

OMNIBUS QUALITY MANUAL

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OIA North America

Omnibus Certification Quality Manual

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1. Scope

1.1 This Omnibus Certification Quality Manual specifies the general requirements for all of OIA North America's process, product, compliance, and quality attribute certification programs in order for such programs to be operated in a competent and reliable fashion. In this manual, the word "product" is used in its widest sense and includes processes and services. The word "standard" refers to the applicable normative document for the certification program in question which specifies the specifications, technical regulations, and procedures which certified operation must comply with to obtain and maintain certification. The words "policies and procedures" refers to the specific policies and procedures that OIA North America shall use to verify applicant's compliance with the applicable standard, and that OIA North America and the applicant's must comply with in order to maintain compliance with the appropriate standard. The word "applicant" refers to any party who has applied for certification under one of OIA North America's certification programs, irrespective of if the party has or has not been previously granted certification, as the requirements of certification are ongoing.

1.2 Each certification program operated by OIA North America shall include the following:

1.2.1 A certification standard drafted by an impartial and competent committee, individual, or other organization which describes the requirements that must be

met by the party to be certified, the rights and responsibilities of the applicant and OIA North America, and the requirements that OIA North America must meet in order to continue to operate the certification program.

1.2.2 A certification manual which describes the policies and procedures by which OIA North America shall carry out certification activities and which applicants shall be expected to follow in order to apply for, obtain, and maintain certification.

1.3 Each certification program operated by OIA North America may, unless specifically required or prohibited by the applicable standard, include the following:

1.3.1 Surveillance of the applicant's production, marketing, or quality system implementation and operation;

1.3.2 Type testing or examination;

1.3.3 Testing or inspection of samples taken from the market or from supplier's stock or from a combination of both;

1.3.4 Testing or inspection of every product or of a particular product, whether new or already in use;

1.3.5 Batch testing or inspection;

1.3.6 Design appraisal.

2. References (Reserved)

3. Definitions

3.1 Applicant: In this manual the term applicant is synonymous with the term "supplier" as defined in ISO Guide 65, and refers to the party that is responsible for ensuring that products for which certification is sought to be obtained or maintained meet, and if applicable, continue

to meet, the standards and requirements on which the certification program is based.

4. OIA North America as a Certification Body

4.1 General Provisions

- 4.1.1** The policies and procedures under which OIA North America operates and administrates each certification program shall be non-discriminatory and shall be administered in a non-discriminatory manner. Procedures shall not be used to impede or inhibit access by applicants other than as provided for in this manual.
- 4.1.2** OIA North America shall make its services accessible to all applicants whose activities fall within OIA North America's certification programs' declared fields of operation. There shall not be undue financial or other conditions. Unless required by the specific standard under which certification is sought, access shall not be conditional upon the size of the applicant, the size of OIA North America's certification programs, membership in any association or group, nor shall certification be conditional upon the number of certificates already issued.
- 4.1.3** The criteria against which the products of an applicant are evaluated by OIA North America shall be those outlined in the standards specified for that program. An explanation of the application of these standards to OIA North America and applicant's operations, as formulated through certification policies and procedures, shall be formulated by a relevant and impartial committee, person, or organization possessing the necessary technical competence and published by OIA North America.
- 4.1.4** OIA North America shall confine its requirements, evaluation, and decision on certification to those matters specifically related to the scope of the certification being considered.

4.2 Organization

The structure of OIA North America and its certification programs shall be such as to foster confidence in its certifications. In particular, OIA North America and its certification programs shall:

- a. Be impartial;**

- b. Be responsible for decisions relating to its granting, maintaining, extending, suspending, or withdrawing of certification;**
- c. Identify the management committee, group, or person which shall have overall responsibility for all of the following activities of the certification program(s):**
 - 1. Performance of testing, inspection, evaluation, and certification as defined in this manual and within the standard applicable to the certification program,**
 - 2. Formulation of policy matters relating to the operation of the certification program(s),**
 - 3. Decisions on certification,**
 - 4. Supervision of the implementation of its policies,**
 - 5. Supervision of the finances of the certification program(s) and OIA North America,**
 - 6. Delegation of authority to committees or individuals as required to undertake defined activities on behalf of OIA North America and the certification program(s),**
 - 7. Technical basis for granting certification;**
- d. Have documents which demonstrate it is a legal entity;**
- e. Have a documented structure which safeguards impartiality including provisions to ensure the impartiality of the operations of OIA North America's certification program(s); this structure shall enable the participation of all parties significantly concerned in the development of policies and principles regarding the content and functioning of OIA North America's certification program(s);**
- f. Ensure that each decision on certification is taken by a person(s) different from those who carried out the on site audit/inspection and the initial evaluation;**
- g. Have rights and responsibilities relevant to OIA North America's certification activities'**
- h. Have adequate arrangements to cover liabilities arising from operations and/or activities;**
- i. Have the financial stability and resources required for the operation of the certification program(s)**

- j. Employ a sufficient number of personnel having the necessary education, training, technical knowledge and experience for performing certification functions relating to the type, range, and volume of work performed, under the a responsible senior executive;**
- k. Have quality system giving confidence in its ability to operate a certification program;**
- l. Have policies and procedures that distinguish between product certification and any other activities in which OIA North America is engaged;**
- m. Together with its senior executive and staff, be free from any commercial, financial and other pressures which might influence the results of the certification program(s) or process;**
- n. Have formal rules and structures for the appointment and operation of any committees which are involved in the certification process; such committees shall be free from any commercial, financial and other pressures that might influence decisions; a structure where members are chose to provide a balance of interests where no single interest predominates will be deemed to satisfy this provision;**
- o. Ensure that activities of related OIA North America programs, divisions, subsidiaries or other bodies do not affect the confidentiality, objectivity and impartiality of OIA North America's certification decisions, and OIA North America shall not:**
 - 1. Supply or design products of the type it certifies,**
 - 2. Give advice or provide consultancy services to applicants as to methods of overcoming identified barriers to certification which has been applied for or requested,**
 - 3. Provide any other products or services which would compromise the confidentiality, objectivity, or impartiality of its certification process and decisions;**
- p. Have policies and procedures for the resolution of complaints, appeals and disputes received from applicants or other parties about the handling of certification or any other related matters.**

4.3 Operations

OIA North America and its certification program(s) shall take all steps necessary to evaluate conformance with the relevant standards of the program. OIA North America shall specify the relevant standards or parts thereof and any other requirements such as sampling, testing and inspection requirements which form the basis of the applicable certification program.

In conducting certification operations, OIA North America shall observe, as appropriate, the requirements for the suitability and competence of bodies and persons carrying out testing, inspection, and certification and registration as defined in ISO Guide 65.

4.4 Subcontracting

If OIA North America decides to subcontract work related to a certification program to an external body or person, a properly documented agreement covering the arrangements including confidentiality and conflict of interest shall be drawn up. OIA North America shall

- a. Take full responsibility for such subcontracted work and maintain its responsibility for granting, maintaining, extending, suspending or withdrawing certification;**
- b. Ensure that the subcontracted body or person is competent and complies with the applicable provisions of this manual, the relevant standard, OIA North America policies and procedures for the specific certification program, other guides relevant to testing, inspection, or other technical activities, and is not involved directly or through the person's employer with the design or production of the product in such a way that impartiality would be compromised;**
- c. Obtain the applicant's consent.**

4.5 Quality System

4.5.1 The management of OIA North America and each certification program having executive responsibility for quality shall define and document its policy for quality, and its objectives for, and commitment to quality, and shall codify this quality system in the Certification Manual for each certification program. The management shall ensure that the certification manual's policy and procedures for each program is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels of the organization.

4.5.2 Each of OIA North America's certification programs shall operate an effective quality system in accordance with the relevant elements of this Quality Manual and ISO Guide 65 and appropriate for the type, range and volume of work performed. The quality system shall be documented in the Certification Manual for each program and shall be available for use by the Certification Program staff. OIA North America shall ensure effective implementation of the documented quality system, procedures and instructions. OIA North America shall designate a person having direct access to its highest executive level who, irrespective of other responsibilities shall have defined authority for

- a. Ensuring that quality system is established, implemented and maintained in accordance with this Quality Manual and ISO Guide 65, and**
- b. Reporting on the performance of the quality system to the body's management for review and as a basis for improvement of the quality system.**

4.5.3 The quality system for each certification program is documented in this Quality Manual, the Certification Standards for the program, and the Certification Manual for the program. The Certification Standards and/or Certification Manual shall contain at least the following:

- a. A quality policy statement;**
- b. A brief description of the legal status of OIA North America and the certification program; including the names of its owners, and if different, names of the persons who control it;**

- c. **The names, qualifications, experience and terms of reference of the senior executives, and other certification personnel, both internal or external;**
- d. **An organization chart showing the lines of authority, responsibility and allocation of functions stemming from the senior executive;**
- e. **A description of the organization of OIA North America and the certification program, including details of the management (committee, group, or person), its constitution, terms of reference, and rules of procedure;**
- f. **The policy and procedures for conducting management reviews;**
- g. **Administrative procedures including document control;**
- h. **The operational and functional duties and services pertaining to quality so that the extent and limits of each person's responsibility are known to all concerned;**
- i. **The procedure for the recruitment, selection, and training of certification body personnel and monitoring of their performance;**
- j. **A list of approved subcontractors and the procedures for assessing, recording, and monitoring their performance;**
- k. **Procedures for handling nonconformities and for assuring the effectiveness of any corrective and preventative actions taken;**
- l. **The procedures for evaluating products and implementing the certification process, including**
 - 1. **The conditions for issue, retention and withdrawal of certification documents,**
 - 2. **Controls over the use and application of documents employed in the certification of products;**
- m. **The policy and procedure for dealing with appeals, complaints, and disputes;**
- n. **Procedures for conducting internal audits based on the provisions of ISO 10011-1.**

4.6 Conditions and procedures for granting, maintaining, extending, suspending and withdrawing certification

4.6.1 OIA North America shall specify in the certification manual for each certification program the conditions for granting, maintaining and extending certification and the conditions under which certification may be suspended or withdrawn, partially or in total.

4.6.2 OIA North America shall specific in the certification manual for each certification program the procedures to

- a. Grant, maintain, withdraw, and if applicable suspend certification;**
- b. Extend or reduce the scope of certification;**
- c. Re-evaluate, in the event of changes significantly effecting the product's design or specification, or changes in the standards to which compliance of the product is certified, or changes in the ownership, structure or management of the applicant, if relevant, or in the case of any other information indicating that the product may no longer comply with the requirements of the certification standards.**

4.7 Internal audits and management reviews

4.7.1 OIA North America shall conduct periodic internal audits covering all procedures in a planned and systematic manner, to verify that the quality system is implemented and is effective.

OIA North America shall ensure that

- a. Personnel responsible for the area audited are informed of the outcome of the audit;**
- b. Corrective action is taken in a timely and appropriate manner; and**
- c. The results of the audit are documented.**

4.7.2 The senior executive or his designate shall review the quality system for each certification program at defined intervals which are sufficiently short to ensure its continuing suitability and effectiveness in satisfying the requirements of this Quality Manual, ISO Guide 65, and the stated quality policy and objectives for each program.

4.8 Documentation

4.8.1 Each certification program operated by OIA North America shall provide, through publications, electronic media, or other means, and update at regular intervals and make available upon requests, the following:

- a. Information about the authority under which the certification program operates;**
- b. A documented statement of its product certification program(s) including its rules and procedures for granting, maintaining, extending, and suspending and withdrawing certification;**
- c. Information about the evaluation procedures and certification process related to each certification program;**
- d. A description of the means by which the organization obtains financial support and general information on the fees charged to applicants and to certified operations;**
- e. A description of the rights and duties of applicants and certified operations, including requirements, restrictions or limitations on the use of the certification body's logo and on the ways of referring to the certification granted;**
- f. Information about the procedures for handling complaints, appeals, and disputes;**
- g. A directory of certified products and their suppliers, or a directory of certified operations.**

4.8.2 Each certification program operated by OIA North America shall establish and maintain procedures to control all documents and data that relate to its certification functions. These documents shall reviewed and approved for adequacy by appropriately authorized and competent personnel prior to issuing any documents following initial development or any subsequent amendment or change being made. A listing of all appropriate documents with the respective issue and/or amendment status identified shall be maintained. The distribution of all such documents shall be controlled to ensure that the appropriate documentation is made available to personnel of the certification body or suppliers when they are required to perform any function relating to the certification body's activities.

4.9 Records

4.9.1 Each certification program shall maintain a record system to suits its particular circumstances and comply with existing regulations and the appropriate standard. The records shall demonstrate that the certification procedures have been effectively fulfilled,

particularly with respect to application forms, evaluation, inspection, and audit reports, surveillance activities and other documents relating to granting, maintaining, extending, suspending, or withdrawing certification. The records shall be identified, managed, and disposed of in such a way as to ensure the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of the information. The records shall be kept for a minimum of 10 years or longer as required by the applicable standard under which the certification program operates.

- 4.9.2 Each certification program shall have a policy and procedures for retaining records for a period consistent with its contractual, legal, or other obligations. The minimum period of such record retention shall be 10 years, or longer as required by the applicable standard under which the certification program operates. The certification program shall have a policy and procedure concerning access to these records consistent with the confidentiality requirements of this Quality Manual, the applicable standards, ISO Guide 65, and relevant laws and regulations.

4.10 Confidentiality

- 4.10.1 Each certification program shall have adequate arrangements consistent with applicable laws to safeguard confidentiality of the information obtained in the course of its certification activities at all levels of its organization, including committees and external bodies or individuals acting on its behalf.
- 4.10.2 Except as otherwise required by law, regulation, the applicable standard under which certification is being conducted, this Quality Manual, or ISO Guide 65, information gained in the course of certification activities about an applicant or the applicant's products or services shall not be disclosed to a third party without the written consent of the applicant. Where the law, regulation, or standard requires information to be disclosed to a third party, the applicant shall be informed of the information provided unless prohibited by law, regulation, or the applicable standard.

5. Certification Program Personnel

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 The personnel of the each certification program body shall be competent for the functions they perform, including making required technical judgments, framing policies and implementing them.

- 5.1.2** Clearly documented instructions shall be made available to certification program personnel describing their duties and responsibilities, These instructions shall be maintained up to date.

5.2 Qualification criteria

- 5.2.1** In order to ensure that evaluation and certification are carried out effectively and uniformly, the minimum relevant criteria for the competence of certification program personnel shall be defined by the certification programs.

- 5.2.2** The certification programs shall require its personnel involved in the certification process to sign a contract or other document by which they commit themselves to:

- a. To comply with the rules defined by OIA North America and the certification program, including those related to confidentiality and independence from commercial and other interests; and
- b. To declare any prior and/or present association on their own part, or on the part of their employer, with a supplier or designer of products to be evaluated or inspected by the certification program and to which they are to be assigned.

The certification program shall ensure that, and document how, any contracted personnel for their own part, and on the part of their employer, if any, satisfy all the requirements for personnel outlined in this Quality Manual.

- 5.2.3** Information on the relevant qualifications, training and experience of each member of the personnel involved in the certification process for each certification program shall be maintained by the certification program. Records of training and experience shall be kept up to date, in particular the following:

- a. Name and address;
- b. Organization affiliation and position held;
- c. Educational qualification and professional status;
- d. Experience and training in each field of the certification body's competence;
- e. Date of most recent updating of records;
- f. Performance appraisal.

6. Changes in certification requirements

The certification program shall give due notice of any changes it intends to make in its requirements for certification. Unless mandated by regulation or by the body responsible for creating or accrediting the applicable standard, the certification program shall take account of views expressed by interested parties before deciding on the precise form and effective date of the changes. Following decision on, and publication of, the changed requirements, it shall verify that each supplier makes any necessary adjustments within such time as, in the opinion of the certification program, is reasonable.

7. Appeals, complaints and disputes

7.1 Appeals, complaints and disputes brought before the certification program by applicants, or other parties shall be subject to the procedures defined in the appropriate standard, or if not defined in the standard, as defined in the Certification Manual for the certification program.

7.2 OIA North America shall

- a. Keep a record of all appeals, complaints and disputes and remedial actions relative to its certification programs;**
- b. Take appropriate subsequent action;**
- c. Document the action taken and its effectiveness.**

8. Application for Certification

8.1 Information on the procedure

- 8.1.1 OIA North America shall provide to applicants an up-to-date detailed description of the evaluation and certification procedures, appropriate to each certification program, which shall include a copy of this Quality Manual, a copy of the relevant standard, the Certification Manual, and fee schedule for the certification program under which certification is sought.**
- 8.1.2 OIA North America shall require that each applicant for certification under each certification program shall:**
- a. Always comply with the appropriate standard;**
 - b. Make all necessary arrangements for the conduct of the inspection/audit, including provision for examination by OIA North America of documentation and access to all areas, records (including internal audit reports) and personnel for the purposes of evaluation of compliance and resolution of complaints;**
 - c. Make claims regarding certification only in conformity with the appropriate standards under which certification is granted and in respect of the scope of such certification;**
 - d. Does not use its certification in a manner such as to bring OIA North America into disrepute and does not make any statement regarding its certification status or scope which OIA North America finds misleading or unauthorized;**
 - e. Upon suspension or cancellation of certification, discontinue its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference thereto and return any certification documents as required by OIA North America;**
 - f. Use certification only to indicate that products are certified as being in conformity with the specified standards under which certification is maintained;**
 - g. Endeavor to ensure that no certificate or report nor any part thereof is used in a misleading manner;**
 - h. In making reference to its product certification, in communication media such as documents, brochures or advertising, complies with the requirements of the certification program and the appropriate standard.**
- 8.1.3 When the desired scope of certification sought by an applicant is related to a specific system or type of system operated by OIA North America, any explanation needed shall be provided to the applicant.**
- 8.1.4 If requested, additional application information shall be provided to the applicant.**

8.2 The application

8.2.1 Each certification program operated by OIA North America shall require the completion of an official application form, signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant, in which or attached to which are the following:

- a. The scope of the desired certification;**
- b. A statement that the applicant agrees to comply with the requirements for certification and to supply any information needed for evaluation of products to be certified.**

8.2.2 The applicant, as a minimum, shall provide the following information:

- a. Corporate entity, name, address and legal status;**
- b. A definition of the products to be certified, the certification system, and the standards against which each product is to be certified.**

9. Preparation for Evaluation

9.1 Before proceeding with the onsite evaluation audit/inspection, the applicable OIA North America certification program shall conduct, and maintain records of, a review of the application for certification to ensure that

- a. The requirements for certification are clearly defined, documented and understood;**
- b. Any difference in understanding between the certification program and the applicant is resolved; and**
- c. The certification program has the capability to perform the certification service with respect to the scope of the certification sought and, if applicable, the location of the applicant's operations and any special requirements such as the language used by the applicant.**

9.2 The certification program shall prepare a plan for its evaluation activities to allow for the necessary arrangements to be managed.

9.3 The certification program shall assign personnel appropriately qualified to perform the tasks for the specific evaluation audit/inspection. Personnel shall not be assigned if they have been involved in, or been employed by a body involved in, the design, supply, installation or maintenance of such products in a manner and within a time period which could conflict with impartiality.

9.4 To ensure that a comprehensive and correct evaluation audit/inspection is carried out, the personnel involved shall be provided with appropriate working documents.

10. Evaluation

The certification program shall evaluate the products of the applicant against the standards covered by the scope defined in its application against all certification criteria specified in the rules of the scheme.

11. Evaluation report

The certification program shall adopt reporting procedures that suit its needs but, as a minimum, these procedures shall ensure that

- a. Personnel appointed to evaluate the conformance of products shall provide the certification program with a report of findings as to the conformity with all certification requirements;**

- b. A full report on the outcome of the evaluation is promptly brought to the applicant's notice by the certification program, identifying any nonconformities that have to be discharged in order to comply with all of the certification requirements and the extent of further evaluation or testing required. If the applicant can show that remedial action has been taken to meet all the requirements within a specified time limit, the certification program shall repeat only the necessary parts of the initial procedure.**

12. Decision on certification

- 12.1 The decision as to whether or not to certify a product shall be taken by the certification program on the basis of the information gathered during the evaluation process and any other relevant information.**
- 12.2 The certification program shall not delegate authority for granting, maintaining, extending, suspending or withdrawing certification to an outside person or body.**
- 12.3 The certification body shall provide to each applicant offering certified products, formal certification documents such as a letter or a certificate signed by an officer of OIA North America who has been assigned such responsibility. These formal documents shall permit identification of the following:**
 - a. The name and address of the applicant whose products are the subject of certification;**
 - b. The scope of the certification granted, including, as appropriate,**
 - 1. The products certified, which may be identified by type or range of products,**
 - 2. The product standards or other normative documents to which each product or product type is certified,**

3. The applicable certification system or program;

- c. The effective date of certification and the term or certification is applicable.**

12.4 In response to an application for amendment to the scope of a certificate already granted, the certification program shall decide what, if any, evaluation procedure is appropriate in order to determine whether or not the amendment should be made and shall act accordingly.

13. Surveillance

13.1 The certification program shall have documented procedures to enable surveillance to be carried out in accordance with the criteria applicable to the relevant certification standard.

13.2 The certification program shall require the applicant to inform it about any changes to its products or program such as intended modification to the products certified, manufacturing process, or if relevant, its quality system, and any changes which may affect the conformity of the product with the relevant standard. The certification program shall determine whether the announced changes require further investigations. If such is the case, the supplier shall not be allowed to release certified products resulting from such changes until the certification body has notified the supplier accordingly.

13.3 The certification program shall document its surveillance activities.

13.4 Where the certification program authorizes the continuing use of the OIA mark or the certification mark on products of a type which have been evaluated, the certification program shall periodically evaluate

the marked products to confirm that they continue to conform to the standards.

14. Use of licenses, certificates, and marks of conformity

- 14.1 OIA North America and the certification program shall exercise proper control over the ownership, use and display of licenses, certificates, and marks of conformity.**
- 14.2 Guidance on the use of certificates and marks permitted by the certification program may be obtained from ISO/IEC Guide 23.**
- 14.3 Incorrect references to the certification program, the standards, or misleading use of licenses, certificates or marks, found in advertisements, catalogs, etc. shall be dealt with by suitable action.**

15. Complaints to applicants

Each certification program operated by OIA North America shall require the applicant for certification to

- a. Keep a record of all complaints made known to the applicant relating to a product's compliance with requirements of the relevant standard and to make these records available to the certification program when requested;**
- b. Take appropriate action with respect to such complaints and any deficiencies found in products or services that affect compliance with the requirements for certification;**
- c. Document the actions taken.**

