

## THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

At Global Veritas Certification Services (GVCS), we offer management system certification services and a step by step process to be followed for certification:

### 1. Application

Our team assists you to complete the application process, by determining the important factors to your certification. These can include your certified scope of activities, worker numbers, certified locations and applicability of requirements of your chosen standard(s). We then perform a formal review of the application and calculate your audit durations and frequency.

### 2. Initial Stage 1 Assessment

A Stage 1 assessment is mandatory to review your organisation's preparedness for certification. The assessor will do a review of your management system and related documents, evaluate site-specific requirements for stage 2 audits, and consider your organisation's readiness for a Stage 2 Compliance audit – including knowledge of the requirements of the standard(s), ensure internal audits and management review meeting processes, identification of legal requirements that are substantial enough for compliance, and generally review allocation of resources for the stage 2 audit. A report is prepared by audit team and identifying areas of concern. Any gaps in conformance must be addressed prior to commencement of a stage 2 assessment.

### 3. Initial Stage 2 Compliance Assessment

The Stage 2 assessment is conducted to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of clients management system meetings its objective and conformance with requirements including applicable legislation and contractual requirements. This assessment will cover all requirements of the standard(s). A comprehensive report is provided, detailing all areas of conformance or non-conformance and potential area for improvement. If no major non-conformances are issued, the assessor will recommend your organization for certification.

We must then perform a formal review of the stage 1 and stage 2 audit documents and review the corrective action to take a formal decision to grant certification. If, for some reason, certification is refused this decision must be in writing and made available to the client.

Another Stage 2 shall be conducted prior to recommending certification if the effective correction and corrective action for the major nonconformity are unable to verify within 6 months after the Stage 2 audit

### 4. Surveillance Assessments

For the following 2 years, surveillance audits are required to verify the ongoing implementation and maintenance of your management system and ensure ongoing compliance with the standard(s). The frequency of surveillance audit depends on many factors (such as size and scope of the organisation, number of certified location etc) but typically will be performed annually.

Surveillance assessments are typically a smaller audit, focusing on key areas of the standard. A report is provided, detailing all areas of conformance or non-conformance. If no major non-conformances are issued, your certification status will be maintained.

If GVCS believe that the client's management system is declining in effectiveness, based on evidence from surveillance reports or from external complaints, the audit team leader may request to increase the sampling level or scope of the surveillance and/or to undertake an additional surveillance visit(s). The client will be advised of the situation.

## **5. Recertification**

3 years after your initial successful stage 2 assessment, we are required to perform a recertification assessment. This is similar to the initial stage 2 assessment, and reviews your ongoing compliance against all requirements of the standard(s).

A comprehensive report is provided, detailing all areas of conformance or non-conformance. If no major non-conformances are issued, the assessor will recommend continuation of certification.

Following expiration of certification, the certification body can restore certification within 6 months provided that the outstanding recertification activities are completed, otherwise at least a stage 2 shall be conducted. The effective date on the certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision and the expiry date shall be based on prior certification cycle.

## **6. Special Audits**

If the client requests a change/extension of scope from that already granted, the Scheme Manager or the designate will undertake a review to determine any audit activity necessary. This is normally conducted in conjunction with a surveillance visit.

If it becomes necessary to conduct an audit at short notice or unannounced to either investigate a complaint, or in response to substantial changes, or as follow up to a suspended client, a copy of Audit Plan and Audit Notification Letter will be provided to the client. In addition, the assignment of the audit team will take into account the lack of opportunity for the client to object to any of the auditors.