



IECQ PUBLICATION

IEC Quality Assessment System for Electronic Components (IECQ System)

**Rules of Procedure –
General requirements for the acceptance of IECQ Certification Bodies
into the IECQ System**

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INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

**Rules of Procedure –
General requirements for the acceptance of IECQ Certification Bodies
into the IECQ System**

FOREWORD

This publication has been prepared by the Management Committee (MC) of the IECQ.

This revision IECQ 02 Edition 2.0 has been prepared to align with the new Edition 4.1 of IECQ 01.

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INTRODUCTION

Taking into account the object of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) as given in Article 2 of the Statutes, the particular object of the IECQ System, operated in conformity with the Statutes and under the authority of the IEC, is to facilitate international trade in electronic components of assessed quality, by providing a global framework for independent assessment and certification.

The object is achieved by the implementation of quality assessment procedures in such a manner that organizations, processes, and components certified as conforming to the requirements of an applicable Standard or Specification, are acceptable to all participants.

The IECQ System provides manufacturers with a “supply chain verification tool” for seeking assurance that electronic components, assemblies, processes and related materials conform to declared technical Standards and Specifications.

These Rules of Procedure set out the application, assessment and surveillance process for bodies seeking to be accepted and maintain acceptance as IECQ Certification Bodies (IECQ CBs). These Rules of Procedure are to be used in conjunction with the IECQ Basic Rules, IECQ 01.

For existing IECQ CBs seeking an extension of scope to cover other IECQ Programmes, form IECQ MC/130/Q shall be completed and submitted to the IECQ Secretariat.

While these Rules of Procedure contain general assessment procedures for the qualification of IECQ CBs, additional requirements beyond those covered here may apply for the respective IECQ Certification Schemes. Such additional requirements are detailed in the relevant Scheme's Rules of Procedure, e.g. IECQ 03-1, IECQ 03-2, IECQ 03-3, IECQ 03-4, IECQ 03-5 and IECQ 03-6.

Further information concerning these procedures or any other aspect of the IECQ System, may be obtained by contacting the IECQ Secretariat as follows:

Address:

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Sydney, NSW 2000
Australia

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Rules of Procedure – General requirements for the acceptance of IECQ Certification Bodies into the IECQ System

1 Scope

This publication contains the general assessment procedures for the qualification of IECQ Certification Bodies (CBs) to enable their participation in the various Schemes of the IECQ System.

2 Normative references

The following publications contain provisions, which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of these Rules. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. The IECQ Management Committee shall decide the timetable for the introduction of revised editions of the publications.

IECQ 01, *IEC Quality Assessment System for Electronic Components (IECQ System) – Basic Rules*

IECQ 03-1, *General Requirements for all IECQ Schemes*

IECQ 03-3, *IECQ Approved Component Products, Related Materials & Assemblies Scheme*

IECQ OD 010, *Qualification Criteria for Assessors and Lead Assessors according to IECQ (third-party assessment)*

IECQ OD 013, *IECQ Assessor Report regarding the Assessment and Re-Assessment of IECQ Certification Bodies (CBs)*

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17021, *Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems*

ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*

ISO/IEC 17065, *Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*

ISO 9001, *Quality management systems – Requirements*

ISO 14001, *Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use*

3 Terms and definitions

The basic definitions concerning conformity assessment contained in ISO/IEC 17000 apply.

For the purpose of this document, the definitions contained in IECQ 01 and the below apply:

3.1

IECQ Certification Body (IECQ CB)

a body which has been accepted according to the IECQ Rules and which issues IECQ Certificates of Conformity

3.2

IECQ Certification Body Certificate of Acceptance

a document issued under these Rules indicating that adequate confidence is provided that a duly identified Certification Body has been found to operate procedures that provide confidence that the IECQ activities undertaken complies with IECQ rules and requirements

4 Acceptance of IECQ Certification Bodies (IECQ CBs)

4.1 Description

An IECQ Certification Body (IECQ CB) is an organization responsible for the processing applications and the subsequent issuing and maintenance of IECQ Certificates of Conformity issued under the IECQ Conformity Assessment Schemes, including surveillance of all QMS and associated procedures and processes which demonstrate continued compliance with the requirements of the Schemes.

A candidate certification body is accepted as an IECQ CB and allowed to operate under the IECQ Schemes/Programmes they have nominated following satisfactory assessment of their competence by assessors appointed by the IECQ Conformity Assessment Bodies Committee (IECQ CAB). Competence is judged by reference to ISO/IEC 17065 and/or ISO/IEC 17021, IECQ System rules and IECQ System requirements. A satisfactory assessment as documented in an IECQ Assessor Report (IECQ OD 013) shall be approved by the IECQ CAB and accepted by the IECQ Management Committee (IECQ MC).

4.2 Responsibilities

Upon acceptance as an IECQ CB the organization agrees to abide by the IECQ System and its Scheme(s)/Programme(s) Rules and Rules of Procedure. Participation in the IECQ Schemes/Programmes requires that IECQ CBs maintain their knowledge and understanding of the practical application of IECQ Rules and Operational Documents and Procedures. Such requires participation and attendance at IECQ annual meetings and training events. Non-attendance at such events may instigate the need for a special surveillance assessment visit to ensure that the CB maintains its capability to conduct IECQ Certification/Approval activities according to latest IECQ procedures.

Only IECQ CBs that have been accepted to participate in the nominated IECQ Schemes/Programmes are permitted to issue IECQ System Certificates of Conformity for those nominated IECQ Schemes/Programmes.

The activities of an IECQ CB cover acceptance of applications seeking IECQ Certification, evaluation, surveillance and certification activities under their nominated IECQ Schemes/Programmes within their defined geographical areas, for which acceptance has been granted.

The IECQ CB is responsible for accepting applications, conducting assessments, issuing IECQ Certificates and the planning and conducting of on-going surveillance activities in accordance with IECQ Scheme(s) Rules of Procedure and supporting IECQ Operational Documents.

4.2.1 The IECQ CBs shall have the following responsibilities and duties:

- a) shall be free from any influence which could prevent it from acting in an impartial manner;
- b) shall have a staff sufficient in number, technical competence and skill to carry out adequately its surveillance and supervisory responsibilities;

- c) shall ensure that their representatives are under an obligation not to disclose any information concerning the organization which is of a confidential nature, other than information which is in the public domain, or which may be required by law;
- d) shall nominate and have clearly documented in their QMS the “Authorized Person(s)” who have the function that is authorized to formally issue IECQ Certificates of Conformity on behalf of the IECQ CB;
- e) when an IECQ CB subcontracts any part of the assessment, it shall ensure that
 - 1) its responsibilities and obligations for the assessment conducted on its behalf are fully met;
 - 2) it is able to demonstrate that its subcontractor is competent to perform the services in question and complies with the applicable criteria stipulated in the present clause and with any additional requirements for the work being subcontracted;
 - 3) details of the CBs and their subcontractors approved to operate under the IECQ Schemes/Programmes shall be included in NSSA or SSA and approved by IECQ CABC;

CBs are reminded that while it is acceptable to subcontract part of the assessment the decision to issue a certificate remains with the IECQ CB;

- f) while it is acceptable for an IECQ CB to use contracted assessors (clause 6), the IECQ CB shall ensure no non IECQ CB shall present themselves as IECQ Certificate issuing CBs;
- g) the CB shall record and retain details of its investigation of the competence and compliance of its subcontractors, and maintain a register of all subcontracting. These details shall be submitted to the IECQ CABC for approval;
- h) a CB shall ensure that any activities which it performs, or which any subcontractor performs on its behalf, comply with the relevant clauses of the following documents:
 - ISO 19011, *Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing*
 - ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*
 - ISO/IEC Guide 60, *Conformity assessment – Code of good practice*
 - ISO/IEC 17021, *Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems*
 - ISO/IEC 17065, *Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*
- i) after granting certification to an organization, initiate a surveillance assessment plan in accordance with IECQ Rules and IECQ Operational Documents, except as modified by IECQ Scheme Special Surveillance requirements – refer to each IECQ Scheme’s Rules of Procedure for details;
- j) notify the organization of customer complaints relating to the compliance of its product, process or service with the specified requirements.

4.3 Acceptance of Certification Bodies

4.3.1 Conditions for acceptance

A certification body shall be accepted as an IECQ CB by the IECQ MC and given the right to issue IECQ System Certificates of Conformity/Approval, under the following conditions:

- a) the certification body shall be recognized by a IECQ Member Body (IECQ MB) of an IECQ System participating country, approved by the IECQ Conformity Assessment Bodies Committee (IECQ CABC) and accepted by the IECQ Management Committee (IECQ MC);
- b) the certification body shall have provided a compliant SSA which clearly defines the geographical area, technological areas and a list of the IECQ Schemes/Programmes over which the certification body proposes to conduct certification and surveillance activities;

- c) the competence of the certification body to comply with these Rules shall be demonstrated by assessment. The general competence, efficiency, experience, familiarity with IECQ System rules, IECQ Scheme/Programme requirements and competence to carry out quality management system assessments as well as compliance with ISO/IEC 17065 and or ISO/IEC 17021 shall be assessed. Acceptance in another IECQ Scheme/Programme shall be taken into account. In those cases, the IECQ MC shall decide upon the extent of the assessment that is necessary. A satisfactory assessment as documented in an IECQ Assessor Report (IECQ OD 013) shall be approved by the IECQ CAB and accepted by the IECQ Management Committee (IECQ MC).

4.4 Statement of Surveillance Arrangement (SSA)

A candidate IECQ CB shall prepare a Statement of Surveillance Arrangement (SSA) document that will form an Annex to the National Statement of Surveillance Arrangements (NSSAs) of the IECQ MB whom is recognizing the candidate. It shall contain all essential information, without superfluous repetition of the Rules of the System, and shall be written in English language.

The SSA shall include the following information under the following headings:

1) Introduction

This section shall relate the IECQ CB's organization to the System and shall show the general approach to the implementation. I.e. Including full address and contact details of the primary office location(s) as well as any branch office locations where IECQ activities are undertaken.

2) Description of the IECQ CB's organization

This section shall include

- a) *an organization chart;*
- b) *a statement showing the responsibilities for the surveillance and calibration functions required by clause 6 of the Basic Rules, with particular reference to the IECQ CB;*
- c) *a statement of which of the following geographical areas over which the IECQ CB proposes to conduct activities:*
 - 1) *Americas*
 - 2) *Europe*
 - 3) *Asia Pacific and others*
- d) *a statement of the IECQ Scheme(s)/Programme(s) and scope of that Scheme(s)/Programme(s) over which the IECQ CB proposes to exercise jurisdiction. These Schemes/Programmes shall be those covered by one or more IEC generic and sectional specifications or such other specifications as may be approved for use under the System (see Basic Rules, IECQ 01), as well as IECQ AP, IECQ AC, IECQ ECMP, IECQ HSPM and IECQ ITL;*
- e) *a description of the arrangements for managing and conducting a comprehensive system of internal quality audits to verify compliance with the relevant IECQ System and Scheme(s)/Programme(s) requirements;*
- f) *a description of the arrangements for appeal against its decisions or those of the relevant Certification Body (CB), including the ability to escalate the appeal to the IECQ MC and IEC CAB;*
- g) *a description of the arrangements for the certification of manufacturers, distributors, specialist contractors, approval of independent testing laboratories, IECQ Avionics, and IECQ HSPM Organizations;*

NOTE An IECQ CB intending to act additionally as an independent testing laboratory shall include in this section a description of how its laboratory complies with ISO/IEC 17025.

- h) a description of the arrangements as may be applicable for the implementation of
- the Approved Process Scheme
 - the IECQ AP-CAP Counterfeit Avoidance Programme,
 - the Approved Component Scheme
 - the IECQ AC-TC Technology Certification
 - the IECQ AC-AQP Automotive Qualification Programme,
 - the IECQ HSPM Scheme,
 - the IECQ Avionics Scheme,
 - the IECQ Independent Testing Laboratory Scheme;
- i) a description of the arrangements for the implementation of quality conformance inspection and an indication of the frequency of surveillance visits;
- j) a description of the arrangements for the implementation of Attestation of Conformity, IECQ 03-3, Annex B.

3) Resources of the IECQ CB

This section shall include information on the experienced manpower, the test facilities, and the ancillary technical services including contractors and subcontractors, available to deal with the technological areas defined in the Annex.

4) Guidance and information documents

This section shall include or make reference to written working instructions, which serve as guidance documents to the IECQ CB and to any documents providing additional information.

All documents listed shall be made available to participating countries on request.

4.5 Application to become an IECQ CB

The candidate certification body, via an IECQ Member Body (IECQ MB) of the IECQ System, shall make an application for acceptance to operate as an IECQ Certification Body under the applicable IECQ Schemes/Programmes as defined by their application.

The application file shall be submitted to the IECQ Executive Secretary.

The application file shall be in electronic form and shall contain the following information:

- a) a declaration that the candidate complies with, or undertakes to comply with, the requirements detailed in 4.1, form IECQ MC/129/Q or IECQ MC/130/Q as applicable shall be completed and submitted;
- b) the address of the primary location of the candidate, and country regions in which the candidate requests to operate under the IECQ if granted acceptance by the IECQ MC;
- c) an SSA document, as specified in 4.4, for inclusion as an Annex in the NSSA of the IECQ MB whom is recognizing the candidate;
- d) a declaration that the candidate will pay such dues with respect to the application and IECQ System dues/fees as may be determined by the IECQ MC;
- e) evidence, where applicable, that it has been granted accreditation or recognition of compliance in respect of the documents listed in 4.2.1 h) by any other responsible authority.

4.6 Appointment of the Assessment Team

4.6.1 Assessment Team

As soon as the application has been approved, the IECQ Executive Secretary, in consultation with the IECQ CABO Chairman and applicant, shall appoint an IECQ Assessment Team comprising a minimum of one expert from an IECQ CB.

The members of the Assessment Team should have the following knowledge/experience as appropriate:

- certification and quality assurance;
- application of standards and testing;
- equipment, instruments and their calibration.

Each member of the designated Assessment Team may be assisted by not more than two support staff from his/her IECQ CB.

4.6.2 Objection

The candidate may submit an objection to the IECQ Secretariat regarding the appointment of one or more of the members of the Assessment Team on commercial grounds, which shall be stated in the objection. Alternative member(s) shall be selected in accordance with 4.6.1.

4.6.3 Candidate responsibility

The candidate shall only be responsible for the transportation and living expenses of up to 3 members of the Assessment Team, whether this is an initial visit or, if necessary, a subsequent visit. An estimate of these expenses shall be provided to the candidate in advance and agreed by the candidate.

The visits within the country of the candidate shall be planned so that they will be completed as expeditiously as possible.

4.6.4 Assessment Team Leader

The IECQ Executive Secretary shall appoint the Assessment Team Leader.

4.6.5 Appointment of assessors

IECQ Assessment Teams shall report to the IECQ Executive Secretary who shall manage all assessments, including the appointment of assessors, to ensure assessments are carried out in a timely manner and in accordance with the requirements of the IECQ System and its Schemes/Programmes.

The IECQ Executive Secretary shall consult with the IECQ CABO Chairman and where necessary the IECQ MC Chairman and make the arrangements for a visit of the Assessment Team to the candidate. The visit shall take place, unless impractical, within three months and the assessment of the candidate shall be completed within twelve months of the approval of the Annex to the SSA.

4.7 Assessment of an IECQ CB

The Assessment Team during its visit to the candidate shall verify that:

- a) the candidate meets the general requirements of 4.1 and 4.2.1;
- b) these Basic Rules and Rules of Procedure have been implemented in a correct way;

- c) their SSA document (Annex) to the NSSA of the IECQ MB whom is recognizing the candidate is a correct description of the actual situation;
- d) the candidate has sufficient experience with quality assessment of electronic components involving certification procedures similar to those adopted for use within the System and has arrangements for the preparation and maintenance of a list of certified manufacturers, distributors, specialist contractors and approved independent testing laboratories which it has assessed and intends to certify under the System; and
- e) that the measuring and test equipment necessary for the scope of the application is available.

The candidate shall be responsible for arranging such visits to any laboratory and to any manufacturer's production line as may be considered appropriate by the Assessment Team.

4.8 Report to IECQ CABC and IECQ MC

4.8.1 Draft IECQ Assessor Report (IECQ OD 013)

During the visit, the Assessment Team shall prepare a draft IECQ Assessor Report (IECQ OD 013). This draft shall contain all the conclusions of the Assessment Team where these are either the joint opinions of the Assessment Team or those of one or two of its members.

The report shall indicate whether

- a) the Assessment Team would unanimously recommend the acceptance of the candidate; or
- b) it would recommend, subject to the correction of some minor deficiencies, the acceptance of the candidate; or
- c) there were important deficiencies and the Assessment Team could not recommend acceptance until these deficiencies had been corrected and a further visit by one or more members of the team would be necessary to determine whether the corrective action was satisfactory; or
- d) the conclusions were applicable to the entire process of acceptance or only to a part of this process.

The draft report shall be discussed with the candidate and every attempt made to resolve any differences between the Assessment Team and the candidate at the time of the visit. In the case of c) above, the candidate may request that any of the detailed information is treated as confidential.

NOTE The IECQ Assessor Report (IECQ OD 013) is available from the Publication>Operational Documents area of the IECQ website: www.iecq.org.

4.8.2 Finalized IECQ Assessor Report (IECQ OD 013)

Upon completion of its visit, usually within 4 weeks, the Assessment Team shall finalize its IECQ Assessor Report (IECQ OD 013) and submit it to the members of the IECQ CABC. Where the candidate has requested that the detailed information in 4.8.1 is treated as confidential, it shall be contained in a separate appendix to the report and shall only be made available to those delegates to the IECQ CABC who are members of IECQ CBs.

4.8.2.1 Minor deficiencies

Where the report shows that only minor deficiencies exist, the Assessment Team may agree to accept written evidence that corrective action has been accomplished. When such evidence has been received by the members of the Assessment Team within 8 weeks of the conclusion of their visit, a supplement shall be added to the IECQ Assessor Report indicating that the Assessment Team unanimously recommends the acceptance of the candidate and the report shall be sent to the members of the IECQ CABC.

Where the written evidence that the corrective action has been accomplished is not received, the Assessment Team shall recommend that the acceptance of the candidate is not granted. The Assessment Team shall then issue a supplement to its report, which shall be sent to the members of the IECQ CAB. C.

4.8.2.2 Important deficiencies

Where the report shows that important deficiencies have been revealed, the candidate shall have the right to take corrective action within a period of 12 months. The report shall be circulated to the IECQ CAB. C. but, if confidential, the appendix shall be circulated only to those members who are members of IECQ CBs. The report shall recommend that the acceptance of the candidate is not granted until the necessary corrective action has been accomplished.

The Assessment Team may either delegate to one of its members the responsibility to visit the candidate again or decide that all the members shall jointly make the visit. This visit shall take place as soon as possible after notification of the completion of the corrective action and, in any case, not later than 3 months after the notification.

During this visit, a draft supplement to the original IECQ Assessor Report shall be prepared and the candidate shall be informed of its conclusions. Where the candidate has been visited by one member, the draft shall be circulated to the other members of the Assessment Team.

Usually within 4 weeks of the completion of the visit the Assessment Team shall finalize its report.

Where the Assessment Team is satisfied that the corrective action has been accomplished, the supplement to its original IECQ Assessor Report shall indicate that the Assessment Team unanimously recommends the acceptance of the candidate and the supplement shall be sent to the members of the IECQ CAB. C.

Where the Assessment Team considers that the corrective action has not been accomplished, it shall report this fact to the IECQ CAB. C.

4.8.3 Termination of application

When deficiencies have not been satisfactorily corrected within a period of 12 months from the issue of the visit report, the application shall be considered to have been terminated.

4.8.4 Appeals

If the candidate does not agree with the report of the Assessment Team, it shall be allowed to present its case in writing to the IECQ CAB. C. prior to this Committee considering the recommendation of the Assessment Team.

The delegates of IECQ CBs shall consider this matter during the first scheduled meeting of the IECQ CAB. C. following the submission of the report from the Assessment Team and the objections from the candidate. The IECQ CAB. C. shall give a decision in writing within 1 month of the meeting.

If the IECQ CAB. C. concurs with the recommendations of the Assessment Team, and if the candidate still considers that its views were not properly taken account of or that the correct procedures were not followed by the IECQ CAB. C., the candidate may appeal against the decision, according to the IECQ appeals process details in IECQ 01.

4.8.5 Acceptance – Voting on an application

If, in 4.8.2, the Assessment Team unanimously recommends in its report the acceptance of the candidate, the recommendation shall be submitted to the members of the IECQ CAB. C. for

acceptance at a meeting or by correspondence. Acceptance shall not be withheld by any CABC member except for technically valid and documented reasons.

Where objections for acceptance are raised, the CABC Chairman shall decide the course of action.

The decision of the IECQ CABC shall be communicated to the IECQ MC for their endorsement at the next meeting, or via correspondence.

4.8.6 Notification

Usually within 2 weeks of the IECQ MC receiving notification of the decision the candidate certification body shall be informed.

If the decision is positive, the Secretary of the IECQ MC shall inform the candidate certification body in writing.

If the decision is negative, the Chairman of the IECQ MC may, depending on the findings, suggest to the candidate certification body to withdraw the application, or to accept a new assessment.

4.9 Changes to the SSA

4.9.1 Critical changes

IECQ CBs shall inform the IECQ Executive Secretary of changes in their organizational structure, operations, personnel or systems that may result in their SSA not being current or valid. Changes in an SSA that could affect the adequate operation and supervision of the IECQ Schemes/Programmes shall be submitted to the IECQ Secretariat and shall be approved by the IECQ CABC before taking effect.

The IECQ Secretariat in consultation with the CABC Chairman and MC Chairman, as appropriate, shall review the proposed changes and determined the course of action, which may include a site visit by an IECQ Assessor, and/or review by CABC. Where a review by CABC is determined necessary a submission is to be prepared to the members of the IECQ CABC with a request that they state within 2 weeks of despatch from the Secretariat whether they have any objections.

If no objections and no requests to discuss the matter at a meeting to be held are received by the end of the 2 weeks, the relevant IECQ CB shall be informed of this and the IECQ Executive Secretary shall report this at the next meeting of the IECQ CABC.

Where more than half the members of IECQ CABC object to the changes, the matter shall be dealt with at the next meeting of the IECQ CABC. The decision of the IECQ CABC may be such that an Assessment visit is required, in which case the assessment shall be coordinated and managed by the IECQ Executive Secretary, in consultation with the IECQ CABC Chairman.

Where less than half the members of IECQ CABC object to the changes, the IECQ CABC Chairman shall decide the course of action.

4.9.2 Non critical changes

The IECQ CB shall within 1 month notify the IECQ Secretariat of changes to the SSA other than those given in 4.9.1.

The Secretariat shall circulate such notification to all IECQ CABC members.

4.9.3 IECQ CB responsibility on changes

Each IECQ CB is responsible for deciding whether the action on changes should be subjected to the procedures of 4.9.1 or 4.9.2.

If no objections are received by the end of 2 weeks, the relevant IECQ CB shall be informed of this and the IECQ Executive Secretary will report this at the next meeting of the IECQ CABC.

4.9.4 SSA reconfirmation

Every 5 years, the IECQ CBs accepted under the IECQ System shall send to the IECQ Secretariat a recapitulation of the changes applied in their SSA. The recapitulation shall be subjected to the procedures given in 4.9. If no changes have been applied during the 5 years' period, the IECQ CB shall confirm that the existing text is still valid.

4.9.5 Implementation of changes in IECQ Basic Rules or IECQ Scheme(s)/ Programme(s) Rules

Each IECQ CB is responsible for ensuring any changes to the IECQ Basic Rules and or any Scheme/Programme Rules of Procedure are reflected in their SSA and the revised document shall be submitted to the IECQ Secretariat.

4.10 Maintenance, suspension and withdrawal of IECQ acceptance of an IECQ CB

4.10.1 Maintenance of acceptance – IECQ CBs with national accreditation

Applicable to IECQ CBs that maintain national accreditation, by IAF (International Accreditation Forum) member accreditation body found to be acceptable by the original IECQ Assessment Team.

4.10.1.1 IECQ CB annual reporting with national accreditation

Every year, prior to the anniversary date of acceptance into the IECQ System, each IECQ CB shall report at the annual IECQ CABC meeting on the following information for consideration by the IECQ CABC:

- a) confirmation of the currency of the IECQ CB National Accreditation – including a statement on any identified Non-Conformances and the corrective actions required;
- b) advising of any changes to the procedures in force, or an amendment to the SSA if the changes are small, or a complete re-issue of the SSA if the changes are of a significant nature;
- c) information on the annual IECQ CB internal audits conducted in accordance with 4.4, and a statement on verification of the corrective actions required;
- d) information, including the result, on any appeals against the decisions of the IECQ CB which have needed resolution by the IECQ MC or the IEC Conformity Assessment Board (CAB). This information shall be given in such a manner that it does not disclose any confidential information;
- e) promotional activities undertaken by the IECQ CB or the IECQ MB whom is recognizing them;
- f) means by which the IECQ CB continues to comply with the requirements of the IECQ Rules.

Where Non-Conformances have been identified the IECQ Executive Secretary shall consult with the IECQ CABC and IECQ MC Chairman, as necessary whom shall determine the course of action.

4.10.2 Maintenance of acceptance – IECQ CBs without national accreditation

Applicable to IECQ CBs that do not hold national accreditation but who have been accepted into one or more of the IECQ Schemes/Programmes by way of a full on-site assessment, by the IECQ Assessment Team; shall comply with 4.10.2.1.

4.10.2.1 IECQ CB annual reporting without national accreditation

Every year, prior to the anniversary date of acceptance into the IECQ System, an on-site assessment shall be arranged by the IECQ Secretariat.

At the completion of an annual assessment the IECQ Assessor Report (IECQ OD 013) shall be completed and be forwarded to the IECQ Executive Secretary who shall review the reports for completeness and any Non-Conformances. Where Non-Conformances have not been identified the reports shall be reviewed and maintained by the IECQ Secretariat.

Where Non-Conformances have been identified the IECQ Executive Secretary shall consult with the IECQ CABC and IECQ MC Chairman, as necessary whom shall determine the course of action.

NOTE The IECQ Assessor Report (IECQ OD 013) is available from the Publication>Operational Documents area of the IECQ website: www.iecq.org.

4.10.3 IECQ CABC consideration of annual IECQ CB reports

The IECQ CABC shall consider the information required by 4.10.1.1 at its annual meeting and, if the IECQ CABC is not satisfied, it may ask for further information to clarify any matters of doubt, either by an oral statement at the meeting or by further documentation. In the second case the final decision shall be made at the following meeting of the IECQ CABC. During this period, the accreditation of the IECQ CB shall remain in force.

Any reports submitted shall be retained, for a minimum of 10 years, for record keeping purposes.

4.10.4 Re-assessment

At intervals of not more than 5 years, the arrangements in the SSA and the implementation of the requirements of the IECQ System and Schemes/Programmes shall be re-assessed by an IECQ Assessment Team, according to 4.6.1, to assess the continued technical competence of the IECQ CB to exercise its duties. If the IECQ CB is servicing only one certification/approval, the re-assessment team may comprise only one assessor.

4.10.5 Suspension and withdrawal of IECQ acceptance

The acceptance of an IECQ CB may be suspended or withdrawn by the IECQ MC if the IECQ CB no longer fulfils the conditions of 4.3.1 or, if in the opinion of the IECQ MC, the IECQ CB hampers the aim, operation or development of the IECQ System, fails to take action regarding misuse of IECQ Certificates of Conformity, or violates these Rules. Before such a decision is made, the IECQ CB shall be given the opportunity to take corrective action over a period of 6 months and state its own opinion on the matter.

4.10.5.1 Suspend acceptance

Where evidence has been presented to, and accepted by the IECQ CABC that the IECQ CB and the IECQ MB concerned have been informed and have failed to take any remedial action, the IECQ CABC shall request the IECQ MC to immediately suspend the acceptance of the IECQ CB.

All IECQ MBs, IECQ CBs shall be informed in writing by the Secretary of the IECQ CABC within 2 weeks of the decision to suspend the acceptance of the IECQ CB.

4.10.5.2 Corrective action review

The IECQ CABC may require the IECQ CB to submit evidence that it has corrected its deficiencies or may decide to convene an IECQ Assessment Team to re-assess the IECQ CB. The final decision on the outcome shall be made at the next meeting of the IECQ CABC and its decision and recommendation put forward to the IECQ MC. If the decision of the IECQ MC is to lift the suspension, the IECQ CB may resume its activities immediately and confirmation of the lifting of the suspension shall be given in writing by the Secretary of the IECQ CABC within 2 weeks to all IECQ MBs, IECQ CBs. If the decision of the IECQ MC is unfavourable or corrective actions have not been completed within 6 months, or any other period agreed by the IECQ CABC, the procedures of 4.10.5.3 shall be invoked.

4.10.5.3 Withdrawal acceptance

Where the deficiencies are serious, the IECQ CABC may request the IECQ MC to withdraw acceptance of the IECQ CB. Formal notification of the withdrawal of the acceptance shall be given, in writing, to the IECQ CB, by the Secretary of the IECQ MC within 2 weeks of the decision. The decision, however, shall be binding from the time that it was made by the IECQ MC. IECQ MBs, IECQ CBs shall be informed by the Secretary of the IECQ MC in writing within 2 weeks of the withdrawal of the acceptance. Any subsequent request from the IECQ CB to be re-admitted to the System shall be regarded as a new application.

4.10.5.4 Decision to suspend or withdraw

A decision to suspend or withdraw the acceptance of an IECQ CB shall require agreement of the IECQ MC during a meeting or by correspondence, as determined by the Chairman, by a majority of at least four fifths of the total number of members. Members not attending a meeting shall have the right to cast their vote in writing by registered mail or electronic mail to the Secretary of the IECQ MC prior to the meeting.

In case of a suspension or a withdrawal, the IECQ CB in question shall not be allowed to claim any relationship with the IECQ Schemes/Programmes.

4.10.5.5 Recognizing IECQ MB responsibilities

During the period of suspension, or in the case of withdrawal of acceptance, the recognizing IECQ MB involved may make arrangements, with the assistance of and subject to approval by the IECQ CABC, for other IECQ CBs to carry out the surveillance and audit testing work in order to safeguard, to the maximum possible extent, the position of certified organizations.

4.10.5.6 IECQ CB wishing to withdraw from the IECQ Schemes/Programmes

An IECQ CB wishing to withdraw from the IECQ Schemes/Programmes shall notify the Secretary of the IECQ MC. This notification to be at least 1 year in advance and shall indicate the reason for the withdrawal and the date from which the withdrawal will become effective.

4.10.5.7 Reinstatement

The voting on the decision for renewal or reinstatement of the approval of an IECQ CB shall be on the same basis as that for the initial acceptance of an IECQ CB.

4.10.5.8 Appeal

An IECQ CB has the right to appeal to the IEC Conformity Assessment Board (CAB) against the decision made by the IECQ MC. The decision of the IECQ MC shall remain, pending the outcome of the appeal. Such an appeal shall be made within 6 months of the date of the IECQ MC decision.

5 Complaints

If there are complaints concerning the actions of an IECQ CB that the IECQ CAB and or IECQ MC cannot resolve, the IECQ MC or the complainant shall have the right to request the IEC Conformity Assessment Board (CAB) to take appropriate action.

6 Contracted auditor resources

Where the IECQ CB wishes to utilize contracted external auditor resources, the IECQ CB shall:

- a) control all critical stages of the certification process, such as but not limited to appointment of the audit team, the duration of the audit and over all audit planning;
- b) utilize external auditor resources under individual contract arrangements;
- c) maintain external auditor resources qualification and accreditation records, ensuring that contracted auditors comply with the IECQ CB's own auditor qualification requirements;
- d) maintain external auditor resources training records;
- e) strictly control promotional material of contracted auditors or their organizations to ensure that such material is not misleading.

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