



**Certification Guidelines/ Outsource  
Activity - Audit by Branch Office/  
Partners**

**Organization Instruction- 19**

The material contained within this document has been produced by RIR CERTIFICATION PRIVATE LIMITED and cannot be copied or altered, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of RIR CERTIFICATION PRIVATE LIMITED.

PREPARED BY:

AMIT DOGRA

APPROVED BY:

TARUN SHARMA



# Certification Guidelines /Outsource Audit by Branch Office/ Partners

## Organization Instruction- 19



### 1. Scope

This document relates to entities, performing and/or managing management system certification activities, on behalf of RIR certification body (RIRs) holding accreditation, which are not wholly or partly owned or employed by the RIR Certification. The entities may or may not be located in the same country as the RIR head office and may be a representative, agency, franchisee or sales office of the RIR or any entity which has a contractual relationship with the RIR for performing certification activities

This Organization Instruction shall ensure unified procedure, responsibilities and authorities for control of branch offices. It also defines the relationship between the Head Office and branch office, it specifies the system during opening, running and development of the branch office.

### Liability scope

This abstract is obligatory for all branch offices

#### Head office RIR

RIR CERTIFICATION Pvt. Ltd., 323, Tower B4, Spaze I-Tech Park, Sector- 49, Sohna Road, Gurugram- 120018, Haryana (INDIA)

#### RIR branch office

The corporate subject, who signed franchise contract for certification with Head office.

### 2. Definitions

Entities - A person, partnership, organization, or business that has a legal and separately identifiable existence.

Risk Assessment - A risks is a positive or negative deviation from the expected or Target. Addressing a risk could mean pursuing a new opportunity. The better your organization manages risks, the better prepared you are to face uncertainties. Organizations are required during planning to address their both risks and opportunities. Opportunities can include the adoption of new customers, products, technology or practices.

The risks shall be considered with regard to impartiality, competence, consistency, independence, and levels of local risk to certification business in the country where the CB is planning for the entity to operate.

### 3. Procedure

#### 3.1 Risk Assessment of Candidate Entities

- Prior to entering any agreement, the RIR HO shall perform a comprehensive risk assessment on the candidate entity in the country in which it is located and in the

# Certification Guidelines /Outsource Audit by Branch Office/ Partners

## Organization Instruction- 19



countries in which it will be operating on behalf of the RIR Certification. If it identifies an unacceptable risk that is not manageable, the RIR HO shall not proceed with the agreement.

- The risks shall be considered with regard to impartiality, competence, consistency, independence, and levels of local risk to certification business in the country where the RIR is planning for the entity to operate. (As per IAF MD 23, Annex 1.) Existing accreditation of the entity can be taken into account.

### **Annex 1: Elements that can be checked during the risk assessment include but are not limited to:**

- ownership and owners and their relationships (business and other);
- related businesses, including relationships with consulting companies;
- criminal records of owners and entity
- clean records;
- potential issues with authorities, violations, acts, bans, tax records, social security records;
- former relations with other CBs, if any, current status, reasons for termination of relationships;
- number of employees on record, including external resources;
- scopes of competence of auditors, auditor files, current contracts;
- financial stability

### **3.2 Establishment of the Legally Enforceable Agreement**

The RIR shall establish a legally enforceable agreement (MOU) with the candidate entity to include but not be limited to:

- 1) The candidate entity shall conform to the applicable requirements including legal status, impartiality, competence requirements, process requirements and with the RIR's management system, to the extent that the candidate entity is involved in the delivery of certification services.
  - The candidate entity shall operate within the RIR's management system and/or under its own accreditation;
  - As needed, based on the risk assessment, additional controls shall be defined and implemented;
- 2) The entity is subject to on-site internal audit by the RIR on an ongoing basis. The audits shall include all activities performed by the entity on behalf of the RIR. The audit frequency shall depend on the risk assessment and the results of previous audits;
- 3) Mandatory annual reporting on key performance indicators (KPIs), including those specified in IAF MD 15: IAF Mandatory Document for the Collection of Data to Provide Indicators of Management System Certification Bodies' Performance;

# Certification Guidelines /Outsource Audit by Branch Office/ Partners

## Organization Instruction- 19



- 4) Provision of access to control and monitoring by the RIR's Accreditation Body (AB) as deemed necessary;
- 5) Details of the activities to be provided by the entity;
- 6) Responsibilities, authority and liability of each party;
- 7) Provision of resources, training, continuous professional development; viii) Intellectual property and protection;
- 8) Before outsourcing any activities it performs on behalf of the RIR, the entity shall obtain the agreement of the RIR.
- 9) The Entity shall able to demonstrate and evaluate the risks arising from its certification activities and that it has **adequate arrangements (e.g. insurance or reserves) to cover liabilities arising from its operations in each of its fields of activities and the geographic areas in which it operates.**

### 3.3 Audit/ Certification Approval Process

Within reasonable Lead time (min 2 days) before planned audit branch office shall send to Head office following documents:

The Following Steps recommend for Audit process with approval by head office.

Branch office	Submission of Form No- 01, Application Form & Application part (various applied Standards) to RIR Head office.
Head office	Head office technical Team – do Application Review (Form 2) to check the applied management system under scope accreditation with applicable Man-days of various standard consider as single/ integrated audit with available approved Auditors/ Technical Expert to conduct the audit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nomination of audit team is subject to the Head office' approval.</li> </ul>
Branch office	After Application Review & Approval by HO, Branch office will share the proposed Audit programme (Form 03), Contract proposal copy (Form 04) & Certification Agreement (Form 5) & Impartiality/ Confidentiality Statement (Form 6) Signed by Nominated Auditors.
Head office	With consider all Documents (Form- 03 to 06) after review– HO give Approval or Rejection/ changes of Audit team of Stage 1 Audit. If any non-conformities are discovered in the audit team proposal (Form 03), the Head office informs the branch office, who shall propose the change in audit team and send it repeatedly back for

## Certification Guidelines /Outsource Audit by Branch Office/ Partners Organization Instruction- 19



	approval.
Branch office	Once Audit team approved for Stage 1 Audit, Audit team will submit the Stage 1 Audit plan for approval.
Head office	Head office Technical Team review the Stage 1 Plan, if no such issue identified in stage 1 plan then recommend for Stage 1 Audit.
Branch office	Audit Team will submit the Stage 1 Audit Report with proposed Stage 2 Audit plan no major concern/ finding identified in stage 1 audit with recommendation of Stage 2 Audit. If any concern / finding raised during the Stage 1 audit, acceptance of closure evidence need to submit for further review to HO
Head office	Head office nominated Technical Reviewer team – Review the Stage 1 Audit Report with closure evidences (raised concern) and proposed audit plan –Stage 2. If Stage 1 found effective and no changes recommended in audit plan –Audit team can proceed for Stage 2 Audit with approved Audit plan after approval by HO.
Branch office	Audit team submit the Stage 2 Audit Report with NC Finding Closure/ CAR (if applicable) and other relevant documents updated Audit programme Form 03, Form 07,14, 15, 16 to Head office for further Technical Review.
Head office	Head office Nominated Technical Team – Review the Stage 2 Report with required evidence acceptance / rejection or further information required by audit team, The Head office also checks, if audit was conducted by audit team with approved delegation, studies the documentation content and consults possible uncertainties with the branch office than final recommendation of Technical team consider for Certification Decision.
Head office	Certificate Decision Team - If the Head office does not discover any substantial facts, which could oppose the determination of lead auditor stated in the non-conformity reports and in the Audit report, issues the certificate for audited area of management system.

*Note: By reason of effectiveness it is necessary to send at once the proposal of all planned audits for following month or week – depending on planning period.*

- Audit can be performed only after the approval of audit team delegation by the Head office. If this rule is not obeyed, it shall be considered as significant breach of RIR procedures.

# Certification Guidelines /Outsource Audit by Branch Office/ Partners Organization Instruction- 19



- Form 04-Proposal / Contract with client should have detail about audit time determined for various audits (Initial/ Surveillance/ Recertification) in the certification cycle according to the Application Review.
- Any changes in delegation of approved audit team are subjects of repeated approval.

## Surveillance/ Recertification Process

<b>Branch office</b>	Submit the Proposed audit Plan, Audit Programme and Auditor information based upon their availability prior one week advance to HO.
<b>Head office</b>	If no certain changes or revision in the audit plan and Audit team, After Review & Approval by HO, Audit can proceed by Branch office as per the recommended Audit plan & Audit Team.

### 3.5 Certificate awarding

- As mentioned above, If the Head office does not discover any substantial facts, which could oppose the determination of lead auditor stated in the non-conformity reports and in closing meeting report, issues the certificate for audited area of management system.
- The Head office shall issue certificates in number and languages agreed with the branch office.
- Certificate shall be consider valid if Active Status will show on RIR Certification Website- [www.rircert.com](http://www.rircert.com). Branch office will intimate to Head office within 03 days of Certificate issue if Certificate detail would not available on the Website.

In a case of non-awarding of certificate, the Head office shall prepare the decision about non-awarding of the certificate and consequently informs the branch office about the reason and agrees the further procedure.

### 3.4 Audit documentation

Branch office shall send to the Head office below documents as per defined process step (Section 3.3- **Audit/ Certification Approval Process**)

- 01- Application Form
- 03- Audit Programme-
- 04- Audit Proposal (Mandatory)
- 05-certification agreement + attachment + scans of last pages with signatures
- 06- Auditor/ TE Confidentially Statement (for lead auditor, auditor and technical expert) – scanned with signatures
- 07- Opening & Closing Form+ scanned page with signatures (Stage 1 (if onsite))

# Certification Guidelines /Outsource Audit by Branch Office/ Partners

## Organization Instruction- 19



- 08- Stage 1 Audit plan- if applicable
- 09- Stage 1 audit (for certification or recertification audits only) + scanned page with signatures
- 10- Stage 2 Audit plan
- 11- Stage 2 audit report + scanned Last page with Auditor signatures
- 07- Opening & Closing Form+ scanned page with signatures
- 13-non-conformity reports – scanned a signed report of substantial non-conformities elimination
- 14-Organization Reserve & Mark
- 15- Data for Certificate Issuance with scope of certificate validity in English
- in a case of requirement of certificate issue in other language than English – certificate in required language shall be sent in full version
- 16- Customer Feedback

Audit documents are reviewed by the Head office. The Head office also checks, if audit was conducted by audit team with approved delegation, studies the documentation content and consults possible uncertainties with the branch office.

### Non-conformities elimination

- Substantial non-conformities shall be eliminated sooner than audit report is sent (certificate shall not be issued sooner)
- Less substantial non-conformities shall be eliminated in the specified time – monitoring is provided by branch office, the Head office performs random inspections of non-conformities elimination

### 3.6 Certificate delivery

- After certificate issue the Head office shall ensure the certificate delivery through shipping or by registered mail according to the requirements agreed with the given branch office, which are registered in Record.

**Note: No Modification/ Changes would permissible after final issue of Certificate (Either Soft or Hard Copy) by RIR Head office. If certain activity will be found by Branch Office or Partners it will treated as violation of RIR Certification Process and action can be taken after investigation by RIR Head Office Investigation Committee.**

### 3.7 Surveillance audits and recertification

10<sup>th</sup> of every Month the branch office sends the plan of surveillance audits for the following month.

At recertification audits branch office proceeds analogically as at the certification audits.



# Certification Guidelines /Outsource Audit by Branch Office/ Partners Organization Instruction- 19



The Head office monitors validity of issued certificates and if the client has not been recertified the end of certificate validity is marked on RIR website accordingly.

## 4.0 Selection and evaluation of branch office

- a) After new branch office opening the Head office ensures the training about RIR Management System Certification, ISO 17021 requirement and evaluation of Risk analysis.
- b) Branch office shall make organizational structure including responsibilities and authorities assigned to job positions.
- c) Organizational structure shall contain job position of “Country Manager”. Country Manager” must meet qualification and competence requirements for certification personnel.
- d) Country Manager” is responsible for pre selection and evaluation of auditor’s recommendation by RIR HO and He/ she supervises meeting of procedures when audits are planned and realized on the behalf of RIR.
- e) Country Manager” must be approved for the standards in which certification is provided by branch office. The branch office which has executed more than 10 certifications in year is obligatory to evaluate Management System manual in accordance with ISO/IEC 17021 or ISO 9001 according to the Head office instructions.
- f) Approval of branch office’s auditors from RIR Head Office time to time.
- g) RIR HO shall monitor the ongoing performance of the entity/ Branch office, including on-site internal audits (including witnessing audits) atleast once in year of the entities to the relevant accreditation requirements of the RIR’s management system, the RIR’s Governance Documents and other applicable documents in relation to the activities performed on behalf of the RIR. The audit frequency can be reduce/ increase shall depend on the risk assessment and the results of previous audits;**

**Evaluation of branch offices is realized in following criteria (criteria importance is indicated in below table)**

S. No	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	Marks (Percentage)
1	Risk Assessment- Liability and Certification Business	10 %
2	Planning of audits, Quality of audit reports and related management system documents	20 %
3	Approving of auditors & Evaluation of auditor’s and Certification Personnel performance	20 %
4	RIR HO Internal audit at branch office performance	10 %
5	Internal audits performance with corrective and preventive actions	10 %

# Certification Guidelines /Outsource Audit by Branch Office/ Partners

## Organization Instruction- 19



6	Management Review	5 %
7	Surveillance audits conduction	5 %
8	Fulfilment of tasks and communication with Head office	5 %
9	Elimination of documentary non-conformities Like discovered deficiencies which have to be eliminated by the branch office	5 %
10	Turnover	10 %

***Evaluation is realized by the Head office & Results of the evaluation are sent to branch offices annually.***

The Head office continuously checks the tasks resulting from Risk analysis and results are taken into consideration at the evaluation of the branch office.

### 5. Complaints and appeals

Branch office is obligatory to inform immediately the Head office about any complaints and appeals of customers or the third parties. Complaints/appeals is reviewed and solved by the Head office with the branch office's assistance.

### 6. Other activities of branch offices

Branch office shall inform Head office about planned establishing of any additional business activity above the management system certification scope. The Head office shall check if there might any conflict of interests occur in relation to management systems certification by performing such activities. Branch office can start other business activities after the Head office's approval only

### 7. Business trip abroad (RIR Head office' visit of branch)

- At the beginning of calendar year the Head office elaborates the yearly plan of foreign branch offices visits – branch offices where the visit is planned within the given year are informed by the Head office about the proposed date of visit. The branch office is obligatory to accept the Head office's visit.
- *The visit usually requires **minimum 1 day audit within the administrative premises of the branch office and minimum 1 day witness audit at the client of the visited branch office (during certification, surveillance or Recertification Audit).***
- Person performing the preparation of business trip shall elaborate the visit's program and sends it to the branch office. If there are some comments to the program from the branch office's side, these shall be sent to the Head office.
- After the business trip realization the Head office sends to the branch office the records from conducted audits and check list – **monitoring of nonconformities elimination** (this check list contains only discovered deficiencies which have to be eliminated by the

# Certification Guidelines /Outsource Audit by Branch Office/ Partners Organization Instruction- 19



branch office). The Head office subsequently monitors fulfilment of specified deadlines for nonconformities elimination and requires the objective evidence about the elimination.

## 8. References and notes

Related standards

- ISO/IEC 17021:2015, Conformity assessment. Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management system“
- IAF MD 12:2016 Accreditation Assessment of Conformity Assessment Bodies with Activities in Multiple Countries
- IAF MD 23:2018 Control of Entities Operating on Behalf of Accredited Management System Certification Bodies.

## Revision proceeding

Any formal and objective changes to this OI are carried out by Head office.

## Circulated

Head office, branch offices/ Partners.