

QA/1.0

IACS QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION SCHEME (QSCS)

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHEME – 11th EDITION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide general information on the IACS Quality System Certification Scheme (QSCS)¹. Additional details regarding the IACS QSCS Requirements are available on the IACS website (www.iacs.org.uk).
- 1.2 For the definition of the entities or persons mentioned below, refer to Annex 4 of the IACS Charter and/or Section 2 of 'Requirements for Accredited Certification Bodies for auditing Classification Societies (CSs) in accordance with QSCS Quality Management System Certification' (ACB Requirements).

2 ESTABLISHMENT OF QSCS

- 2.1 The decision to develop IACS QSCS was made by the IACS Council at its May 1990 meeting in Tokyo. The Scheme was approved by the IACS Council at its meeting in Helsinki, June 1991.
- 2.2 QSCS is continually reviewed by the Quality Committee (QC) to maintain its relevance to CSs and the shipping industry, in general.
- 2.3 This 11th Edition incorporates the changes to the Scheme, consequent to IACS's decision to make the Scheme generic to all the CSs and independently auditable by Accredited Certification Bodies (ACBs), which becomes fully effective from 1 January 2011.
- 2.4 The period until 1 January 2011 is considered a Transition Period and the auditing and certification policies valid for this transition period are detailed in the document: 'Transition year audit policies' available on the IACS website.
- 2.5 At the end of the Transition Period, IACS shall not issue any further QSCS certificates to IACS Members and Applicants.

3 QSCS OBJECTIVES AND POLICY

- 3.1 The main objective of QSCS is to verify that:
 - (i) a CS has developed its own internal quality management system;
 - (ii) the system of the CS is in conformity with the requirements laid down by IACS in the QSCS 'Quality Management System Requirements' (QMSR) available on the IACS website;

¹ This requirement is mandatory for IACS Members and Applicants from 1 January 2010.

(iii) the system of the CS is in operation as described in relevant documents of that CS.

3.2 Compliance with IACS QSCS is mandatory for IACS Members and Applicants. Other non-IACS CSs may apply QMSR and request an ACB to certify QSCS compliance on a voluntary basis.

3.3 The only QSCS certificate recognized for IACS Membership is the one issued by an ACB complying with the ACB Requirements, and recognised by IACS as compliant with such ACB Requirements in accordance with the procedure that they prescribe, as listed on the IACS website.

3.4 The IACS QSCS covers the following services rendered by a CS:

- (i) classification of ships capable of unrestricted navigation, and mobile offshore installations in respect of both new building and existing vessels;
- (ii) statutory work carried out on ships capable of unrestricted navigation, and mobile offshore installations which are covered by IMO instruments on behalf and under the authority of appropriate national Administrations.

4 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS

4.1 To obtain the QSCS certification (or statement of compliance) by an independent ACB, the quality management system of an individual CS is to comply with the IACS 'Quality Management System Requirements' (QMSR) published on the IACS website.

4.2 The IACS QMSR are built upon the quality management requirements of the latest version of ISO 9001 Standards, including, where considered necessary, additional requirements and guidelines, as deemed relevant and appropriate to CSs, resulting from the experience of application of the QSCS and specifically complying with the following:

- (i) IMO Resolutions A.739(18), A.789(19), applicable parts of ISO 17020 and other applicable standards, identified from time to time;
- (ii) IACS Resolutions, including IACS Unified Requirements, Procedural Requirements, Unified Interpretations and Common Structural Rules.

5 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION

5.1 Issuance, by an ACB, recognised by IACS as compliant with the ACB Requirements referred to in 3.3, of the Quality Management System Certificate of Conformity to ISO 9001 and a 'Statement of Compliance' to IACS QMSR, attests that the certificated CS' internal quality management system has been verified as being in conformity with IACS' QSCS and that the system is in operation.

5.2 The Quality Secretary may choose to join a scheduled ACB audit as observer, which shall be agreed to and arranged to suit the mutual convenience of the Operations Centre (OC), ACB and the Member.

5.3 Maintenance by a CS of ACB certification of compliance with QSCS, issued by an ACB that is recognised by IACS as complying with the ACB Requirements and in

accordance with the procedures of that ACB, shall constitute evidence of continued compliance with QSCS.

5.4 The certificate may be suspended / withdrawn, in accordance with the ACB's documented procedures.

6 INTERPRETATION OF QSCS

6.1 The authority to interpret QSCS and its technical documents is as follows:

- (i) additional requirements specific to the operations of CSs into the IACS QMSR: QS is first level, followed by QC;
- (ii) IACS Resolutions: GPG, supported by the appropriate Panel.

6.2 If the first level interpretation does not satisfy either the Member, the Applicant, or its ACB, then the issue may be submitted, in writing, to the IACS Council.

7 QSCS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS

The following describes the various measures taken by IACS to ensure that QSCS is continuously maintained, updated and improved as necessary according to documented procedures:

System related

7.1 Development, periodic review and updating of the QSCS system documentation to maintain its applicability, relevance, adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness, are all based on one or more of the following:

- (i) improvements initiated by Members;
- (ii) QS's Annual Quality Management Review (QMR);
- (iii) IMO Observer's report;
- (iv) comments of Quality Advisory Committee (AVC);
- (v) appeals and complaints.

7.2 Annual collation, review and suitable analysis of ACB audit data of Members, based on ACB feedback and other inputs from Members, AVC, IMO Observer, other stakeholders and end-user workshops as referred to paragraph 1.7 of the ACB Requirements, for identifying improvements to QSCS.

7.3 Maintenance of documented evidence, as required, in any suitable format and media.

7.4 Development of software tools, as necessary, to discharge the functions efficiently.

Certification related

7.5 Maintenance and development of the ACB Requirements.

7.6 Review of the credentials of ACBs proving their compliance with the above-mentioned Requirements.

- 7.7 Maintenance of a publicly available list of ACBs satisfying the ACB Requirements.
- 7.8 Observing of audits by ACBs, of system implementation by Members and Applicants.

Training related

- 7.9 Development and periodic updating of the training modules for the training of ACB Auditors.
- 7.10 Training of ACB Auditors, as and when appropriate.

Complaints related

- 7.11 Consideration of requests for interpretation of QSCS requirements.
- 7.12 Consideration of complaints relating to QSCS (see further Section 9 below).

8 OVERSIGHT BY EXTERNAL PARTIES

- 8.1 The QSCS is subject to oversight by external Parties to ensure its relevance and suitability and also to identify further improvement opportunities, as follows:
- (i) the IMO Observer periodically reviews the activities of IACS related to the implementation and continuous improvement of the QSCS, including the activities of the ACBs, as deemed necessary by him/her to submit his/her periodical QSCS assessment report to the IMO;
 - (ii) the AVC provides objective, independent advice, guidance and oversight from the industry;
 - (iii) representatives of flag States may also observe the ACB audits of Members and provide their feedback.
- 8.2 The QS and QC identify and implement appropriate follow-up actions, as required.

9 COMPLAINTS

- 9.1 Complaints against IACS Members are processed as per the IACS Complaints Policy published on the IACS website.
- 9.2 Complaints against ACB certification are processed as per the respective ACB's procedures, and, if the ACB process does not satisfy the complaint raised the documented procedures of the relevant national accreditation body whose logo appears on the ISO 9001 certificate issued by the ACB.
- 9.3 During the Transition Period, if an application for IACS membership is refused on the basis that the Applicant does not have a valid QSCS certificate, this decision shall be appealable to the **IACS Independent Appeal Board (IAB)** in accordance with the Appeal Board Rules of Procedure (Annex 2 of the IACS Charter).

10 PUBLICATION

- 10.1 IACS publishes, inter alia, on its public web site www.iacs.org.uk:

- (i) this Description of the Scheme document;
- (ii) the QMSR;
- (iii) IACS Resolutions;
- (iv) the list of IACS Members;
- (v) a list of ACBs that, at the request of a CS, have been verified by IACS as compliant with the ACB Requirements.

10.2 Any CS that possesses a valid QSCS compliance certificate issued by an ACB that appears on the IACS list of ACBs is permitted to refer to this fact publicly.

10.3 Any ACB that appears on the IACS list of ACBs shall be permitted to refer to this fact publicly.

11 CONFIDENTIALITY

11.1 All members of OC, QC, AVC, Council, the ACBs and IMO and EMSA Observers respect the confidentiality of any information they may receive pursuant to the implementation of this Scheme.
