
**Conformity assessment — Requirements
for bodies providing audit and
certification of management systems**

*Évaluation de la conformité — Exigences pour les organismes
procédant à l'audit et à la certification de systèmes de management*

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work. In the field of conformity assessment, the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO) is responsible for the development of International Standards and Guides.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

Draft International Standards are circulated to the national bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the national bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO/IEC 17021 was prepared by the *ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO)*.

It was circulated for voting to the national bodies of both ISO and IEC, and was approved by both organizations.

This first edition of ISO/IEC 17021 cancels and replaces ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996 and ISO/IEC Guide 66:1999, which have been combined and technically revised.

Introduction

Certification of a management system, such as a quality or environmental management system of an organization, is one means of providing assurance that the organization has implemented a system for the management of the relevant aspects of its activities, in line with its policy.

This International Standard specifies requirements for certification bodies. Observance of these requirements is intended to ensure that certification bodies operate management system certification in a competent, consistent and impartial manner, thereby facilitating the recognition of such bodies and the acceptance of their certifications on a national and international basis. This International Standard serves as a foundation for facilitating the recognition of management system certification in the interests of international trade.

Certification of a management system provides independent demonstration that the management system of the organization

- a) conforms to specified requirements,
- b) is capable of consistently achieving its stated policy and objectives, and
- c) is effectively implemented.

Conformity assessment such as certification of a management system thereby provides value to the organization, its customers and interested parties.

In this International Standard, Clause 4 describes the principles on which credible certification is based. These principles help the reader to understand the essential nature of certification and they are a necessary prelude to Clauses 5 to 10. These principles underpin all the requirements in this International Standard, but such principles are not auditable requirements in their own right. Clause 10 describes two alternative ways of supporting and demonstrating the consistent achievement of the requirements in this International Standard through the establishment of a management system by the certification body.

This International Standard is intended for use by bodies that carry out audit and certification of management systems. It gives generic requirements for such certification bodies performing audit and certification in the field of quality, environmental and other forms of management systems. Such bodies are referred to as certification bodies. This wording should not be an obstacle to the use of this International Standard by bodies with other designations that undertake activities covered by the scope of this document.

Certification activities involve the audit of an organization's management system. The form of attestation of conformity of an organization's management system to a specific management system standard or other normative requirements is normally a certification document or a certificate.

Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

1 Scope

This International Standard contains principles and requirements for the competence, consistency and impartiality of the audit and certification of management systems of all types (e.g. quality management systems or environmental management systems) and for bodies providing these activities. Certification bodies operating to this International Standard need not offer all types of management system certification.

Certification of management systems (named in this International Standard “certification”) is a third-party conformity assessment activity (see ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.5). Bodies performing this activity are therefore third-party conformity assessment bodies (named in this International Standard “certification body/bodies”).

NOTE 1 Certification of a management system is sometimes also called “registration”, and certification bodies are sometimes called “registrars”.

NOTE 2 A certification body can be non-governmental or governmental (with or without regulatory authority).

NOTE 3 This International Standard can be used as a criteria document for accreditation or peer assessment or other audit processes.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 9000:2005, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

ISO 19011:2002, *Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing*¹⁾

ISO/IEC 17000:2004, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000, ISO/IEC 17000 and the following apply.

3.1

certified client

organization whose management system has been certified

1) References in this document to the relevant guidance in ISO 19011 apply to the auditing of all other types of management systems.