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0 DEFINITION

0.1 Nonconformity

Nonconformity : Non-fulfilment of a requirement.

1 REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

Each CERTIFICATION BODY (CB) has to make a written application to NQSA. The “application form for CERTIFICATION BODY” and all documents associated are joined to this demand. Uncompleted application won’t be taken into account. A NQSA board decision (only industrial members) is needed to begin the qualification process of the CB.

1.1 Criteria to approve the application of the CERTIFICATION BODY

To get an approval from the NQSA board (only industrial members), these criteria must be respected by the CERTIFICATION BODY:

- A permanent structure (legal entity),
- A valid accreditation ISO 17021 within its scope ISO 9001 and AS/EN9100 or TS 16949
- A minimum number of auditors qualified in the field of nuclear industry (EA code 11)
- An international organization
- An experience within nuclear activities (perform ISO 9001 assessment)
- The ability of the CERTIFICATION BODY to develop specific procedures and tools to enable it to carry out granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing NSQ-100 certification

1.2 Preparation for assessment

After Board approval on the application, the NQSA Certification Committee will appoint an assessment team consisting of a lead assessor and, when needed, a suitable number of assessors. When selecting the assessment team belonging to a NQSA member (only industrial members), NQSA Certification Committee will ensure that the assessors (lead and others) have:

- Appropriate knowledge of Certification System
- Auditing experience.

NQSA Certification Committee will ensure that the team members act in an impartial and non-discriminatory manner. In particular, the assessment team will inform NQSA, prior to the assessment, about existing, former or envisaged link or competitive position between themselves or their organization and the CB to be assessed.

An assessor cannot assess a Certification Body more than 3 times consecutively.

NQSA Certification Committee will inform the CB of the names of the members of the assessment team and the organization they belong to. CB can object to the appointment of any particular assessor.

In case of a disagreement between the CB and NQSA, the NQSA Impartiality Committee will be in charge to investigate the request and will advise the CB of the final decision.

NQSA Certification Committee will decide on the assessment duration based on number of NSQ-100 auditors (a minimum is one day per 2 assessors).

The costs of the NQSA assessment and surveillance actions will be charged to the applicant CB

The task of the assessment team is to review the CB's documents and to conduct the on-site assessment of the main or head office.

The assessment of the conformity services of the CB will be conducted at least at the premises of the CB from which the key activities are performed and, where relevant, will perform witnessing at other selected locations where CB operates, to gather objective evidence that in the applicable scope the CB is competent and conforms to this procedure.

NQSA Certification Committee will agree, together with the CB and the assigned assessment team, to the date and schedule for the assessment.

The language used for the assessment is English or another language mutually agreed (NQSA Certification Committee, CB, assessment team).

1.3 Document and record review

The assessment team will review the following documents to evaluate the CB system for conformity with this procedure prior to proceed of the on-site assessment:

- Application form and relevant associated documents, including the quality manual and procedures of the main applicant's qualification of auditors
- The CB procedures and relevant associated documents and records to perform NSQ-100 certification.

The results of this review are communicated to the CB.

If the review is satisfactory, the admissibility is pronounced, the initial on-site assessment can then be scheduled, normally within six months after the end of this review.

The assessment team may decide not to proceed with an on-site assessment based on the nonconformities found during this review. In such case, the nonconformities will be reported in writing to the CB. The closure by the lead assessor is needed prior the on-site assessment. If after one year, the actions plan is not satisfactory, the qualification file is closed by NQSA Certification Committee.

1.4 On-site assessment

The lead assessor prepares the on-site assessment by sending an audit plan to NQSA Certification Committee and to the CB.

The assessment team will mainly check that all relevant information and evidence gathered during the documents and records review are well implemented.

The on-site assessment will be conducted in accordance with Guidelines NF EN ISO 19011 and must include:

- Reviewing the adequacy and compliance with the requirements
- Verifying the application of these procedures;
- Reviewing the adequacy of the CB organization to provide the services subject to its application;
- Assessing the performance of the control staff and auditors of the CB to perform NSQ-100 certification within Nuclear supplier organization.

When the assessment team cannot reach a conclusion about a finding, the team will refer back to the NQSA Technical Manager.

1.5 Assessment report

A meeting will take place between the assessment team and the CB prior to leaving the site. At the meeting, the assessment team will provide a written report on its finding obtained from the audit (see 1.1.4).

Then, a written report on the outcome of the assessment will be brought to the attention of the CB within a period not exceeding one month. This assessment report will contain comments on competence and conformity, and will identify non conformities, if any, to be resolved in order to conform to all of the requirements for qualification.

The CB will respond to the assessment report within one month, by describing the specific action taken or planned to be taken, to resolve any identified nonconformities. Any identified nonconformities shall be closed within 6 months from audit date.

The report official language is English. Translation can be agreed during the agreement's step.

NQSA Certification Committee will ensure that the responses of the CB to resolve nonconformities are reviewed to see if the actions appear to be sufficient and effective. If the CB responses are found not to be sufficient, further information and evidence will be requested. NQSA Certification Committee may decide to carry out a follow-up assessment to verify effective implementation of corrective actions.

1.6 Decision-making and granting NQSA qualification

The information provided to NQSA board (only industrial members) will include the following documents:

- A valid accreditation ISO 17021 within its scope ISO 9001 and AS/EN9100 or TS 16949
- The number of auditors qualified in the field of nuclear industry (EA code 11)
- A document certifying the experience within nuclear activities (for example : perform assessment ISO 9001)
- The assessment report :
 - Non major non conformity on the ISO 17021 requirement and the requirements present in the document and related document
 - Lead assessor positive recommendations.
- The list of auditors qualified to perform NSQ-100 certification
- The agreement signed between NQSA and CB mentioning in particular the proper use of the NQSA marks.
- any other relevant information or event ;

The qualification is decided by the NQSA board (only industrial members) based on the information above.

NQSA will provide a qualification certificate to the CB. This qualification certificate will identify:

- the NQSA references and logo
- the name and address of the headquarter of the CB
- The list of premises from which the NSQ-100 certification is managed and which are covered by this qualification
- the qualification number of the CB
- the effective date of granting of qualification and the expiry date
- the signature of the NQSA Chairman.

The qualification certificate will be installed on NQSA website. The information will be maintained during the validity of the qualification. In case of withdrawal of the qualification, the information related to the CB will be erased from the website and a NQSA letter will be sent to the organization certified NSQ-100 by this CB.

Normally, the qualification will be delivered for 5 years.

1.7 Appeals

The CB has the opportunity to appeal any decision of NQSA affecting the status or scope of qualification.

The NQSA Impartiality Committee will be in charge to investigate the appeal, will decide on the validity of the appeal and will advise the CB of the final decision.

1.8 Reassessment and surveillance

Reassessment is similar to an initial assessment (see 1.1.2).

Surveillance on-site assessments are less comprehensive than reassessments.

The Surveillance on-site assessment will be carried out according to 3 devices:

- Check of audit reports
- On-site oversight as an observer
- Audit of the procedures and the tools developed by the certification body.

Reassessment will take place at intervals not exceeding 5 years from the date of initial qualification.

NQSA will carry out a yearly surveillance on site to monitor the continued fulfillment by the qualified CB of the requirement for qualification. The first surveillance on site assessment will be performed no later than 12 months from the date of initial qualification

When, during surveillance or reassessment, nonconformities are identified, the assessment team will specify the time limits for corrective actions to be implemented. In case of disagreement on any non-conformity to the requirements of this procedure, the CB may appeal to NQSA.

NQSA may conduct extraordinary assessments as a result of complaints or significant changes (see 2.1).

1.9 Extending qualification

In response to an application for a change in the list of premises of a CB, NQSA Certification Committee will analyze this request in order to determine whether or not an on-site assessment needs to be carried out.

1.10 Suspending, withdrawing or reducing qualification

The CB will lose its qualification (French Safety Nuclear Authority advice) in case of improper issuance of a NSQ-100 certificate.

NQSA may suspend, withdraw or reduce all or part of qualification when a CB has persistently failed to meet the requirements of qualification.

This NQSA board decision will be sent to the CB with acknowledgment of receipt.

The decision can be based on:

- the loss of the ISO 17021 within its scope ISO 9001 and AS/EN9100 or TS 16949
- the loss of sufficient number of auditor qualification
- the improper use of NQSA marks.
- a client's or NQSA's significant claim ;

A notification is sent to the CB with the decision of the board, and in case of a reassessment a new qualification certificate is joined to the notification.

The CB will keep the same qualification number but will have an updated certificate.

The CB also has the ability to voluntarily reduce their scope of agreement, or withdraw completely.

1.11 Records on CBs

NQSA Certification Committee will keep the following records on CBs to ensure confidentiality :

- Relevant correspondence,
- Assessment records and reports
- Records of Board and Certification Committee deliberations and decisions
- Copies of NQSA qualification certificates.

1.12 Annual activity report

Each CB will send to the NQSA Certification Committee an annual activity report specifying in particular:

- Follow-up of the auditors qualification
- Appeal request management

2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF NQSA AND CB

An agreement is signed between the CERTIFICATION BODY and NQSA.

2.1 Obligations of the CB

The agreement will define the duties, liability and confidential aspect.

By signing this agreement with NQSA, the CB will commit to:

- Fulfil continually this procedure in order to maintain its qualification,
- Authorize to NQSA representatives to provide access to all its premises, personnel files, documents and records as necessary for the assessment and maintenance of the qualification
- Communicate, prior to the assessment, the documentation required for the preparation of the assessment;
- Arrange towards its customers, NSQ-100 certified holders or candidates through a contract or by any other equivalent means in order to impose, where appropriate and upon request, the presence of NQSA assessors during an on-site assessment. A non-compliance of this NQSA requirement may be a case of suspension (see 1.1.10).
- Pay all costs related to NQSA assessments, whatever conclusions they lead, as well as annual fees,
- Not use its qualification in such a manner as to prejudice the reputation of NQSA and not make any statement relating to the NSQ-100 certification that the NQSA could reasonably be regarded as misleading
- Ensure compliance with the rules of use of the NQSA logo and symbol.
- Inform NQSA, without delay, of any significant change relevant to its qualification, in any aspect of its status or operation relating to:
 - o Its legal, commercial, ownership or organizational status,
 - o The organization, top management and key personnel,
 - o Main policies,
 - o Resources and premises,
 - o Scope of ISO 17021 accreditation, and
 - o Other such matters that may affect the ability to fulfill this requirements for qualification.
- Recognized ISO 9001 certificates issued under the control of the IAF. This recognition is subject to review and approval of last audit ISO 9001 report.

2.2 Obligations of NQSA:

2.2.1 Confidentiality

All CB information collected by NQSA and/or assessment team for a NQSA qualification starting with the submission of its application are considered and treated as confidential.

The following information will be installed on the NQSA website :

- Name and address of the CB
- Date of granting qualification and expiry dates
- Contact details of the CB

