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	Maintenance and Renewal of Certification Procedure	Version: 08 Effective: June 2024
	Compiled by: Certification	Approved by: GM- Certification

1. Purpose

This procedure covers the activities carried out in order to maintain and renew certification. Certification is maintained through continuous surveillance audits and special audits. Reference is made to suspension, withdrawal and reduction of scope, which is covered by **MSC-P15-POL**.

2. Definitions

2.1 Auditor: is a person with competence to conduct an audit.

2.2 Special audit is a:

- **Short notice audit** – is the audit that is conducted by giving a notice of 48 hours.
- **Unannounced audit** – Is the audit that is conducted under prescribed conditions without informing the client in advance.

2.3 Certified client: organization whose management system has been certified.

2.4 Objective evidence: objective evidence for the purpose of audit generally consists of records, statements of fact or other information which are relevant to the audit criteria and verifiable.

2.5 Verification: confirmation, through the provision of objective evidence, that specified requirements have been fulfilled.

3. Acronyms

3.1 CAC: Certification Approvals Committee

3.2 QMS: Quality Management System

3.3 FSMS: Food Safety Management System

3.4 Manager: Manager Certification

3.5 OH&SMS: Occupational Health and Safety Management System


4. Process owner:

The Manager Certification is the process owner of this procedure

5. Activities

5.1 Maintaining certification

- (a) NSI shall maintain certification based on demonstration that the client's management system continues to meet the requirements of the management standard and other normative documents.
- (b) The audit objectives for the Surveillance and Re-certification audit shall be as outline in the Audit Planning Procedure MSC-P11
- (c) NSI shall maintain certification based on positive conclusion by the audit team and review by the Manager Certification without further review and decision by the CAC, unless the audit team recommends reduction or extension of scope of certification or suspension or withdrawal of certification. Manager shall inform the CAC of maintained certification.
- (d) Manager shall monitor surveillance activities including monitoring the reporting by its auditors.

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5.1.1 Surveillance audit and other surveillance activities


- 5.1.1.1 Surveillance audits are not full system audits, however, they are planned such that representative areas and functions of the scope of the certified management system are covered.
- 5.1.1.2 The planning of the surveillance audit shall be conducted as per Audit planning procedure (MSC-P11).
- 5.1.1.3 Surveillance audits are scheduled as per Audit Programme (**MSC-P10-FD/ MSC-P10-FO/MS-C-P10-FR/MS-C-P10-FW**) and are conducted onsite and/or virtually as per the Audit Plan (**MSC-P11-FB**) and Conducting audit procedure (**MSC-P12**).
- 5.1.1.4 Other surveillance activities may include:
- a) enquiries from the NSI to its certified client on aspects of certification;
 - b) reviewing any certified client's statements with respect to its operations
 - c) request to certified clients to provide documented information
 - d) other means of monitoring certified client's performance
- 5.1.1.5 The first surveillance audit is conducted not more than 12 months from the date of certification decision.
- 5.1.1.6 Second surveillance audit shall not be conducted in the same calendar year with the recertification audit.
- 5.1.1.7 The audit plan for each surveillance audit for the relevant management system standard shall include:
- a) Internal audits and management review;
 - b) A review of actions taken on nonconformities identified during the previous audit;
 - c) Complaints handling;
 - d) Effectiveness of the management system with regard to achieving the certified client's objectives and the intended results of the respective management system (s);
 - e) Progress of planned activities aimed at continual improvement;
 - f) Continuing operational control;
 - g) Review of any changes;
 - h) Use of marks and/or any other reference to certification.

5.2 Cause Analysis of Non-Conformities

- 5.2.1 The client shall analyse the cause of all nonconformities and describe the specific correction and corrective actions taken, or planned to be taken, to eliminate detected nonconformities, within a defined time.
- 5.2.2 Analysis of the cause of the nonconformity and actions taken shall be submitted within 14 days after the audit.


5.3 Effectiveness of Correction and Corrective Actions.

- 5.3.1 The audit team shall verify the effectiveness of the corrections and corrective actions. The audit team shall accept the corrective action plan by signature/signing it.
- 5.3.2 The result of the review and verification shall be communicated to the client by the audit team.
- 5.3.3 Major nonconformities shall be closed off 1 month from the last day of the surveillance

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- audit. Audit team shall complete the ‘**verification and close off**’ section of **MSC-P12-FF**.
- 5.3.4 Audit team shall close off minor nonconformities during the next audit by completing the ‘**verification and close off**’ section of **MSC-P12-FF**.
- 5.3.5 The duration between different certification activities are shown in **table 1 of MSC-P12**.
- 5.4 Recertification audit**
- 5.4.1 NSI shall request the certified client to submit a new Application form (**MSC-P10-FA/ MSC-P10-FM/MS-C-P10-FT**) for a recertification.
- 5.4.2 Recertification audit shall be schedule as per Audit Programme (**MSC-P10-FD/ MSC-P10-FO/ MSC-P10-FR/MS-C-P10-FW**) and conducted as per Audit Plan (**MSC-P11-FB**). Recertification audits shall be conducted not less than 3 months before expiry date.
- 5.4.3 The audit team shall review the performance (**MSC-P15-FA**) of the management system **two months** before the recertification audit. The review output helps to develop **MSC-P11-FB**.
- 5.4.4 A stage 1 audit may be conducted prior to recertification audit in situations where there have been significant changes to:
- a) management system standard;
 - b) operation of the management system;
 - c) the organization with regarding to ownership;
 - d) scope of certification;
 - e) processes or products; and
 - f) applicable legislations etc.
- 5.4.5 The recertification audit is conducted on site as per the Auditing Procedure (**MSC-P12**).
- 5.4.6 Audit plan for recertification audit shall cover the following:
- a) all requirements of the management system standard
 - b) verify whether the changes, if any, were effectively implemented, and whether the scope of certification applied for is relevant and applicable.
 - c) whether the management system has improved to enhance overall performance; and
 - d) whether the management system is able to achieve the certified client’s objectives.
- 5.4.7 The duration between recertification audit and certification decision shall not exceed 3 months.
- 5.4.8 For minor and major nonconformities, client shall submit evidence of corrective action taken 14 days after the audit. For minor NCs, NSI may accept a Corrective Action Plan by signature and verify actions taken to resolve minor nonconformities during the next audit.
- 5.4.9 Major NCs shall be closed off within one month after the date of audit.
- 5.4.10 If major NCs are not closed off before expiry date;
- a) NSI shall not extend the validity of certification,
 - b) NSI may restore certification within 6 months after expiry date provided major NCs are closed off. The expiry date of the new certification cycle after restoration of certification shall be based on the previous cycle.

Note: For post audit activities and duration between certification activities, please see **table 1** in

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MSC-P12.

- 5.4.11 Decision to renew certification shall be made by the CAC based on the audit recommendations (**MSC-P14-FA/ MSC-P14-FH**) and audit evidence submitted by the audit team.
- 5.4.12 In the event were recertification audit activities or where the CB is unable to verify the implementation of corrections and corrective actions for any major nonconformity prior to the expiry date of the certification, then recertification shall not be recommended and the validity of the certification shall not be extended. The client shall be informed and the consequences shall be explained.
- 5.4.13 Following expiration of certification, the CB can restore certification within 6 months provided that the outstanding recertification activities are completed. The effective date on the certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision and the expiry date shall be based on prior certification cycle.

5.5 Special audits

Special audits can either be short notice or unannounced visit to assess compliance of extended scope of certification or to follow up on a suspended client.

For occupational health and safety audits; in the event that the CB becomes aware that there has been a serious incident related to occupational health and safety, the CB may conduct a special audit in order to investigate any possible compromise of the management system and function effectively, independently from the involvement of the competent regulatory authority. The outcomes of the investigation shall be documented as per **Audit Report (MSC-P10-FM)**.

The special audit shall provide grounds for the CB to decide on the actions to be taken including suspension or withdrawal of the certification. In the event that it can be demonstrated that the system seriously failed to meet the OH&S certification requirements, such requirements shall be part of the contractual agreement between the CB and the organisation.


5.5.1 Expanding of scope

- a) Certified client shall submit Certification Scope Amendment Application Form (**MSC-P10-FK**).
- b) This application is handled as per Pre-Certification Activities Procedure (**MSC-P10-A**).
- c) This type of audit may be conducted in conjunction with a surveillance audit.

5.5.2 Short notice audits

5.5.2.1 NSI may conduct audits of certified clients at short-notice or unannounced to investigate complaints, or as follow up on suspended clients or in response to changes.

- a) Conditions that may trigger short notice audits:
 - Investigation of repetitive complaints
 - When there are justifiable concerns about implementation of corrective actions
- b) Conditions that may trigger unannounced audits
 - Misuse/ Abuse of NSI certification and marks

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-Follow up on suspended clients *intermediary*

5.5.2.2 The conditions under which short notice audits is to be conducted shall be included in the Certification Contractual Agreement (**MSC-P03-FA/ MSC-P03- FF / MSC-P03-FG/MS/P03-FN-**).

5.5.5.3 Appointment of the audit team for short notice audit shall take into consideration impartiality and conflict of interest.

5.5.5.4 For short notice audits, the client shall be notified 24 hours before the audit is conducted.

5.6 Suspending, withdrawing or reducing the scope of certification

The suspension, withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification is done as per Policy on Suspension, Withdrawal or Reduction of Scope of Certification (**MSC-P15-POL**).

5.6.1 Upon receipt of a written certification withdrawal or suspension request by the client or by the audit team, the Manager: Certification shall complete the **Certification Withdrawal /Suspension Notification (MSC-P15-FB)** and submit to the CAC for their decision. When the withdrawal of the certification is approved by the CAC, the Manager: Certification shall communicate the outcome to the client and the Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) shall update the list of certified clients.

5.6.2 Reduction of scope of certification can be made by a client or on recommendation by the audit team. Upon receipt of the scope reduction recommendation, the Manager: Certification shall submit the **Certification Recommendation (MSC-P14-FA)/ Certification recommendation round robin (MSC-P14-FH)** to the CAC for their decision.

5.6.3 Suspension of certification shall be done as per the Policy on Suspension, withdrawal or reduction of scope of certification (**MSC-P15-POL**).

5.7 Restoring certification

5.7.1 The NSI shall restore the certification of its suspended client only after the issue that has resulted in the suspension has been resolved within 6 months.

5.7.2 A follow up onsite audit shall be conducted to verify whether actions taken are effective.

5.7.3 Failure to resolve the issue that has resulted in the suspension in a time established by the certification body shall result in withdrawal or reduction of scope of certification.

6 Reference documents

6.1 **MSC-P03-FA:** Contractual agreement

6.2 **MSC-P12:** Conducting audits procedure

6.3 **MSC-P15-POL:** Policy on Suspension, Withdrawal or Reduction of Scope of Certification


7 Records

7.1 **MSC-P10-FA:** Certification Application Form

7.2 **MSC-P10-FD:** Audit Programme

7.3 **MSC-P10-FW:** OH& SMS Audit Programme

7.4 **MSC-P10-FT** OH& SMS Application Form

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7.5 MSC-P10-FK: Application for Amendment to the scope of certification

7.6 MSC-P11-FB: Audit Plan

7.7 MSC-P12-FE: Audit Report

7.8 MSC-P12-FM: OH& SMS Audit Report

7.9 MSC-P12-FF: Non-conformity Report

7.10 MSC-P15-FA: Pre-recertification Performance Report

7.11 MSC-P15-FB: Certification Withdrawal Notification

8 Record of Revisions

Revision	Date	Description
01	Jan 2016	Established
02	July 2016	Amend 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 to include duration between audit stages.
03	March 2017	Amend the Purpose, definitions, 5.1 and 5.1.2, 5.1.1.7 and 5.1.1.8
04	Nov 2017	Add 5.4 (i) request certified client to submit MSC-P10-FA for recertification. Add 5.4 (x) reference to table 1 in MSC-P12. Modify 5.2 and 5.3 to clarify acceptance of CAP and clearance of NCs. Add new form 7.1 Amended 5.6 Upon receipt.....certified clients; Added 7.8
05	Jan 2019	Add 5.7 Restoring certification.
06	May 2020	Under clause 5.6, added clause 5.6.1, 5.6.2 and 5.6.3
07	March 2021	Added virtual auditing under clause 5.1.1.2 and added clause 5.4.12 and 5.4.13.
08	May 2023	Added abbreviation for Manager Certification Added a sentence at 5.1 b about audit objectives and moved old 5.1 d to become 5.1 c Added under 5.1.c review of audit findings by the Manager Added 5 (d) regarding monitoring of surveillance activities and reporting by the Manager Added 5.1.1.2 – regarding planning of surveillance audit Added under 5.1.1.3, audit programme for NAMS/SANS 10330
09	June 2024	Expanded 5.5 to include OH&SMS related aspects. Added OHS related forms