

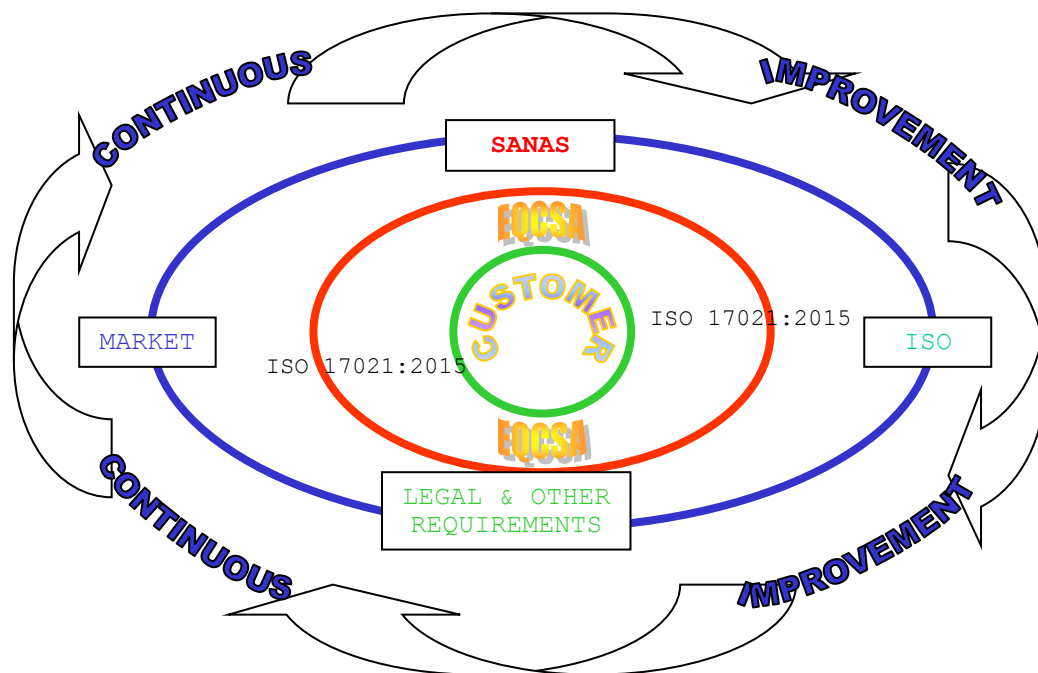
5 QUALITY SYSTEM AND PROCESSES

5.1 Objectives

The description of the quality management system and the relevant established business process descriptions ensures that the EQCSA business objectives can be consistently achieved, effectively audited and continuous improvement achieved.

5.2 Quality Management System

The Quality Management System in this manual is structured to ensure the effective, efficient and economic processing of the EQCSA business. The manual is developed under the principles of sound quality assurance standard ISO 17021:2015 (Option A). The graphical display shows the interaction of the established business objectives (customer focus), the position of EQCSA and the external role players for the professional execution of the EQCSA business of certification of management systems to international standards.



The EQCSA Quality System has the capability to either pro-actively or reactively focus the business objectives and system elements and processes to ensure that all requirements as specified by the influential role players and market forces are met. Therefore it is important that all systems and processes are established, designed to meet the above configuration and documented for use and review to ensure continuous improvement and a professional level of certification services.

Part one is the establishment of the business objectives and principles and policies required to ensure that the business objectives can be achieved.

Part two describes the business processes to ensure that the business objectives can be consistently achieved. The following process descriptions are found in Part two:

Process Flow Charts

Workprocesses

Part three includes the registers and personnel qualification documentation required for EQCSA.

Workdocuments:

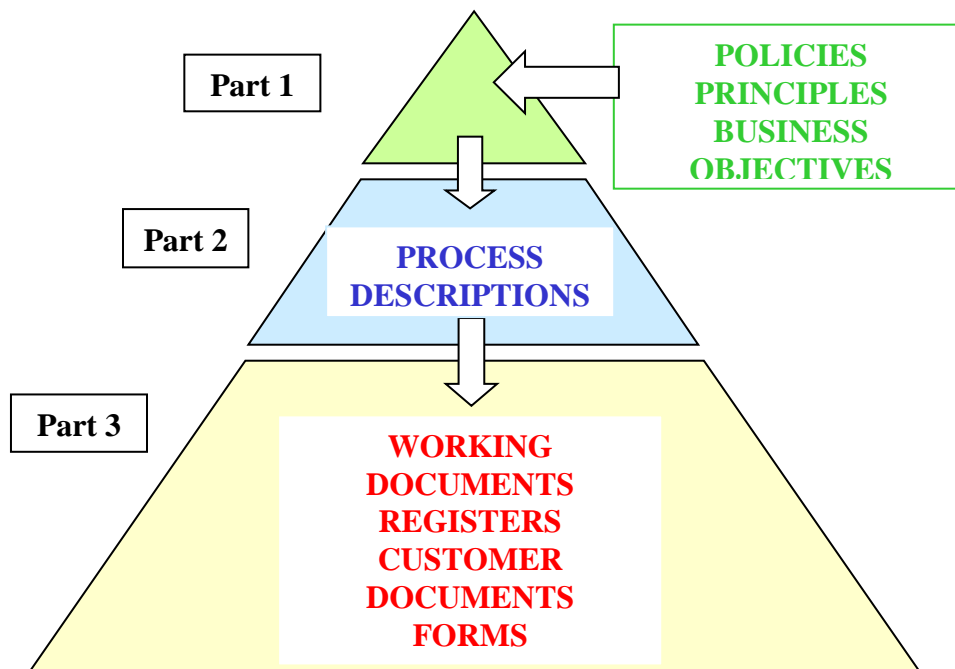
ISO 9000 Certification
ISO 14000 Certification
HACCP Certification
OHSAS 18001 Certification
ISO 22000 Certification
Integrated Management System Certification

Forms

Registers

Personnel Documentation

Support Documentation



5.3 Quality Management System Elements

5.3.1 Policies, Principles, Business Objectives

5.3.1.1 Objective Statement (Sec. 1):

The objective statement as part of the policy manual provides for the understanding of the business environment of EQCSA and as it is influenced by the business environment. It is important to ensure that all infra-structures, financial resources, documentation, tools and personnel is available to achieve the objectives. This is ensured by creating the correct working environment for personnel supporting the objectives of EQCSA whether employed or working as sub-contractors for the organization.

5.3.1.2 Administration (Sec. 2):

The section "Administration" establishes the required documentation important to EQCSA to achieve the business objectives. The responsibility of ensuring that all documentation is available in the correct format is with EQCSA. To ensure that the correct information is available and disseminated to the people with an interest in the quality services of EQCSA the following processes are used:

- Regular reviews of the documentation in periods. Sources used are web-sites from clients and suppliers (where available), internet information of national and international bodies establishing requirements formally against which management system evaluation requires auditing, contacts with organizations and bodies which can provide information important for all personnel interested in EQCSA's performance.
- Internal audits, including the elements of the EQCSA quality system, shall include the evaluation of the information and its accurate status, available.
- Management reviews, including the evaluation of documents in the register of the company. Where information is, in the view of management, improvable disregarding whether it is company internal information or national or international information, a person appointed by the management review committee will take time to submit improvement suggestions to the relevant and responsible organization. In regard with standards relevant for the maintenance of accreditation this will be SANAS.
- Audits by external bodies such as the accreditation organization or other organizations and bodies EQCSA subscribes to and is able or obligated to undergo an external audit. The audit results indicating a change in information available from these audits should, however, only occur between two internal review periods. EQCSA shall rely on its internal mechanisms to ensure that information available to personnel is appropriate and up-to-date.

5.3.1.3 Continuous Improvement Process (Sec. 3):

The continuous improvement process assures that all input and output requirements of the EQCSA business environment can be met with adequate systems, processes, working environments and personnel available to achieve the stated business objectives. To ensure that the continuous improvement process is working, the following is ensured by EQCSA:

- Business objectives, targets, systems and processes are documented and available for use.
- Mechanisms are established to ensure that improvements can happen, such as business process review, assurance of competent personnel available, contacts with outside bodies, use and application of appropriate technologies and effective feedback loops between customers, contractors, stakeholders and authorities are working. This is the responsibility of all personnel with an interest in the quality services of EQCSA and capability to meet with market demands.
- Financial means are available or where constraints are occurring, plans are available to control and ensure the process of continuous improvement.

- Training and development is provided, where personal skills and knowledge is required to ensure that continuous improvements are supported.

5.3.1.4 Organization and Responsibilities (Sec.4) (Impartiality):

The organizational structure must ensure that EQCSA is in the position to provide certification and verification services as established by its business objectives. This includes the assurance that the organization has an established structure which enables the accreditation organization to accredit EQCSA. This as a result should enable EQCSA to issue certification for organizations seeking certification of management systems in compliance with international standards or verification of system performance to meet legal or customer requirements.

Important is that the organizational structure is designed as such as to ensure impartiality and the required freedom of decision making in regard with granting certification.

Impartiality needs to take three important issues into consideration:

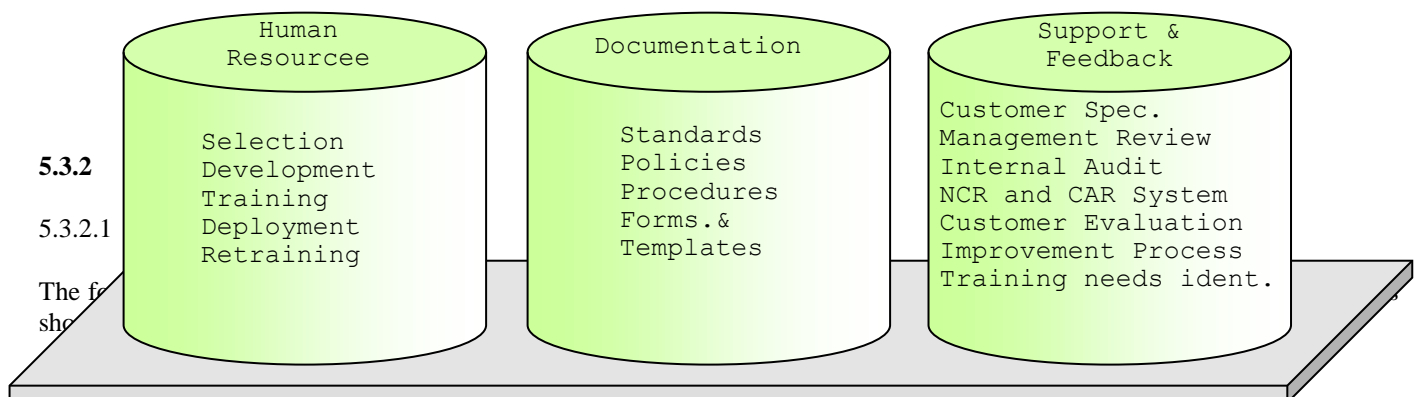
- 1) An organizational structure (see Certification Committee) is established for granting certification which ensures that personnel involved in the decision making process are not gaining financially or otherwise from the certification (i.e direct customer or supplier of the organization to be certified).
- 2) The business ethics of the EQCSA team, which accepts the rules of the certification environment.
- 3) The recognition that the EQCSA reputation as a good certification provider is superior to any financial short term gain of an unethically and unprofessionally carried out certification process.
- 4) The participation of EQCSA Management in organizations who have policy direction advisory and standard interpretation authority such as Certification Body, Industrial Sector Interest Group (CAIA) and Professional Body membership (ECSA, VDI, Naval Officers Association).
- 5) The training and education of all staff members and auditors to understand the importance of ethical business practices and open and objective customer service within the rules of the certification business environment.
- 6) The open discussion with competitors and client environment on the understanding and interpretations of ISO standards related to the certification business environment.

The above issues are to be taken into consideration in the selection and development of personnel for EQCSA certification activities.

5.3.1.5 Consistency of Service:

The system assuring consistency in services provided by EQCSA rests on three pillars:

- Personnel selection and development which ensures competent services provided.
- Documentation of systems, processes and infrastructures.
- Support mechanisms and feedback mechanisms demonstrating that requirements are met and where identified can be improved.



The manual will be secured on External Harddrive made available to all personnel and contractors via any means of electronic transfer media as available. Where the electronic manual cannot be used, the person responsible can request a hard copy of the applicable documentation.

Processes are where possible designed as flow-diagrams and include the required reference to the applicable form or template. A list of available forms and templates is included in the manual and will be up-dated and indicated as such, when a document or required information is changing.

EQCSA makes sure that it maintains control by providing a list of persons issued with company documentation required for certification and verification services. Any up-daste will be submitted to the person on the list and with it the responsibility of that person to ensure that the latest up-dated information is used. It is the responsibility of every document or information owner to verify before use that the correct information is available, especially where documentation or informationb is used infrequently.

5.3.2.2 List of available Process Descriptions:

The following process descriptions are available for consistent process application:

- Human Resource Availability
- Certification Process
- Support Processes

5.3.2.3 Maintenance and Improvement of Processes:

All process descriptions are subject to control and review to ensure that they are effective, efficient and economic.

It is important for EQCSA to ensure that optimum benefits are made available to the customer. At the same time EQCSA values the personnel deployed for their services. It must be clear that costs occurring to the account of the client are calculated realistic and not excessive. The cost related to the certification services provided ensure that the client receives a value adding service. This can only be ensured when personnel is provided with adequate working environment. Should the customer not be prepared to provide the appropriate working condition as agreed during the tender phase, EQCSA will not commence with the service. Process descriptions are supporting an economic and efficient and effective service and therefore require attention and assurance that they work correctly.

Process descriptions therefore will be reviewed and revised should the following conditions occur:

- National, international or legal requirements are changing.
- The improvement process has identified improvement opportunities to an appropriately working process.
- Market changes affecting the process.
- The audit personnel has difficulties to comply to the process and the process can be changed without compromising accreditation acceptance standards or applicable legislation.
- The process does not achieve customer satisfaction (Customer complaint).
- Internal or external audits have revealed a non-conformance or improvement opportunity.
- Management review has identified a short-coming or improvement opportunity.
- Management or ownership of EQCSA is changing.

- If none of the above are applicable the process description is reviewed and verified as adequate or change required once during a years period. Should the process proves to be stable, that review period can be extended and will be indicated as such on the document.

5.3.3 Customer Information and Confidentiality:

During the provision of the service EQCSA personnel or contractors must have access to customer information. This information could and will be sensitive information and customer intellectual property. EQCSA personnel and contracted personnel must respect the fact that there is sensitive information which cannot be made publicly available.

All staff and contractors have to sign a confidentiality agreement (see Doc. 413 AUDITOROBLIGATIONS) should they desire to work for EQCSA.

Should EQCSA personnel or contractors during the course of the service provision come across information which indicates that the customer is transgressing a legal requirement (specifically during environmental assessments) he or she must inform the customers top management and stop the audit or evaluation. At the same time the Manager Certifications must be notified. Only when the client is taking actions to correct the legal transgression to the Manager Certification satisfaction the auditor can commence with the audit/evaluation with the release of the Manager Certification. The transgression is documented via the NCR form and the release is signed off by the Manager Certification.

All information obtained during the service remains with the record maintained by EQCSA. Any information will only be disclosed with the customer's consent. Where during the service provision EQCSA personnel or contractors discover legal transgression, the customer is requested to notify the appropriate authorities immediately. Should the client not comply with the request, EQCSA will regard this as a non-compliance to contractual conditions and discontinue the service.

The auditor will immediately leave the customer's premises and report to the Manager Certification. The Manager Certification will obtain legal advice and where required notify the appropriate authorities and the customer at the same time.

Information required to obtain evidence of customer system compliance of sensitive nature can remain at the customer's premises, however, could require the audit team to visit the customer's premises for preparation purposes. This should be acceptable to the customer and the cost implications thereto accordingly.

Should audit personnel provided by EQCSA disclose any information without permission by the customer and EQCSA Manager Certification, dismissal will be processed in accordance with legal requirements and staff and contract personnel:

- Will be removed from the list of audit personnel.
- Legal steps will commence to protect EQCSA and the client from the consequences of the disclosure.
- Makes the person responsible for any loss of income by the client or EQCSA due to the disclosure.
- Makes the person responsible and legal steps are taken to protect the reputation of EQCSA.

5.3.4 Support and Feedback

To ensure that EQCSA can achieve it's business objectives, the required working environment must be assured through the already established policies and process descriptions. In addition the management system must provide for support processes and mechanisms.

To ensure that EQCSA can consistently provide an excellent service to the customer and implement the Continuous Improvement Policy into the organization feedback mechanisms for internal and externa feedback must be provided.

The following mechanisms are available to ensure the consistent high level of performance of EQCSA:

Forms for:

- Customer Information for Offer of Service
- Personnel skills and competence for auditor registration
- Audit planning
- Offer of Service
- Customer service acceptance
- Customer Invoicing
- NC and CA documentation
- NCR and CAR registration
- Certificate control
- Certificate issue
- Multi site audits
- Auditor Log Sheets
- Customer feedback
- Customer information telephone log

Templates for:

- Audit protocols ISO 9000
- Audit protocols ISO 14000
- Audit protocols for other audit/assessment services as defined in the business objectives
- Certification/re-certification, surveillance audit reports ISO 9000
- Certification/re-certification, surveillance audit reports ISO 14000
- Audit reports for other audit/assessment services as defined in the business objectives
- Certificates ISO 9000
- Certificates ISO 14000
- Certificates OHSAS 18001
- Certificates ISO 22000
- General Conditions of Contract

Customer Information Material for:

- Understanding the certification process.
- Selection of an appropriate certification service.
- Customer's obligation in the certification environment.
- Certification body obligation in the certification environment.

5.3.5 Consultancy and Training

EQCSA will not engage in either consultancy nor training activities in conflict with certification interests and internal training for personnel where needs are identified and no suitable external training is available. The minimum training provided in-house is induction training for staff and contractors to ensure that the EQCSA policies and business objectives are understood and can be represented appropriately in customer related activities and services.

Should, which is preferred, the customer enquire about the certification process and service provided by EQCSA before management system development and implementation, EQCSA will provide the customer with information supporting the appropriate acquisition of consultancy services. No preferential consultancy service will be referenced unless EQCSA is confident that the consultancy service is professional and impartial, i.e. gives the client the option of selecting their own certification service.

Similar, where EQCSA is approached for training, the customer will be supported with information of appropriate acquisition of a training institution to ensure that the customer will receive optimal training services. This can include the recommendation of subjects for training required and what level of the organization should receive training.

EQCSA personnel is permitted to be involved in training activities, provided the training activities are meeting one or more of the criteria as follows:

- Offered by an appropriate public or private training institution
- Training offered is generic and accessible to the public and business
- Training does not enforce a customer relationship with EQCSA for certification purposes
- Training issues do not result in consultancy with an EQCSA certification customer

5.3.6 Back-up Organization:

5.3.6.1 Service Discontinuation:

In the unlikely event of EQCSA is discontinuing their certification services the following steps are undertaken:

- The customers will be informed of the intend to close the service.
- A list of accredited certification service organizations is made available and contact information is provided to the customer.
- Reputable accredited certification service organizations are approached to support the customer's of EQCSA with certification services.
- Information of reasons of discontinuation of services through EQCSA will be published via internet using appropriate channels such as own and linked web-sites, and web-sites of organization's working in the interest of the certification environment such as SAACB.
- Immediate notification to the accreditation organization.

5.3.6.2 Service Partnerships

EQCSA provides for the possibility to offer the customer a joint venture service together with another organization to complement the service expectations of the customer. Such a joint venture can be offered, where EQCSA cannot provide the service to the customer on it's own, however, offers the customer the option of a service together with another certification organization.

The following conditions must be achieved:

- The customer agrees to the joint venture.
- EQCSA finds a suitable joint venture partner who is prepared to complement the service.
- The joint venture is an equal partnership of two or more business partners with the objective of optimizing the service to the customer.
- None of the joint venture partners seeks an advantage against the other partner.

- Joint venture partners have acquired the required accreditations for the services offered.

For joint ventures, special contracts will be drawn-up, to ensure that the responsibilities and services provided are unambiguously defined and understood by the customer and all joint venture partners. The joint venture does not remove the obligation of granting, renewing, refusing, expanding or reducing the scope of certification suspending or restoring certification from EQCSA.

Presently EQCSA maintains service partnerships with TUV Rheinland.

5.3.6.3 Service Sub-contracting

EQCSA considers the support from sub-contracted auditors or certification organizations, to ensure that the certification service to clients is cost effective and efficient. Therefore the contracted organization or individual must agree to work within the requirements of the EQCSA Quality Management System and Procedures. Sub-contracted auditors who have a conflict of interest in regard a customer have to disclose their relationship with the customer. Persons who have been previously involved with the customer as employees or consultants are not permitted to be involved in certification audits for at least two years after their engagement. Thereafter EQCSA will obtain agreement by the customer to deploy such a sub-contracted auditor.

Certification organizations are most likely considered for optimum service provisions in joint venture partnerships and are selected based on their accreditation conditions. Only accredited certification organizations are considered for service optimization which are accredited by a recognized accreditation organization (IAF Member) and have the required scope ability.

Individuals for sub-contracting are selected on their qualifications. The selection criteria are identical to those for employed auditors. Once the individual auditor is accepted, the personnel data are kept as confidential documents at EQCSA offices and the individual is included into the List of Auditors.

The contracted audit service provider will only be allowed to conduct audits on behalf of EQCSA, once an EQCSA Lead Auditor has evaluated the contractor's performance against the EQCSA performance criteria and is satisfied with the contractor's audit performance.

Provided the applicant has sufficient audit experience and a proven Lead Auditor Status from an acceptable organization, EQCSA evaluates the performance of the auditor under Lead Auditor conditions. Any other auditor will only be included as auditor and works under a EQCSA Lead Auditor until satisfactory audit performance allows upgrading to Lead Auditor status.

An individual contract will be signed between EQCSA and the contractor to ensure that issues such as confidentiality, performance, customer dissatisfaction, liability, legal issues and payments are established and clearly understood. The sub-contracting does not remove the obligation of granting, renewing, refusing, expanding or reducing the scope of certification suspending or restoring certification from EQCSA.

5.4 Impartiality Management

The management of impartiality is mainly a characteristic of ethical business conduct and the selection of personnel involved in the certification environment who has the required personnel aptitudes to ensure that during certification activities the individual influence of decisions is achieving the required objectivity protecting EQCSA (Pty) Ltd and the Certification Industry as such from the perception and actual facts of being biased in the marketing for customers, certification services and other services which could become attractive to the organization.

5.4.1 Conflict of Interest

The following listed criteria are guidance for identifying Conflict of Interest:

- Involvement in consultancy of EQCSA personnel to customers

- Involvement in consultancy of external personnel used for EQCSA certification audit services
- Involvement in internal audit activities with the client
- Involvement of EQCSA personnel in any position and employment of the customers' organization during the last three years
- Influence of financial decision making

5.4.2 Impartial Behaviour

The main component of assuring impartiality is that decision makers and service providers are behaving impartial. The influence of factors against impartiality need to be cognitively addressed by the responsible personnel. The following issues are addressed also in the contract review checklist through relevant questions:

- Financial behaviour
- Ignorance to relationships
- Risk of consequential damage
- Image loss
- Customer's perceived status for reputation gain
- Competence of audit personnel
- Selection of internal and external persons for audit services

5.4.3 Threats to Impartiality

Threats to impartiality can come from inside or outside EQCSA. The internal threats are mainly influenced through the above referenced behavioural issues by EQCSA management and internal and external audit personnel.

Externally threats to impartiality can arise through factors which are not under EQCSA control. Therefore a preventive mechanism requires consideration to encounter the possible different threats to impartiality from external organizations, bodies or individuals:

The following possible threats are identified and listed:

- Self-interest of a person involved in certification proceedings deciding or acting to the benefits of self-advantage.
- Self-review, reviewing work done by themselves.
- Familiarity (trust): not seeking audit evidence.
- Intimidation

Threats to impartiality are addressed via the Impartiality Review by the MD. Where doubts and risk of the above impartiality threats can be reversed back to the MD, external sources will be used.

5.4.4 Verification of Impartiality

Verification of Impartiality is carried by Impartiality Reviews as decided by the MD, whereby the impartiality risk is evaluated should the condition of one of the person's activities internally and externally change.