

Audit and Certification Process of GUTcert for

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ACCORDING TO ISO 9001

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ACCORDING TO ISO 14001

ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ACCORDING TO ISO 50001

FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ACCORDING TO ISO 22000

VALIDATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DECLARATIONS ACCORDING TO EMAS

WORK SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ACCORDING TO BS OHSAS 18001

ORDINANCE ON WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANIES (EfbV)

ORDINANCE ON EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION (AZAV)

INFORMATION SECURITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ACCORDING TO DIN ISO/IEC 27001 (INCL. IT SECURITY CATALOGUE)

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Principles of GUTcert Certification

A certification starts with a two-stage initial audit and also includes an annual surveillance audit for the following two years (resp. four surveillance audits within AZAV-certification cycle). On recertification, a new certification cycle begins, which again includes an annual surveillance audit for the following two years, resp. 4 years. By means of the surveillance audits, it can be determined to what extent the organization and its management system have improved. Furthermore, the auditors determine, together with the organization, what potential improvements exist with respect to the management system and the system performance. Only such auditors are used who have the necessary high technical and methodical qualification. The audit team:

- audits the management system and verifies its compliance with the internal processes of the organization,
- determines whether the processes and procedures have been introduced, implemented and maintained effectively, and whether the objectives and specifications/requirements are being pursued,
- verifies the fulfillment of the normative requirements.

If the organization operates at several locations, locations are also audited on a random basis during the course of the certification cycle. Detailed information on the process and its requirements are specified in AA152EN DataSheet_Multiple-sites.

Specialities in the GUTcert certification process:

- Personal customer care during the preparation and performance of the process as well as quick responses to inquiries.
- The organization is understood as a partner. Goal of the audit is to improve business processes of the organization on a lasting basis.
- Standards are accumulated knowledge of experts. The auditors of GUTcert apply this always considering the individual conditions of each customer.
- The employees of GUTcert have a high degree of technical competence and skills to implement these principles.

The personal processing of proposals, the preparation of auditors to use audit time on-site effectively and the constant responsiveness of auditors and employees of the certification body are prerequisite to achieve these goals.

1 Certification / Issue of the Certificate

1.1 Preparation of the Two-stage Initial Audit

Data Collection

When an organization contacts GUTcert, it receives a form for the first data collection, with the request to provide certain basic data. In order to speed up the process, this data can also be provided by telephone or internet.

Quotation

On the basis of this data, GUTcert prepares an individual offer describing the expense and the conditions for the certification activities (resp. validation / approval). The defined audit programme takes into account the size of the organization, the scope of application and the complexity of the management system, the products and processes and the described level of effectiveness of the management system, and the results of previous audits. In the interests of the organization, advantage is taken of all opportunities to reduce the audit time including remote audits.

If the company confirms the offer and places an order on this basis, a desired audit date can be specified.

In all procedures according to ISO 14001, ISO 9001, ISO 50001, ISO 22000, ISO 27001 and BS OHSAS 18001 (DAkkS) GUTcert can review the offer on the basis of the report on the stage 1 audit and modify it, if necessary.

Contract Conclusion, Selection of the Auditors, Technical experts and further participants

After the order is placed (certification contract), GUTcert nominates an audit team from the GUTcert pool of auditors. The organization has the right to reject the assigned auditors. In this case, a new audit team will be selected by GUTcert. For a better preparation for the certification procedure the organization will be provided with the GUTcert Audit checklist. The lead auditor prepares a detailed audit schedule.

GUTcert auditors are appointed according to technical expertise in the relevant sectors, and undergo regular training on current questions of the relevant management systems and the content of international standards. Both, auditors and assessors, must observe strict impartiality, and for this reason must not undertake any consultancy activities for the relevant company for two years (four years for EMAS) before and after the certification. The term 'consultancy' covers any form of cooperation in the development, implementation or maintenance of a management system. This also includes the conduction of internal audits. Trainings and seminars are also considered as consultancy if specific company solutions are offered. Auditors are obligated to absolute confidentiality with regard to the information obtained during their activities.

Furthermore Experts, interpreters and translators can be used to support the auditors with specific knowledge or expertise in the activity to be audited, or in the language or culture, thus allowing an effective oral or written communication. Those persons are under the supervision of the lead auditor and must be selected and used in such a way that they have no disproportionate influence on the audit.

1.2 Certification Procedure / Assessment

Preliminary Audit

A preliminary audit is always carried out by a member of the later audit team. Above all it serves to rectify uncertainties with regard to the documentation and the implementation of relevant procedures, and to identify weaknesses. This enables the organization to correct any possible critical points before the certification audit. It also serves to set priorities for the planning of the certification procedure. A report is compiled on the results of the preliminary audit. Each

organisation may only conduct one preliminary audit which may only be ordered in conjunction with a certification.

Certification Audit

An initial certification audit is conducted in two stages:

Stage 1 Audit

The Stage 1 audit always includes a review of the management system documentation. The organization is provided with a detailed list of the minimum documentation to be submitted.

The documentation review begins about 6 weeks before the intended audit date. The management documentation of the company and the agreement to the auditors proposed by GUTcert should be available by this date. The management system documentation normally includes the Management Manual and the procedural instructions (for ISO 22000 HACCP-studies and for ISO 27001 the Statement of Applicability (SoA) are required additionally). Further documents such as work instructions or forms necessary for the understanding of the entire system should also be submitted (see also the detailed instructions on the web site of GUTcert).

The Stage 1 audit serves to assess the organization's status and its understanding with regard to the requirements of the standard. Missing documents or other materials required by the auditor will be requested.

In a quality, environmental, energy management system and food safety audit as well as in an OHSAS audit according to the DAkKS procedures, the auditor can visit the company on-site during the course of the Stage 1 audit. During this visit, additional information regarding the readiness of the organization for the Stage 2 audit and the resources required for this purpose are determined. In ISO 27001 procedures the stage 1 is generally always on-site.

This on-site visit is obligatory if the organisation fulfills at least one of the following conditions:

- More than 500 employees
- High risk category in the areas of environment and/or occupational health (ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001)
- High energy complexity (ISO 50001)

The main objectives of the audit are:

- Checking the maturity of the management processes. The planning and the successful conclusion of the internal audit and the management review in particular must be ensured by the time of the Stage 2 audit.
- Checking of the core processes of the organization in order to assess the successful implementation of the management system, if necessary another location of the organization must be included within multi-site-certification projects.
- Identification of the scope of application of the certification, particularly with regard to locations, activities and scopes.
- in case of ISO 27001: Identification whether there are documents that the auditor is not allowed to review and that hinder or prevent further proceedings.

The lead auditor then prepares a stage 1 audit report, which is sent to the organization early enough before the Stage 2 audit and therewith gives the organization the opportunity to correct or complete the management documentation and procedures. In case of ISO 27001 a review and release of the stage 1 report by the certification office are necessary.

This is followed by coordination with the organization on the focal points to be set for the Stage 2 audit.

Usually the Stage 2 audit can be carried out in the organization at the agreed time where the period between Stage 1 and Stage 2 audit must not exceed 6 months. If the Stage 1 audit reveals major gaps or non-conformities, these will be described in detail in the report. This may make it advisable or necessary to postpone the date of the Stage 2 audit in order to give the organization the opportunity to rectify such non-conformities and close gaps.

Stage 2 Audit

Following the agreement on the audit date, the audit team carries out the Stage 2 audit on the basis of audit criteria and documentation for system audits at the organization's premises. The procedure follows the relevant specifications of the applicable certification systems and begins with an opening meeting, followed by interviews with managers and employees, inspections on-site, monitoring of activities and conditions and document reviews in order to collect evidences of compliance with all the requirements of the standard.

In the debriefing, the lead auditor/assessor gives the responsible person an interim verbal report in order to inform about the status of the certification/validation/approval of the management system. If non-conformities have been stated, the organization is given the opportunity to analyze their root causes and specify measures to correct the non-conformity by a date specified in the non-conformity report. The successful implementation of these measures must be confirmed by the auditor/assessor either by verifying subsequently submitted documents or by a follow-up audit on-site before the certification procedure can be continued. Complaints will be verified during the next audit for effective corrections.

1.3 Issue of Certificate / Validation of the Environmental Statement

Within 10 working days, the lead auditor/assessor writes an audit report which contains all results of the assessment.

In the case of certification of a management system according to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 (DAkKS procedure), ISO 50001, ISO 22000, ISO 27001 or BS OHSAS 18001 the final decision on the issue of a certificate lies with the Certification Committee, which issues the certificate on successful review of the complete procedure.

In proceedings under DAU rules (e.g. validation of an environmental statement, certified to ISO 14001), the decision on the outcome on the issue lies on the verifier. If applicable, he validates the environmental statement or issues the certificate subsequent to the audit.

The certificate is valid for three years (18 months for waste management, 5 years for AZAV) from the date of the certification decision with surveillance audits carried out annually. The certificates of GUTcert are available in the formats DIN A3 and DIN A4, and in various languages. The status of the certification is made publicly available. Certifications according to the IT security catalogue are furthermore reported to the Bundesnetzagentur.

1.4 Certification Mark

The use of the certificate and the certification mark are part of the certification contract with the company and are regulated by the terms and conditions of certification of GUTcert. According to these conditions, Organizations certified by GUTcert may use the GUTcert certification mark free of charge. They are entitled to use this certification mark on letterheads, brochures and information material.

In compliance with the respective requirements of the EMAS Regulation, Organizations with a validated environmental statement may use the EMAS logo in external communication.

2 Maintenance of the Certification

2.1 Surveillance Audits

In accordance with the prescribed certification procedure, a requirement for the issue of a certificate is the annual review of the management system by the auditor/assessor on-site during the validity of the certificate. The first surveillance audit has to have been conducted at least 12 months after the date of the initial certification decision. All further surveillance audits have to be performed at least once per annum, preferably every 12 months. The dates are defined in the audit programme. The surveillance does not cover the full extent of the initial audit, but is restricted to essential features which ensure the functioning of the management system, such as:

- Internal audits and management review,

- Handling of complaints and incidents (BS OHSAS 18001),
- Effectiveness of the management system with regard to achievement of targets,
- Assessment of changes,
- Continual operation control,
- Progress in the sense of continual improvement (including rectification of any complaints from previous audits) and
- Use of marks / other references on the certification.

All other applicable standard elements are dealt with at least in one of the two surveillance audits. Besides, the procedure follows that of a certification procedure.

The certification contract starts with the placement of the order by the customer and covers the initial certification cycle as well as all following surveillance and recertification audits. The invoicing for the corresponding audits takes place according to the current project calculation, of course only after the rendering of services by GUTcert.

In the validation of an environmental statement, surveillance audits in accordance with the regulations of EMAS may be necessary.

2.2 Takeover of an Existing Certification

A change of the certification body is also possible during the validity period of a certificate. The assessment of the certification and the issue of the certificate take place in accordance with the regulations of the relevant IAF guidelines.

3 Recertification

A recertification audit or a revalidation has to be conducted prior to the expiry of the certificate or before a consolidated environmental statement can be established. Therefore the recertification audit should take place in due time to accomplish the certification before expiry of the old certificate – usually at the latest 4 weeks before.

The procedure of a recertification audit mainly follows that of an initial certification/initial validation. However, a Stage 1 audit is usually not required if no significant changes of the management system have occurred.

With a recertification audit on site the continuing conformity and effectiveness of the management system as a whole is assessed, and the continuing importance and applicability of the certification on the defined scope is confirmed. Earlier audit reports on surveillance audits are considered during the recertification audit. A new certificate will then be issued, which is again valid for 3 years (resp. 5 years for AZAV).

The on-site audit reviews:

- Effectiveness of the management system with respect to internal and external changes and its continued relevance and applicability to the scope of certification
- the outlined commitment to maintain the effectiveness and improvement of the management system in order to increase the overall performance
- the management system of the customer and its performance related to compliance with legal requirements
- Operation control / steering of processes
- Internal Audits and Management review
- Responsibility of the top management for the basic rules of the management system
- Connections between normative requirements, policy, performance targets and requirements, all applicable legal requirements, responsibilities, skills, activities, procedures, findings from internal audits.

4 Audits for special reason

4.1 Extension of the Scope of Application

An extension of the scope can be performed in conjunction with a review audit or in an additional audit. Following the receipt of the request for extension, the organization first receives a detailed list of the minimum documentation to be submitted. This is reviewed by the auditor/verifiers, who then notify the organization about any action required. An additional audit may be necessary. For waste management companies a permit is applied for with the relevant authorities. The organization finally receives a new certificate.

4.2 Audits on short notice and unannounced audits

Following the rules of accreditation, the certification body can conduct unannounced audits or audits on short notice at certified clients to investigate serious complaints, verify significant changes or to reinstate suspended certifications. The certification office will take extra care in choosing the audit team in these cases, because there is no opportunity to object to the members of the audit team.

5 Annulment, Suspension, Restriction and Withdrawal of Certificates

If the requirements for the validity of a certificate cease to exist, measures must be taken by the certification body in order to prevent the use of this certificate or to assure that the requirements for the certification are met.

Procedures for the annulment, suspension, withdrawal or reinstatement of certificates are documented. The status of every certificate is made publicly available.

5.1 Annulment

A certificate is annulled if the certified organization, without direct culpability, no longer fulfills the conditions for the further validity of the certification. These include in particular bankruptcy, the change to another organization or the discontinuation of the certified activity.

As soon as the certification body becomes aware of such circumstances, these are verified (usually by contacting the organization in question). In the event of corresponding reasons, the certification contract must be cancelled, and the organization requested in writing to return the certificate and refrain from using the certification mark in advertising or referring to the certification in any other way.

5.2 Suspension

If the specified time period for the conclusion of the surveillance procedure is exceeded, or the certified management system of the organization fails to comply with the requirements even after expiry of a defined period for corrective actions, the validity of the certificate must be suspended. Suspension will be notified in writing, with the requirement to refrain from using the certification mark in advertising or referring to the certification in any other way until the suspension is lifted. A certificate may also be suspended at the request of the organization.

Such suspension can be applied for a maximum of 6 months. A surveillance audit is carried out in order to lift the suspension. On successful conclusion of the surveillance procedure, the suspension is lifted and the existing certificate becomes valid again. If the causes of a suspension are not resolved after the specified period, this may result in withdrawal or restriction of the scope of the certificate.

5.3 Restriction of the Scope

If the requirements for a particular part of the scope of application of a certificate are not fulfilled persistently, the scope of the certificate can be restricted by the certification body.

5.4 Withdrawal

A certificate must be withdrawn by the certification body in the following cases:

- The suspension of a certificate cannot be lifted within the required time period or
- The certification contract with an organization is cancelled due to its own culpability or
- The organization fails to meet the requirements of the standard even after expiry of the defined period or
- The organization ceases the activity permanently.

The organization will be requested in writing to return the certificate and refrain from using the certificate or certification mark in advertising or referring to the existing certification in any other way.

In the case of a), this may require cancellation of the certification contract or performance of a recertification procedure.

The head of the certification body is responsible for the withdrawal of a certificate.