099 F Description of certification procedure

The certification procedure for the examination of a management system is divided into 3 phases. The auditors are selected by the head of the certification body in accordance with the authorization for the particular sector and qualification.

The subsequently described audit and certification activities have basically as objective to determine the conformity of the management system of the client to be certified with the requirements of the underlying normative documents and with the defined processes and documentation of the management system developed by the client. Furthermore it will be evaluated both the ability of the management system to ensure the client organization meets applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements and the effectiveness of the management system to ensure the client organization is continually meeting its specified objectives. In result of the audit and certification activities areas for potential improvement of the management system will be identified or, if applicable, critical and non-critical nonconformities will be given.
The audit extent necessary for these audit and certification activities can be taken from the particular audit program (see offer) and the audit plan.

1. Application examination

The company interested in a certification is asked to provide all the data which are necessary in the customer questionnaire for preparation a tender, so that the certification body can assess and calculate the extent of certification according to recognized rules. The applicant organization will receive a non-binding offer for the certification and if agreed with the certification conditions send an order for certification to the certification body.
If the certification body cannot fulfil the certification extent or scope of the certification requested by the company in the customer questionnaire thus no offer for certification will be sent to the applicant organization and the company will be informed of the reasons for the rejection by the certification body.

2. Audit stage-1 and evaluation of submitted management system documents

The certification audit begins with a stage-1 audit and the review of the submitted management system documents (e.g. manual, if available; organization chart, work and procedure instructions, reports to the internal audits and last management review).
The applicant submits the management system documents in their current version to the lead auditor in reasonable time prior to the certification audit. The management system documents will be evaluated by the lead auditor on the basis of the specific standard requirements.
Parts of the review of the management system documentation can take made on-site during the stage-1 audit.
In good time prior to the stage-1 audit the applicant receives an audit plan for the stage-1 audit. The content of the audit plan will be agreed with the applicant during the introductory meeting before the beginning of the stage-1 audit. The purpose of the stage-1 audit is to check the management documentation, to evaluate the client's location and the site-specific conditions, to communicate adequately with the client in order to evaluate the client's understanding regarding the requirements of the standards. Necessary information on the scope or scope of application of the management system, processes and the location as well as applicable legal and official aspects and their implementation will be collected. Furthermore it will be evaluated if the internal audits and management reviews were performed and if the degree of the implementation of the management system shows that the stage-2 audit can be performed.
The applicant receives a report for the stage-1 audit including the evaluation of the management system documents. Detected critical or non-critical nonconformities must be corrected demonstrably before the beginning of the stage-2 audit. Maximum 6 months can lie between stage-1 and stage-2 audits. If significant changes occur with the applicant's management system which to be certified thus it may be necessary to repeat the entire stage-1 or parts thereof. If appropriate the applicant will be informed if the results of the stage-1 audits result in a postponement or cancellation of the stage-2 audit.
After clarification of all nonconformities and/or uncertainties the stage-2 audit can take place. After the expiration of 6 months a new stage-1 audit must be performed.

3. Audit stage-2

Prior to the beginning of the stage-2 audit the client receives an audit plan for stage-2 audit. During the stage-2 audit the effectiveness of the management system conforming to specific standard requirements as well as the determinations of the implemented management system based on specific examples of procedures and sampling procedures will be checked.
It is the task of the company to demonstrate the practical application of its documented management system in the stage-2 audit. Upon completion of the audit the client will be informed during a final discussion about the audit results.
Nonconformities will be documented in nonconformity reports. The lead auditor decides about the classification of nonconformities in critical or non-critical. The result of the audit will be documented in a report.

Procedure in case of identified critical nonconformities
A critical nonconformity exists when standard points or process elements as a whole are not described in a required extent and/or when they are not implemented which can lead probably to the delivery of faulty products/services.
The client must analyse the cause of this nonconformity and determine both corrections and corrective actions within 2 weeks after the audit was performed. The implementation of corrections and corrective actions must be made within maximum 3 months (differing from this: for certification audit: within maximum 6 months from the last day of stage-2, otherwise a new stage-2 audit must be carried out).
A critical nonconformity leads either to a re-audit, which means a new on-site examination, or to a submission of new documents and evidences. The lead auditor decides about the extent of a re-audit, however only the management system processes affected by the critical nonconformity will be audited. The re-audit will be calculated according to the necessary complexity.
The issue of the certificate or the continuity of the certification can only be recommended by the lead-auditor after the confirmation of implementation of the corrections and corrective actions.

Procedure in case of identified non-critical nonconformities
A non-critical nonconformity exists when an inadequacy was determined in the description or realization in one part of a standard point or process element.
The client must analyse the cause of this nonconformity and determine both corrections and corrective actions within 2 weeks after the audit was performed. If the lead auditor evaluates the corrections and corrective actions as adequate in order to correct the inadequacy then he can recommend the issue of the certificate or the continuation of the certification. The implementation of the determined corrections and corrective actions will be checked and evaluated at the latest by the lead auditor during the next scheduled surveillance audit.

4. Issue of the certificate and maintenance of the certification

The issue of the certificate follows after the approval of the certification procedure by the head of the certification body. In the framework of the approval of the certification process the certification body can evaluate the fulfilment of the standard requirement differently from the lead auditor.
When the signed contract for the certification is present, the certificates (if desired, in several languages) including the contract and audit report, will be delivered to the client. The certificate is valid for 3 years as long as annual surveillance audits will be performed in the company with the purpose of maintenance of the certification.
If there are significant changes in the scope or in company data during the validity period of the certificate, then these changes must be checked in the next surveillance audit or in the extension audit. If necessary, a change of contract according to the points which changed will be signed by both sides.

Surveillance audits:

Within the 3 years of certificate validity annual surveillance audits will be performed. During the surveillance audit it will be checked on a sample basis whether the certified management system is still fulfilling the requirements.

The 1st surveillance audit after the first certification must be performed within one year after the approval of the certification procedure. A postponement of the audit date after the due date leads to a suspension (Immediate suspension by exceeded the due date) or withdrawal of the certificate (6 months after the due date).

The 2nd surveillance audit must be performed analogous no later than 2 years after approval of the certification procedure. The suspension will be made 3 months after the due date, the withdrawal 6 months after the due date.

In the log term before the scheduled surveillance audit the applicant will be informed by the certification body about the upcoming audit and the planned audit team. Simultaneously the applicant will be asked to inform the certification body about the changes in the company e.g. changed number of employees or changed scope. The audit date will be coordinated between the applicant and the lead auditor.
For the audit preparation the applicant receives the audit plan with the standard specific requirements that need to be checked. It is not necessary to check all standard requirements in every surveillance audit.
In case of critical and non-critical nonconformities the process is the same as in the certification audit. The certificate can be withdrawn in case of serious critical nonconformities. The applicant receives a report with the audit results after the surveillance audit.

Suspension and restoration after a suspension:

In case of a declared suspension the certification will be temporary invalid. The certified company is not authorized during this period to advertise with the certification, including the certificate and certification mark.
A successful audit and subsequent approval of the certification procedure may lead to the renewal of the certification and to the recovery of the certificate.
The validity of the certification can be regained by a successfully performed audit. Additional regulations can be found in the certification contract.

Withdrawal:

A withdrawal of the certificate must be performed by the certification body 6 months after the exceeded due date. With completion of withdrawal the allowance of the applicant to advertise with the certificate terminates. The withdrawn certificates must be sent to the certification body. After the completed withdrawal a certification is only possible as a completely new initial certification.

Refusing of the certification:

A refusal of the certification may be concluded if the certification body after submitting the application for certification by the customer establishes that a certification of the relevant customer is not possible by reason f.e. the competence in the certification body is not ensured or the company does not comply with the principles. Furthermore a refusal of the certification can also be determined in following an audit by the certification body. In this case the company must remedy the deficient aspects of the auditor and may then apply for a new certification.

Restriction or extension of the scope of the certification:

An extension of the scope of the certification can be requested by the certified company for example, if further activities are to be certified or another standard within an integrated audit (auditing several standards at the same time under using synergy effects). An extension may also be done when e.g. new branches/sites shall be included or further production or service processes shall be added. After an order has been issued after receipt of a correspondingly amended offer it will be carry out an audit to check the extended scope and after approval in the certification body the changed certificates will be issued.
If necessary, an adaption of the existing audit program follows for the remaining period of certificate validity.
An extension audit may be performed both in the context of the regular surveillance audit or a re-certification audit as well as on a specially scheduled date, during which the extended aspects will be checked.

A restriction of the scope can be requested by the certified company if parts of the certified scope are no longer to be certified or if the number of standards which were included in the certification have to be reduced. The changed extent of the audit is communicated to the certified company and after an appropriate successful audit the changed certificates will be issued.

A restriction of the scope must be made if during the audit or during the approval in the certification body will be detected that for some parts of the certified scope not all certification requirements were implemented. Should despite of an anew audit or submitted documents not all evidences for the maintenance of the

granted certification be provided, the scope of the certification will be restricted and new certificates will be issued.

As a result of the audit for an extension or if necessary for a restricion a new approval of the certification procedure and issue of changed certificates follows. The previously valid certificates must be returned by the applicant to the certification body.

5. Renewed certification or re-certification audit; Renewal of certification

Prior to the exceeding of validity of the certificate a re-certification audit must be performed in order to a renewal of the certification for another 3 years. A beginning of the re-certification audit is not permitted after expiry of the currently valid certificate with the conditions of a re-certification; in this case a new initial certification must be carried out with stage-1 and stage-2.

Information about the existing management system or about the changes in the existing certification must be handed in in advance by the applicant together with the customer questionnaire to the certification body. In the re-certification offer to the applicant the audit program for the next three years of the certification cycle will be specified.
During the re-certification audit the efficiency of the whole management system will be checked by random samples. The audit procedure will be implemented according to point 2 in this description.
Activities for re-certification audits may require a stage-1 if there are significant changes in the management system, in the organization or in the context with function of the management system (e.g. changes in legislation).

The new certification cycle begins with the release of the re-certification process. The re-certification procedure including the approval by the head of the certification body should be completed during the validity period of the current certificate to ensure an uninterrupted connecting certification to the existing certificate.

If the re-certification (including the completion of all deviations and approval by the certification body) could not be completed within 6 months after expiry of the existing certificate a new stage-2 audit shall be carried out in accordance with the audit extent of a first certification.

To continue maintaining the certification must be carried out annual surveillance audits in the 1st and 2nd year after the re-certification. The due date corresponds to the release of the re-certification process + 1 or 2 years.

6. Short-notice or unannounced audits

If required it could be carry out short-noticed or unannounced audits in the audited company, for example to investigate complaints or to examine changes which have been made or to make void a suspended certification. In the case of short-notice audits the certification body reserves the right to inform the certified company at least 3 days before the visit date about the main focus of the audit. Unannounced audits are not announced to the certified company.
In both cases the certified company is engaged to grant the employees or the auditors of the certification body of TÜV Thüringen e.V. access to the relevant locations of the company.

7. Multi-site certification

Multi-site certifications are applied to enterprises with several (production) sites or offices. One of these sites must be defined by the certified company as a central office, which plans, steers and controls the defined activities for all sites. The central office must not necessarily be the head office (headquarters) of the company.
The sites can be separate legal entities, but they must be connected to the central office in a legal or contractual way. The legal access by the central office and the management representative of the top management of the central office to all sites must be ensured (e.g. by contractual regulations).

In case of a multi-site certification and if appropriate requirements are fulfilled the audit will be performed in the defined central office and in further locations according to the sampling procedure. This will be defined in the audit program (see offer) for the certification audit and annual surveillance audits.

The sampling procedure for the multi-site certification is possible, if following requirements are fulfilled:

- Establishment, implementation and maintenance of a management system **which applies to all locations uniformly**. This also applies also for the substantial process descriptions.
- Surveillance of the whole management system under the **central direction** by the management representative of the central office. He is authorized to give instructions to all sites.
- Performance of the **internal audits in all sites** and according to all standard requirements with the evidence of the implementation of the management system before the audit of the certification body will be performed.
- Accomplishment of the **central** management review and complaint management.

The inclusion or discontinuation of some sites requires an adjustment of the audit program for the existing remaining certification cycle. However it is not possible to separate sites retroactively from the multi-site company after the audit was performed (e.g. if critical nonconformities were detected in one site).

The audit process and the maintenance of the certification by conducting annual surveillance audits will be performed according to points 2 and 3 of this description.

Information on dealing with complaints and appeals

The information how to contact TÜV Thüringen in case of complaints and appeals is provided on the homepage of TÜV Thüringen:
http://www.tuev-thueringen.de/gk/managementsysteme/weg-zum-zertifikat/