

Section – VI

Standardization: Quality Management & Accreditation's



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Standardization: Benchmarking, Quality Management & Accreditation's

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Standards

Standards make an enormous contribution to most aspects of our lives - although very often, that contribution is invisible. It is when there is an absence of standards that their importance is brought home. For example, as purchasers or users of products, we soon notice when they turn out to be of poor quality, do not fit, are incompatible with equipment we already have, are unreliable or dangerous. When products meet our expectations, we tend to take this for granted. We are usually unaware of the role played by standards in raising levels of quality, safety, reliability, efficiency and interchangeability - as well as in providing such benefits at an economical cost.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is the world's largest developer of standards. Founded in 1946, ISO consists of approximately 90 member countries at present and this number is expected to grow. With the exception of the electrical and electronic engineering industries (which are covered by International Electro technical Commission - IEC), the ISO is responsible for the promotion and development of international standards and related activities, including conformity assessments such as testing, inspection, laboratory accreditation, certification and quality assessments.

Standardization may have one or more specific aims, to make a product, process or service fit for its purpose. Such aims can be, but are not restricted to, variety control, usability, compatibility, interchange-ability, health, safety, protection of the environment, product protection, mutual understanding, economic performance, trade. They can be overlapping.

What is Conformity Assessment & Accreditation?

Conformity assessment is the demonstration that specified requirements relating to a Product, Process, System, Person or Body is fulfilled. Conformity assessment helps demonstrate and raise quality.

Certification is a means of providing assurance that the product complies with specified standards and other normative documents.

Accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring them that product or service delivered by the supplier meets the desired laid down standards.

Quality Standards

While there are many laid down standards, we would elaborate the ISO 9000:2004 standards, due to its great applicability to Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) for quality management.

The ISO 9000 series standards provide the requirements to which organisations desirous of certification must conform. One very important aspect of the standards is that they were very generic in nature and ingenuity is required while interpreting the standards' applicability to the industry or firm in question.

The ISO 9001:2004 standard sets the standards as to how the quality of the product/service should be managed through Quality Management Systems.

Under ISO-9000: 2004, there are the following Primary Standards:

ISO-9000 Quality Management System - Fundamental & Vocabulary
ISO-9001 Quality Management - System Requirements
ISO-9004: 2000 Quality Management System - Guidance to Performance Improvement
ISO-19011: 2002 Guidelines for Quality and/or Environmental management systems Auditing
ISO-14001: 2004 Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use.

The focus of the standard has shifted from building quality to managing quality. Hence there is a very strong emphasis on the management commitment and how the top management is providing leadership to the various processes involved in product realization for the satisfaction of the customer. The focus has also moved more towards the stated and implied requirements of the customer.

Implementation of Quality Standards in SME Units

One of the important aspects of the ISO registration process is to verify whether the unit seeking registration is indeed doing what is being claimed in its quality manual.

The best strategy to adopt when embarking on the road to ISO registration is to adopt a simple model: design a quality assurance model from bottom up to ensure that what is done is indeed what is documented. Most auditors, while doing third party audits for registration, like to follow the "show me mapping" process.

The process should begin with a familiarization with the standard, followed by an assessment of the current quality assurance system with a special focus on how it addresses the ISO requirements. Thereafter, corrective actions to remove the gaps should be initiated and continuous monitoring via internal quality audits should take place to prevent the degradation of the systems' entropy to a higher level. It is advisable to have the assistance of a consultant to guide the implementation efforts.

The registrars, after conducting the audit, send their recommendations to the accrediting body, which gives the certification. After certification, periodic "unannounced" audits are conducted to ensure that the unit is complying with the requirements of the standard.

Incidentally, it makes good sense to decentralize registration efforts both from the point of view of acquiring as well as retaining certification.

The designed Quality Assurance system should:

- Suit the unit's need
- Not be restrictive to the point of being impractical
- Be continuously upgraded.

Indeed the implicit driving force behind the registration process should be the formulation of a well throughout, effective system designed to bring about improved performance.

Reimbursement of ISO 9001/14001 Certification / Consultancy Expenses for SMEs

Ministry of Small Scale Industries, Government of India is supporting and working through various schemes to build competitiveness in small-scale industries. One of the schemes is on promotion of the implementation of ISO 9001/ISO 14001 certification in small-scale industries. Finance could be a major deterrent for the small-scale industries to invest in implementation of the quality management and/or environmental management system standards. To support this endeavor, the ministry reimburses the consultancy and the certification expenses up to a maximum of Rs 75,000/- for the small-scale industries.

To regulate the quality of certification and to promote national accreditation structure, Ministry of Small Scale Industries has decided that with effect from January 1, 2007, the consultancy expenses arising from the consultancy work done by the following categories of consultants will be considered for reimbursement:

- Quality Council of India (QCI)
- Consultants registered with NRBPT
- TQM Division of Textiles Committee
- National Productivity Council (NPC)
- Consultancy Development Centre (CDC)
- Small Industries Institute
- CII/FICCI/ASSOCHAM

The units will have to forward their application with a copy of the receipts from consultants for the fees received by them from the industry duly attested by any of the following:

- Director of Industries
- Director, Small Industries Service institute
- General Manager, Distt. Industries Centre
- Chartered Accountant

For further details of the scheme, kindly contact O/o DCSSI, New Delhi.

Quality Links

Quality Council of India

Quality Council of India is the national level body responsible for formulating the strategy, general policy, constitution and monitoring of various components of QCI including the accreditation boards to ensure an effective accreditation system, monitoring the progress of activities & appeal mechanisms set by the respective boards.

Quality Council of India, (QCI), registered as autonomous society was formed by a joint initiative of Government of India and the Indian Industry represented by the three prime industry associations, ASSOCHAM, CII and FICCI.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

The Bureau of Indian Standards is the national standards body of India. It deals with all aspects of standardization, certification and quality.

<http://www.bis.org.in/>

National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL)

NABL is an autonomous body under the aegis of Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, and is registered under the Societies Act. NABL has been established with the objective to provide Government, Industry Associations and Industry in general with a scheme for third-party assessment of the quality and technical competence of testing and calibration laboratories. Government of India has authorised NABL as the sole accreditation body for Testing and Calibration laboratories.

In order to achieve this objective, NABL provides laboratory accreditation services to laboratories that are performing tests / calibrations in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189:2003 for medical laboratories.

<http://www.nabl-india.org/>

DNV

DNV is an international organisation with a network of 300 offices spread over 100 countries. DNV's 7,000 employees work at key locations in Europe, in the Americas and in Asia and Australia.

<http://www.dnv.com/>

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

The International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) is the world association of Conformity Assessment Accreditation Bodies in the fields of management systems, products, services, personnel and other similar programmes of conformity assessment.

<http://www.iaf.nu/>

ISO (International Organization for Standardization)

ISO is the world's largest developer of standards. Although ISO's principal activity is the development of technical standards, ISO standards also have important economic and social repercussions. ISO standards make a positive difference, not just to engineers and manufacturers for whom they solve basic problems in production and distribution, but to society as a whole.

<http://www.iso.org/iso/en/ISOOnline.frontpage>

International Personnel Certification Association (IPC)

IATCA (International Auditor and Training Certification Association) has been replaced by IPC, the International Personnel Certification Association (IPC). The reasons for this change are simple. The members of IATCA recognized that there are now many sectors within business and industry and government that require and benefit from personnel certification. IATCA was established 10 years ago expressly to address the management systems market.

<http://iatca.com/>

Standardization, Testing and Quality Certification (STQC)

Standardization, Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) Directorate is an attached office under the Department of Information Technology, Government of India. STQC provides cost-effective International level Assurance Services in Quality and Security on a national level to Indian industry and users. STQC Services are also being extended to other overseas countries.

<http://www.stqc.nic.in>

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4M Solutions