- 3) Handling the complaints,
- 4) achieving the objectives of the certified client organization and the objectives of the relevant management system(s) .
- 5) The development of planned activities aimed at continuous improvement,
- 6) Operational control is being maintained.
- 7) Reviewing the changes,
- 8) Other references to the brand/logo and/or certification.

The standard items to be examined in each surveillance audit are specified in the Audit Program.

During a surveillance audit, an Audit Report is generated and sent to the client, containing the audit findings and any identified nonconformities related to the matters to be examined.

Corrective actions related to minor nonconformities found during surveillance audits must be identified and reported to ASCERT within a maximum of 2 (two) weeks .

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Minor nonconformities must be completed within a maximum of (1) one month, and major nonconformities within a maximum of (3) three months.

### **3.1.3. Recertification Audit**

Recertification audits are conducted to assess the continued fulfillment of the requirements of the relevant standards or other governing documentation. The purpose of a recertification audit is to confirm that the suitability and effectiveness of the management system as a whole are maintained, and that relevance and applicability are maintained for the scope of certification.

Recertification audits are conducted in a manner that includes an audit of all clauses of the relevant management system standards or governing document.

Recertification audits should also include a review of the management system's performance throughout the certification period and should cover a review of previous surveillance audit reports.

The recertification audit will be conducted to include a field audit addressing the following requirements:

- a) The effectiveness of the management system as a whole, in light of internal and external changes and their impact and applicability to the scope of documentation.
- b) The commitment shown to maintaining the effectiveness and improvement of the management system in order to increase overall performance,
- c) Whether the certified management system contributes to the achievement of the client organization's policies and objectives.

During the recertification audit, an Audit Report is generated and sent to the client, containing the audit findings and any identified nonconformities related to the issues outlined above.

ASCERT specifies the time limit for corrective actions and measures to be implemented when instances of nonconformity are identified or deficiencies in the evidence of conformity are detected during recertification audits, taking into account the validity period of the certification.

In recertification audits, the findings from the audit and the follow-up of corrective actions to address nonconformities are carried out in the same way as in the initial certification audit.

### **3.1.4. Short-Term Audits**

Within the certified organization, short-term audits may be conducted in the event of changes occurring in the following situations:

- a) Legal, commercial or organizational status or ownership,
- b) Organization and management (such as key executives, decision-making and technical staff),
- c) Contact address and locations,

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- d) The scope of operations under the documented management system,
- e) Major changes in management systems and processes.

#### **Scope Expansion Audit**

Scope expansion audits are conducted in accordance with the new scope requested by the organization, and as agreed upon, either as a surveillance audit at the relevant organization or as an audit covering all items that may be affected by the scope change.

#### **Address Change Verification**

The address change audit is conducted in a way that covers all clauses of the reference standard or relevant document that may be affected by the address change.

#### **Follow-up Audit**

Follow-up audits are conducted when nonconformities requiring follow-up are identified during audits. Their purpose is to determine whether the identified nonconformities have been rectified and whether the corrective actions taken have been effective.

#### **Inspections Conducted Following Complaints**

Audits conducted following complaints aim to identify the nonconformities that were the subject of the complaint, to determine whether the identified nonconformities have been rectified, and to ascertain that the corrective actions taken have been effective.

#### **3.1.5. Auditing of Multi-Site Organizations**

In multi-site organizations, the scope of certification should be the same across all sites, and the organization should use the same management systems for these sites.

The organization to be audited must produce similar products or offer similar services in all areas where it conducts its activities.

The relevant management system should be established and directed at the organization's headquarters. Internal audits should be conducted in all areas. The system of each area within the scope of certification must have undergone internal audit before ASCERT's audit.

In audits of multi-site organizations, it should be examined whether the following conditions are met:

- System documentation and system changes,
- Management review,
- Complaints,
- Evaluation of corrective/preventive actions,
- Planning internal audits and evaluating the results.

In multi-site organizations, if follow-up audits for identified nonconformities reveal ongoing nonconformities in the relevant management system and/or practice at least in one of the central office or sites, certification will not be granted or existing certification will be revoked.

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### 3.2. Conducting Audits

#### 3.2.1. General

An opening meeting is held at the beginning of the audit, and a closing meeting is held at the end of the audit.

The audit team must fulfill the following requirements:

- a) of the client organization's management system structure, policies, processes, procedures, records, and related documents .
- b) Determining that these meet all the requirements of the intended scope of certification,
- c) To provide a basis for establishing trust in the client organization's management system, it is necessary to determine that processes and procedures have been established, are effectively implemented, and are maintained.
- d) Communicating to the client any discrepancies between the activities and the client's policies, goals, and objectives and the results obtained.

#### 3.2.2. Creating the Audit Plan

the Lead Auditor while the Stage 1 report is being prepared .

For surveillance audits, recertification audits, and other special audits, the Audit Plan is prepared by the assigned Lead Auditor prior to the audit .

The Audit Plan is structured to ensure each Auditor independently conducts a minimum of 8 hours of audit per day. Candidate Auditors and Technical Experts are not included in the audit/day duration.

When developing an audit plan, the scope of certification, the standards to be referenced in the certification, the total audit duration, the organization's functions and processes, and the product/service/process or standard clauses related to the expertise of the Auditors and Technical Experts comprising the audit team should be considered, and the plan should be structured in a way that allows for audits to be conducted within the scope of each employee's qualifications .

When creating an audit plan, meal breaks and travel time between the organization's sites are not included in the audit duration.

When inspections involve visits to production/service sites, construction sites, branches, etc., the approximate travel times required for these visits should be determined in consultation with the relevant organization when creating the Inspection Plan, and these times should be excluded from the inspection duration.

When preparing an Audit Plan for follow-up audits, at a minimum, the nonconformities requiring follow-up should be considered.

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### 3.2.3. Holding the Opening Meeting

Where appropriate, a formal opening meeting is held with the persons responsible for the processes and functions to be audited, as well as with the senior management of the client organization. The purpose of the opening meeting is to provide a brief explanation of how the audit activities will be carried out, and it is conducted by the Lead Auditor .

The opening meeting is conducted by the Chief Auditor in accordance with the agenda outlined in the Opening/Closing Meeting Form. At the end of the opening meeting, the relevant sections of the Opening/Closing Meeting Form are completed and signed by the audit team members and participants.

The following will be considered at the opening meeting:

- a) Introduction of participants, including their duties,
- b) Confirmation of the scope of certification,
- c) Confirmation of the audit plan (including the type and scope of the audit, objectives and criteria), any changes and the date and time of the closing meeting, and other arrangements related to the client organization, such as interim meetings between the audit team and the client organization's senior management.
- d) Confirmation of the formal communication channels between the audit team and the client organization.
- e) Confirmation by the audit team that the necessary resources and facilities are available.
- f) Confirmation of privacy-related issues,
- g) Confirmation of occupational safety, emergency and security procedures related to the inspection team,
- h) The status, role, and identity of each guide and observer must be verified.
- i) Reporting method, including any classification of audit findings,
- j) Providing information about the conditions for premature termination of the audit,
- k) The audit team representing ASCERT and the Lead Auditor approve and control the conduct of the audit, including the audit plan, audit activities and audit paths.
- l) Confirmation of the status of relevant previous review or audit findings,
- m) Procedures and methods to be used for conducting sample-based audits,
- n) Approval of the language to be used during the audit,
- o) During the audit, it will be confirmed that the client organization will be informed of the audit progress and any developments.
- p) The client organization should be given the opportunity to ask questions.

If observers (members of the client organization, consultants, personnel of the accreditation body, regulators, etc.) are present during audits, the rationale for this will be evaluated by the ASCERT audit team and the client organization.

### 3.2.4. Communication During the Audit

During the audit, the audit team periodically evaluates the progress of the audit and exchanges information. The Lead Auditor periodically reorganizes the work situation as needed among the audit team members by communicating about the progress of the audit and any concerns the client organization has.

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If audit evidence reveals unattainable audit objectives or the existence of an urgent and significant risk (e.g., security), the Lead Auditor informs the client organization and ASCERT to determine appropriate action . Such actions may include modifying or terminating audit objectives or scope, or modifying or reaffirming the audit plan. The Lead Auditor reports the outcome of the action taken to ASCERT .

The Lead Auditor reviews any changes to the scope of the audit that arise during the on-site audit with the client organization and reports this to ASCERT .

### **3.2.5. Obtaining and Verifying Information**

of documents and records, and observation of operations and conditions in relevant areas, in order to confirm whether the management systems are implemented acceptably according to the applied standards or governing documents, scope, and documentation created.

The audit is conducted by the audit team in accordance with the Audit Plan.

documented , and is being effectively implemented in accordance with the requirements of the relevant standards , using the relevant audit report.

During the audit, information relating to the audit objectives, scope, and criteria (including information on interfaces between functions, activities, and processes) is obtained through appropriate sampling and verified to serve as audit evidence.

Information gathering methods include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) The talks,
- b) Observations of processes and activities,
- c) Reviewing documentation and records.

The audit team ensures that observers do not interfere with the audit or influence the audit results.

Each member of the audit team must conduct the audit accompanied by a guide.

Mentors assist the audit team in facilitating the audit. The audit team ensures that mentors do not interfere with the audit or influence the audit results. The responsibilities of mentors are listed below:

- a) Scheduling and contacting people for meetings
- b) Organizing visits to the site or specific parts of the organization,
- c) Ensuring that the inspection team members adhere to and comply with known rules regarding field safety and security procedures,
- d) Acting as an audit witness on behalf of the client,
- e) To provide explanation or information if requested by an auditor.

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Positive and negative findings and observations made by the audit team members during the audit are recorded in the relevant audit report.

During the audit process, the organization's logo usage is also observed.

If the difficulty of conducting the audit becomes apparent, the Lead Auditor will inform the Client Organization's Representative of the reasons, halt the audit, prepare a report, and terminate the audit. The report will then be forwarded to the Certification Manager.

### **3.2.6. Identifying and Recording Audit Findings**

Audit findings summarizing compliance and detailing non-compliance are reported and recorded to enable informed certification decisions or to ensure sustainable certification.

Opportunities for improvement can be identified and recorded where appropriate. Audit findings identified as nonconformities are recorded as opportunities for improvement.

A finding of nonconformity identified according to a specific condition is recorded and includes a clear statement of nonconformity that details the objective evidence on which the nonconformity is based. Nonconformities are discussed with the client organization to ensure that the nonconformities are understood and that the evidence is conclusive and accurate. However, the Auditor refrains from suggesting the cause of the nonconformities or their solution.

The Lead Auditor attempts to resolve differing opinions between the client organization and the audit team regarding audit evidence or findings and records any unresolved issues.

### **3.2.7. Preparation of Audit Results**

of the Chief Auditor, prior to the closing meeting, the audit team:

- The auditor reviews the audit findings and other relevant information collected during the audit and identifies any nonconformities against the audit objectives and criteria.
- Considering the inherent uncertainty in the audit process, agreement is reached on the audit results.
- It is understandable in all necessary follow-up activities.
- The suitability of the audit program is confirmed, or any desired changes regarding future audits (e.g., scope of certification, audit duration or date, frequency of surveillance, competence of the audit team) are defined.

The Lead Auditor invites the client representative, explains the identified nonconformities, and requests the signing of the Nonconformity Notification Forms to confirm acceptance of the identified nonconformities. The original signed Nonconformity Notification Forms are forwarded to the client representative to be sent to ASCERT within 2 (two) weeks, specifying the actions the client organization plans to take regarding the identified nonconformities and the completion timeframes.

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the Chief Auditor to be forwarded to the Certification Manager.

In addition, the Lead Auditor provides information about positive or negative observations regarding the management system, which may assist in the next audit or help the client organization improve its system.

If the client organization refuses to sign the Nonconformity Notification Forms, the Lead Auditor prepares a report and forwards the Nonconformity Notification Forms, signed by the Auditor, to the Certification Manager.

### **3.2.8. Holding the Closing Meeting**

Where applicable, a formal closing meeting is held with registered participants and those responsible for the audited processes or functions, as well as senior management of the client organization. The purpose of the closing meeting, led by the lead auditor, is to present the audit findings, including recommendations regarding certification. Each nonconformity is presented clearly, and a timeframe is given for responses.

The closing meeting is conducted by the Chief Auditor in accordance with the agenda set out in the Opening/Closing Meeting Form.

At the meeting, the Chief Auditor presents the positive and/or negative results of the audit, and any nonconformities, in an understandable manner. They also provide information about the audit procedures.

The closing meeting also includes the following elements:

- a) The client organization should be informed that the evidence obtained is based on sampling information, thus clarifying the uncertainty.
- b) Reporting method and timeframe, including any classification of audit findings,
- c) ASCERT's process for handling nonconformities, including any findings regarding the client organization's certification status,
- d) The time given to the client organization to correct any nonconformities identified during the audit and to prepare a plan for corrective action.
- e) ASCERT's post-audit activities,
- f) Information on how complaints are handled and appeals processes.

The client organization is given the opportunity to ask questions. Differences of opinion regarding the audit findings or conclusions are discussed and, if possible, resolved between the audit team and the client organization. Unresolved differences of opinion are recorded and reported to ASCERT.

At the closing meeting, the Chief Auditor stated:

- If no non-conformity is found, the decision-maker will be given a positive opinion regarding certification or recertification.
- If a follow-up audit is deemed necessary, it will be conducted, and only after corrective actions have been taken regarding the identified nonconformities. Then the

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decision-maker will be given a positive opinion regarding certification or recertification. expressed.

If follow-up audits for nonconformities have not been recommended, whether these nonconformities have been rectified can also be verified by reviewing documents and records. The client organization cannot be recommended for certification until corrective actions related to the nonconformities have been implemented.

During surveillance audits, it is stated that a recommendation will be made to suspend certification if the following conditions occur:

- The audits conducted revealed major non-conformities.
- Failure to rectify minor nonconformities identified during inspections within the specified timeframes,
- The detection of non-compliance with legal requirements,
- Failure to comply with certification rules.

It is stated that during follow-up audits of suspended client organizations, a recommendation will be made to continue the validity of the certification if the identified nonconformities have been resolved, and to revoke the certification if they have not been resolved.

At the end of the closing meeting, the relevant sections of the Opening/Closing Meeting Form are completed and signed by the audit team members and participants.

At the end of the meeting, the Lead Auditor forwards the relevant forms for the audit team's evaluation to the Client representative, requesting that they be completed for review.

### 3.2.9. Audit Report

ASCERT provides the client organization with a written report for each audit. The audit team may identify opportunities for improvement, but cannot recommend specific solutions. The audit report is the property of ASCERT .

The Lead Auditor prepares the Audit Report by analyzing all information and audit evidence obtained during Stage 1 and Stage 2 audits to review the audit findings and reach a conclusion on the audit results.

The audit report number is "Customer No."

The lead auditor ensures the preparation of the audit report and is responsible for its content. The audit report ensures that the audit is accurate, concise, and clear, enabling the certification decision to be notified, and includes or refers to the following:

- a) ASCERT definition,
- b) Name and address of the customer organization and customer representative,
- c) Type of audit (e.g., initial certification, surveillance or recertification audit, or special audits),

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- d) Audit criteria,
- e) The purposes of the audit are:
- f) The scope of the audit, in particular the definition of the organizational structure or functional units or processes of the audited client organization, and the duration of the audit,
- g) Any deviations from the audit plan and the reasons for them,
- h) Key factors affecting the audit program,
- i) the Chief Auditor , members of the audit team and accompanying persons,
- j) Locations and dates where inspection activities were conducted (on-site or off-site, permanent and temporary locations),
- k) Audit findings that are consistent with the requirements of the audit type and that refer to evidence and conclusions,
- l) If any, any significant changes affecting the client organization's management system that have occurred since the last audit,
- m) If identified, unresolved issues,
- n) The audit may be combined, joint or integrated, where appropriate.
- o) The statement that the audit was conducted based on a sampling of the available information,
- p) The audit team's recommendation,
- q) Checking that the audited client organization is properly using its certification documents and trademarks,
- r) Verifying the effectiveness of applicable corrective actions related to previously identified nonconformities.

The report also includes the following:

- a) A statement regarding the suitability and effectiveness of the management system, along with a summary of the evidence relating to the following :
  - The ability of the management system to meet applicable requirements and expected outputs,
  - Internal audit and management review process,
- b) A conclusion regarding the suitability of the certification scope,
- c) Confirmation that the audit objectives have been met.

### **3.2.10. Analysis of the Causes of Nonconformities**

ASCERT requires the client organization to conduct a cause analysis within the specified timeframe, identify the corrective actions taken or planned, and eliminate the identified nonconformities.

### **3.2.11. Effectiveness of Correction and Corrective Actions**

ASCERT reviews the solutions identified by the client organization, the determined causes, and the applicable corrective actions.

ASCERT verifies the effectiveness of each correction and corrective action performed.

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Evidence obtained to support the resolution of irregularities is recorded.

The client organization is informed of the review and verification results.

The client organization is informed whether an additional full audit, an additional limited audit, or documented evidence (to be confirmed in subsequent audits) is required to verify effective correction and corrective actions.

of the relevant standards or governing documents and the organization's system documents are identified, the nonconformities are described as minor or major on the Nonconformity Notification Form and signed by the Lead Auditor .

### **3.2.12. Information Regarding the Initial Certification Decision**

The information provided by the audit team to the Certification Directorate, and thereby to the Decision-maker, for the initial certification decision shall be prepared to include at least the following:

- a) Audit reports,
- b) Comments on the nonconformities and, where applicable, the corrective actions taken by the customer,
- c) Confirmation of the information provided to ASCERT during the application review process ,
- d) Based on the conditions and observations, advice on whether or not to grant the certificate.

The appendices to the Audit Report to be prepared are given below:

- Stage 1 Audit Report
- If the audit is on-site - Phase 1 Audit Plan
- If the audit is on-site, then Phase 1 Opening/Closing Meeting Form.
- Non-conformity Notification Forms, if any.
- Phase 2 Audit Plan
- Stage 2 Opening/Closing Meeting Form
- Records of any corrective actions/corrective measures, if any.

The audit report and its appendices are prepared in full by the Chief Auditor and submitted to the Certification Directorate.

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#### 4. REVISION INFORMATION

Revision Date	Revision No	Item No.	Explanation of the Revisions Made
June 10, 2013	01	3.1.1.1.1.7	Accreditation Audit/Document Review Maximum time allowed between Stage 1 and Stage 2 audits has been added.
August 26, 2013	02	3.5	: "Forms to be used in the audit can be obtained online at <a href="http://www.bqs.com.tr">www.bqs.com.tr</a> , via the Auditor Login section . "
15.10.2016	03	-	Transition to TS EN ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015
01.02.2017	04	-	Checklists have been removed.
01.03.2021	05	-	A general revision has been made.
08.11.2025	06	-	Requirements related to ISO 45001 have been added.

Preparer	Approved
<i>Management Representative</i>	<i>General manager</i>