	GHANA STANDARDS AUTHORITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CERTIFICATION SCHEME	MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROCEDURES
DOC: MSCS-P9.2-08	ISSUE: 01	10 JUNE 2020

PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING REMOTE AUDITS

1. PURPOSE

This procedure is to ensure the systematic approach and conditions under which management systems audits can be conducted remotely. It is also to help maximize site access, shorten distances, travel time and cost, providing flexibility to achieving audit objectives.

2. SCOPE

The procedure applies to initial certification, surveillance, recertification, expansion of scope, follow-ups, investigations, verifications and any special audits. The conditions under which GSA-MSCS can choose to conduct audits remotely includes amongst other conditions of, safety constraints, pandemics or travel restrictions.


3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Nonconformity** - Non fulfillment of a requirement.
- 3.2. **Remote audit** - The facilitation of audit or assessment of a client's management system from a location other than being physically present.
- 3.3. **Virtual Site** - An online environment allowing persons from different physical locations to execute processes.
- 3.4. **Audit** - A systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which audit criteria are fulfilled.
- 3.5. **Audit plan** - Description of the activities and arrangements for an audit.
- 3.6. **Audit team**- One or more auditors conducting an audit, supported if needed by technical experts. One auditor of the audit team is appointed as the audit team leader.
- 3.7. **Technical expert**- A person who provides specific knowledge or expertise to the audit team such as specific knowledge or expertise relates to the organization, the process or activity to be audited, or language or culture.
- 3.8. **CB** - Certification Body, herein refers to the GSA-MSCS

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1. **HSC & MR** - are responsible for programming of audits.

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4.2. Team Leader - responsible for planning individual audits.

4.3. DCO - Document Control Officer is responsible for maintaining proper records.


4.4. HSC & IAO – identify and assigning audit team

5. PROCEDURE

Remote audit may be used by GSA-MSCS in accordance with the process described below:


Clause No	Task	Responsibility	Related Documents
5.1	Determine if conditions and definitions under which GSA-MSCS or the CB may choose to conduct audit remotely exist.	HSC	
5.1.1	Remote audits may be chosen when: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Travel to auditee or specific location is not reasonable (i.e. for safety constraints or reasons, pandemic, travel restrictions, instability, etc.). b. The number of sites to be assessed is difficult for the CB to completely fulfill within its timeframe. c. Auditee or client has systematic implementation of its management system where records, data, etc. can be reviewed at any site, despite where the work is being performed. d. The audit or assessment is for a minor extension to scope. e. Auditee or client has a proven track record of conformance at the location of the remote assessment. f. The risk level of the assessment is of low concern to the CB. g. An activity or activities planned for the on-site audit could not be completed and extending the on-site audit is not the best 	HSC	

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Clause No	Task	Responsibility	Related Documents
	<p>resolution.</p> <p>h. The situation requires the audit team to come back for a follow-up, but another visit is not easily achievable within a short time frame.</p> <p>i. CB has an assessor (or team of assessors) already familiar with the client's management system and its practices and have visited the auditee's organization before.</p>		
5.1.2	<p>Remote audit may be less favourable when:</p> <p>a. auditee has a history of nonconformance at the location being assessed.</p> <p>b. during initial assessment activity of a new client or auditee's facility, scope or significant change.</p>	HSC	
5.2	<p>Appoint audit team and leader.</p> <p>NB: Auditor-in-training and technical expert maybe included where necessary.</p>	HSC/ IAO	
5.3	<p>Determine and select the appropriate technology (i.e. ICT) to be used for the assessment.</p>	HSC/ Team Leader	
5.4	<p>Determine the risk associated with the remote audit to include the risk of impartiality and objectivity, confidentiality, methodology or approach, technology use and mitigation measures.</p> <p>NOTE 1: Both parties need to take appropriate necessary measures to safeguard confidentiality data in any format</p>	HSC / Team Leader	
5.4.1	<p>Inform participating team members of the risk assessment, in the preparation of the team.</p>	Team Leader	
5.5	<p>Agree with auditee on the chosen technology (e.g. ICT) for use in the remote auditing.</p>	HSC & Audit Team leader	
5.6	<p>Plan the audit – indicating the methodology and technology to be used (e.g. documentation review, email, teleconference, webEx, zoom, etc).</p> <p>Audit plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scope 	Team leader	

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Clause No	Task	Responsibility	Related Documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List of activities, items, areas, information and personnel to be involved in the remote audit ▪ Timeframe for conducting remote audit, etc. 		
5.7	Intimate auditee of audit plan at least 5 days prior to the remote audit	Team leader	MSCS-F9.2-13
5.8	Prepare and plan for the remote audit by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. setting up the appropriate technological method (if any) depending on choice selected to be used. b. Testing platform compatibility between the audit team (CB) and auditee prior to audit. c. Provision and use of webcams, cameras, etc, when physical evaluation of an event is desired or necessary 	Team Leader	
5.8.1	For methodology of document review or email: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contact CB or auditee through agreed medium for necessary documentation to be used for conducting the remote audit 	Team leader	
5.8.2	For teleconferencing or use of zoom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Set up appropriate ICT facilities for use b. Team briefing & appointing roles c. Conduct opening via ICT d. Record attendance by requesting names present or contacted 	CB / HSC Team leader Team Leader Team Leader	
5.8.3	Ensure appropriate copies of all auditee's required documentation have been made available by contacting CB or auditee	Team Leader	
5.9	Perform the remote audit (as per audit plan) in a manner that resembles an on-site audit as closely as possible. Gather evidence, evaluate and verify information	Audit team	
5.10	Prepare audit conclusions from identified findings summarizing them into opportunities for improvement (OFI), observations and	Audit team	MSCS-F9.2-12

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Clause No	Task	Responsibility	Related Documents
	nonconformities, where applicable. Grade the nonconformities in the same manner as if it was detected on-site.		
5.11	Conduct closing meeting and record attendance. Give opportunities for questions and clarification from auditee.	Team Leader	MSCS-F9.1-02
5.12	Prepare audit report to include details of all records reviewed and findings.	Audit Team	MSCS-F9.2-08 MSCS-F9.2-13
5.13	Submit audit report and nonconformities to CB for onward submission to auditee within five (5) working days.	Team Leader	

6. REFERENCES

Doc: MSCS-F9.1-01 Agenda for the opening meeting

Doc: MSCS-F9.1-02 Attendance sheet of member's present

Doc: MSCS-F9.1-03 Agenda for the closing meeting

DOC: MSCS-F9.2-12 Nonconformity report (NCR)

DOC: MSCS-F9.2-13 Intimation to the applicant of the audit team and audit dates.

ISO/IEC 17021-1 Conformity Assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and Certification of Management Systems. Part 1: Requirements

IAF ID 12 Principles of Remote Assessment.

IAF MD 4 IAF Mandatory Document for use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing / Assessment purposes

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