

General Certification Rules



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Introduction

This Regulation contains:

- Standards regarding the inspection and certification policy of Control Union CUWG Spain.
- Specifies the rights and obligations of both clients and CU WG Spain.
- Establishes additional standards for specific programs addressed in specific documents.
- Contains regulations related to contract conditions.

1. Scope and Applicability

CU WG SPAIN provides its services to legal entities, which can be individuals, companies, or societies, referred to as "Clients". CU WG SPAIN may provide its services directly through its own employees or, at its discretion, through an affiliate of CU WG SPAIN or any other organization. When CU WG SPAIN subcontracts part of its work to third parties, it will retain full authority and responsibility under all circumstances to have a valid contractual agreement with the Client and to grant, maintain, extend, reduce, suspend, or withdraw certification. CU WG SPAIN will notify its clients of any changes to certification requirements within a reasonable timeframe and communicate them on its website.

This Client Assessment Manual is an integral part of the set of normative documents referenced in the Service Contract. CU WG SPAIN has the right to modify or expand this Client Assessment Manual as it sees fit, provided it continues to comply with the requirements of harmonized standards (e.g., ISO/IEC 17020, ISO/IEC 17065, and ISO/IEC 17021, as applicable). For any changes or expansions to this Manual, a three-month transition period may be given from the adoption date, clearly indicating the end date of the transition period.

In all cases where this Client Assessment Manual, or any other applicable regulations or agreements, do not provide sufficient guidance, the certification director will make the necessary decision.

2. Confidentiality

CU WG SPAIN and its employees at all levels of its organization, including committee members, contractors, personnel from external bodies, or individuals acting on behalf of CU WG SPAIN, are obligated to consider all information obtained in the course of their business activities as proprietary information and treat it as confidential.

CU WG SPAIN cannot disclose such information to any third party without the written consent of the Client.

CU WG SPAIN will use Clients' confidential information solely for the purpose of its activities and will not disclose that confidential information or grant access to a third party without their prior written consent.

When CU WG Spain is required by law or authorization of contractual provisions to disclose Clients' confidential information, CU WG Spain will notify the client of such request; unless prohibited by law. We may need to disclose information to our employees, including committee members, contractors, affiliated offices, personnel from external bodies, or individuals acting on behalf of CU WG SPAIN, to provide the agreed-upon services.

CU WG Spain is obligated to inform any individual about the status of their certification upon request.

As a client, you may disclose confidential information about our procedures and methods to your affiliates (i.e., anyone who directly or indirectly controls you, is controlled by you, or is under your direct or indirect control) and to your officers, employees, or subcontractors only on a need-to-know basis. Disclosure to any other third party is prohibited.

Client information obtained from sources other than the client (e.g., from a claimant or a regulatory body) will be treated as confidential information unless both the information source and the client consent to disclose it.

CU WG SPAIN personnel, including committee members, contractors, personnel from external bodies, or individuals acting on behalf of CU WG SPAIN, will keep confidential all information obtained or created during the performance of CU WG SPAIN activities, except as required by law. Individuals present during the assessment who are not subject to certification activities or acting on behalf of CU WG SPAIN must sign a confidentiality agreement to prevent them from compromising CU WG SPAIN's objective and impartial position. Any individual who refuses to sign the applicable confidentiality agreement will not be present during the assessment.

3. Types of Certifications

CU WG SPAIN utilizes a series of assessment methods, depending on the type of certification applied. Generally, we distinguish between three types of certifications:

Inspection:

It is an evaluation of materials, products, facilities, plants, processes, work procedures, or services, and the determination of their conformity with requirements. The validity of the assessment result is only related to the moment of assessment. The conformity statement of an inspection establishes that the inspection body has evaluated a specific product or process, etc., on a specific date against a specific set of requirements and found them to be in conformity at that time. The conformity statement does not have validity. In other words, there is no certification, only a conformity statement. When a conformity statement is issued, it is not referred to as a certificate but rather a statement. This also means that an inspection statement cannot be suspended or withdrawn. The person performing an inspection is known as an inspector. It also means that basically every assessment is the same, every time a new conformity statement must be issued. Inspection schemes typically do not apply a mark or logo. Accredited inspection activities are based on ISO/IEC 17020.

Product Certification:

This is a systematic process to obtain records, statements of fact, or other relevant information and objectively evaluate them to determine to what extent a product, process, or service complies with a specific set of requirements. The objective is to provide confidence to consumers, regulators, industry, and other stakeholders that products meet specified requirements. A product in this definition can also be read as a process or service. And a product certification process may contain elements of inspections or management system certification.

The conformity statement establishes that the certification body, based on the evaluation of a specific product or process, etc., on a specific date against a specific set of requirements, has justified confidence that this specific product or process, etc., will remain compliant during the validity period established in the statement. The statement is typically known as a certificate. In product certification, the first assessment is always an initial assessment, followed by surveillance assessments and periodically a recertification assessment, where a new certificate is issued. Product certification systems typically allow the use of a logo or mark that can be applied to the product. These logos and

marks may have to comply with specific requirements. Accredited product certification activities are based on ISO/IEC 17065.

Management System Certification:

This is a systematic process to obtain evidence of evaluation and objectively assess it to determine to what extent the management system complies with a specific set of requirements.

The objective of management system certification is to provide confidence that the management system conforms to specified requirements, is capable of consistently achieving its stated policy and objectives and is applied effectively. An assessment of the management system is known as an audit, and the person conducting an audit is an auditor.

Management system processes typically refer to activities that have more than one possible option to achieve the established goal and are usually a framework of policies, processes, and procedures used to ensure that the organization can fulfil all tasks required to achieve its objectives. Processes, procedures, and policies of a management system interact with each other and with their environment. Consequently, a process can be initiated to reach a predefined outcome, but it is not guaranteed that this outcome will actually be achieved. Management system processes are often continuous processes. Past results are likely to affect future results. Therefore, making a certification decision cannot be considered without the context of past achievements and must be considered when assessing whether the management system as a whole will remain compliant and effective, as well as relevant and applicable for the certification scope.

In management system certification, suggesting that the product, process, or service from that system complies is never allowed; after all, that is not what has been evaluated. Therefore, if there is a logo or mark to use, it is not allowed to be directly used on the product or product packaging, nor is it allowed to indicate elsewhere that the product complies or has a certain status. Logos and marks may have to comply with specific requirements. Accredited management system certification activities are based on ISO/IEC 17021.

4. Types of Assessment

When assessing your evaluation subject, CU WG SPAIN applies the following types of assessment:

Initial Audit:

This is the first audit of a client for a CU certification program. In this initial audit, all requirements of the certification program are evaluated. For inspections and product certifications, all inspections are equal.

For some programs, this initial audit must be conducted in 2 stages:

- Stage 1: Document review.
- Stage 2: On-site audit.

In the initial assessment, documented information of the Client's management system, specific site conditions, the status and understanding of standard requirements within the organization, information about the scope of the management system, applicable legal and regulatory requirements, and the implementation and effectiveness of the Client's management system are reviewed and evaluated.

Recertification Evaluation:

Following the initial assessment, a certificate is issued, the validity period of which depends on the scheme owner. This is the audit to assess the ongoing compliance with all standard requirements and other normative documents.

Recertification/renewal audits are scheduled in a timely manner to allow for timely renewal before the certificate expiration date.

The renewal activity includes reviewing previous follow-up audit reports and considering the client's performance in the most recent certification cycle.

It may be necessary to include Stage 1 in renewal audits when there are significant changes, or conduct the audit in 2 stages in order to optimize resources while still meeting the objectives of the certification renewal audit.

For non-conformities, each program establishes deadlines for the implementation of corrective actions. These must be implemented and verified before the certificate expiration.

If the renewal audit has not been completed or the implementation of corrective actions for non-conformities cannot be verified before the certification expiration date, then certification renewal cannot be recommended, and the validity of the certification cannot be extended. The client will be informed of the consequences. After certification expiration, CU WG Spain can restore certification within the following 6 months, provided that pending certification renewal activities have been completed. The certificate validity date should be the date of the new certification decision or a subsequent one, and the expiration date should be based on the previous certification cycle, if the certified scheme allows it. The above statement depends on the specifications of the scheme itself.

Surveillance Evaluation:

To maintain certification, it must be demonstrated that the client continues to comply with program requirements, which is achieved through surveillance audits.

Surveillance activities include on-site audits to verify compliance with program requirements.

Programs with certification cycles of 1 year: Surveillance audits generally do not apply unless the program establishes surveillance audits for high-risk products, where a surveillance audit may be required after initial certification is granted.

Programs with certification cycles longer than 1 year: Surveillance audits are planned after initial certification is granted. Depending on the scheme, there may be 1, 2, or more surveillance audits.

During surveillance audits, not all program requirements may be evaluated; however, it should be planned along with other surveillance activities, such as:

- Requests from the certification body to the certified client regarding certification-related aspects;
- Review of statements from the certified client regarding their operations (e.g., promotional material, websites);
- Request for documented information sent via electronic means; Other measures to monitor the performance of the certified client.

Special Audits:

- a) **Scope Expansion:** If the client requests an expansion of scope to an already granted certification, CU WG Spain will review the request and determine any audit activities necessary to decide whether the expansion is granted. This may be conducted alongside the surveillance audit.
- b) **Short-Notice or Unannounced Audits:** CU WG Spain may conduct audits on certified clients in the form of short-notice or unannounced visits, according to the contract terms and scheme specifications. These audits are conducted to investigate complaints, in response to changes, as follow-ups to clients with suspended certification, general investigations, among others.
- c) **Sampling Audits:** For certain programs, it may be necessary to conduct exclusive audits for sampling testing, which may be part of the audit program or part of investigations.

Remote Assessment:

The auditor is located in a facility different from the client's. There is interactive communication for audit activities: conducting interviews, observing work performed, and carrying out document reviews with the participation of the auditee. This method requires the auditee to have access to information technology. It may also be applicable when it is preferable to minimize interference between assessment activities and the client's operational processes as much as possible, or when health and safety requirements make off-site methods applicable. When remote assessment is applied, it should not reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of the conventional assessment process and, when possible, should improve it, supporting and maintaining the integrity of the assessment process.

Joint Assessment:

A joint assessment is an assessment in which two or more conformity assessment bodies cooperate to assess a single auditee. This may involve two or more certification bodies, but it could also apply to the scheme owner joining an assessment. Each assessing party must accept full responsibility for its role in the assessment.

Combined Assessment:

It may occur that a client applies two or more management systems of different disciplines (e.g., quality, environment, occupational health and safety). When two or more of these disciplines are assessed together in one assessment, it is called a "combined assessment."

Integrated Assessment:

The client mentioned earlier applying two or more management systems of different disciplines (e.g., quality, environment, occupational health and safety) may have combined these disciplines into a single management system. The assessment of such a management system is called an "integrated assessment."

5. Scope evaluation

The scope of the assessment is specified in your Service Agreement for the applicable assessment and includes identification of:

- The products, processes, services, or management systems for which certification is granted,
- The applicable certification scheme, and

- The standard(s) and other normative document(s), including their version, deemed to comply with the product(s), process(es), service(s), or management system(s).

You are required to inform CU WG SPAIN if the products, processes, services, units, and/or management system(s) under the scope of CU WG SPAIN are also certified by another certification body with the same standard (or if they request certification from another certification body).

When a client and its subcontractors are assessed by different conformity assessment bodies, the Client and its subcontractors must accept that the conformity assessment bodies may exchange information about the operations under their contract.

Changes in the scope of evaluation

Is required to inform CU WG SPAIN as soon as possible if any changes occur that may interfere with or could interfere with the requirements mentioned in the relevant standards or indicate a change in the scope of the certificate. This may include, among others, changes in ownership, structure, management, or any other change that may affect your ability to comply with the applicable standards.

When requesting the addition of new units, products, processes, or services to the scope of your certification, you must submit a written request before production and/or processing begins, to produce/deliver, process, and/or sell the product, process, or service with reference to the certification. You must always submit your request using an application form so that we have a formal record that we have been requested and allowed to perform our services. CU WG SPAIN will evaluate the requested addition and, if the result is positive, will add it to the scope of your certification. This evaluation may require additional consultation. The costs of these are not included in the contract and may be charged based on the actual costs incurred.

6. Certification Application

Client may express interest in the assessment services of CU WG SPAIN by completing an application form for the specific scheme. This application form can be found on the Control Union website, or it can be requested from CU WG SPAIN by mail or phone.

CU WG Spain will evaluate the application and determine if it is possible to offer the service. If feasible, you will be sent a quotation (offer letter) that includes the Terms of Contract. This proposal includes the time required to conduct the audit (according to the different types of audits).

CU WG Spain must verify that the scope of the evaluation is correct, ensuring that all persons, products, processes, services, units, etc., are included in the application and offer, as required by the scheme.

Upon agreement, the client must return the signed offer. By doing so, you enter into a service agreement with CU and will be assigned an identification code.

Please note that by signing the contract, the client is obligated to comply with the following procedures and rules:

- a. Must provide CU WG SPAIN with all documents, product samples, drawings, specifications, and other information required by the CU WG SPAIN assessor, at their sole discretion, to complete the assessment program;
- b. Is obliged to provide access to all locations and facilities that the CU WG SPAIN assessor, at their sole discretion, deems necessary. Failure to provide the required information or access, or

- intentionally delaying the process, may be interpreted as obstruction of the assessment, which may lead to termination of the assessment and, in severe cases, even suspension of the certificate;
- c. The client must, when requested, allow and accommodate the presence of observers from accreditation bodies, scheme owners, government agencies, or trainee assessors during assessments. The client may object to certain individuals representing these organizations but cannot object to the organizations themselves. This means that if one of these organizations expresses interest in being present during an assessment at the organization, the client must comply. Once again, refusal to cooperate may be interpreted as obstruction of the assessment, which may be grounds for terminating the assessment and, in severe cases, even suspending the certificate.
- d. Must immediately inform CU WG SPAIN of any changes in the audited product or organization that may influence what needs to be assessed during the audit and what is declared on the certificate. This can range from additional products to changes in key personnel, from adding a new production line to discontinuing a product. Should be aware of some issues here: if the changes are significant, we may need to adjust the time we need to dedicate to the assessment and provide you with a tailored contract. Or the addition may be something for which the current assessor is not qualified. As a result, we may not be able to conduct the assessment within the agreed-upon time, which adds costs.
- e. In general terms, the client cannot refuse an assessment. However, there may be unforeseen circumstances that make the assessment impossible due to "force majeure" or "acts of God." This may include inaccessible roads, floods, fires, explosions, earthquakes, droughts, tsunamis, etc. And/or if the access is unsafe for the Client and/or assessor due to riots, war (civil), hostilities, acts of terrorism, piracy, rebellion, revolution, military insurrection, or usurpation of power; but also, epidemics, maritime or air disasters, or failures of utility companies (such as: telecommunications, internet, gas, or electricity providers). If such a cause of delay comes to your attention, must immediately notify CU WG SPAIN of the force majeure event and its cause and possible duration.

7. Planning

Based on the application, CU WG Spain will plan the initial audit and assign a qualified auditor (or audit team) to the program.

If necessary, CU WG Spain may hire a technical expert to participate in the assessment.

If the operation is conducted in a language that is not the auditor's proficiency, the participation of translators or interpreters may be required. This will be defined from the submission of the application.

The auditor contacts the client to coordinate the audit date. Any changes should be communicated. If necessary, the auditor will request the submission of documentation prior to the assessment.

The auditor will send you an audit plan, including the audit team members (if applicable) and/or accompanying persons to the audit. The audit plan establishes:

- Audit objectives.
- Audit criteria.
- Audit scope, including the identification of units, processes to be evaluated. Dates and locations where activities will be carried out, as well as the audit method. Duration of the audit. Roles and responsibilities of audit team members and accompanying persons (such as observers, interpreters).

The assigned evaluator will be informed, including all relevant information for the evaluation and the scope of the evaluation (area, subprogram, project size, etc.). In large evaluations, CU WG SPAIN may decide to appoint an evaluation team.

When appropriate, an evaluation plan will be sent to you in due time before the evaluation. This plan is intended to ensure that the evaluation time is used appropriately and efficiently, and that all elements to be evaluated can be assessed within the evaluation timeframe. It must contain at least:

- a) the objectives of the evaluation;
- b) the evaluation criteria;
- c) the scope of the evaluation, including identification of the organizational and functional units or processes to be evaluated;
- d) the dates and locations where on-site evaluation activities will take place, including visits to temporary and remote sites, evaluation activities, if applicable;
- e) the expected duration of on-site evaluation activities;
- f) the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation team members and accompanying persons, such as observers or interpreters.

Based on this information, you should be able to adequately prepare for the evaluation and have the necessary personnel, units, and documents available.

If necessary, you are allowed to object to the appointment of any particular evaluator or technical expert, but you must be able to justify such objection. When your objection is valid, CU WG SPAIN will reconstitute the team and appoint another advisor or expert.

8. Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide CU WG SPAIN with sufficient details to make a certification decision. The evaluation is conducted against all applicable elements of the standard. To achieve this, CU WG SPAIN will verify product and process specifications, system plans, records, procedures, and work instructions, conduct interviews with personnel, and compare findings with the actual situation.

The Client must make all necessary arrangements for the evaluation. They must make available to CU WG SPAIN all information and documents that CU WG SPAIN deems necessary, including actions taken in response to any complaints. It is the client's responsibility to ensure that this information is accurate, complete, and reliable. They must also provide CU WG SPAIN (and any legitimately present authority during the evaluation) with unobstructed access to all areas, facilities, and units within the scope of certification, and personnel and equipment must be available for the evaluation to be conducted effectively. Please note that failure to comply with this requirement may result in suspension or even withdrawal of the certificate, according to a decision by CU WG SPAIN at its sole discretion.

CU WG SPAIN may apply any of the types of evaluation described in Chapter 4. If necessary for verification purposes, CU WG SPAIN may need to take samples for analysis or request the Client to provide samples free of charge. The evaluator will divide the sample into three equal parts and provide the Client with a duplicate. The other two parts are for the laboratory and for CU WG SPAIN. Verification samples must be analysed by a laboratory accredited according to the current version of ISO/IEC 17025 for the applicable matrix. CU WG SPAIN will inform the Client as soon as the results are available. If the analysis results demonstrate non-compliance with applicable regulations, the results may lead to changes in the certification status or scope of the certificate. CU WG SPAIN will not have any responsibility for the accuracy of the laboratory analysis results.

In a management systems evaluation, stage 1 certification will be conducted. The purpose of this stage 1 evaluation is to assess the Client's management system documentation, review the Client's understanding of the requirements, gather information about the scope of the management system and related regulatory compliance, to assess that the Client is planning and conducting internal evaluations, determine the Client's readiness for stage 2 evaluation, and prepare the details of the stage 2 evaluation with the Client. As a result, CU WG SPAIN will have obtained detailed information to focus its stage 2 evaluations. At least part of the stage 1 evaluation must be conducted at the Client's premises.

The evaluation will begin with an opening meeting. The purpose of the opening meeting is to provide a brief explanation of how the evaluation activities will be conducted and to verify a series of prerequisites for the evaluation, such as confidentiality and the availability of personnel. If there are any changes in the scope of certification that were not previously mentioned and that will have an impact on the evaluation time and/or the contract (for example, a new process/unit, etc.), the evaluator will explain that these changes cannot be inspected if they have not been requested. However, the opportunity to adjust the application may still be given at that time. The attendance of senior management and key personnel at the opening (and closing) meeting is considered a sign of commitment.

At the end of the evaluation, a formal closing meeting will be held. The purpose of this meeting is to present the evaluation findings, including the recommendation regarding certification. Non-conformities will be presented in a manner that is understandable, and the timeframe for response will be agreed upon. It's important to note that "understood" does not necessarily mean that the non-conformities have been accepted by the Client. You will have the opportunity to ask questions during the closing meeting. Any divergence of opinion regarding the findings or conclusions of the evaluation between the evaluation team and the Client should be discussed and resolved when possible.

If the evaluation lasts more than one day, each intermediate day will begin with a brief opening meeting and conclude with a summary of the day's encounters.

You must ensure that all necessary measures are taken for the safety of working conditions, sites, and facilities during the evaluation. You should take all necessary steps to eliminate or remedy any obstruction or interruption in the conduct of evaluations and inform CU WG SPAIN in advance of any known, real, or potential risk or hazard associated with any orders or samples or testing. If the objectivity of the evaluation is compromised, the evaluator has the right to suspend the evaluation. Reasons may include, for example, interference from accompanying individuals or refusal to grant access requested by the evaluator.

9. Similar Product/Process

When the standard production process or a product is not available at the time of evaluation, for example, with seasonal products, an assessment of comparable/similar products or processes may be applied. When there is no certified production until the evaluation, the CU WG SPAIN evaluator verifies the production with a product, process, or service that is comparable to the missing product's process or service. This means that it will be determined that the product, process, or service has comparable processing characteristics and risks. Thus, declaring that the evaluated process is the same as the process, leading to the respective standard equivalence of the product.

If a certificate was issued based on the review of the comparable process, the Client is obligated to inform CU WG SPAIN as soon as the processing of that product, process, or service begins. The Client

must provide CU WG SPAIN with the unit identification, product name, batch identification, and start date of the certified production process. This is to allow CU WG SPAIN to plan an additional visit to the certified unit if required. Failure to communicate the first processing in the case of a comparable evaluation may result in provisional validity of the certificate, scope reduction, and ultimately, even suspension of the certificate, as appropriate. Clients should note that it is their responsibility to comply with certification requirements.

10. Non-conformities

A nonconformity is the failure to meet an established requirement. When an evaluator encounters a nonconformity, they will address it and discuss it with the client. If the client cannot provide satisfactory evidence that the finding is incomplete or incorrect and the requirement is met, the evaluator will issue a nonconformity. The client may rectify the issue on the spot and resolve the nonconformity before the evaluator leaves the premises. However, that does not mean the nonconformity will disappear; it was found to be a nonconformity and must be recorded as such.

Not all nonconformities are of the same severity. Therefore, CU WG SPAIN applies 4 types of nonconformities. Specific schemes may use other grades and may also refer to them differently.

Major Nonconformity:

If there is a finding that raises significant doubts about the existence of effective process control or whether the products, services, or the management system will meet the specified requirements to the extent that serious doubts are raised about whether the ability to achieve the intended results is affected, then this is classified as a major nonconformity. This conclusion may also be reached when a quantity of minor nonconformities associated with the same requirement or issue is found, based on the opinion that this demonstrates a systemic failure.

Critical Nonconformity:

This is a significant nonconformity that leads to an immediate and critical failure of the management system or product to meet the intent of the standard and therefore is a critical failure. Due to this critical nature, we will require immediate and vigorous action on your part.

Minor Nonconformity:

If there is a failure to meet a requirement, but it does not directly affect the products, services, or the management system's ability to achieve the intended results, this is classified as a minor nonconformity.

Observations:

Also referred to as Improvement Points or Opportunities for Improvement. Observations are points that do not constitute a failure to meet a requirement and, therefore, technically are not nonconformities, and there is no absolute need to address them before a certificate can be issued. However, they have the potential to become a nonconformity if left unaddressed. For this reason, CU WG SPAIN will reassess these elements in the next scheduled evaluation.

11. Corrections and Corrective Actions:

Nonconformities must be addressed. Whenever there is a pending nonconformity (NC), a positive certification decision cannot be made, and the certificate cannot be issued for the project, including the units/products in question, unless otherwise stipulated in the corresponding standard. The amount of time granted to provide CU WG SPAIN with satisfactory evidence of addressing the issue may vary

depending on the scheme. Some make significant distinctions between major and minor nonconformities, while others allow the same amount of time for both. Therefore, the following overview is only an approximate guideline; refer to the specific scheme regulations for exact deadlines. Please note that it is expressly your responsibility to take appropriate corrective actions.

Critical:

One thing on which all parties agree is the need for immediate and severe action in the case of a critical nonconformity. CU WG SPAIN will require you to take action within 24 hours. We understand that it is almost always impossible to completely resolve the problem within 24 hours. So that is not what we expect. We expect you to present a serious investigation into the root cause of the problem and a valid plan on how to correct the situation as soon as possible within those 24 hours. We also expect you to take steps to ensure that no product that does not meet the requirements is marketed, and that, when necessary, products that have already been marketed will be recalled. We strive to provide the Client with an option for redemption. However, the situation we encounter may be so grave, or a specific scheme may require us.

Major:

As mentioned, the amount of time allowed to resolve major nonconformities may differ depending on the certification scheme. CU WG SPAIN typically allows for 2 calendar months. In the case of a major nonconformity, you must genuinely resolve the issue.

Minor:

Some schemes require you to address a minor nonconformity within 3 calendar months. Others require you to provide the certification body with a valid plan within the 3 months and resolve the nonconformity before the next scheduled assessment, which is typically set at around 12 months. This latter option is typical for management system assessments: to design an adequate plan, you must conduct a root cause analysis, which is quite typical for management system certification. The plan will be assessed and must be accepted by CU WG SPAIN.

Observation:

Given that an observation technically isn't a nonconformity, we won't ask you to provide evidence that you addressed the issue seriously and implemented the solution effectively. However, since we'll review it again in the next assessment, it would be advisable for you to review it yourself.

A proper nonconformity statement consists of a reference to the relevant clause of the standard that requires something, a clear description of the deviation found from that requirement, and objective evidence that the nonconformity statement is a valid one.

If a client doesn't provide CU WG SPAIN with satisfactory evidence that the problem was addressed and the solution was implemented effectively within the established timeframes, we'll escalate the nonconformity to the next higher level. So, a minor becomes a major, and a major becomes critical. The associated timeframes for that new qualification apply, and you'll have the opportunity to resolve the issue. If you fail to do so, we'll initiate the suspension procedure for your certificate. In many cases, this includes informing the scheme owner, who may then publicly announce the suspension of your certificate. To reinstate the certificate, a full on-site assessment must be conducted, the costs of which, as expected, will be billed to the Client. If the Client still doesn't resolve the issue after the suspension,

Please note that the indicated timeframes refer to the time you have to investigate the problem, find an adequate solution, and verify and demonstrate that this solution actually works. As a certification

entity, we recommend that you start working on resolving a nonconformity as soon as you receive it. The evaluator will leave the nonconformities at your facilities at the end of the assessment, including their classification. Nonconformities will also be included in the report.

There are a number of elements you should consider and address when resolving a nonconformity. What we require from you is:

Corrección

A correction is an action to eliminate the detected nonconformity. For example, if there is a requirement that your production facility must place tiles and it was discovered that some tiles were missing, then the correction is to replace the missing tiles. A correction can be made along with a corrective action.

Acción correctiva

A corrective action is an action to eliminate the cause of a detected nonconformity or other undesirable situation and thus prevent the recurrence of the same problem. If, for example, in the previous example, the reason the tiles are falling off is that the brick wall is damp, then you may replace the tiles as a correction, but it is likely that the tiles will fall off again shortly. To prevent the tiles from falling off, it is necessary to remedy the damp wall. That is what is known as a corrective action. Note that there may be more than one cause for a nonconformity.

Root Cause Analysis:

To determine what an effective corrective action for the problem found is, you must perform a root cause analysis: try to get to the root of the problem. You must identify the factors that resulted in the nature, magnitude, location, and/or timing of the nonconformity. For it to be effective, you must conduct the root cause analysis systematically. There are several techniques for conducting a root cause analysis, but one that may be useful to you is the "5 Whys" method. Basically, it requires you to repeat the question "Why?" five times (or as many more or fewer as is reasonable). Each answer forms the basis for the next question. For example:

Problem: The vehicle won't start. (the problem)

Why? - The battery is dead. (First why)

Why? - The alternator isn't working. (Second why)

Why? - The alternator belt has broken. (Third why)

Why? - The alternator belt was well beyond its lifespan and was not replaced. (Fourth why)

Why? - The vehicle did not receive maintenance according to the recommended service schedule. (Fifth why, a root cause)

Not all problems have a single root cause. If you want to discover multiple root causes, you should repeat the method by asking a different sequence of questions each time.

When you know the root cause of the problem, you also know what to address so that this problem does not recur.

Extension Analysis:

Knowing what the root cause of the problem was is one thing. Another thing is to ensure that the same problem does not occur or have the potential to occur elsewhere as well. Therefore, you must ask yourself: are there other places where I need to address this same problem?

Implementation

Finding the root cause is a good thing and so is planning solid corrections and corrective actions. But those still don't solve the problem. What we want to know is whether you actually implemented the corrections and corrective actions and whether they were truly effective. When submitting your evidence to close the nonconformity, you must also provide evidence of effective implementation.

For each and every nonconformity, you must provide evidence of the correction and its implementation. Not all schemes require you to take corrective action and perform associated root cause and extension analysis. This is usually related to management system certification. Which makes sense, management system certification deals much more with procedures and interactions within an organization, whereas product certification deals with specific characteristics of that product. Therefore, it is much more essential to find the root cause and scope in management system certification than in product certification. However, please note that product certification schemes tend to incorporate an increasing number of management system elements, so corrective actions and their related activities become increasingly relevant for all types of certifications. Furthermore, taking corrective actions and conducting root cause and extension analyses is sensible. If not for the benefit of the certification body, then definitely for the profitability of your business.

12. Report

During the audit, the auditor will record their findings on standardized inspection forms. These forms must be signed by the client or the official representative of the client during the inspection visit to acknowledge the inspector's conclusions. If the official representative signs, their signature is only valid if the person is officially registered as authorized to sign within the company.

The auditor will provide the Certifier with all audit forms containing their compliance conclusions according to all program certification requirements.

After the audit and verification have been completed by the certifier, CU WG Spain will send an assessment report to the client, prioritizing the assessment of compliance with specific program requirements. The client has the right to object to the content of the report within a maximum period established by the specific program after it has been sent by CU WG Spain or from the date the inspector delivered the inspection results.

CU WG Spain has the right to charge a fee for providing copies of the reports, as well as for conducting other services if the involved client allows it.

13. Certificate Issuance

CCU WG SPAIN will take into consideration the following aspects:

- The information provided by the Client in the application;
- An impartial review of the findings and conclusions of the assessment as sufficient regarding certification requirements and scope;
- Any recorded non-conformities and the effectiveness of their identified causes, corrections, and corrective actions submitted by the Client;
- Any other relevant information, for example, public information or feedback on the Client's assessment report

After this review, CU WG SPAIN will make a certification decision. This may result in the granting or maintenance of certification, the expansion or reduction of the certification scope, or the renewal,

suspension, restoration, or withdrawal of certification. We will inform the Client of the decision made. If the decision is negative, then the Client has the right to appeal against the decision. When CU WG SPAIN is satisfied that the Client meets all certification requirements, we will issue a certificate. This certificate and report will always remain the property of CU WG SPAIN and can only be copied or reproduced for the benefit of a third party if it clearly contains the word "copy". Since the certificate and report remain our property, CU WG SPAIN has the right to request the return of any certificate.

The Certificate will remain valid until its expiration date unless it is found that the management system and/or the Client's products no longer meet the requirements, and a new certification decision is made. The validity of the certificate will also expire upon termination of the Services Agreement regarding this assessment between CU WG SPAIN and the Client. Please note that CU WG SPAIN is required to inform any interested party about the status of their certificate upon request.

If you request us to provide more than one issuance of the certificate, then we will provide one that clearly contains the word "copy". CU WG SPAIN has the right to charge a fee for providing copies of certificates.

CU WG SPAIN will strive to renew the certificate within the timeframe indicated in the applicable standards or after a scope change, provided that the Client remains in compliance with applicable requirements and regulations, the Client's contract continues, and financial obligations are met.

14. Certificate Suspension

If the Client fails to provide evidence that appropriate and effective measures are being taken and implemented regarding the recorded non-conformities within the agreed-upon timeframe, it has been found that the Client is misusing the certificate and/or the logo or mark and this has not been remedied to the satisfaction of CU WG SPAIN, the Client is not meeting financial obligations, or the Client has placed products on the market in unsafe or non-conforming conditions, the certificate may be suspended.

CU WG SPAIN will inform the Client in writing of the suspension, indicating at least the start date, duration, and justification of the suspension, as well as the options and deadlines for appeal. The suspension will be extended for the duration of the appeal process until a final decision is made. The suspension will not begin until at least 10 days after notification, and the suspension period will be a maximum of 3 months.

Upon receiving the suspension notification of their certification, the Client must immediately suspend all use of advertising materials/statements containing a reference to the certification, as per CU WG SPAIN's instructions, and revise all advertising materials accordingly when the scope of certification has been reduced. The Client is not allowed to make any reference to the certification while suspended. If the Client has placed a mark directly on the product, they will refrain from marketing this product while it is suspended.

CU WG SPAIN is required in many cases to inform the scheme owner of the certificate suspension. CU WG SPAIN also expressly reserves the right to publish suspensions. At the end of the suspension period, an assessment will be conducted to determine if the conditions for reinstating the certificate have been met. If these conditions are met, the suspension will be lifted, and the Client will be notified of the certificate's reinstatement. However, if the conditions are not met, the Certificate will be withdrawn.

All costs incurred by CU WG SPAIN in the suspension and reinstatement of a certificate will be borne by the Client.

15. Certificate Withdrawal

The certificate may be withdrawn if the Client deliberately, at the sole discretion of CU WG SPAIN, fails to comply with the provisions of the Service Agreement or if the Client continues to breach the established requirements during suspension. The certificate may also be withdrawn upon the termination of the service agreement. CU WG SPAIN will inform the Client in writing of such withdrawal, indicating at least the start date, the justification for the withdrawal, and the options and deadlines for appeal. The withdrawal will be postponed for the period during which the appeal is being considered, until a final decision has been made. The withdrawal will not take effect until at least 10 days after the notification.

Upon receiving the notification of certificate withdrawal, the Client must immediately discontinue all use of advertising materials/statements containing a reference to the certification, as instructed by CU WG SPAIN, and revise all advertising materials accordingly if the certification scope has been reduced. No further reference to the certification is permitted. In case the Client has affixed a mark directly to the product, they must refrain from marketing such a product. The Client is also required to return the certificate to CU WG SPAIN.

In cases of withdrawal, no refund of assessment fees will be granted, and CU WG SPAIN will publish the certificate withdrawal and notify the relevant accreditation body and/or scheme owner, if applicable.

16. Certificate Resignation

The Client may request the cancellation of the certificate and the Service Agreement. CU WG SPAIN will examine whether the Client has fulfilled their financial obligations and will inform the Client in writing of the resignation procedure, with the resignation taking effect no sooner than 10 days after notification.

From the date of the Client's contract resignation, the certificate becomes invalid, and the Client must return the certificate. In the event of certificate invalidity, CU WG SPAIN has the right to notify buyers, assessment bodies, competent authorities, and other interested third parties.

17. Expansion and Reduction of Certification Scope

To expand or reduce the scope of a certificate to cover additional sites or products, or to remove sites or products that no longer apply, the Client must complete a new application form or give notice through the Client profile. The application procedure mentioned in Chapter 6 will be followed, and an assessment will be conducted. The cost of expanding or reducing the scope of certification will be based on the nature and scope of work.

After a successful assessment, an amended certificate will be issued.

18. Reference to Certificate and Certification Mark or Logo

Upon the issuance of a certificate, CU WG SPAIN may authorize the Client to use a designated certification mark or logo. The Client's right to use any such marks depends on maintaining a valid certificate with respect to the certified management system or products and compliance with the scheme governing the use of the mark. A Client authorized to use an accreditation body's mark must

also comply with the rules governing that body's mark. However, the Client is not obligated to make use of such authorization.

The use of indications referring to the certified production method or CU WG SPAIN is only permitted after the relevant certificate has been issued. The use of marks and logos will be assessed during the evaluation against the specific program requirements.

It should be noted that, in the case of management system certification, no mark, logo, or certification statement can be used on a product or its packaging, or in any other way that could be construed as an indication of product conformity.

When referencing and using the certificate and certification marks or logos, the following applies:

- Misleading statements about the certification status are not permitted.
- It is not allowed to suggest that the certification relates to activities, units, products, etc. that are outside the scope of certification.
- Certificates, marks, and logos must be represented in their entirety, including frames.
- Logos can only be represented in the specified colors or in black and white.
- Placing the logo on laboratory test reports or calibration certificates is not allowed.
- If a client continues to use logos or other expressions implying that certification is still valid after the withdrawal or resignation of a certificate, CU WG SPAIN may take legal action.
- CU WG SPAIN expressly reserves the right to publish any misuse of its logos and certificates.

CU WG SPAIN will take appropriate measures, at the expense of the Client, to address incorrect, illegal, or misleading references to certification or the use of certificates and certification marks. These may include legal action and/or publication of the infringement. Misuse, illegal, or misleading use of such marks or logos is considered a critical non-conformity with certification requirements and will likely result in immediate certification suspension.

19. Certificate Transfer

Transfer of certification is the recognition of an existing and valid management system certification, issued by one certification body, by another certification body, in order to issue its own certification. However, multiple certification (simultaneous certification by more than one certification body) is not included in this definition. When the accepting certification body is accredited to transfer the scope, the previous certification body must also be accredited by an accreditation body recognized by the IAF MLA.

Before a transfer, a documentation review is conducted, which typically includes a visit from the potential Client. The on-site visit is mandatory if contact cannot be established with the previous certification body. The review will cover CU WG SPAIN's ability to conduct the assessment within its accredited scope, the reasons for a transfer, the existence of a valid accredited certification, consideration of the assessment reports from the last certification or recertification, subsequent surveillance reports, and any outstanding non-conformities, including any other relevant documentation available related to the certification process. If the last certification, recertification, or subsequent surveillance assessment reports are not available or if the surveillance assessment is overdue, a certification transfer cannot be applied.

Any outstanding non-conformities issued by the previous certification body must be assessed and closed before CU WG SPAIN can make a positive certification decision.

If no further pending or potential issues are identified in the pre-transfer review, certification can be issued following the normal decision-making process. The ongoing surveillance program will be based on the previous certification regime, unless CU WG SPAIN has conducted an initial or recertification assessment as a result of the review.

If you choose to transfer from one certification body to another, it would be prudent to consider the ongoing validity of your certification. You must ensure that your agreement with the previous certification body is not terminated before obtaining your new certificate. Otherwise, you may have no certificate for a period of time. You must also ensure that your new certification body receives all applicable information regarding your last certification, including the latest report and any outstanding non-conformities and issues.

20. Complaints, Claims, and Appeals

While CU WG SPAIN is committed to providing its clients with accurate services, it may happen that one or more aspects of the service are not to the Client's liking. In such cases, the Client may choose to lodge an appeal, complaint, or claim against CU WG SPAIN.

An appeal is a formal notification of disagreement with a decision (of certification) within a certification process, or a request from the provider of the object of conformity assessment to CU WG SPAIN for reconsideration of a decision it has made regarding that object.

A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction, separate from the appeal, by any person or organization regarding the behaviour of a CU WG SPAIN employee, the methodology of CU WG SPAIN, or work performed under the contractual responsibility of CU WG SPAIN by a critical office or subcontractor. When dissatisfaction relates to a decision (of certification) within a CU WG SPAIN certification process, it must be submitted as an appeal, not as a complaint.

A claim is a formal request for financial or legal settlement and should not be considered as complaints or appeals. Claims are resolved by the financial and/or legal departments. Crucial elements for CU WG SPAIN procedures are mentioned in this section.

If you wish to file a complaint or appeal, you can use the form in Annex I.

Appeal

Clients wishing to lodge an appeal with CU WG SPAIN against a decision (of certification), or request reconsideration of a decision (of certification) that has been made, must specify the nature of the appeal in as much detail as possible to clearly describe the matter and provide objective evidence to support each element or aspect of the appeal, if applicable.

An appeal must be submitted in writing. CU WG SPAIN will only accept appeals in English and Spanish unless otherwise agreed in writing. Appeals must be received by CU WG SPAIN within 6 (six) weeks of the decision (certification) being issued and must be filed at CU WG SPAIN's office in Spain. Failure to do so, or if the appeal is inadequately substantiated or incomplete, CU WG SPAIN may reject the appeal

and will not assume responsibility for such an appeal. CU WG SPAIN will inform the appellant accordingly.

CU WG SPAIN will appoint two staff members to investigate the appeal. All staff involved in the appeals handling process, including those in review, approval, and decision-making, must be different from those who conducted the assessment and made the certification decision. Any staff member, including those acting as managers, who provided consultancy to the Client in question, or has been employed by that Client, within the two years prior to the filing of the appeal, will not participate in the review or approval of the appeal resolution for that Client.

CU WG SPAIN will strive for timely resolution of the appeal and will take necessary subsequent actions to address the appeal. It will formally inform the appellant of the outcome and conclusion of the appeal process and the rationale for the decision in writing within 3 (three) months following receipt of the appeal. CU WG SPAIN will document the appeal, its outcome, and any actions taken to resolve it, including any corrections and corrective actions established.

The filing, investigation, and decision of appeals shall in no case result in discriminatory actions against the appellant.

Complaints

Customers wishing to lodge a complaint with CU WG SPAIN are requested to specify the nature of the complaint in as much detail as possible ("who, what, where, when"), to describe the issue clearly, and to provide objective evidence to support each element or aspect of the complaint, where applicable.

To avoid misinterpretations and the appearance of bias by CU WG SPAIN, complaints must always be submitted in writing. Only complaints in Spanish or English will be accepted, unless otherwise agreed in writing. Complaints must be received by CU WG SPAIN within the 6-week period established by the organization following the incident that gave rise to the complaint at the corresponding CU WG SPAIN office. Complaints that are inadequately substantiated or incomplete may be deemed inadmissible by CU WG SPAIN and rejected. CU WG SPAIN will inform the complainant accordingly.

CU WG SPAIN will decide on the admissibility of the complaint. Two staff members will be designated by CU WG SPAIN to investigate the complaint. All staff involved in the complaints handling process, including those in review, approval, and decision-making, must be different from those who conducted the assessment and made the certification decision. Any staff member, including those acting as managers, who provided consultancy to the Client in question, or has been employed by that Client, within the two years prior to the filing of the complaint, will not participate in the review or approval of the complaint resolution for that Client.

The designated staff members will collect and verify all necessary information (to the extent possible), including root cause analysis, and will propose how to proceed, including corrections and corrective actions where applicable. CU WG SPAIN will strive for timely resolution of the complaint and will take necessary subsequent actions to address the complaint. If the complaint relates to a Client certified for a management system, the review of the complaint must also consider the effectiveness of the certified management system.

CU WG SPAIN will informally notify the complainant of the outcome and conclusion of the complaint process and the rationale for the decision in writing within 3 (three) months following receipt of the

complaint. CU WG SPAIN will record the complaint, its outcome, and any actions taken to resolve it in UCI under a unique identification, including any corrections and corrective actions established.

Complaints about a certified Client that have gone through the complaints handling process must be directed to that certified Client by CU WG SPAIN within an appropriate timeframe. If requested by the complainant, anonymity of the complainant shall be maintained. CU WG SPAIN shall determine, together with the certified Client and the complainant, if and to what extent, the subject matter of the complaint and its resolution will be made public.

The filing, investigation, and decision of complaints shall in no case result in discriminatory actions against the complainant.

If CU WG SPAIN decides and verifies that CU WG SPAIN or any of its employees, officers, agents, or subcontractors are not to blame to the extent specified in the complaint, all costs and expenses may be charged to the complainant.

CU WG SPAIN will strive to resolve any complaints amicably. When an amicable agreement is not reached, all disputes that may arise between CU WG SPAIN and the Client will be brought before the competent court of jurisdiction in Spain, which shall have exclusive jurisdiction over the matter, unless the parties agree in writing to another competent court.

Claims

CU WG SPAIN's liability with respect to any claim for loss, damage, or expense of any nature arising out of any breach of contract and/or any failure to exercise due skill and care by CU WG SPAIN shall not in any circumstances exceed an aggregate total sum equal to 10 (ten) times the amount of the fee or commission payable for the specific services required under the applicable contract with CU WG SPAIN. CU WG SPAIN shall not be liable for any claim for indirect or consequential loss, including loss of profits and/or loss of future business and/or loss of production and/or cancellation of contracts entered into by the Client.

The Client shall indemnify and hold CU WG SPAIN harmless from and against damages suffered by CU WG SPAIN as a result of the Client's failure to observe the requirements of the standard and/or national and international government laws and regulations.

Annex I: Complaint/Appeal Registration Form

An appeal is a formal notification of disagreement with a decision (of certification) within a certification process, or a request from the provider of the object of evaluation of conformity to CU WG SPAIN for reconsideration of a decision it has taken in relation to that object.

A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction, distinct from the appeal, by any person or organization regarding the behaviour of an employee of CU WG SPAIN, the methodology of CU WG SPAIN, or work performed under the contractual responsibility of CU WG SPAIN by a critical office or subcontractor, where a response is expected.

A concern is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern by any person or organization regarding a customer certified by CU WG SPAIN, which is not sufficiently grounded to be classified as a complaint and where a response is expected.

Date	
Organization's name	
Name	
Address	
Phone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Type (Cross out what does not apply.)	Complaints Appeal
Description PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR COMPLAINT/APPEAL IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE ("WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN") AND PROVIDE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION IF APPLICABLE	

Evidence

PLEASE SPECIFY THE EVIDENCE FOR YOUR COMPLAINT/APPEAL

A15.a Control de Cambios

Date	Version	Summary of Changes
31-03-2023	1.0	Document Creation
	1.1.	Office updated
20-01-2024	1.2	Improvement of wording and removal of errors where other Control Union offices were mentioned
24-04-2024	1.3	Improvement of document wording. Change of document name to Annex A15. General Certification Rules.