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Certification Policy on Transition to a new management system standard version

Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) through its National Certification Division (NCD) takes keen interest on the standard review process and starts preparations

NCD inquires regularly from National Standards Division (NSD) of RSB regarding the process and updates of the standard under revision.

NCD communicates regularly with Accreditation Body on its transition procedures


RSB through its NCD communicates to its clients informing them that the applicable standard to their management system is under revision and the briefing starts from the International or regional or national draft standard stage.

NCD develops its transition plans based on analysis of the changes in the standard and takes the following steps:

- ❖ Commences training of auditors and other staff when Final Draft Standard (FDS) is issued, verifies training effectiveness to ensure that relevant level of competence is demonstrated;
- ❖ Ensures that its management system has been updated to reflect the necessary changes;
- ❖ Communicates the transition arrangements to its clients at the FDS stage;
- ❖ Encourages current users of the standard under review to start to the implementation of the revised standard at an FDS stage;
- ❖ Informs its certified clients and interested parties about publication of the new standard version;
- ❖ Communicates main changes in the new standard version to interested parties;
- ❖ Communicates with certified clients the transition period, clearly indicating end of validity of their certificates and share guidance on the transition process and arrangements for transition;
- ❖ Requests its certified clients to prepare and share their transition plan for NCD's consideration;
- ❖ Communicates to interested parties the deadline for accepting application for certification to the old version of the standard;
- ❖ Plans the timing of audit and certification activities for the new standard version, whether it should be a single visit or a staged approach;
- ❖ Considers the stated transition period and current certification period;
- ❖ Ensures clients' ongoing conformance to the standard under revision through the transition process before fully complying to the new standard version;
- ❖ Encourages new users to implement the new standard version;
- ❖ Arranges audit schedules for certified client organizations;

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Revision:	00		Date of Approval:	30/07/2019
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- ❖ Plans the timing of certification decisions for upgrading certification documents not to exceed the transition period;
- ❖ Determines action to be taken in respect of clients that have failed to complete the transition by the transition period. For example, the level of audit necessary for certification to be reinstated;
- ❖ NCD only conducts audits against approved standards but not against the FDS;
- ❖ Commences issuance of certificates to the new version after building the necessary competence and having verified the competence of auditors and other staff in other certification functions.

NCD ensures that:

- i) All issues that require client action for compliance with the new standard version requirements are clearly identified and raised as documented findings;
- ii) Records are maintained to demonstrate that all prior transition audit findings have been evaluated for corrective action where applicable;
- iii) NCD ensures that the evaluation of a client's conformance to the new standard version requirements during the transition phase does not interfere with the client's on-going conformance to the old version of the standard;
- iv) Only when all identified outstanding issues have been appropriately addressed and the effectiveness of the management system demonstrated, auditors recommend certification to the published new standard version;
- v) Only completion of the full transition process prior to end of transition period ensures continued certification to standard.

Depending on the agreement with the certified client, NCD conducts transition activities during a routine surveillance, recertification audit or a special audit. Where transition audits are carried out in conjunction with scheduled surveillance or recertification (i.e. progressive or staged approach), the audit time includes additional time so that all activities are covered for the existing and new standards.


Raymond MURENZI
 Director General

