



QCI – CAPSI Voluntary Initiative

Security sTar Agencies Rating Scheme

Certification Process

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0 Scope

- 0.1 This document describes the certification process to be followed by the Certification Bodies approved under the **Security sTar Agencies Rating Scheme (STARS)** in processing applications received from private security agencies for certification as per technical criteria specified under the Scheme.
- 0.2 Types of Certification -The following levels of certification shall be available as described in the Technical criteria:

Level 1 – One Star – Meeting Compliance Requirements

Level 2 – Two Star – Established Compliance Management

Level 3 – Three Star – Consistent Operations

Level 4 – Four Star – Sustained Performance

Level 5 – Five Star – Assured Quality

Level 6 – Six Star – Trusted Excellence

Level 7 – Seven Star – Professionally Managed Security Operations

- 0.3 The certification shall be granted to a Private Security Agency after due verification of compliance to the prescribed criteria.
- 0.4 Certification at Level 7 (seven star) as per ISO 18788 in addition to the requirements of the lower levels – the certification process for this level is still under development.

1. Application for Certification

1.1 Application Form

- 1.1.1 The agency shall apply in the application form prescribed by the Certification Body.
- 1.1.2 The applicant shall clearly indicate the level of certification it is applying for.
- 1.1.3 The applicant shall provide information about its offices to be covered under the scheme.
- 1.1.4 The applicant shall specify/list all the services to be audited and certified. It shall mention whether all the services are covered at single or multiple locations/sites. For multiple sites, overlapping activities, if any shall also be mentioned.

1.1.5 If number of offices is more than two , to be covered under certification, a representative sample of the offices shall be audited for compliance to the Criteria as applicable.

1.2 List of Documents

1.2.1 The applicant shall submit all necessary documents (as per applied criteria) to the Certification Body (CB) for document review.

1.3 Information for Applicants

1.3.1 The information describing certification processes for granting, maintaining, extending, renewing, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification, and geographical areas in which it operates shall be publicly available on certification body's website and by other modes. The information shall include:

- a) An Application form;
- b) Reference to the Certification Criteria,
- c) Procedure for obtaining certification under the STAR Scheme, a detailed description of the initial and continuing certification activity, including the application, initial evaluation, periodic surveillance, evaluations, and the process for granting, maintaining, reducing, extending, suspending, withdrawing certification and re-certification .
- d) List of documents required to be submitted along with the application.
- e) Information about the fees for application, initial certification and continuing certification and policy for the fee
- f) Documents describing the rights and duties of applicants/ certified clients, and
- g) Information on procedures for handling complaints, feedbacks and appeals.

1.4 Registration of Application

1.4.1 The CB shall respond to all enquiries received from prospective applicant organisations for certification with complete information for facilitating registration of application, within 7 working days of receipt of the query.

1.4.2 The applicant for certification shall apply to any of the approved Certification Bodies on the Application format prescribed by the CB, and provide the information as mentioned in previous clauses and any other information the CB may consider relevant to the certification process.

- 1.4.3 The applicant shall declare (in the form of an undertaking in application) whether it has been an applicant / certified under this Scheme with or by any other certification body, and if yes then shall provide the previous evaluation reports to the new certification body. The certification body may verify the information provided by contacting the earlier certification body.
- 1.4.4 The prospective applicant providing Private Security Services shall along with the application declare any judicial proceedings relating to its operations, any proceedings by any Regulatory body or suspension / cancellation / withdrawal of any certification / approvals under any Regulations or otherwise. Such declaration shall be a part of the undertaking mentioned in 1.4.3 above.
- 1.4.5 Certification is granted only against the current relevant certification criteria. The certification body shall review all applications for the above and ensure the same.
- 1.4.6 All applications for certification shall be reviewed by the certification body for adequacy and deficiencies observed, if any, shall be informed to applicant within 7 working days of receipt of application. Review of applications shall be done by a competent person. Records of review shall be maintained.
- 1.4.7 Only complete applications supported with all documents sought shall be accepted and registered in order of receipt with a unique identification number, acknowledged and records maintained. Registration shall be done within 7 days of receipt of application or information in response to the deficiencies communicated as per 1.4.6 above. In case the applicant discloses any proceedings, suspensions etc as per 1.4.3 above, the applicant shall not be entertained for a period of one year from the date of conviction, suspension, withdrawal, deregistration etc.
- 1.4.8 If the certification of any level under the Scheme has been suspended / cancelled by any approved CB, the application from such an agency shall not be accepted till suspension is revoked by the concerned CB or for one year from the date cancellation of certification. This will be applicable only for the security services whose certification has been suspended/cancelled. However, this will not be applicable to other security services under same legal entity.
- 1.4.9 If the certification of any level under the Scheme has been cancelled by any CB, the application for certification under the Scheme may be carried out considering the agency as a new client.
- 1.4.10 The antecedents of the applicants shall be checked in relation to the Scheme. Applications from agencies who have earlier either misused the Certification, or whose earlier certificate was cancelled because of violation of terms & conditions / misuse of certification or have been implicated / convicted by the court in relation to their security

services, shall not be entertained for a period of one year of conviction / strictures by the court / cancellation of the certificate by any CB.

1.4.11 Applications from agencies found to be misusing the certification while their application is being processed for grant of certification, shall not be processed any further, and rejected after a due notice of 15 days. Fresh applications from them shall be treated as per clause 1.4.10 given above.

1.4.12 Requests for grant of certification from previous applicants as per 1.4.13 (a), (b) &(c) / expired certificates shall be processed like fresh applications and the entire procedure for grant of certification shall be adhered to subject to clauses 1.4.8 and 1.4.9 above.

1.4.13 An application shall be rejected or closed under the following conditions;

- a) if Initial Evaluation is not carried out within 3 months of registration of application
- b) if the entire certification process is not completed within 6 months of registration of application.
- c) If the applicant shows no progress towards completion of corrective actions within 3 months of Initial Evaluation and 6 months of Registration of application.
- d) Misuse of certification under the Scheme
- e) Evidence of any malpractice
- f) Voluntary withdrawal of application.

1.4.14 The application fee, if charged by CB, shall be non refundable.

1.4.15 The first time certification to Level 2, 4 and 6 shall be considered as new application and not recertification.

2. Audit programme

2.1 Audit Programme

2.1.1 The following audit program shall be followed for level 3 to Level 6:

Certification activity
Certification Audit – Stage 1 (1 day for Level 3 & Level 4)
Certification Audit – Stage 2
Surveillance –“Once in a year”, Second surveillance audit shall be an unannounced audit which shall be carried out within period of 9 to 12 months from previous surveillance audit.”

The audit cycle for level 3 to Level 6 shall include

- Initial certification audit in two stages (Stage 1 and Stage 2) as per ISO 17021-1:2015 with 1 day Stage 1 audit for Level 3 & Level 4.
- Recertification audits (generally 3 months before the end of 3 year validity)

2.1.2 The following audit program shall be followed for level 1 to Level 2:

Certification activity
Certification Audit
Surveillance –“Once in a year”, Second surveillance audit shall be an unannounced audit which shall be carried out within period of 9 to 12 months from previous surveillance audit.”

The audit cycle for level 1 to Level 2 shall include

- Initial certification audit in single stage as per ISO 17021-1:2015
- Recertification audits (generally 3 months before the end of 3 year validity)

2.2 **Sampling of the offices and sites to be Audited**

2.2.1 Related Definitions

Central Function

The function that is responsible for and centrally controls the management system

Permanent Offices

An office location (Regional or Branch or local) from where a Private Security Agency performs work or from which a service is provided on a continuing basis.

Temporary Site

Site (physical or virtual) where security services are provided for a finite period of time to a client organization by the Private Security Agency, and which is not intended to become a permanent site. It is a fixed location or premises to which a security officer/guard is assigned for a fixed length of time

2.2.2 For a Private Security Agency having multiple offices operating at same level of certification with a single management system, the offices and client sites shall be audited to demonstrate that the management system is capable of achieving its intended results for all sites involved.

2.2.3 Sampling of Permanent Offices

The following requirements for sampling of multiple offices of the PSA shall apply at all certification levels, where the offices are each performing similar processes/activities.

Initial audit:

the size of the sample shall be the square root of the number of sites: ($y=\sqrt{x}$), rounded up to the next whole number, where y = number of sites to be sampled and x = total number of sites.

Surveillance audit:

the size of the annual sample shall be the square root of the number of sites with 0.6 as a coefficient ($y=0.6 \sqrt{x}$), rounded up to the next whole number.

Re-certification audit:

the size of the sample shall be the same as for an initial audit. Nevertheless, where the management system has proved to be effective over the certification cycle, the size of the sample could be reduced to, $y=0.8 \sqrt{x}$, rounded up to the next whole number.

The first time certification to Level 2, 4 and 6 shall be considered as initial audit.

The central function shall be audited during the initial certification and every recertification audit and at least once a calendar year as part of surveillance.

On the application of inclusion of new offices or a new group of offices to join an already certified multi-office agency, the Certification Body shall determine the required activities to be performed before including the new office(s) in the certificate. This shall include consideration of whether or not to audit the new office(s). After inclusion of the new office(s) in the certificate, the sample size for future surveillance or recertification audits shall be determined.

2.2.4 Sampling of Temporary Sites

The temporary sites shall be audited for minimum 0.5 days each and selected based on risk, size and complexity of security services provided by the PSA. The sample of sites selected should represent the range of the PSA's scope of certification, competency needs and service variations having given consideration to sizes and types of activities, and the various stages of projects in progress.

The size of temporary site sample shall be as per Table 1 below:

Table 1

Number of Temporary Sites	Size of Sample					
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
2 - 25	1	1	2	3	2	3
26-50	1	1	2	4	2	4
51-100	1	1	3	5	3	5
101-200	1	1	3	6	3	6
201-400	2	2	4	7	4	7
401-800	2	2	4	8	4	8
801-1600	2	2	5	9	5	9
1601-3200	3	3	5	10	5	10
3201-6400	3	3	6	11	6	11

Typically on-site audits of temporary sites would be performed. However, decoy checks or 'mystery shopping' shall be conducted as alternatives to replace upto half of the selected temporary sites audits. In each case, the method of decoy audit should be fully documented and justified in terms of its effectiveness.

2.3 Audit Mandays

2.3.1 The mandays required to conduct an effective initial audit of the PSA office having the Central Function shall be calculated in accordance with the following Table 2. At level 5 & 6 the audit mandays shall be as per IAF MD 5.

The number of effective manpower shall be the non billable personnel employed by the Agency.

Table 2

Effective Number of Personnel	Initial Audit Man-days for Stage 1 and Stage 2 (days) Bifurcation of Stage – I (20%) and Stage - II (80%)		
	Level 1 and 2	Level 3 and 4	Level 5 and 6
1-5	1	1.5	1.5
6-10	1	1.5	2
11-15	1.5	2	2.5
16-25	1,5	2.5	3
26-45	2	3	4
46-65	2.5	4	5
66-85	3	4.5	6
86-125	3.5	5.5	7
126-175	4	6	8
176-275	4.5	7	9
276-425	5	7.5	10
426-625	5.5	8.5	11

- 2.3.2 Time duration shall be calculated for each sampled permanent office as defined in the table in 2.3.1. A reduction of 1 manday can be made for audit of permanent office from Audit Days, subject to condition specified in 2.3.6.
- 2.3.3 Document review, audit preparation and report preparation time shall be additional and shall be at least one man-day.
- 2.3.4 During the three year certification cycle, audit time for surveillance audits for a given organization should be proportional to the audit time spent on the initial certification audit (Stage 1 + Stage 2), with the total amount of time spent annually on surveillance being about 1/3 of the audit time spent on the initial certification audit
- 2.3.5 The audit time for the recertification audit should be calculated on the basis of the updated information of the client and is normally approximately 2/3 of the audit time that would be required for an initial certification audit (Stage 1 + Stage2) of the organization if such an initial audit were to be carried out at the time of recertification.
- 2.3.6 The minimum audit time for each audit shall be at least one man-day (8 hrs. per day).
- 2.3.7 The audit time for audit of Temporary Sites shall be in addition to Audit days defined above.

3.1 Preliminary information to be provided to the CB

3.1.1 CBs shall inform client regarding documentation to be provided by the agency for “Document review” in compliance to scheme criteria requirements as applicable

3.1.2 Before starting the application review, the applicant shall provide the Certification Body with the documentation in compliance to ‘Requirements for Private Security Agencies’, as applicable.

3.1.3 Apart from information regarding the equipment and facilities of the agency, the applicant shall provide adequate information in order to allow auditors to have a preliminary overview of the agency and its operations.

3.1.4 The documentation to be provided shall include the following:

- a) Quality Manual – Addressing all the requirements as per criteria document
- b) Procedures – (Procedures related to process and general area of operation)
- c) Standard operation procedures/ Work instructions
- d) Form and Formats.

3.2 Audit Team

3.2.1 The CB shall appoint an Audit Team having the necessary competences required to conduct the audit.

Audit Type	Audit Team composition
Certification Audit	Lead Auditor + Auditor(s), if required + Technical Expert (if Lead Auditor/ Auditor are not qualified for security services sector)
Surveillance	same as above

3.2.2 The necessary competence requirements for the team of Lead Auditor / Auditor or Technical Expert for qualification for Security Services sector can be though demonstrated competence for Education (graduation), Knowledge, Private Security Work Experience (over 2 years), Military/Law Enforcement Experience (over 3 years) and understanding of PSARA & other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

3.2.3 The lead auditor / auditor shall be qualified QMS auditors

3.3 Audit Plan

3.3.1 The CB shall ensure that the Audit is conducted during working days in which all operational and support processes are functional.

3.3.2 No audit shall be planned in case the agency is non-operational

3.3.3 The Auditors, if more than one, may conduct part of the audit in parallel being focused on specific processes/ areas.

3.3.4 All the activities as included in the scope of certification of PSA such as operations, staffing, training, marketing, performance evaluations etc. shall be audited.

4. **Certification Audit**

4.1 **Stage 1 Audit**

4.1.1 The stage 1 audit is performed to:

- a) Audit the agency's management system documentation;
- b) Evaluate the agency's location and specific conditions and to undertake discussions with the client's personnel to determine the preparedness for the stage 2 audit;
- c) Review the client's status and understanding regarding requirements of the criteria, in particular with respect to the identification of key performance or significant aspects, processes, objectives and operation of the management system including scheme requirements;
- d) Collect necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, processes and location(s) of the client, and related statutory and regulatory aspects and compliance (e.g. quality, PSARA, legal aspects of the client's operation, associated risks, etc.);
- e) Review the allocation of resources for stage 2 audit and agree with the client on the details of the stage 2 audit;
- f) Provide a focus for planning the stage 2 audit by gaining a sufficient understanding of the agency's management system, offices and site operations in the context of possible significant aspects;
- g) Evaluate if the internal audits and management review are being planned and performed, and that the level of implementation of the management system substantiates that the agency is ready for the stage 2 audit.
- h) Auditors shall identify personal protective equipment which may be reasonably required during while auditing processes in stage – 2 audit and report in stage – 1 audit and ensure availability of the required personnel protective equipment during Stage – 2 audit.

4.1.2 The Stage – I audit shall be carried out by a competent audit team to judge the adequacy of the system to meet requirements of applicable level criteria. It shall result in a formal report

4.1.3 The stage 1 audit shall be carried out at the agency's premises in order to achieve the objectives. The CB shall have a defined guideline for the same. (Also Ref IAF MD 2).

4.2 Stage 2 Audit

4.2.1 The Objectives of stage 2 audit shall be to verify compliance to the applicable certification criteria at that level, regulatory requirements, verification of documents and records, and interviews with personnel involved in various relevant activities. The stage 2 audit shall be conducted at the agency's premises.

4.2.2 .Competence of people at the agency shall be audited to verify the effective knowledge QA/ QC and of internal procedures, applicable standards related to security services being provided. The competency of the personnel shall be as per applicable regulation.

4.2.3 Safety during audits

4.2.3.1 The Audit of security agency operations involves may involve risks linked to work environment. The responsibility for risk analysis and the identification of the most suitable means of protection shall be that of the agency..

4.3 Non conformities

4.3.1 Any non conformities observed during audit, with respect to the certification criteria shall be informed in writing to the applicant for taking necessary action. The non conformities shall be classified as Major or Minor depending on their severity.

a) **Major Non conformity** – A non conformity that affects the capability of the management system to achieve the intended results. A number of minor NCs on the same aspect shall be clubbed together and raised as single major NC.

b) **Minor Non conformity** – All other gaps and non conformities shall be classified as Minor. These shall generally be related to other implementation issues which do not directly affect the capability of the management system to achieve the intended results.

4.3.2 In case of major and minor NCs the organization shall carry out root cause analysis and inform the same along with correction and corrective actions, within a period of one month or 3 months respectively. All non-conformities are required to be closed before initial certification through verification of adequacy of the correction and corrective actions. All Major non-conformities, shall invariably require a follow-up audit.

4.4 Audit Report

4.4.1 The Certification Bodies shall send the Audit Report within 7 working days from the date of the completion of the audit to the client.

4.4.2 The audit reports for stage 1 and stage 2 shall clearly provide evidence and conclusions about the fulfilment of the audit objectives as described above and shall contain sufficient detailed information regarding conformity with all the relevant certification requirements, including the Certification Criteria applicable to the level. The Certification Body shall develop appropriate report format(s) and report writing guidance document to ensure that the report provides, adequate and complete details for ensuring appropriate, evaluation, review and decision in respect of grant of certification. The Audit report shall have the following as minimum:

- a) Scope of the Certification,
- b) Name and address of Private Security Agency audited
- c) Name(s) of auditor/members of the team
- d) Date & time of audit
- e) Audit Criteria
- f) Structure of the audited Private Security Agency
- g) Report on auditing including that for all “Additional Requirements” with evidence of compliance
- h) Nonconformities, if any
- i) Processes excluded by the Scope of the certification, if any,

NOTE: ISO 17022 may be referred to for further guidance on Audit reporting

5. **Certification Decisions**

5.1 Certification decision shall be the sole responsibility of the certification body and the decision shall be taken by its internal person(s) competent for the job provided they have not been involved in the process of audit of the organization. Impartiality and absence of conflict of interest shall be ensured before entrusting the task of certification decision making.

5.2 **Conditions for granting a certificate:**

5.2.1 The CB shall grant the certification when all the following conditions are met with:

- a) The audit report with suitable recommendation is available
- b) All NCs raised have been closed.
- c) There are no other issues impacting grant of certification

There shall be no conditional grant of certification.

6. **Certificate**

6.1 The Private Security Agency may achieve one of the following certificates:

Certificate	Object	Certificate Number
Single Office	All the processes carried out	One certificate number
Multiple Offices	Multiple Offices sharing common resources or processes	One number (the certificate shall have an annexure with the list of certified offices)

6.2 Certification Documentation - The certificate shall include the following information:

- a) Certificate number
- b) Certification scheme name
- c) Reference to certification criteria
- d) Private Security Agency's name (that of the legal entity) with all permanent locations in the schedule
- e) Certified Private Security Agency address
- f) Certification Level and Scope of certification
- g) Scheme logo
- h) logo of the CB
- i) Accreditation number with logo
- j) Date of certification
- k) Expiry date
- l) Signature of the CB's authorized representative

In case of Multi Site certification, the CB shall annex to the certificate the list of the certified offices. The temporary sites shall not be included.

6.3 Validity

6.3.1 The certificate shall be valid for 3 years from the date of issue.

7. Surveillance audits

7.1 Surveillance audits, announced and unannounced shall be carried out on site at a frequency mentioned in clause 2.1, by a competent audit as per clause 3.2 above. The audit mandays for surveillance audits shall be as defined in clause 2.3

7.2 Non conformities observed during surveillance audit shall be categorized as major and minor as defined in clause 3.4

8. **Suspension**

8.1 The certification body shall issue instructions to the certified organization for suspension of certification when

- a) the major NCs issued are not closed in timelines prescribed
- b) repeated major NCs are raised in consecutive surveillance assessments
- c) there is failure to organize a surveillance audit within the specified time period
- d) there is non payment of outstanding dues
- e) any major changes have taken place in the legal status, ownership, name etc without prior information to the CB
- f) any willful misuse of the logo of the Scheme is detected
- g) any willful false declaration in the application form or otherwise is detected
- h) excessive or serious complaints against the certified organization management system are received and are found to be valid
- i) the certified organization voluntarily requests a suspension. Such request must be submitted in writing to the CB along with the reasons. The CB may decide to accept the request but may not allow the client to revoke suspension on its own.

8.2 The certification body shall issue due notice of at least one week for suspension of certification to the certified organization.

8.3 When certification is suspended, the certification body shall require that, during the period of suspension, the certified organization makes no misleading claims.

8.4 The certification body shall revoke suspension only when Corrective actions have been taken and verified by the certification body.

9. **Renewal of certification**

9.1 The certification shall be renewed at the expiry of 3 years validity period. However the renewal process and the renewal of certification decision shall be taken on or before the certificate expiration date. In order to achieve the same the certification body shall send the Renewal notice to the certified units at least four months prior to expiry of certificate validity period

9.2 The certified organization shall apply for renewal in the prescribed format along with fee, if any prescribed by the CB at least 3 months before expiry of the certification.

9.3 The onsite surveillance audit conducted towards the end of third year and before the expiration of the certificate shall be considered as the recertification audit (refer clause 2.3). The objectives of this audit will be a combination of stage 2 and surveillance audits, unless there has been any changes in product and process

requirements, which would then also require assessment of the organization's revised processes, controls and systems.

- 9.4 The certification body shall review the performance of the certified unit who has sought renewal of the Certificate, with respect to compliance to certification criteria during the entire certification cycle, prior to a decision on the renewal of the certificate. The review shall essentially be based on the following:
- a) Surveillance and recertification audit reports for the audits carried out during the certification cycle. The NCs raised and the satisfactory resolution of the issues raised and their effectiveness.
 - b) Any suspension of certificate during the previous validity period;
 - c) corrective actions taken
 - d) complaints if any received,
 - e) Adverse information from stakeholders and regulators, if any.
- 9.5 The review shall be conducted by competent person (s) designated for the job.
- 9.6 The decision for renewal of certificate shall be taken by the competent personnel authorised for the same, based on the satisfactory performance of the certified organization.
- 9.7 The certification body shall not renew certification with conditions for compliance to be verified subsequently. There shall be no conditional renewal of certification.
- 9.8 When performance of the certified unit is not satisfactory, the certification body shall withhold the renewal of the certificate clearly stating the reasons and give time for effecting corrective actions. The verification and decision on renewal should be taken within 3 months of the certification expiry date.
- 9.9 The corrective actions shall be verified generally on site unless the Certification Body can verify the same off site prior to considering for renewal of certificate. The justification for off site review shall be recorded.
- 9.10 In case the agency does not complete satisfactorily actions within three months, the certificate shall stand expired from the date of expiry of previous validity.
- 9.11 When a certificate is not renewed, it shall expire at the end of validity period.
10. **Withdrawal**
- 10.1 Certification body shall withdraw the certificate when
- a) Certified organization contravenes the terms and conditions of certification and provisions of the STAR scheme
 - b) The certified organization is not conforming to the requirements of the

- Certification Criteria and the corrective actions taken are not ensuring compliance,
- c) the proposed plan for corrective actions will take a considerable time beyond 6 months for implementation;
- 10.2 Certification body shall withdraw the certificate at the request of the certified plant, if the operation(s) in the certified organization can no longer be carried due to reasons of natural calamities such as flood, fire, earthquake etc, lock out declared by the management, or closure of business operations etc.
11. **Change of location/Ownership/Name**
- 11.1 The certified organization shall inform the CB of any change in the location of the head office and additions/deletions of other offices.
 - 11.2 On receipt of such information, the certification body shall issue instructions to the certified organization for suspension of certification with immediate effect.
 - 11.3 The agency shall be subject to an onsite audit at the new site like an Initial audit of an applicant.
 - 11.4 If the audit is satisfactory, the Certification Body shall transfer the Certificate to the new location.
 - 11.5 The CB shall endorse the change of premises on the Certificate.
 - 11.6 In the event of change of Ownership, the organization shall provide necessary documentary evidence. The new management of the organization shall submit its acceptance to the agreement with the Certification Body, and payment of fees. The same process shall be followed as and when an existing applicant undergoes a change in management. Such changes shall not call for a visit to the production site.
 - 11.7 In case of change of Name, the Private Security Agency shall inform the change in the name to the CB supported with documentary evidence, and if satisfied the CB shall endorse the Certificate in the new name.
12. **Complaints and appeals**
- 12.1 The certification body shall have a documented procedure for handling of complaints and appeals.
 - 12.2 The procedure for complaint handling shall include complaints from all stake holders, especially its certified organization as well as customers of its certified organizations..

- 12.3 The procedure for receipt and handling of complaints shall be made available to public on the CB's website and shall also be easily accessible on the website.
- 12.4 Upon receipt of a complaint or appeal, the certification body shall confirm whether the complaint or appeal relates to certification activities for which it is responsible and, if so, shall address it. The certification body shall acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint or appeal.
- 12.5 The certification body shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information (as far as possible) to progress the complaint or appeal to a decision.
- 12.6 The procedure shall include the process steps for receiving and recording, evaluating and establishing validity of the same, investigating and make decisions on complaints and appeals. The process step shall also include the activities of root cause analysis, correction and corrective actions.
- 12.7 If the complaint relates to a certified organization, then the examination and evaluation of the complaints shall take in to consideration the effectiveness and implementation of the certified organizations system.
- 12.8 The CB's complaint handling process shall document the actions to be taken by the CB as well as the certified organization,. Some of these actions/conditions shall also be included in the CB's legally enforceable contract with the certified organization.
- 12.9 The certification body shall record and track complaints and appeals, as well as actions undertaken to resolve them.
- 12.10 The decision resolving the complaint or appeal shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, person(s) not involved in the certification activities related to the complaint or appeal. To ensure that there is no conflict of interest, personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy for a certified organization, or been employed by the certified organization, shall not be used by the certification body to review or approve the resolution of a complaint or appeal for that certified organization within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment.
- 12.11 Whenever possible, the certification body shall give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the complaint process to the complainant.
- 12.12 In respect of appeals the CB shall ensure that the individual(s)/committee entrusted with handling of appeal and its resolution decision shall be independent of the persons involved in certification related recommendations and decision and their position in the CB shall be such that it shall not be possible to influence their decisions with respect to the subject of the appeal.

- 12.13 The procedure shall also have provision for giving a written statement to the appellant, of the appeal findings including the reasons for the decisions reached and also communicating to the appellant about the provision for giving an opportunity to formally present his case.
- 12.14 Based on the presentation made, the individual or a committee appointed for hearing the case shall take a final decision on the appeal and a formal notice of the outcome and the end of the appeal process shall be given to the appellant.
- 12.15 The certification body shall give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the appeal process to the appellant.
- 12.16 The certification body shall take any subsequent action needed to resolve the complaint or appeal.
13. **Fee**
- 13.1 A fee to be charged to the organization for various activities of the certification scheme, without any discrimination between security agencies, geographical location, size of the agency.
- 13.2 The CBs fee structure shall be publicly accessible and also be provided on request. The fee structure shall provide break up of costs.
- 13.3 CB shall notify and obtain consent to its fee structure from the organizations prior to grant of certification. As and when the fee undergoes a change, the same shall be communicated to all including applicants and the agency certified under this scheme of certification for their acceptance.