



General Certification Process for Products and Services
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This document is intended to set forth the **Certification Process** applied by Bureau Veritas Certification France for an industrial product or a service. It outlines the actions to be undertaken both by Bureau Veritas Certification and by the client in order for the latter to obtain and maintain that certification.



1. CERTIFICATION PROPOSAL AND CONTRACT

1.1. Application

1.1.1. General process

Bureau Veritas Certification provides the candidate organisation with an application file in order to collect the following information:

- ⌘ Organisation name and contact information (name, address, etc.).
- ⌘ Completed activities (process, products or services, clients, etc.).
- ⌘ Organisation structure (number of sites, number of employees, etc.).
- ⌘ List of certifications and qualifications already obtained.
- ⌘ Type of requested certification (certification programme, scope of certification, etc.).
- ⌘ Sub-contractor information.
- ⌘ Pre-audit request as applicable.

Access to certification is not subject to discriminatory practices (e.g. size, membership to a group or association, special certification, etc.).

1.1.2. Multisite organisation

In this case, a multisite organisation owns several geographical locations (networks, regional management units, agencies, offices, etc.) applying all or part of the industrial product or service certification standard.

In this case, the system that is implemented shall comply with the following requirements:

- ⌘ The certification managing and conducting activities for the industrial product or service are centralised on an identified site.
- ⌘ All sites have been internally audited before the certification audit.
- ⌘ The following activities are centralised or reported to a centralising site:
 - Complaints.
 - Corrective action assessment.
 - Internal audit planning and outcome assessment.

The certification covers the implementation of the standard on all sites, not on a particular legal entity. A single multisite certification can lead to the issuance of one or more certificates even when the multisite entity comprises companies with different names. When that certification concerns legal entities that have not directly signed the certification contract the contract signatory must make it legally enforceable for every entity involved.

1.1.3. Admissibility

When the certification programme includes an admissibility analysis Bureau Veritas Certification requests that the organisation provide them with a list of supporting documents to be given under the certification programme. Bureau Veritas Certification analyses the provided documents. If they determine that the application file is complete and that the attached documents are acceptable Bureau Veritas Certification rules on the admissibility of the application and confirms with the candidate organisation that the certification audit can take place.



1.2. Proposal

On the basis of that information Bureau Veritas Certification France develops a certification proposal in accordance with the national requirements set forth by the appropriate accreditation bodies.

The certification proposal made by Bureau Veritas Certification France covers the initial evaluation and monitoring audits conducted to maintain the certificate. It is detailed in the following documents:

- ⌘ Financial proposal.
- ⌘ General certification process: **GP01 - 17065**
- ⌘ General service conditions.
- ⌘ Specific requirements, if any.

This proposal takes into consideration the following cases:

- ⌘ The organisation already owns trade certifications and other certifications.
- ⌘ The organisation is already certified and would like to renew or extend its certification.
- ⌘ The organisation owns several sites or agencies and implements a centralised system.

The proposal includes:

- ⌘ The admissibility of the application when the certification programme requires it.
- ⌘ The certification audit and checks (like mystery clients) to be conducted as per the monitoring plan included in the certification programme.
- ⌘ The certificate issuance.
- ⌘ The audits and checks to be conducted during the validity period and the sampling method for multisite organisations.

The financial proposal does not include any complementary audit that could prove necessary should the products or services provided by the organisation be non-compliant with the selected certification programme or any additional time relating to issues, delays or incomplete or incorrect information attributable to the organisation.

1.3. Contract – Organisation commitment

The organisation returns a signed copy of the contract (or an equivalent document duly dated and signed). This document, which is relating to the GP01-17065 general certification process and to the document on the general service requirements ("Conditions générales de services"), forms the certification contract.

By signing that contract the organisation commits to constantly meeting the certification requirements as well implementing the appropriate changes as notified by Bureau Veritas Certification.

The certification requirements include the following:

- ⌘ The requirements set forth by the certification programme.
- ⌘ The completeness of the certification contract.
- ⌘ The payment of invoices.
- ⌘ The provision of information on the changes made to the certified product or service.
- ⌘ The right of access to the certified product or service for the monitoring activities.

On that document, the organisation may specify the time period when they would like to complete the initial audit. Upon receiving that document Bureau Veritas Certification reviews the contract and prepares the certification audit by setting up an audit team and scheduling the dates.

Once the certification is granted the organisation undertakes to ensure that the certified product or service meets the requirements set forth in the certification programme when the certification applies to mass



production. They shall also keep and make available a record of all complaints they are made aware of (claim handling and actions carried out).

The organisation commits to complying with the communication rules set forth in every programme, including:

- ⌘ Consistency with the scope of the granted certification.
- ⌘ Compliance with applicable graphic charters.
- ⌘ Compliance with the certification programme relating to the use of compliance trademarks and to information relating to products or services.
- ⌘ Use in a way that is not be misleading as to the subject of certification.

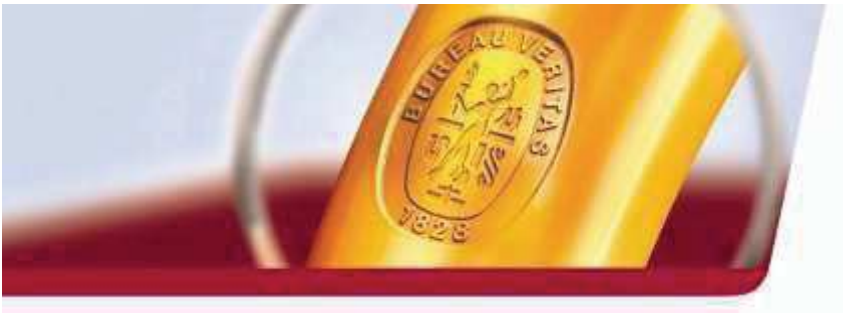
If the organisation provides copies of certification documents to third parties they shall copy them in whole or as required by the certification programme.

Upon suspension, withdrawal or expiration of their certificate the organisation undertakes to cease using references to the certification and implement any other action required by the certification programme. Should the certificate be withdrawn they undertake to return the issued certificate.

In the course of the certification validity period the organisation shall immediately report any changes to Bureau Veritas Certification that may affect their ability to comply with certification requirements. This notification must be made in writing and sent to the attention of the sales representative managing the account.

Examples of changes to be reported include (not limited to):

- ⌘ Property or legal, business and/or organisational status.
- ⌘ Structure and management (e.g. key personnel such as executive managers, decision-makers or technicians).
- ⌘ Changes made to the product or the service or their production method.
- ⌘ Contact information of the person to be contacted and of the appropriate sites.
- ⌘ Important changes made to the quality management system.



2. Bureau Veritas Certification France AUDITORS

Bureau Veritas Certification France mainly uses staff employees in order to ensure the following:

- ⌘ Auditor confidentiality.
- ⌘ Consistency in terms of audit or monitoring approaches.
- ⌘ Auditor availability.

Bureau Veritas Certification France auditors all have a solid experience in industrial sectors and in conducting audits or quality control checks.

They are trained so as to ensure a field-based and pragmatic approach.

They are committed to complying with Bureau Veritas Certification's rules of professional conduct and ethical standards.

Auditors are appointed to conduct certification audits following three criteria:

- ⌘ Competence in the organisation's core activity and/or subject of the certification programme.
- ⌘ Nearness of the organisation's offices.
- ⌘ Availability on the certification dates wished by the organisation.

3. PRE-AUDIT (not part of the certification process)

Conducting pre-audits is not part of the certification process. However, Bureau Veritas Certification France may conduct them upon request by the organisation. Those evaluations are intended to assess compliance as regards the certification programme requirements. It is not to be interpreted as a consulting service.

Pre-audits are conducted by applying the same assessment process as the one used for the certification process.



4. CERTIFICATION AUDIT

When the certification programme is validated and applied by the organisation Bureau Veritas Certification France launches the certification process upon request by the candidate organisation.

The initial audit is conducted by an audit team authorised by Bureau Veritas Certification France. Its goal is to ensure that the industrial product or service developed by the organisation complies with the selected certification programme specifications.

The organisation is provided with the name and contact information of the auditors as well as the final audit dates.

In order to facilitate the audit the organisation shall:

- ✎ Provide the audit team with all the documents and information required for the organisation's evaluation (will depend on the certification programme; they can be organisational charts, internal audit reports, documents relating to the certification programme application, etc.).
- ✎ Grant secure access to their facilities and facilitate interviews with employees or sub-contractors as applicable.
- ✎ Fully cooperate towards the resolution of any non-conformity.

Multisite certifications:

The certification process is performed based on a sample of existing sites as determined in the certification programme (except when specified that all certified sites be audited). A list of sites to be audited is created based on the total number of sites so that the selected sample includes every type of location in a representative way.

Just like for monitoring visits the list of the entities to be audited during the initial audit always specifies the central site with a management and steering role guaranteeing that the certification programme is correctly applied and that the sample includes a sufficient number of sites. This list is sent to the organisation along with each audit plan.

To facilitate that audit the internal audit system must be operational and each site covered by the scope of certification must have been internally audited at least once.

If this provision is included in the external monitoring plan Bureau Veritas Certification also mandates the audit team for other types of checks, which may occur under the form of mystery client visits or calls whereby the auditors do not introduce themselves as such to the candidate organisation and whereby the results are sent to the organisation at the end of the assessment and recorded in the audit report. Moreover, a selection of industrial products may be collected to be checked and the results are sent to the organisation along with the audit report.

According to ISO 17065 requirements Bureau Veritas Certification ensures the following:

- ✎ The organisation has implemented a client claim handling and corrective action system.
- ✎ The organisation has effectively implemented appropriate tools to formally identify and apply national or international regulatory requirements relating to the products or services they provide.



4.1 Opening meeting

The audit starts with a meeting during which the auditor confirms the scope of certification, explains how the audit will take place and outlines the audit programme taking into account the latest changes that the organisation may wish to make.

The organisation representatives are invited to this meeting so that they have a clear view of the audit course and thus are able to inform their colleagues.

4.2 Audit course

The on-site audit includes employee interviews during which the auditor determines whether the actions and prescriptions identified in the certification programme have been implemented at all levels of the organisation.

To that end the auditor makes sure that practices are in line with the certification programme requirements and that processes have been implemented to describe those activities where needed and that relevant records have been maintained.

4.3 Non-conformities

During the audit any identified dysfunction (identified as "non-conformity") is addressed with the organisation representative who may provide additional information to put it in a more global context.

If the dysfunction is confirmed with tangible evidence it is formalised on a non-conformity report whose original copy is given to the organisation.

Non-conformities considered as minor or major depending on the identified risk level shall always meet the three following criteria:

- ⚡ They are objective and founded on the failure to comply with a specification of the certification programme or with a provision required by the organisation.
- ⚡ They are based on evidence, never on presumptions.
- ⚡ They are understood and accepted by the organisation.

From that point the organisation can undertake corrective actions to resolve the non-conformities. Upon request by the organisation the Bureau Veritas Certification France auditors determine whether the implementation of the corrective actions is admissible.

4.4 Briefing meeting

At the end of each day a meeting takes place to review the audit progress and recap the first findings. The non-conformities identified throughout the days are analysed so that the organisation may start implementing the appropriate corrective actions.

They also give an opportunity to review the outcomes of corrective actions already undertaken and to close the relevant non-conformities when applicable.



4.5 Closing meeting

At the end of the audit, a closing meeting is organised by the lead auditor. If possible it should gather the same participants who were at the opening meeting. This meeting is meant to present the audit findings and conclusions.

During the closing meeting the lead auditor should:

- 🔧 Present any identified non-conformity.
- 🔧 Check the information that will appear on the certificate.
- 🔧 Provide the organisation with the documents to be completed related to non-conformities

If possible the audit report is distributed during this closing meeting or within five business days should it not be possible.

5. CORRECTIVES ACTIONS

Within 90 days of the end-of-audit meeting the organisation submits their reply regarding the non-conformity reports to the lead auditor. Failure to meet this deadline may lead to a full review.

Generally speaking minor non-conformities may be closed on the basis of planned actions. Those actions shall always be verified during the next audit.

Major non-conformities can only be closed after the effective implementation of the corrective actions has been checked. Corrective actions can be checked through document sharing or during a complementary audit. Should that be the case an amendment is submitted to the organisation.



6. EVALUATION REVIEW AND CERTIFICATION DECISION

As soon as all non-conformity reports and the audit report are closed the lead auditor recommends that the organisation be certified. Subsequently, the application is reviewed from an administrative and technical point of view by Bureau Veritas Certification who decides on the certification under the supervision of an impartial committee and/or a committee from the specific unit managing the certification programme.

The purpose of the review is to verify that the certification processes and impartiality management rules are correctly applied.

One or more Bureau Veritas Certification certificates are issued to the organisation. They state the following:

- ⌘ The organisation name.
- ⌘ Corporate and Trade Register affiliation number if needed.
- ⌘ The applicable and current certification programme.
- ⌘ The scope of the certified activities.
- ⌘ The key specifications identified in each certification programme.
- ⌘ The site(s) involved and their address as well as the scope of certification for each site if the products or services are different from one covered site to the next.

The original certification date is the date of the first certification decision.

The certification cycle start date is the date when a certification technical decision was made.

The certification cycle period is determined in the certification programme.

The certificate expires one day before the calculated certification cycle end date.

Bureau Veritas Certification France or the specific committee may request additional information or demand that additional investigations be carried out before making a decision or may subject their decision to a complementary monitoring visit.



7. CERTIFICATION TRADEMARKS AND COMMUNICATION

The use of the certification trademarks is subject to the signature of a contract (see § 1.3) as well as to the certification decision and maintenance.

The certificate is issued with the VeriSelect collective certification trademark or the certification programme specific trademark.

Bureau Veritas Certification France provides the organisation with the required instructions on certification trademark uses.

Bureau Veritas Certification France supervises the reference to and/or use of certification trademarks (logos and certificates) during monitoring visits by verifying that the requirements under Chapter 1.3 are met.

Any incorrect reference to the certification programme or any misleading use of the certificates, trademarks or any other scheme stating that a product is certified, which is found on product information documents or other supporting material must be corrected through an appropriate action.

When the certification trademark is misused Bureau Veritas Certification reserves the right to follow up appropriately in order to protect its trademark, including through legal procedures.

8. PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Upon request Bureau Veritas Certification can provide any information relating to the certification programme.

A list of certified organisations is available upon request. It includes the following information:

- ⌘ Certified organisation name.
- ⌘ The number of the contract signed between the organisation and Bureau Veritas Certification.
- ⌘ The certification programme.
- ⌘ The certificate number.
- ⌘ The certificate validity dates.



9. MAINTAINING THE CERTIFICATION

Monitoring audits are conducted to ensure that the certificate is maintained throughout its validity period by checking that the certified product or service still complies with the requirements of the selected certification programme. Special focus is given to the handling of client complaints managed by the certified organisation.

Their frequency is determined in the certification programme managed by Bureau Veritas Certification France.

Monitoring audit and/or check dates are set based on the initial audit end date plus or less 2 months providing that at least one annual monitoring audit be scheduled unless otherwise specified in the certification programme.

For multisite certifications, as with the initial audit, each monitoring visit shall cover the central site as well as an appropriate number of sites.

Monitoring visits are scheduled as part of audits covering the entire certification programme and its specifications.

Bureau Veritas Certification advises the organisation of the scheduled monitoring visit with an advance notice of about 30 days.

As with the initial audit those visits result in an audit report outlining any non-conformity to be resolved under the same terms as those described in Paragraphs 4 and 5.

10. RENEWING THE CERTIFICATION

Before the end of the certification validity period a renewal audit is conducted. A contract proposal will be submitted to the organisation. Its scope depends on the outcomes of the last monitoring audits.

It is scheduled about 2 months before the previous certificate expires so as to give the organisation the opportunity to solve any non-conformity before the previous certificate expires.

The renewal process is the same as the one described in Paragraphs 4 and 5.

11. EXTENDING THE SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

At any moment the organisation may choose to extend its scope of certification to new products, new services or new sites. To that end they must submit a request in writing to Bureau Veritas Certification France who will instruct them how to proceed accordingly.

The extension is usually performed as part of monitoring audits so as to minimise any extra cost it might incur.

Bureau Veritas Certification may launch a specific audit, as circumstances require, to validate the certification extension.

When that extension is anticipated the certification contract includes such a provision. Otherwise an amendment to the contract is executed, determining audit durations and the sites to be audited.



12. MODIFYING THE CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Bureau Veritas Certification undertakes to notify of any change to the certification programme requirements with advance notice.

They shall take into consideration the points of view submitted by the stakeholders before making a decision as to the specific form of the changes and their effective date.

Upon acceptance of the changes Bureau Veritas Certification makes sure that each certified organisation carries out the required adjustments within an amount of time deemed reasonable by Bureau Veritas Certification.

Those changes are notified to the client and may entail the execution of amendments to the existing contract.

13. TERMINATING, SUSPENDING OR WITHDRAWING THE CERTIFICATE, REDUCING THE SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

Bureau Veritas Certification reserves the right to reduce the scope of certification or suspend or withdraw a certificate already issued at any time during its validity period.

The scope of certification may be reduced if Bureau Veritas Certification identifies major deviations on part of the scope of certification during a monitoring audit or after client complaints and when they deem necessary to reduce that scope.

A certificate may be suspended in the following situations:

- ⌘ The organisation fails to submit acceptable responses within the announced deadline following any non-conformity report.
- ⌘ The organisation misuses the certification trademarks (which can also lead to lawsuits)
- ⌘ The organisation fails to comply with the technical and business agreements signed into with Bureau Veritas Certification.
- ⌘ The organisation did not make it possible to conduct the surveillance or renewal audits within the scheduled deadlines, especially by failing to pay invoices within contractually binding deadlines thus making it impossible to schedule subsequent audits.
- ⌘ The organisation undermines the brand image of Bureau Veritas Certification France.
- ⌘ The organisation requested it (termination).

During the suspension period the organisation must abstain from referring to their certification.

The suspension lasts 3 months and may be extended once. The certification may be reactivated upon submission of supporting documents or after an acceptable audit outcome.

Failure to meet these conditions will result in the certification being eventually withdrawn and the contract being terminated.

Bureau Veritas Certification may notify whether a certification has been suspended or withdrawn.

Any anticipated use of the certification trademark results *de facto* in a delay in the issuance of the certificate of 6 months after the misuse has been identified.



14. COMPLAINTS

Complaints brought by clients or third parties are handled under the supervision of the Technical Management Unit. A delivery receipt is sent to the complainant upon receipt of a complaint. An investigation is carried out along with a root cause analysis so as to determine any corrective actions.

A reply is submitted to the complainant and the resolution is undertaken by an individual not involved in the certification activities that gave rise to the complaint.

Third party complaints relating to the certified organisation are reported to that person and may result in an additional analysis being performed during audits.

A complaint review is submitted to the impartiality committee.



15. APPEALS

The organisation may appeal Bureau Veritas Certification's decision in the following situations:

- ⌘ The application of the organisation is declined.
- ⌘ The certificate is not delivered.
- ⌘ The certificate is suspended or withdrawn.
- ⌘ A third party opposes the issuance of the certificate.

Appeals are handled under the supervision of the Technical Management Unit, then as a second appeal by the Corporate Management Office with feedback from the impartiality committee and, as last resort, by the impartiality committee.

The appeal is acknowledged and the appellant is kept informed of the effective handling of their appeal until the end of the process. A reply is submitted to the appellant and the resolution is undertaken by an individual not involved in the certification activities that gave rise to the appeal.

An investigation is carried out along with a root cause analysis so as to determine any corrective actions.

An appeal review is submitted to the impartiality committee.

16. CONFIDENTIALITY

Bureau Veritas Certification administrative staff members and auditors are committed to treating as confidential any information or document obtained or created as part of the certification activities. That duty of confidentiality pertains to any other piece of client information obtained through other sources than the client themselves.

That confidentiality requirement may be waived in the following situations:

- ⌘ Legal purpose or administrative request.
- ⌘ Written agreement granted by the organisation.
- ⌘ Request from the accreditation bodies.

Should confidential data be disclosed in a manner inconsistent with the certification programme Bureau Veritas Certification will notify the client.

17. OBSERVER PARTICIPATION TO AUDITS

Bureau Veritas Certification France may at times call observers to attend their certification or surveillance audits.

These observers may be:

- ⌘ Bureau Veritas Certification France in-house auditors (as part of auditor qualification or supervision).
- ⌘ Auditors from accreditation bodies or certification scheme prescribing bodies (Bureau Veritas Certification France audit as part of accreditation programmes).
- ⌘ Bureau Veritas Certification network staff members.

The organisation must accept the presence of these observers.



18. SUB-CONTRACTING EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

When using sub-contracted resources Bureau Veritas Certification France undertakes to inform the client accordingly.