

0. Definitions

RICI: RICI Company Ltd. the Certification Body.

Client: the Organisation which has contracted with RICI for management system certification services

Initial Enquiry Form: Document used to gather and record client specific information necessary to make an informed decision regarding the requisite competence required to conduct an effective audit.

1. Certification Scheme

In order to obtain and retain certification all applicants and clients to different certification scheme (Quality, Environment, Health and Safety, Information Security and Food Safety Management Systems etc.) must adhere to the following rules :-

All information deemed necessary by RICI in order to complete the assessment should be made available by the applicant through the relevant applicable initial enquiry form. Client will be informed about pricing and other requirements through proposal and contract

RICI will run the scheme in transparent and fair manner without prejudice and discrimination of any applicant due to its size, type of business, financial or political background.

RICI shall be responsible for complete process and all activities of certification, from the initial document review, audit/evaluation of the client's Management System through periodic surveillance audits and re-assessment audits/evaluations.

RICI shall inform the client of the initial audit/evaluation results and if not satisfied that all the requirements for the certification are being met, shall inform the client of those aspects in which the application is deemed non-compliant.

When the client can demonstrate that effective remedial action has been taken to meet all the requirements within a specified time limit, RICI will review the remedial action and determine the suitability of awarding certification.

All certificated clients are entitled to provide feedback and suggestions relating to the potential areas for improvement of the rules & regulations. RICI reserves the right to make changes and corrections to these Rules & Regulations without prior notification. Clients will be given prior notice of any changes that affect their responsibilities or liabilities.

The client shall ensure that the question of responsibility to RICI for the certified system is clearly defined, e.g. by appointing a designated person who is nominated to maintain contact with RICI to ensure that the above provisions have been observed.

The client shall make all necessary arrangements for the conduct of the audits, including provision for examining documentation and the access to all processes and areas, records and personnel for the purposes of initial certification, surveillance, recertification and resolution of complaints

The client shall permit scheme, accreditation body representatives, auditors or trainee auditors all reasonable access for the purpose of observing RICI's auditors/evaluators performing audits/ evaluations and/or surveillance activities including any special audits.

2. Initial Audits for Certification

Initial audits (Stage 1 and 2) shall be conducted against the applicant's procedures and the requirements of internationally accepted:

- Management system standards
- Applicable legislations and other requirements.

Audits will be conducted by RICI approved auditors and findings shall be reported to client. If any development points are identified in Stage I client shall be given sufficient time to implement before proceeding for stage II. The gap between stage I and II shall not exceed 6 months. Stage I audit will focus on the documentation requirements and key implementation areas as well as to ensure effective planning for stage II. The Stage II audit will focus on implementation checking and coming up with conclusion and recommendation. Any noncompliance(s) at this stage shall be closed out effectively within agreed timeframe of 1 month.

3. Certification

When an initial audit has been completed and systems deemed to be satisfactory to the standard requirements by the approved scheme management, the Scheme Manager shall inform the client accordingly and issue a certificate of registration.

Surveillance frequency will be stipulated as either once or twice each year, but additional visits may be conducted at the discretion of the Scheme Manager of RICI. First surveillance has to be within 11 months of Stage II date, subsequent surveillances on annual basis from the Stage II date. Continuation of certification is subject to regular surveillance audits and adherence to the certification rules and regulations.

The certification cycle begins with the date of certification decision and is for 3 years, the date on the certificate issued will be determined by RICI. A re-audit is to be conducted at the end of 3 year certification cycle. The status of the certificate will be available on the official RICI website www.ricionline.com

It may be necessary for RICI to conduct audits of certificated clients at short notice to investigate complaints, or in response to changes, or as a follow-up on suspended clients. Under such circumstance RICI shall exercise additional care in the assignment of the audit team. The short notice audits may be unannounced if so required.

The certificate will remain the property of RICI and shall always be returned on request.

All clients shall maintain a log of all customer complaints they receive which fall within the scope of registration for which a certificate has been awarded. The details responding actions against these customer complaints shall be available for RICI review in the audit.

4. Re-certification

At the completion of the 3 year certification cycle and before expiry of certificate the client must be re-audited. Re-certification audit shall not be recommended if any Major-Nonconformities are not closed by expiry of the last certificate.

5. Extending Certification

A client wishing to extend the scope of its certification to cover additional products, processes, services or sites shall apply to RICI in writing. The Scheme Manager shall review the nature of extension and decide on the necessary audits/evaluations to be performed.

6. Publicity by Certificate Holders

A client has the right to publish that the management system as applicable is/are certified by RICI and apply certification and/or accreditation mark to promotional materials for which the certificate applies.

In every case, the client shall take sufficient care of its publications and advertising so that no confusion arises between management system certification and specific product certification, certificated and non-certificated business scopes covering product and/or services, which may mislead the market.

The client shall not make any claim that could mislead purchasers to believe that a product, process, service, site or organisation is covered by the certification when in fact it is not. The detailed rules will be provided by RICI along with the certificate issued on Doc 02 Rules for Use of Certification and Accreditation Marks.

The logos used by certified clients remain the property of the certification body or accreditation body and must be discontinued if the certification has been withdrawn.

7. Publicity by RICI

Non-confidential information relating to a client certificated management system may be placed in the public domain by RICI as required including the name of client, location, standard(s) certified on and current status of certification as active, suspended or withdrawn. Other information such as scope or verification of a true copy of the certificate may also be provided if required.

8. Confidentiality

RICI shall endeavour to ensure that its employees and auditors maintain secrecy concerning all confidential information with which they become acquainted as a result of their contacts with the client.

The client shall maintain confidentiality of all commercial terms and conditions with RICI for certification services.

Information about a particular client of individual shall not be disclosed to any third party without the written consent of the client or individual concerned except as indicated in 7 above.

Where RICI is required by law to release confidential information to a third party, the client or individual concerned shall, unless regulated by law, be notified in advanced of the information provided.

When confidential information is made available to other bodies, (e.g. accreditation body, agreement group or a peer assessment scheme,) confidentiality of information viewed shall be assured during access by these bodies.

9. Misuse of a Certificate

RICI shall take all reasonable precautions to control the use of its certificates by the certificated clients.

Incorrect references to certifications or misleading use of certificates found in advertisements; catalogues, etc. shall be dealt with by suitable actions, which could include legal or corrective action or publicising the transgression.

Clients are invited to report to the Scheme Manager any misuse of the RICI's marks which comes to their attention. The source of all information received will be treated in confidence.

When RICI receives a report of certificate misuse the report shall be investigated. If misuse is substantiated, the cost of the investigation shall be paid by the certificate holder.

RICI will determine the extent of misuse and the type of corrective action to be undertaken.

10. Suspension of Certification

The certificate issued for a particular scheme may be suspended for a limited period, the areas initiating suspension may include but are not limited to the following cases: -

- If the regular surveillance or recertification audit shows non-compliance with the requirements which is of such a nature that does not require immediate withdrawal.
- If a case of improper use of the certificate, e.g. misleading prints or advertising is not solved by suitable retractions etc.
- The client has voluntarily requested a suspension
- If there has been any other contravention of the certification rules and regulations or client has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system.
- If corrective action requests (CAR's) have not been implemented within specified time scales.
- if the surveillance or re-audit is delayed by more than 2 months beyond the due date or earlier also as the situation may require depending upon the information available to RICI.

The client shall not identify itself as a RICI certificated organisation covering the product, process or service that has been offered during the course of suspension.

The Scheme Manager of RICI will confirm an official suspension of the certificate to the client. At the same time the Scheme Manager shall indicate under which conditions the suspension will be removed.

At the end of the suspension period, a review will be carried out to determine whether the indicated conditions for reinstating the certificate have been fulfilled.

On fulfilment of these conditions the suspension could be lifted by notifying the client or though the audit that the certification has been reinstated.

If the conditions are not fulfilled, the certificate shall be withdrawn. (In most cases the suspension would not exceed 6 months). RICI shall make the suspended status of the certification publicly accessible as deemed suitable.

All costs incurred by RICI, in the suspending and reinstating of certificates will be charged to the client.

11. Withdrawal / Cancellation of Certificate

Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension of certification in a time specified by RICI shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification. A certificate may be withdrawn or the scope of certification reduced in the following cases: -

- If the audit shows that the non-compliance is of a serious nature.
- if the surveillance or re-audit is delayed by more than 4 months beyond the due date or earlier if the situation requires

- If the client fails to settle the due payment of its financial obligation.
- If the client fails to take adequate measures to remove the cause of suspension.
- If any actions are taken by the client which would bring the RICI's scheme into disrepute.

In the above cases RICI has the right to withdraw the certificate by informing the client. The client shall have the right to appeal.

Certificates may also be withdrawn in the following cases: -

- If the client does not wish to continue certification to the scheme voluntarily.
- if the product, process or service is no longer offered
- If the client ceases trading for whatever reason

12. Complaints Handling Process

Should the client have cause to complain regarding the conduct of RICI's staff or auditors, the complaint should be made in writing addressed to the Scheme Manager of RICI at scheme@ricionline.com or through website www.ricionline.com or through registered letter.

Should the complaint be made against the Scheme Manager, the letter of complaint should be addressed to RICI Managing Director.

Complaints received by RICI from any stakeholder regarding the activities of a certificated client shall be referred to that client at an appropriate time.

The complaint shall be investigated in accordance with the RICI complaints handling process procedure and outcome communicated if necessary.

The alleged complaint is logged and evaluated to establish its validity, with any requisite corrective action instigated where necessary. This process shall be subject to requirements of confidentiality. RICI shall determine, together with the client and complainant, whether and, if so to what extent, the subject of the complaint and its resolution shall be made public.

13. Appeals Procedure

The client has the right to appeal against any decision or notification by RICI including the suspension, reduction in scope or withdrawal of certification by RICI.

Notification of client's intention to appeal must be made in writing, and must be addressed to Scheme Manager of RICI within fourteen days of receipt of any notification or decision at scheme@ricionline.com or through website www.ricionline.com or through registered letter.

The client has the right to object to involvement of particular members of the RICI's management in the appeals procedure if evidence can be provided that their impartiality is compromised. The appellants also have the right to present their case in person at their own expense.

The appeal will be heard by Appeals Committee including members of top management, the Appeals Committee shall be impartial and independent of the persons involved in the issue raised. Decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding on both the client and RICI. Once the Appeal Committee has made a decision, no counter claim by either party in dispute can be made to amend or change its decision. Decisions on appeals will be made within 2 months of receipt of the appeal or earlier if practicable.

The outcome of appeal shall be communicated in writing to the appellant and also will be kept up to date on the progress.

Investigation and decisions on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

14. Fees

RICI shall be entitled to charge fees at a level to be determined from time to time having regard to its operating costs relating to the services, administration and long term development of the services.

Commercial arrangements are detailed in certification contracts or other agreements between RICI and the clients.

15. Notice of Changes

All clients are required to inform RICI without delay of matters that may affect the capability of the management system to continue to fulfil the requirements of the standard used for certification. The matters include changes relating to:

- The legal, commercial, organisational or ownership, including key managerial, decision-making or technical staff.
- Contact address and sites
- Size and Scope of business under the certified management system
- Major changes to the management system and processes

RICI's auditors must also be notified of all changes made to the management system since the previous visit.

RICI shall give its certificated clients due notice of any changes to its requirements for certification the timeframe for implementation will be mentioned in the notice. Any such changes will be verified in the subsequent audits.