Explanation of management system certification and process certification

This document describes the standard procedure for management system certification[1] and process certification[2]. An explanation of the process from the request for offer to certification is presented below. The process differs from that for inspections and product certification. *More information on product tests and certification is available at https://www.dekra.nl/en/product-testing/*

Our working method

A certification process consists of fixed steps. We assure you of the care devoted to the certification process by performing these carefully and consistently.

1. **Request for offer, offer and order confirmation**
   If you are interested in (one of) our services, you can request an offer. A form for this is available on the website. If you complete the form in full, we will make you an offer. We will contact you if additional information proves to be necessary. A certification agreement is sent with the offer. This contains the mutual rights and obligations applying for maintenance of the certificate.
   The order will be confirmed if you return the signed certificate agreement to us.

2. **Planning the Audit**
   Following receipt of the signed documents, DEKRA's Planning Department will contact you within 10 working days in order to schedule the audit. The qualifications of the auditor, the location of the audit, your availability, as the client of the auditor, and any project locations to be visited will be taken into account in the scheduling of the audit, in accordance with the accreditation guidelines.

3. **Initial certification audit (phases 1 and 2)**
   The initial certification audit consists of two phases:

   Phase 1
   During this phase, we validate and gather the information that you have provided and draw up the audit agenda. We assess whether you are ready for audit Phase 2 by assessing a number of aspects: the management system or process documents, the internal audit process and your own management review. The auditor draws up a report on this and discusses the results with you.

   Phase 2
   During this phase, DEKRA tests the implementation and effectiveness of the system or process in practice. This takes place on the basis of interviews with employees at all levels of your organisation. In this way, we can determine whether what your organisation has established (tested during Phase 1) is also implemented in practice. Naturally, this must also conform to the standard. Shortcomings may be detected during this phase.

[1] As referred to in ISO 17021, including safety management systems
[2] As referred to in ISO 17065

4. Processing & Reporting up to the Assessment of the Certification Manager

After the audit, the auditor draws up a report. Various specialists then check the report and the process in order to assure you that everything has taken place in the correct manner. The report serves as a basis for the certification assessment. If all steps have been followed correctly, a positive certification decision will be taken.
Circumstances may arise in which not all conditions for certification are met, for example if the auditor does not make a positive recommendation or if contractual conditions are not met. In such cases, the certification management will decide that no certificate will be issued. An appeal can be made against such a decision.

5. Certificate

Following a positive certification decision, you will receive the certificate. In principle, the management system certificate is valid for three years[3]. The validity is always shown in the certificate. With our DEKRA seal, you can show your certification and professionalism to your stakeholders. The possibilities and conditions for the DEKRA seal are available in the promotion kit.
Your organisation will also be included as a certified organisation in the database on our website. In many cases, your certificate will also be shown on the website of the scheme manager.

6. Follow-up audits

After certification, a follow-up audit is conducted (at least) once a year. The first follow-up audit is performed nine months after the issue of the certificate. During the follow-up audits, we once again check the functionality, effectiveness and performance of your business processes. The time required for this audit is generally a third of that needed for the initial certification audit.

7. Recertification audit

After three years, a recertification audit takes place. A complete new assessment then takes place in accordance with the steps in the diagram. The recertification audit takes place at least four months prior to the expiration date of the certificate. This is to ensure that there is enough time to rectify shortcomings, for example, before the certificate expires. DEKRA announces this audit about three months before the audit date. The time required for this audit is generally two thirds of that needed for the initial certification audit.

[3] A process or product certificate may have a different term of validity.

The audit

Every audit consists of a number of fixed parts: the opening meeting, the consultation, the core of the audit and the closing meeting.

Component	Opening meeting	Core of the audit	Consultation	Closing meeting
Scope	A meeting between the auditor/the audit team and the management of the organisation	A series of interviews and other observations	The auditor/the audit team evaluates the findings at the end of each audit day	The result of the audit is reported to the management of the organisation
Explanation	• Roles and responsibilities; • Participants; • The audit agenda; • Relevant logistical and safety measures; • Confirmation of confidentiality; • Explanation of the audit system	The auditor works in accordance with the audit agenda as far as possible. Any departure from this always takes place by agreement with the organisation	The auditor provides daily feedback on the results. Shortcomings are reported and notified to you immediately after the audit.	If shortcomings are found, these are raised and the follow-up process is explained

Non-conformities and their rectification

A non-conformity[4] is a deviation from a requirement in the standard and/or in relation to the management system or process. DEKRA reports non-conformities in a facts report. If non-conformities are found, your organisation must rectify these. The cause of the non-conformity must be shown by an analysis. You must investigate whether the improvement has eliminated the cause and whether this is also applicable to other parts and processes of your organisation.

Classification of non-conformities
Non-conformities are classed as ‘minor non-conformities’ or ‘major non-conformities’, based on the degree of risk that the non-conformity presents.

a. Minor non-conformity
In the event of a non-conformity, the requirement is not met in full. It can be demonstrated that the deviation:

a. is not systematic
b. is an independent incident;
c. will probably not lead to the failure of the management system.

In the event of a non-conformity, the organisation must send DEKRA an improvement plan within 90 days of the audit. Unless otherwise agreed, DEKRA will test the implementation and effectiveness during the following audit. If the implementation and effectiveness can be demonstrated immediately, the auditor may also decide to close the non-conformity right away.

[4] Non-conformities involve extra work that cannot be estimated in advance. The costs are not explicitly valued in our offer. The costs will be calculated proportionately on the basis of post-calculation of the daily rate, with a minimum of 1 hour.

b. Major non-conformity

In the event of a major non-conformity, the requirement is not met at all. The deviation demonstrably relates to:

a. systematic failure of the management system;
b. situations that could lead to non-compliance with the agreements reached with clients or non-compliance with legislation*;
c. situations that could lead to failure or limited usability of products or services, or could cause harm to the environment, safety and/or health.

In the event of a major non-conformity, the organisation must:

- send DEKRA an improvement plan within 30 days of the audit;
- determine and eliminate the causes within 90 days of the audit and send DEKRA the evidence of this for testing.

* In case of ISO14001 or ISO45001, different agreements can be made about a handling period of more than 90 days in the event of non-compliance with legislation and regulations. This is based on agreement with the competent authority on the plan of action.

Rectification of non-conformity

DEKRA must always test, assess and report on the rectification of a (major) non-conformity. This can take place by means of an administrative assessment of the measures or an extra audit at your location. Such audits are also referred to as ‘corrective measures audits’.
If the conditions are not met, DEKRA will be required to suspend certification or to extend an existing suspension.

Suspension may also take place in the event of:

- Abuse of the certificate
- Inability to conduct follow-up audits
- Repeated failure to submit corrective measures in time
- At the request of the certificate-holder
- In the event of suspension, DEKRA requests that an improvement plan be drawn up. DEKRA assesses whether the certificate will be continued or withdrawn.

Flexible design of the process

The process can be adjusted to your specific situation on request, in observance of the rules with which DEKRA must comply as a certification body.
Different rules can also be defined in certain standards, such as the terms within which non-conformities must be rectified. Naturally, you can always contact us if you have any questions.