

Main Requirements of the O'zDSt ISO\IEC Standard 17021:2009

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Annotation: On September 15, 2006, ISO/IEC 17021:2006 Conformity assessment -Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

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With the change in status (instead of the manual of the standard) and the integration of norms into the framework of one document, the latter acquired a fairly simple and understandable internal structure, the foundation of which are 6 principles of certification (Table 1).

Principles for Certification Bodies

In Guidelines 62 and 66, such a section did not exist at all, the principles were set out within the framework of the requirements, being scattered in other sections. The standard draws attention to the fact that the principles are not requirements, they are the basis for fulfilling the requirements provided for in this standard (Table 1). Given that it does not contain exhaustive requirements for all situations that may occur, the principles should be applied as a guide to decision-making, including in unforeseen cases.

The standard formulates the main goal of management system certification to provide all parties with confidence that the management system meets the specified requirements (clause 4.1.2).

Table 1 Principles for management system certification bodies	
Impartiality	To earn and maintain credibility, it is important that the certification body's decisions be based on objectively obtained evidence of conformity (or nonconformity) and not be influenced by other interests or other parties (clause 4.2.2).
Competence	To provide credibility, it is necessary to have evidence of personnel competence, supported by the management system of the certification body. Competence is the demonstrated ability to effectively apply relevant knowledge and skills (clause 4.3).
Responsibility	The client organization is responsible for meeting the requirements for certification. The certification body is responsible for performing an objective assessment of the sufficiency of the certificate of conformity. Based on the conclusions of the audit, he decides to issue a certificate if there is sufficient evidence of compliance, or not to issue if there is no sufficient certificate of compliance (clause 4.4). Any audit is based on sampling only within the organization's management system and therefore is not a guarantee of 100% compliance with the requirements.
Openness	Openness is the access or disclosure of relevant information. The certification body shall make publicly available or disclose appropriate up-to-date information on the audit and certification processes and on the status of certification for any organization (i.e. grant, withdrawal, suspension, renewal, expansion or contraction of scope) in order to have confidence in the reliability and the accuracy of the completed certification (clause 4.5). To earn and maintain credibility, the certification body must ensure that certain interested parties have appropriate access to or disclosure of non-confidential information about the findings of individual audits (for example, audits in response to complaints).
Confidentiality	In order to gain access to the information that the certification body needs to assess compliance with specified requirements, it is essential that the certification body keep any private information about the client confidential (clause 4.6).
(Responsiveness to complaints)	Stakeholders must be confident that complaints will be handled appropriately and that some effort will be made to resolve the complaint. Effective responsiveness to complaints is an important means of protecting certification bodies, its clients, and other users from errors, omissions, and the like. (clause 4.7).

General requirements

The legal and contractual rules included in this section have remained virtually unchanged. Thus, the certification body must:

- be a legal entity or such an integral part of it that it can be considered legally responsible for all certification activities;

- be responsible for making decisions regarding certification, including granting, canceling, suspending, renewing, expanding and narrowing the scope;

- have a legally enforceable agreement with the client regarding the terms of the certification activities.

The standard only clarifies that where there are multiple offices of certification bodies or the client being certified has multiple sites (sites), the certification body should ensure that such an agreement also exists between the bodies making the certification decision and issuing the certificate, and the entire site covered by the scope of certification (clause 5.1.2).

In order to implement the principle of impartiality, a very voluminous clause 5.2 Management of impartiality is included in the standard. Guidelines 62 and 66 in this part contained only general and often vague language. [1].

Impartiality is the actual and subjectively perceived presence of objectivity. Objectivity means that there is no conflict of interest or it has been resolved¹, which excludes a negative impact on the subsequent actions of the certification body. Other terms that may be useful in conveying the element of impartiality are objectivity, independence, freedom from conflicts of interest, neutrality, fairness, open-mindedness.

Now, the certification body must first of all have a top management commitment to the impartiality of its management system certification activities, but most importantly, it must identify, analyze and document

the potential for conflicts of interest resulting from its activities, including any conflicts resulting from its relationships.

It is obvious that the existence of these relations in itself does not always indicate the presence of a conflict of interest. However, if the relationship creates a threat to impartiality, the certification body must document it and be able to demonstrate how it eliminates or minimizes such a threat (this information must be available to the Impartiality Assurance Committee).

Let us clarify that the demonstration should cover all potential sources of conflict of interest, regardless of whether they arise within the certification body itself or as a result of the actions of other persons, bodies or organizations (clause 5.2.2). In a schematic form, the mechanism for countering threats to impartiality is shown in Table 2.

Other important new norms include: the certification body must take steps to respond to any threats to its impartiality resulting from the actions of other persons, bodies or organizations. All certification body personnel, internal and external, must not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise impartiality. Certification bodies shall require personnel, internal and external, to disclose any situation known to them that may create a conflict of interest. [2].

As you know, Guidelines 62 and 66 contained a ban on the certification body to offer or provide consulting (consulting) services aimed at obtaining and supporting certification, as well as services for the development, implementation or maintenance of quality systems (Guideline 62), environmental management systems and related systems (Guideline 66).

While maintaining these requirements in order to ensure impartiality, the standard clarified them and supplemented them with restrictions, in particular:

1 A certification body shall not certify another certification body's certification action management system (clause 5.2.4).

2 The certification body and any part of the same legal entity shall offer or provide management system consulting (5.2.5).

In this regard, the standard clarifies that management system consulting is participation in the development of a project, implementation and maintenance of a management system in working condition

(for example, preparing or creating manuals, procedures, providing advice, instructions or decisions on the development and implementation of a management system) (p .3.3).

Interestingly, the organization of training and participation in it as a trainer does not constitute consulting, provided that the course on management systems or auditing is limited to general information that is freely available, i.e. the coach should not provide solutions determined by the company.

3 The certification body shall not certify the management system of the client's organization (clause 5.2.7) if the client has previously received advice from him on the management system or had internal audits carried out by this body.

Cause The relationship between the consulting organization and the certification body poses an unacceptable threat to the impartiality of the certification body. One way to reduce this threat to an acceptable level is to establish a minimum period of two years after consulting and internal audits have been completed.

4 The certification body and any part of the same legal entity shall not offer or provide internal audits to the clients it certifies (clause 5.2.6).

5 The certification body shall not outsource the management system consulting organization for auditing, as this also poses an unacceptable threat to the impartiality of the certification body (5.2.8). However, this prohibition does not apply to individual external auditors (7.3).

В части, касающейся финансовых вопросов, требования, изложенные в стандарте, существенно детализированы по сравнению с Руководствами 62 и 66 (табл.2).

Table 2. Regulation of financial matters in Guidelines 62 and 66 and the standard	
Guidelines 62 and 66	ИСО/МЭК 17021:2006 (п.5.3)
The certification body must:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have financial stability and funds necessary for the functioning of the certification system (clause 4.1.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to demonstrate that he has assessed the risks arising from his certification activities and has adequate arrangements (eg insurance or reserves) to pay the debt arising from his activities in each of his lines of business and geographic areas in which he working; • Assess your finances and sources of income and demonstrate to the Impartiality Committee that, both initially and in the long run, commercial, financial or other impacts do not compromise its impartiality.

Structural Requirements

Compared to the standards included in Guidelines 62 and 66, these requirements have remained virtually unchanged. So, according to the standard, the certification body must:

- document the organizational structure, showing in it the duties and powers of management and other personnel, as well as any committees formed (clause 6.1);
- have formal rules governing the activities of any committees formed that are involved in certification activities.

When the certification body acts as part of a legal entity, the structure should include relationships with other parts within that legal entity.

It must also identify the top management (board, group or individual) with authority and responsibility for each of the following:

- development of a policy regarding the actions of the certification body and control over the implementation of policies and procedures;
- control of the financial condition;
- development of schemes and rules for the provision of management system certification services; performing audits, certification and complaint resolution procedures;
- decisions regarding certification;
- delegation of authority to committees or, if required, to individuals to take certain actions on their behalf;
- treaty measures;
- providing adequate resources for certification activities.

Resource Requirements

The requirements relating to the competence of management and personnel have previously occupied a special place in Guidelines 62 and 66. In the standard they are collected in a separate section, grouped and specified in relation to the category of personnel and the actions that they perform. So, the certification body in relation to all personnel must (clause 7.1):

- have processes to ensure that personnel have knowledge appropriate to the types of management systems and geographic areas in which they operate;
- determine the competencies required for each technical area (for a particular certification scheme) and for each function of the certification activity;
- identify means for demonstrating competence prior to performing certain functions. [3].

Obviously, it is the persons involved in certification activities that ensure the success of their implementation. These individuals are the key to the operation of the certification body and the satisfaction of customers. With this in mind, the standard draws attention to the fact that the certification body (clause 7.2):

- employ personnel with sufficient competence to carry out various types and ranges of audit programs and other certification work;
- hired or otherwise provided a sufficient number of auditors and technical experts to cover all of its activities and handle the entire volume of audit work;
- gave each person a clear idea of his duties and powers.

In addition, he must:

- define processes for the selection, training and formal appointment of auditors, and for the selection of technical experts to be involved in certification activities;
- have a process to ensure that effective ISO 19011 audits are performed using auditors with both general auditing knowledge and skills and auditing skills and knowledge in specific technical areas;
- ensure that auditors (and, if necessary, technical experts) are knowledgeable about audit processes, certification and other relevant requirements;
- use auditors and technical experts only for those activities in which they are competent;
- identify training needs and provide specific training to ensure that auditors, technical experts and others involved in certification activities can perform their functions competently; the group or individual making the decision to grant, suspend, renew, withdraw, expand or reduce the scope of certification must understand the applicable standard and certification requirements, and demonstrate competence in evaluating audit processes and audit team recommendations;
- ensure the satisfactory performance of all personnel involved in certification and audit activities by having documented procedures and criteria for monitoring and measuring the performance of persons based on the frequency of their use and the level of risk associated with their activities; control procedures for auditors should include a combination of on-site observation, review of audit reports and client feedback and should be based on ISO 19011:2002.

This control needs to be designed in such a way as to minimize disruption to normal certification processes, especially from the client's point of view;

- periodically observe the work of each auditor on site. In this case, the frequency of observations should be determined based on all information available for monitoring. [4].

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