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## Conformity assessment — Guidelines and examples of a certification scheme for services

*Évaluation de la conformité — Lignes directrices et exemples d'un  
schéma de certification pour les services*



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# Contents

|   | Page      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Foreword</b> .....   | <b>v</b>  |
| <b>Introduction</b> .....   | <b>vi</b> |
| <b>1 Scope</b> .....  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>2 Normative references</b> .....   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>3 Terms and definitions</b> .....  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>4 Fundamentals of certification of services</b> .....  | <b>2</b>  |
| 4.1 General.....  | 2         |
| 4.2 Functional approach.....  | 2         |
| <b>5 Development and management of certification schemes for services</b> .....   | <b>3</b>  |
| 5.1 General.....  | 3         |
| 5.2 Scheme owner.....   | 3         |
| 5.3 Stakeholder engagement.....   | 4         |
| 5.4 Scheme management.....  | 4         |
| 5.4.1 Scheme documentation.....   | 4         |
| 5.4.2 Reporting to the scheme owner.....  | 5         |
| 5.4.3 Subcontracting of the administration of the scheme.....   | 5         |
| 5.4.4 Marketing.....  | 5         |
| 5.4.5 Fraudulent claim of certification.....  | 5         |
| 5.4.6 Complaints and appeals.....   | 5         |
| <b>6 Content of a certification scheme for services</b> .....   | <b>5</b>  |
| 6.1 General.....  | 5         |
| 6.2 Scope of the scheme.....  | 5         |
| 6.3 Elements of a certification scheme.....   | 5         |
| 6.4 Selection elements in the scheme.....   | 7         |
| 6.4.1 Certification requirements.....   | 7         |
| 6.4.2 Sampling.....   | 7         |
| 6.4.3 Acceptance of conformity assessment results.....  | 8         |
| 6.4.4 Selection of evaluation activities.....   | 8         |
| 6.4.5 Outsourcing of the conformity assessment activities.....  | 9         |
| 6.5 Certification process.....  | 9         |
| 6.5.1 Certification phases.....   | 9         |
| 6.5.2 Application for certification and the certification agreement.....  | 9         |
| 6.5.3 Evaluation.....   | 9         |
| 6.6 Attestation.....  | 10        |
| 6.7 Licensing the use of certificates and marks of conformity.....  | 10        |
| 6.7.1 Licensing and control of the mark.....  | 10        |
| 6.7.2 Mark of conformity.....   | 10        |
| 6.7.3 Misuse of the mark.....   | 10        |
| 6.8 Surveillance.....   | 11        |
| 6.9 Changes affecting certification.....  | 11        |
| 6.9.1 Changes in specified requirements.....  | 11        |
| 6.9.2 Other changes to the scheme.....  | 11        |
| 6.9.3 Review of scheme operation.....   | 11        |
| <b>Annex A (informative) Examples of certification schemes for services</b> .....   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Annex B (informative) Example of information provided with an application for service certification</b> .....                    | <b>24</b> |
| <b>Annex C (informative) Example of contents of a certification agreement</b> .....   | <b>25</b> |
| <b>Annex D (informative) Example of information to be included in certification documentation</b> .....                             | <b>27</b> |
| <b>Annex E (informative) Example of contents of a licensing agreement for the use of a certificate and mark of conformity</b> ..... | <b>28</b> |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Annex F (informative) Example of information to be included in a licence for the use of a certificate or mark of conformity</b> ..... | <b>31</b> |
| <b>Bibliography</b> .....  | <b>32</b> |

## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. In the field of conformity assessment, ISO and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) develop joint ISO/IEC documents under the management of the ISO Committee on Conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO).

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by the ISO Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) and circulated for voting to the national bodies of both ISO and IEC, and was approved by both organizations.

## Introduction

The term “product certification” has been used traditionally to cover not only tangible products but also services and processes. With the growing importance of services within the overall economic activity, current thinking is that a service is sufficiently different from a tangible product to require a different approach when it comes to specifying requirements (e.g. in international standards) and to assessing conformity of services with those requirements.

The principal differences between a service and a product are the following:

- a service is generally intangible;
- a service requires an interface between the provider and the customer;
- each instance of a service is transient even though it can be repeated many times;
- a service is often provided and used at the same time;
- the success of a service is related to the interaction with customers.

While services are recognized in the scheme type 6 in ISO/IEC 17067, ISO/IEC 17067 does not provide sufficient information on the process for the certification of services. This document is intended to help those involved in the development and operation of service certification schemes.

The range of conformity assessment activities used, and the intensity with which they are applied, needs to be proportionate to the likelihood of a service failing to fulfil a specified requirement and the consequences of such a failure. Factors such as the particular characteristics of the marketplace, the nature of the service and the service delivery methods also need to be taken into account.

The principal stakeholders, who are most affected by the rules, procedures and management of the scheme, are the following:

- the scheme owner;
- the certification body/bodies;
- the providers of certified services;
- the customers for the certified services and entities that rely on certification.

**NOTE** Where a certification body develops and operates its own scheme, the certification body is the scheme owner.

Other stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- regulatory authorities;
- specifiers, and purchasers of certified services;
- conformity assessment bodies (e.g. inspection bodies and management system auditing bodies) involved in the service certification process;
- accreditation bodies and peer assessment groups;
- organizations that facilitate the recognition of certification status from one scheme owner to another.

This document is informative in nature and provides guidelines accompanied by examples which are used to illustrate ways in which the guidelines could be used, without precluding other approaches as decided by the scheme owner in consultation with the other stakeholders.

[Annex A](#) contains examples of existing certification schemes for services.

# Conformity assessment — Guidelines and examples of a certification scheme for services

## 1 Scope

This document provides guidelines and principles of service certification schemes.

NOTE 1 In the context of this document, the assessment of a management system as part of service certification does not constitute the certification of the management system.

NOTE 2 This document is not intended to limit in any way the decisions of scheme owners when developing and operating their own schemes.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 17000:2004, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17065:2012, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*

ISO/IEC 17067:2013, *Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes*