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Expected outcomes

for accredited certification
to ISO management system
standards such as ISO 9001
and ISO 14001





The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) support the following concise statement of outcomes that are to be expected as a result of accredited certification to an ISO management system standard. The intent is to promote a common focus throughout the entire conformity assessment chain in order to achieve these Expected outcomes and thereby enhance the value and relevance of accredited management system certification.

Management system certification is frequently used in both private and public sectors to increase confidence in organizations' operations, the products and services they provide, between partners in business-to-business relations, in the selection of suppliers in supply chains and in the right to tender for procurement contracts.

ISO is the developer and publisher of several management system standards, but does not itself carry out auditing and certification. These services are performed independently of ISO by certification bodies. ISO does

not control such bodies, but does develop voluntary International Standards to encourage good practice in their activities on a worldwide basis. For example, the standards in the ISO/IEC 17021-x series specify the requirements for bodies providing auditing and certification to various ISO management system standards.

One option for certification bodies wishing to provide further confidence in their services is to apply to be accredited as competent by an IAF recognized national accreditation body. The IAF is an international association whose membership includes the national accreditation bodies of most economies.

ISO does not control such bodies, but does develop voluntary International Standards such as ISO/IEC 17011 which specifies the general requirements for bodies carrying out accreditation.

Note: Accredited certification is one way amongst others, that an organization may demonstrate conformity to an ISO management system standard. ISO does not promote accredited certification over other conformity assessment systems or methodologies.



Expected outcomes for accredited certification to an ISO management system standard certification *(from the perspective of the organization's interested parties)*

“For the defined certification scope, an organization with a certified management system has policies and processes in place to achieve the objectives defined by the scope (“Clause 1”) of the specific management system standard.

For example:

“An organization with a certified quality management system is managing its systems and processes so as to:

- a) consistently provide products and services that meet customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements;*
- b) facilitate opportunities to enhance customer satisfaction.”*

Or

“An organization with a certified environmental management system is managing its interactions with the environment and is demonstrating its commitment to:

- a) enhancement of environmental performance and the protection of the environment;*
- b) fulfilment of compliance obligations;*
- c) continually enhancing its environmental management system to achieve its environmental objectives.”*



What accredited management system certification means

To achieve an organization's objectives related to the Expected outcomes intended by the management systems standard, the accredited management system certification is expected to provide confidence that the organization has a management system that conforms to the applicable requirements of the specific ISO standard. In particular, it is to be expected that the organization:

1. has a system which is appropriate for its organizational context and certification scope;
2. has defined a policy appropriate for the intent of the specific management system standard and to the nature, scale and impacts of its activities, products and services over their lifecycles

3. is addressing risks and opportunities associated with its context and objectives;
4. analyses and understands customer needs and expectations, as well as the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements related to its products, processes and services;
5. ensures that product, process and service characteristics have been specified in order to meet customer and applicable statutory/regulatory requirements;
6. has determined and is managing the processes needed to achieve the Expected outcomes intended by the management system standard;

7. has ensured the availability of resources necessary to support the operation and monitoring of these products, processes and services ;
8. monitors and controls the defined product process and service characteristics ;
9. aims to prevent nonconformities, and has systematic improvement processes in place to :
 - a) react and correct any nonconformities that do occur (including product and service nonconformities that are detected after delivery) ;
 - b) determine the cause of nonconformities and take corrective action to avoid their recurrence ;
 - c) determine if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur ;
 - d) implement any action needed ;
 - e) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken ; and
 - f) address complaints from interested parties ;
10. has implemented an effective internal audit and management review process ;
11. is monitoring, measuring, analysing, evaluating and improving the effectiveness of its management system.
12. has implemented processes for communicating internally, as well as responding to and communicating with interested external parties.



What accredited management systems certification does not mean

It is important to recognize that management system standards define requirements for an organization's management system, and not the specific performance criteria that are to be achieved (such as product or service standards, environmental performance criteria etc). Accredited management systems certification should provide confidence in the organization's ability to meet its objectives related to the intent of the management system standard. A management systems audit is not a full legal compliance audit, and does not necessarily ensure ethical

behavior or that the organization will always achieve 100% conformity and legal compliance, though this should of course be a permanent goal.

Within its scope of certification, accredited management systems certification does not imply or ensure, for example :

- that the organization is providing a superior product and service, or
- that the organisation's product and service itself is certified as meeting the requirements of an ISO (or any other) standard or specification.

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