

CODE OF ETHICS

for notified certification bodies of management systems in the SIC System

SIC-N-10:20

INTRODUCTION

The SIC (System of International Certification) is a partnership of organizations providing certification, inspection, and other related services regarding management systems, products and personnel in various fields of activity.

This document is mandatory for the management system certification bodies notified in the SIC (hereinafter referred to as the System) and describes their code of ethics and rules of conduct.

Management systems certification bodies (hereinafter referred to as CBs) notified in the System are the CBs that have passed the notification procedure and carry out their activities in accordance with the rules established in the System, as well as strictly adhering to the principles set out in ISO / IEC 17021-1: 2015 "Conformity assessment. Requirements for bodies carrying out audits and certification of management systems ", namely:

- impartiality;
- competence;
- responsibility;
- transparency;
- confidentiality;
- addressing complaints;
- risk based approach.

This document is subject to changes or updates. In this case, changes or updates will be notified to the CB.

1 GUIDELINES

- 1.1 CBs provide their services in countries of the world with different cultures, traditions and political systems. The CB employs intelligent, professional and conscientious specialists who have great respect for the culture and traditions of their customers, partners and other interested parties. The main guiding principles of the CB are: the unacceptability of racism, chauvinism, nationalism and religious intolerance.
- 1.2 All service relations, both within the CB and with other CBs in the System, should be built only on the basis of mutual respect, support and professionalism, free and fair competition in the certification services market is the only acceptable condition for a successful business, while competition within the System between the notified CB is unacceptable.
- 1.3 Principles outlined in ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015

1.3.1 Impartiality

The CB should avoid objectionable or questionable conduct, including the use of false, incorrect, incomplete or biased information, and refuse to pay or receive remuneration for securing employment. The CB must use exclusively ethical means to gain advantages in the provision of services and to not intentionally harm any notified member of the System.

The CB must strictly adhere to the principle of impartiality and independence in the provision of services, avoiding possible threats of non-compliance, such as:

- actions based on personal (for example, financial) interests;
- consulting activities in relation to customer organizations that are provided with certification services;
- outsourcing management system certification activities to consulting organizations;

- involvement of personnel who previously participated in consulting a specific customer organization for at least 2 years after the completion of these works in audits or other activities related to certification of management systems;
- the presence of friendly relations or excessive trust in the customer organization;
- actions done due to fear, etc.

All CB personnel must act independently and impartially and must not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to undermine CB's credibility. In particular, the CB must take action in response to any threat to its impartiality caused by the actions of other persons, bodies or organizations.

The CB should require, both from its own and from external personnel, to promptly report any situations known to them that may put either themselves or the CB in a position of conflict of interest.

1.3.2 Competence

Assuming the obligation to provide services, the CB and its employees must have the necessary amount of knowledge and skills in order to fulfill obligations in a conscientious and professional manner, to guarantee the customer services based on proven and approved methods using all, including the latest international norms and rules.

CB employees are obliged to constantly update their professional knowledge by taking appropriate courses and through self-education.

For the provision of certified services, the CB must engage only auditors with the competence corresponding to their qualifications, confirmed by a specific code.

1.3.3 Responsibility

The CB is responsible for assessing a sufficient amount of objective evidence, on the basis of which a decision is made on registration, renewal, narrowing / expanding the scope of certification, suspension and cancellation of certificates.

The CB is responsible for the timely payment, sufficiency and accuracy of the information entered into the SIC-PRO software product for registration and renewal of the certificate.

The CB does not issue, stamp or sign documents without carrying out the appropriate procedures or necessary measures within the framework of the rules of the System.

1.3.4 Transparency

The CB is required to provide accurate and non-misleading information to all of its contracting entities and other interested parties.

The CB must inform its customers that it is a member of the System and performs work in accordance with the established rules. The customer, not the CB, is responsible for meeting the certification requirements.

1.3.5 Confidentiality of information

The CB should treat all information submitted by contracting organizations as confidential, and their content or copies should not be transferred to third parties, except in cases at the request of applicable laws, by court verdict, in court proceedings, at the request of government authorities or with the permission of the organization/client. (Any data published in the SIC Registry is considered information available to all interested parties).

The principle of confidentiality should be strictly adhered, even if the disclosure or dissemination of information does not cause material or other damage to the parties.

1.3.6 Addressing Complaints

An indicator of the quality of the CB is the timely response to complaints.

The CB must promptly investigate complaints, claims, if they are deemed justified, take appropriate actions to identify and eliminate the causes of their occurrence. Effective response to complaints, claims protects against errors, omissions or unreasonable actions.

1.3.7 Risk based approach

The CB must consider the risks associated with competent, consistent and impartial activities within the System.

Risks can include factors associated with:

- the sample used in the process of work;
- actually present and perceived impartiality;
- legal, regulatory and liability issues;
- the contracting organization and its context;
- the impact of the CB on the customer organization and its activities;
- safety and labor protection of CB personnel and involved non-staff personnel;
- perception by stakeholders;
- misleading claims of the contracting authority;
- use of logos;
- other.

2 RULES

2.1 Basic rules of business conduct for CB employees and non-staff personnel

CB employees and involved non-staff personnel in the framework of the implementation of activities in the System must follow the following rules:

- The CB is responsible for any violation of this Code of Ethics and for all the consequences of such violations;
- reject bribery in any form; promote a corporate culture of trust and zero tolerance for bribery;
- show tolerance and respect for the customs and traditions of the people of the world, take into account the cultural and other specificities of various ethnic and social groups, religious denominations, political views, promote interethnic and interfaith harmony;
- in relation to stakeholders, the following are not allowed:
 - a. any kind of expression and action of a discriminatory nature based on gender, age, race, nationality, language, citizenship, social, property or family status, political or religious preferences;

- b. dismissive tone, rudeness, arrogance, incorrect remarks, presentation of inappropriate, undeserved accusations;
 - c. threats, offensive language or remarks, actions that interfere with normal communication or provoke illegal behavior.
- to promote the establishment in the team of business relationships and constructive cooperation with each other and with all interested parties;
 - to be polite, benevolent, correct, attentive and to show tolerance in communicating with stakeholders.

2.2 Marketing

The CB has the full right to choose the methods of marketing activities that it considers necessary to achieve its goals. However, marketing methods should not lead to a situation when deliberate misinformation is used in the conduct of business, which may harm other certification bodies: both notified in the System and not included in the System.

The CB should not transfer to third-party organizations any information entrusted to it by both the contracting organizations and the System in order to obtain benefits.

2.3 Failure to comply with the requirements of standards for compliance with which certification work is carried out

The CB should not deliberately distort the meaning of the requirements of any standards for compliance with which the work is carried out in order to understate / overestimate the level of their requirements and thus receive business proposals.