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Organisation internationale de normalisation
International Organization for Standardization
Международная Организация по Стандартизации

**TO THE CASCO MEMBERS AND
ORGANIZATIONS IN LIAISON**

Your ref.
Our ref. CASCO 23/2009

Date 2009-06-03

CASCO INTERPRETATION ON IMPARTIALITY

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please find below the proposed interpretation agreed by the CASCO CPC with regard to two questions on clause 6 of ISO/IEC 17021.

You are requested to indicate if you are in favour or against the proposed CPC response to both questions and to include any comments you have on the CPC response.

Please note that should you vote in favour of the CPC proposed response to both questions and also have comments, your vote shall not be dependant on your comments being included.

The voting form does not include any information on the conditions or the motivation of the CPC for both questions. You need to refer below for this information.

The interpretation was requested by an ISO member body and included below is their motivation. Due to lack of information the CPC response has been given conditionally. The conditions form part of the interpretation.

Background provided by ISO member body

We refer to the Committee for safeguarding impartiality indicated in Clause 6 of the ISO/IEC 17021. Our Committee respects the balance of interests and is constituted by more than 15 external representatives which act on a voluntary and ad-honorem basis.

In our practice as a MS CB the Committee meets every month to consider policy issues and the proposals from the managers of the CB to grant, maintain, suspend or withdraw certificates for management systems.

The reason for this is to ensure that all the process which lead to the final decisions is fully respecting the Principle of Impartiality. On the basis of the report with the findings of the audits and its revision by the certification officers, the Certification Manager prepares a recommendation of decision for the Committee. The Committee review the proposal to verify the impartiality and other aspects of the certification process and approve (or not) the proposal, taking part therefore in the final decision.

My concrete questions refers to 6.2.1.d): “ to conduct a review, as least once annually, of the impartiality of the audit, certification and decision-making processes of the certification body” and the subsequent paragraph: “Other tasks or duties may be assigned to the committee provided these additional tasks or duties do not compromise its essential role of ensuring impartiality”; and they are:

Question 1 posed by IRAM:

If the Committee performs a review of the impartiality of all the processes in every meeting (12 meetings per year in our case), is it necessary to conduct an additional review every year?

Proposed Response from CPC:

No.

Condition set by CPC:

It is not necessary to perform an additional review provided that the impartiality committee can demonstrate it also fulfils clauses 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and all of clause 6.2.1 as part of the monthly reviews either in one or more of the monthly reviews. If these are not included as part of the monthly reviews an additional review would be required.

Question 2 posed by IRAM:

Given the fact that this review includes the “decision making process”, does it imply, that the Committee cannot take part in the decisions of granting/suspending/withdrawing certificates?

Proposed response from the CPC:

No.

Condition set by CPC:

The impartiality committee as part of the certification process would need to demonstrate that it also fulfils the clauses 5.1.3, 5.2.10, 5.2.13, 5.2.12, 7.2.1, 7.2.9, 7.2.10.

Motivation for condition to question 2:

It is accepted that the impartiality committee operates as a part of the certification body for the functions it performs and therefore the decision remains with the certification body. It is assumed that the certification body verifies the competence and impartiality of this committee for the function of decision making. The impartiality analysis performed by the certification body would need to include an analysis of these two functions of the committee to determine any threats to impartiality by the performance of these functions and how these threats have been managed to an acceptable level.

I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation and I look forward to receiving your votes and comments.

Yours faithfully,



Sean Mac Curtain
Head, Conformity assessment
CASCO Secretary