
	GHANA STANDARDS AUTHORITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CERTIFICATION SCHEME	MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDELINES
DOC: MSCS-G9.2-05	ISSUE: 06	26 JUNE 2019

**GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS
FOR
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CERTIFICATION**



**The Director General
Ghana Standards Authority,
P. O. Box MB 245,
Accra, Ghana.**

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GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANT FOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines on what a prospective applicant to MSCS needs to know before filing the application for taking certification.

2. SCOPE

This covers general information on application for grant of MSCS certification.

3. DEFINITION

3.1 **Applicant** - An Organization that applies for a certificate under the GSA Management Systems Certification Scheme.

3.2 **Application** -The request for grant of certificate in the application Form **MSCS 9.2-01** of GSA Management Systems Certification.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES


HSC - is responsible for publication printing and making available such general information to prospective applicant and general public.

5. GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS FOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The Ghana Standards Authority (GSA), the national standards body of Ghana has been guiding Ghanaian industries through formulation of national standards, testing and product certification. In the wake of international trends and competitiveness taking new dimensions in quality and quality management, GSA has introduced management system certification schemes to provide third party assurance for management systems such as ISO 9001, ISO

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14001, ISO 22000, OHSAS 18001 implemented by industries, commerce and service organizations. GSA has adopted these management systems standards as national standards.

These guidelines provide useful information on processing of an application, procedure for grant of certificate, obligations and responsibilities of organizations interested in obtaining certificates to relevant management system standards. The scheme envisages grant of Management Systems Certification to organizations according to management systems models ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 22000 and other similar management system standards.

5.2 APPLICATION

5.2.1 The organization desirous of obtaining Certification should ensure that they are operating in accordance with management systems they are applying for. They should apply in duplicate on the prescribed form **MSCS-F9.2-01** along with the application fee. The application fee is non refundable.

5.2.2 The Application must be signed by the Proprietor, Partner or Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the organization or any other person authorized to sign any declaration on behalf of the organization. The name and designation of the person signing application must be recorded legibly in the space set apart for the purpose on the application form.

5.2.3 All parts of the application form (**MSCS-F9.2-01**) must be completed and accompanied by the documented system (e.g. overview of organization's activities, defined scope, policy & objectives, risk management plan, relevant procedures, etc) which should be in line with the requirements of the relevant management systems standards.


5.2.4 If necessary, GSA shall provide for the applicant further information about the scheme and also ask for further information from the applicant.

5.2.5 GSA reserves the right to reject an application, which is incomplete and does not fulfil one or more of the following requirements:

- i) application fee not accompanying the application,
- ii) application form is incomplete,
- iii) information provided not clear or insufficient.

5.2.6 The reason for rejection of application shall be communicated in writing to the applicant by GSA Management Systems Certification.

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5.2.7 Ghana Standards Authority will acknowledge the receipt of the application and application fee. Every application will be given a serial number to be known as application number. In all future correspondence reference must be made to the application number.

5.3 APPLICATION REVIEW

After the application has been accepted, the accompanying documented system along with it shall be examined by the GSA MSCS for verifying the conformance to the relevant standard. Any significant omissions or deviations from the prescribed requirements intimated by GSA will have to be corrected by the applicant and GSA advised accordingly to process the application for assessments.

5.4. INITIAL CERTIFICATION AUDIT FEE

The Audit fee shall be payable in advance, estimate of which shall be intimated to applicant by GSA, depending upon the man-days expected to be spent on the audit of the organization, the anticipated expenses for travel/stay, multi-sites consideration, risk associated with organization’s activities and processes, etc.

5.5 INITIAL CERTIFICATION AUDIT


5.5.1 There will be a two-stage initial certification audit of the applicant organization. The stage I audit is intended to establish organization's readiness for the stage two initial certification audits. The stage 1 audit includes gathering information on the size, nature of the operation, status and understanding of the management system standard, adherence to statutory and regulatory requirements and resource requirements for stage II audit.

The resource requirements for stage II audit will take into consideration factors such as number of the auditors and the duration of the audit. (The number of the auditors and the duration of the audit will vary according to the size and nature of operation of the firm being assessed.)

Stage II audit is to evaluate implementation and effectiveness of applicant’s management system. This includes compliance to management system standards and regulatory requirements, operational control of processes, status of internal audit and management review as a minimum.

5.5.2 An Audit team from GSA will be constituted to visit the applicant organization for initial certification audit of the organization’s compliance to the certification requirements

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enumerated in the documented management system and relevant management system standard.

5.5.3 The Audit at site, both stage I and Stage II, will comprise the following sequence:

a) Opening Meeting

The leader of the audit team will conduct this meeting. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company, the management representative and heads of all the departments being audited are expected to be present. During this meeting, the leader will explain the scope and extent of the audit, modalities of audit, reporting methods and the other important aspects of the audit.

b) Conduct of Audit

The audit is conducted in accordance with the audit plan agreed between the Certification Body and the applicant organization. Each auditor should be accompanied by a guide from the company being audited who is conversant with the activities of the departments(s) the auditor is auditing. Audit process is conducted with a meeting with head of the function and operatives. The nonconformities recorded by the auditors must be accepted by the functional head/Management Representative.


c) Closing meeting

All the members present in the opening meeting should preferably be present in the closing meeting as well; the audit team will present their findings to the organization's management. The nonconformities observed by the audit team will be handed over to the firm at the end of each day for necessary corrective action. Time frame for the corrective action(s) will be decided by the applicant organization. The nonconformity report will be signed by Management Representative or authorized signatory of the organization.

d) Report

A brief report is handed over to applicant organization, which included nonconformity statements.

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5.6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF APPLICANT DURING THE AUDIT

5.6.1 The applicant is expected to provide following assistance to the audit team during the audits:

- a) Arrangements of stay, local guidance and travel arrangements etc.
- b) The CEO or his authorized nominee and the Management Representative of the company must be present during the opening and closing meetings. As far as possible, all responsible personnel of the company whose departments are being audited should be present in these meetings.
- c) In the interest of the applicant, all efforts should be made to see that time of the audit team is not wasted on account of non availability of relevant personnel, documents, records, shut down of unit(s) being audited etc.
- d) The firm will arrange a place/room where members of the audit team can meet and discuss during the day and at the end of the day to exchange their notes and findings.

5.6.2 Before the award of a certificate to the organization is considered, cause(s) of nonconformity and corrective actions taken by the organization on the nonconformities observed during the audit will have to be verified by GSA. This may call for a follow up audit, full or partial, as the case may be.

5.6.3 Before a certificate is awarded, the applicant shall give the following undertaking:

“We shall make no claim direct or implied that the certificate to be granted relates to any products or processes other than those that will be set out in the certificate and the schedule.”

5.7 AWARD OF CERTIFICATE


5.7.1 Based on the findings of the audit team and satisfactory report, organization will be granted a certificate by GSA. The certificate shall be granted for a period of three years. The steps involved in certification are indicated in Figure 1. There are four possible outcomes:

- a) recommendation for certification,
- b) recommendation for certification subject to corrective actions being implemented satisfactorily and / or effectively,
- c) limited re-audit or follow-up visit at a later date,
- d) no recommendation for certification, which usually means that a complete re-audit is necessary.

For (c) and (d) above, additional fee and expenses will be charged.

Note: The certificate cannot be recommended in case of any unresolved nonconformities identified during the audit.

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5.7.2. When the certification is not granted,

- i. applicant organization has the opportunity to address resulting issues within six (6) months for a stage 2 audit to be re-organized;
- ii. applicant organization unable to address issues within six (6) months, would be required to sign a new certification contract for certification processes to continue.

5.7.3 Award of certificate will be followed by surveillance audits at least once a year by the auditor(s) of GSA to verify the effective implementation and maintenance of the management system established by the organization.

5.7.4 During the operation of certification, when an organization fails to observe the conditions of the Management Systems Certification Scheme or where there have been significant changes in the organization of the certified client, the certificate of the organization is liable to be suspended or withdrawn and may call for special visits for which organization is liable to pay special visit charges, as set out in schedule of fees.

5.8. SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES

5.8.1. After achieving certification, an organisation is granted certification for a three year period, subject to ongoing reassessment. There's the need to periodically review the effectiveness and continued compliance of the certified client's management system fulfilment of the specified requirements and the achievement its intended results and objectives.


5.8.2. The surveillance audits are carried out on-site, but may not necessarily be a full system audit. It's planned with subsequent surveillance activities so that GSA MSCS can maintain confidence that the client's certified management system continues to fulfil requirements.

5.8.3. GSA MSCS conducts surveillance audits at least once a year. The date of the first surveillance audit following initial certification is not more than 12 months from the last day of the decision making. Two-years of surveillance Audits are then followed by the Re-certification Audit.

5.9. RENEWAL, SUSPENSION, WITHDRAWAL OR REDUCTION OF SCOPE OF CERTIFICATE

5.8.1 Any certificate awarded automatically expires at the end of the period for which it is awarded. A recertification/renewal notice will be issued to the certificate holder by GSA about four months before the expiry of the current operative period. The organization is required to submit the renewal application along with the original copy of the certificate at least three months in advance before the expiry of the certificate, which will be followed by a complete audit of the management system of the organization.

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5.8.2 If some discrepancies are found during the audit, the organization will be asked to identify the cause(s) of the discrepancies and take appropriate corrective action. After the organization has taken necessary action to remove discrepancies, the Management Systems Certification will be renewed for a period of three years.

5.8.3 Certification is suspended any time condition of the client's management system cannot be verified or is verified as not being effectively maintained. Certification is suspended when:

- a) client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system;
- b) certified client does not submit itself for surveillance within the specified time frame;
- c) client has voluntarily requested for suspension;
- d) client does not complete corrective actions within agreed time scale;
- e) the certificate or logo of MSCS is misused in any way;
- f) the client fails to comply with the financial requirements of the agreement of certification;
- g) the client undertakes actions which bring MSCS into disrepute.

The maximum period of suspension is six months unless for any specific reason extended by GSA, after which conditions for withdrawal apply.


5.8.4 Certification is withdrawn when a client's management system demonstrates significant non-conformance(s) with audit standard or planned arrangements and a failure to react to and correct the non-conformance(s) after the stipulated time. Once the certificate is withdrawn and if the client wishes to get the certification again, GSA would carry out a complete re-audit.

5.8.5 The scope of certification can be extended or reduced on receipt of written request from the client under one or more of the following:

- a) when products/services are added or deleted from the existing scope,
- b) when the client increases or decreases the production capacity or range covered in the scope, with additional or less manpower or resources within the existing management systems certified.
- c) change in number of sites.

GSA may reduce the client's scope of certification to exclude the parts not meeting requirements, when the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements for those parts of the scope of certification. Reductions will be in line with the requirements of the standard used for certification.

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5.9. OBLIGATION OF CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

5.9.1 The organization shall at all times comply with the requirements of the certification as set out therein and comply with these regulations or any amendments thereto;

5.9.2 The organization shall only claim that it is holding a certificate in respect of the capability which is the subject of the certificate and which relates to the products, processes or systems in accordance with the certification requirements;

5.9.3 The organization shall not use the certificate in any manner to which the Authority may object and shall not make any statement concerning the authority of the certificate holder's use of the certificate which in the opinion of the Authority may be misleading;

5.9.4 The organization shall submit to the Authority for approval the form in which he proposes to use his certificate or proposes to make references to the certificate.

5.9.5 The organization shall upon expiry of its period of validity, suspension, or cancellation of the certificate, however determined, discontinue its use forthwith and withdraw all promotional and advertising matter which contains any reference thereto;

5.9.6 The organization shall not make any change in the Management System which forms the basis for the grant or renewal of the certificate and which prevents his compliance with the Scheme without prior approval of the Authority;


5.9.7 The organization shall submit to the Authority any amendments to the approved documented System;

5.9.8 The organization shall document all changes made to the Management System and make records of such changes available to Authority's designated officers on request. A change in key personnel in relation to management of the certified systems and technological functions or senior management shall be notified to the Authority by the organization;

5.9.9. The organization shall permit access to a team appointed by the Authority for purposes of assessment, audit or surveillance. The certificate holder shall give full details of all actions taken in response to field problems arising from allegations of defects in products, processes or systems covered in the certificate and allow Authority 's officers access to all relevant records and documents for the purpose of verifying such details;

5.9.10. The organization shall be required to produce evidence of continuing operations for the products, processes or systems covered by the certificate holder. The certificate holder shall notify the Authority in writing of discontinuance in such operations exceeding three months. Discontinuance of a certificate in excess of six months or more may lead to cancellation of certification. In such cases, a fresh application shall be submitted to the Authority and an assessment visit will be necessary prior to grant of a new certificate.

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5.10 PRIVILEGES OF CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

5.10.1. The certificate holder can show the original management system certificate to anyone concerned to demonstrate conformance. If need be it can be photocopied and displayed at various locations.

5.10.2. The use of management systems certification mark on letter-heads, in advertisements, brochures, complimentary and for other promotional purposes is allowed.

5.10.3. Each certificate holder shall be listed in the register of certification maintained by GSA.

5.11. RE-CERTIFICATION

5.11.1. The final part of the 3-year certification cycle is the more comprehensive re-certification assessment at the end of the third surveillance year. The purpose of the recertification assessment is to confirm the continued conformity and effectiveness of the management system as a whole, and its continued relevance and applicability for the scope of certification.

5.11.2. The recertification audit is planned and conducted to evaluate the continued fulfilment of all of the requirements of the relevant management system standard or other normative document. This is planned and conducted in due time (3 months before expiration of certification) to enable for timely renewal before the certificate expiry date.

5.12. APPEALS

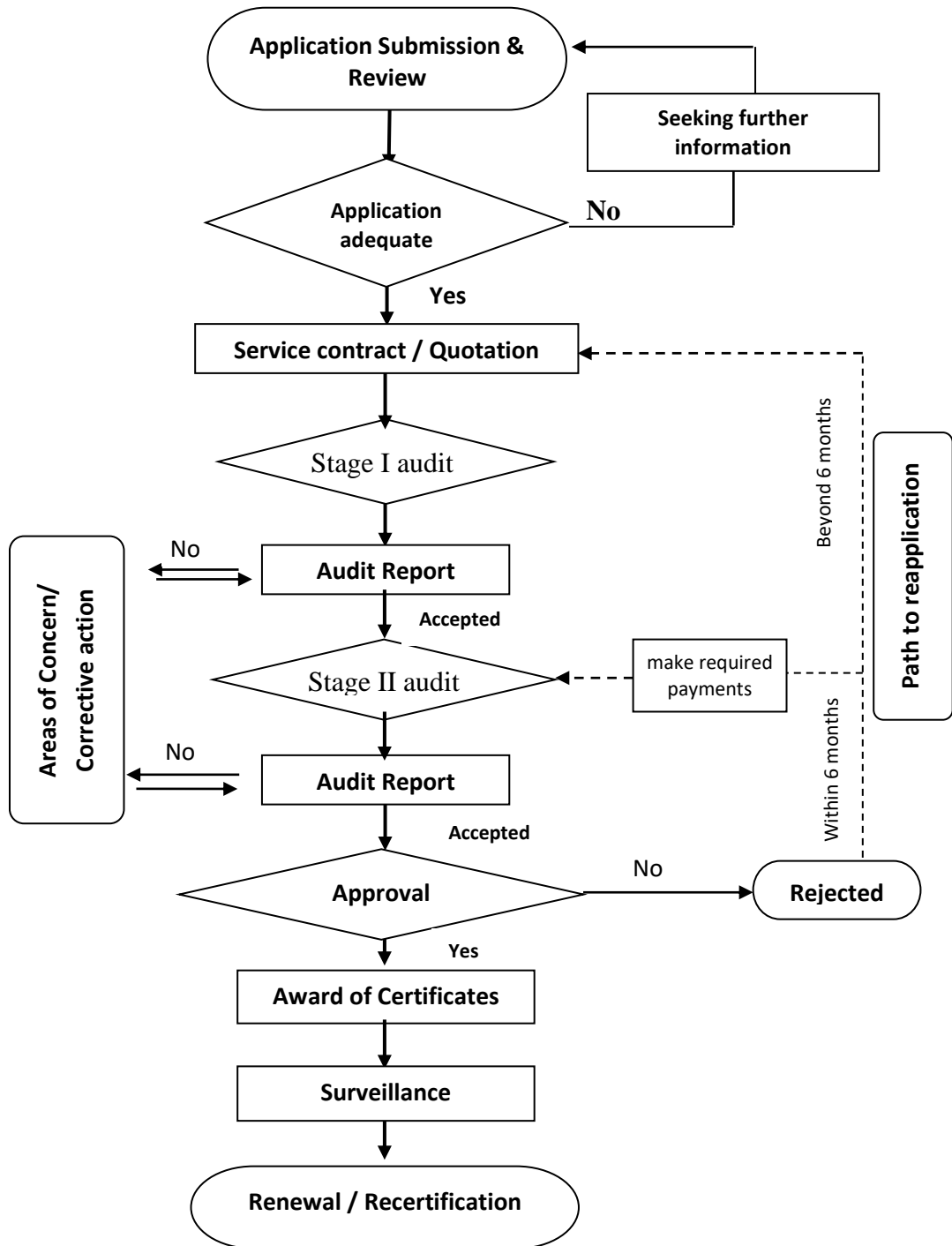
5.12.1 Any decision taken in respect of granting, withholding, renewal, suspension or withdrawal of certification under the GSA Management Systems Certification Scheme can be appealed against.


5.12.2 The appeal shall be made formally in writing to the Appeals Committee not later than 90 days from the date of intimation of the decision by GSA. The verdict of Appeals Committee shall be final.

5.12.3 For the procedures and guidelines for making an appeal contact Head, Management Systems Certification at Ghana Standards Authority, Accra, Ghana.

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FIG 1 PROCESS OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CERTIFICATION



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ANNEX A

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OBTAINING PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FROM
THE APPLICANT FOR OBTAINING CERTIFICATE FOR MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM AGAINST RELEVANT GHANA STANDARDS**

1. DETAILS OF THE COMPANY

1.1 Name of the Firm:

1.2. Address of the Registered Office:

Telephone _____ Mobile _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Web Site _____

1.3. Address of the Facility/ Factory _____

Telephone _____ Mobile _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Web Site _____

Contact Person (Management Representative)

(Name: _____ Designation: _____)

Telephone _____ Mobile _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Web Site _____

1.4 Status of the Unit/ Organization


Large: _____ Medium: _____ Small: _____

1.5 Indicate whether the unit is a part of some larger organization, if so give the name and address of the holding organization

Name: _____

Address: _____

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2. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES


2.1 Indicate the effective number of employees who will be present at the time of audit i.e. employees refers to all individuals whose work activities support the scope of the certification

No	Sites (Single/Multi-sites) & Location	Permanent	Temporary	Total

2.2 Description of SCOPE for which certificate is sought:

2.3. Description of category of products or processes for which certificate is sought for (ISO 22000/ HACCP):

No	Food Categories	Products/ Processes	Number of HACCP plans in this category	
			CCPs	oPRPs

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2.4. Please give details of any significant environmental issues relating to your activities:

2.5. What are the significant environmental Aspects and impact arising from your products and services?


SI No	Aspects	Impact

2.6. OH&S hazards, associated risk and severity of outcome:

SI No	Health hazard	Associated Risk

2.7. Please identify the main environmental/ health and safety legislation and regulations that relate to your activities, sites and operations:

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3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (For ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS and ISO 22000)

3.1 Description of category of products or processes for which certificate is sought _____

3.2 Quality Management System Standard/ Environmental Management System/ Occupational Health & Safety Management System and/or Food Safety Management Systems Standard Assessment Schedule as applicable

GS/ISO _____

3.3. Details of Assessment and/or certificate already held _____


3.4. Details of any Management System Documentation: _____

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (for ISO 14001)

4.1. Land Use (Site)

- a) Total area of the plot
- b) Total area of the Building
- c) Total are of Unit/Factory
- d) Number of floors
- e) Height of the Building
- f) Height of working hall
- g) Total area set aside for wild life habitat

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h) Area of contamination of land

4.2. Raw Material/Natural Resources

- a) Name of raw materials
- b) Whether imported/indigenous
- c) Annual consumption value
- d) Use of natural resources, if any

4.3. Energy Management

- a) Source of Energy - Coal/LPG/Oil/Electricity/Non- Conventional Energy/Traditional
- b) Energy - Firewood/Diesel Generating Set
- c) Energy Load (kW)
- d) Clearance Certificate from local Authority

4.4. Air Quality Management

- a) Quantity of emissions such as CO, CO₂, SO₂ etc.

4.5. Water Management

- a) Source of water - ground/municipal
- b) Consumption of water
- c) Management of waste water
- d) Management of storm water

4.6. Effluents Management

- a) Type of effluent
- b) Quality of effluent
- c) Mode of disposal

4.7. Waste Management

- a) Waste produced per quantity of finished product
- b) Percentage waste recycled
- c) Percentage recycled material used in packaging


4.8. Hazardous Material Management

- a) Type of hazardous material generated
- b) Quantity
- c) Mode of disposal/replacement

4.9. Transportation

- a) Have you attempted to reduce the impact of your distribution methods on environment?

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4.10. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

- a) List the legal requirement/standards/codes of practice
- b) Indicate the consent/clearance obtained on the above from authorities
- c) Number of prosecutions, if any

4.11. Emergency Contingency Plans

- a) Number of Environment incidents/accidents
- b) Indicate the plans you have for dealing with emergencies/accidents

4.12. Description of category of products or processes for which **certificate** is sought

4.13. Details of any Occupational Health & Safety Management System certificate already held and/or assessment held

4.14. Details of any Environmental Management System certificate already held and/or assessment held

Signature _____

For and on behalf of _____.

Seal of the Firm

Date:

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