Instruction sheet for the certification of multi-site organizations / legal entities

This leaflet is based on the IAF document MD 1:2018, where further detailed regulations can be found.

The regulations described below only apply to procedures according to the DAkkS regulations (certifications according to ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 50001, ISO 22000, ISO/IEC 27001, ISO 55001 and ISO 45001/BS OHSAS 18001, certification of alternative systems according to § 3 SpaEfV and AZAV). The validation of environmental declarations and the certification of environmental management systems on the basis of our DAU recognition are subject to specific regulations, about which we will be pleased to provide information on request.

1. Applicability of the sampling method

If an organization has several locations where a single management system is applied for the entire organization under the leadership of a central office, the certification of the entire organization can be carried out in a single procedure. If, in addition, the activities at the sites are of a similar nature, the entire management system can be certified on the basis of audits using site sampling.

The following requirements must be met for multi-site certification:

a) There is a defined central office of the organization which manages and controls the entire organization. In relation to the management system, this includes at least the following activities:
   - Documentation of the management system
   - Changes in the management system
   - Complaints management
   - Corrective actions
   - Internal audits and management review
   - Monitoring compliance with relevant external regulations

b) The individual sites may be independent or dependent under company law, but must be subject to the common management system. This may require a contract between the head office and the sites. Specifications of the head office regarding the management system must be binding for the sites. An overall organization that combines independent individual organizations for the sole purpose of operating or certifying a uniform management system cannot be certified by auditing site samples.

   Criteria for uniform organizations are:

   -• **Economic interdependence according to HGB (group structure)**
      - same majority shareholders
      - Right to appoint / dismiss organs
      - Domination agreement / profit transfer agreement
      - Controlling influence according to the articles of association
      - single top management
      - Relations between affiliated companies do not a priori fulfil these conditions

   -• **Powers of the top management**
      - Reporting obligation of assigned bodies
      - Delegation of responsibility
      - Selection of staff
      - Allocation of resources

- Binding specification of policy and goals
- (This may not be the case even within group structures!)

-• **Field of activity of headquarters and locations**

- Uniform business purpose of the entire organization
- Headquarters globally controls service provision at the locations (e.g. via business policy and the management system)

-• **Contractual relationship between headquarters and sites**

- Requirements see top management
- Authority of the head office (not only with regard to the management system)

-• **Special cases:**

- Franchising: usually not multi-site capable

c) Before the initial certification audit, the complete internal audit at all locations must have been completed (in the case of alternative systems, the recording of the energy situation in accordance with SpaEfV) and the management review must have been carried out.

The contract for certification is concluded with the central unit, whereby access to the individual sites must be ensured.

If the procedure is successful, all sites included are listed in an annex to the certificate. It is also possible to issue a sub-certificate for each site, for which additional work may be charged according to the offer.

2. Definitions

A **site** comprises processes/activities under the control of a company that are carried out at a defined spatial location, including all associated or related storage of raw materials, by-products, intermediate products, finished products and waste materials, and all equipment or infrastructure involved in the processes/activities, whether temporary or not. Alternatively, where available, legally required definitions shall apply.

The geographical extent of a location is not necessarily limited to one (postal) address. Depending on the nature of the products or services, a larger area may be considered to be a site of an organization.

Sites can be either permanent or temporary, depending on the intended duration of use for the production of products or provision of services by the organization.

A **temporary site is** a site where specific activities are carried out for a limited period of time. The customer determines which locations are to be described as temporary. However, these must also be audited on a random basis as part of the certification. Temporary sites can also be listed on the certificate, but must be marked as temporary.

If processes are run using an online environment, regardless of physical location, the site is **virtual**. However, processes that must run in a physical environment (e.g. warehousing, physical testing laboratories) cannot be considered a virtual site. For the purposes of calculating audit duration, virtual sites are treated as single sites.

Points of purchase are energy consumption points outside of locations. They are connected to the network of the network operator via one or more offtake points and have their own energy meters. Therefore they are not own sites in the sense of IAF-MD1.

3. Application of the sampling method

For the auditing of an organisation with several sites, a sampling procedure may be used under certain conditions (see 1). In addition to the aspects listed below, the audit programme should generally be designed to ensure that an effective audit is carried out which achieves the audit objectives with sufficient certainty and that existing risks are adequately addressed.

In addition to the head office, only selected locations are then included in the audit. The certification body is responsible for selecting the sites to be audited. A random procedure shall also be applied. Compared to a separate certification of the individual sites, there are often considerable cost advantages. When applying the random sampling procedure, the following prerequisites must also be observed:

general

- The products/services made available at all locations must be essentially the same and must be produced using the same methods and processes.
- External requirements (e.g. laws), whose implementation is to be checked in the audit, are the same (or largely similar) at all locations

EMS

- Similar, comparable environmental impacts exist at all locations.

EnMS

- In addition to the locations, all the company's inspection points must also be included in the certification procedure. The certification body selects the inspection bodies to be audited in coordination with the appointed auditor.
- EnMS procedures according to ISO 50003: The processes relating to significant energy inputs and significant energy consumption must be essentially the same at all locations or organized in similar sub-units using similar methods or processes. Sites with the most energy-intensive processes must be subject to more frequent audits.

  Additional tasks to the EnMS headquarters:
  - Energy Planning Process
  - Determination and adjustment of the baseline and energy performance indicators
  - Definition of goals, targets and action plans
  - Assessment of the applicability and effectiveness of action plans and EnPIs
  - Organization-wide energy-related performance data

Alternative systems

- The site selection must cover all energy efficiency measures. For production and sales sites, the samples must be drawn from groups with similar site characteristics (energy consumption classes, product specification, area, number of employees).

OH&SMS

- Accident and health risks for employees at work must not differ significantly at all locations and must be assignable to the same risk class.
- If additional accident and health risks are present at sites that result in a classification in a higher risk category, these sites must be excluded from the sampling procedure and audited separately.

AZAV

- In these procedures, the sampling procedure is only applicable within a legal entity.

ISMS

- The sampling procedure can only be applied to sites where no increased risk has been identified. High risk sites must be audited annually.

AMS

- The following aspects must be taken into account when selecting the sample of assets:
  - Risk potential with significant financial impact

- Influence on the intended results (performance, planning, leadership, support)

The size of the sample for the audit of the sites is based on the detailed provisions of MD1:2018, 6.1.3.3.

4. Inclusion of temporary locations

When temporary sites are included in the sampling plan, their role in the management system shall be taken into account.

If they differ only in terms of the period of use, they are treated in the same way as permanent sites (possibly as a separate cluster, see 5.b).

In case of less time use or reduced relevance in the management system (e.g. regarding the number of relevant processes), both the number of temporary sites included and the respective planned audit time may be less than that for permanent sites. The existing risks and the effectiveness of the audit must be taken into account as a determining factor. For OH&SMS procedures, different project statuses should also be considered in the sample.

5. Adjustment of the sample size

a. Consideration of additional risks

When determining the scope of the sample, additional factors that pose risks to the effectiveness of the audit are taken into account to an increasing extent:

- Size of the locations and number of employees
- Complexity and risk level of processes / activities
- Complaints and other aspects of corrective and preventive action
- Results of internal audits and management assessments

b. Site clustering

If the conditions specified under 3. apply to only some of the sites, the sample scope may be adjusted.

In this way, locations can be divided into different clusters, for which the above-mentioned requirements are then fulfilled. The sample selection is then carried out separately for each cluster.

c. Inclusion of new locations

If new sites are to be included in an existing multi-site certificate, the certification/registration body shall adjust the audit program in consultation with the audit leader. In doing so, the aspects mentioned in this document shall be taken into account when determining the new sample scope. As a rule, at least one new site shall be included in the sample; any decision to the contrary shall be justified.

d. Multisite certification without sampling

If a sampling procedure is not possible, all sites are audited in initial and recertification audits. In surveillance audits, 30% of all sites are audited in addition to the headquarters (rounded up to the next whole number). All sites to be included in the matrix during the year must be audited individually.

6. Calculation of audit time

The calculation of the audit time per site is done according to IAF MD 5 or the specific management system regulation. The further requirements of IAF MD 1, 7.3 are taken into account.

When determining the site-specific audit time, priority should also be given to the effectiveness of the audit. For this purpose, a transfer of audit time between different sites should also be considered, if necessary. In special cases, a further reduction of the audit time at sites can even be made on the basis of a risk analysis. The decisions in this regard must be justified and documented in detail.

7. Requirements for obtaining certification

The prerequisite for certification is the fulfilment of all standard requirements at all locations included. The certificate must be cancelled, suspended, restricted or withdrawn for the entire organization if even one of the included sites does not meet the certification requirements. In addition, the impact of a finding on other sites must be examined in the audit matrix and appropriate overarching measures must be initiated.

An organization may also include only a part of its sites in the management system, in which case they are subject to the procedure described. A change of the sites involved shall be notified to the certification/registration body in due time before an audit. It is not possible to exclude sites (which may not meet the requirements for certification) during the ongoing process.

The withdrawal of sites from the scope of the certified management system shall be immediately notified to the certification body.

Detailed information on the sites is required for the preparation of a sample certification offer. The list must contain at least the address, activities, performance profile and number of employees for each location; if necessary, separate system-specific information must be added. On this basis, the certification body shall draw up an audit programme for the entire certification period. The information on the sites as well as on the overall system will be checked by the auditor during the audit. Incorrect information may result in considerable additional work or the termination of the certification procedure.