

CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY

(ONLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF EXPORTERS OF SRI LANKA)



MANUAL

Version 1.0

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National Chamber of Exporters of Sri Lanka

Contents

| | | |
|------|--|----|
| 1. | Introduction | 3 |
| 1.1. | Background | 3 |
| 1.2. | (10) Principles implemented by NCE..... | 3 |
| 1.3 | Authority | 5 |
| 1.4 | Scope..... | 5 |
| 1.5 | Purpose | 5 |
| 1.6 | Manual | 5 |
| 2 | Contents..... | 5 |
| 2.1 | Member Registration | 5 |
| 2.2 | Submitting self-evaluation declaration Documents and other supporting documents for the certification..... | 6 |
| 2.3 | Certification Review | 6 |
| 2.4 | Grant of Certification | 6 |
| 2.5 | Denial of Certification | 6 |
| 2.6 | Decertification..... | 6 |
| 2.7 | Quality Monitoring Process | 6 |
| 2.8 | Maintenance and Revision..... | 7 |
| 2.9 | Program Methodology..... | 7 |
| 3 | Process Requirements | 8 |
| 3.3 | Obtaining and Verification of Information..... | 8 |
| 4 | Principles & Compliance Criteria | 10 |
| 4.1 | Principle 1: Trading Practices | 10 |
| 4.2 | Principle 2: Payment of a Fair Wage | 10 |
| 4.4 | Principle 4: Non-Discrimination, Gender Equity and Freedom of Association | 10 |

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The National Chamber of Exporters of Sri Lanka (NCE), is the only Trade Chamber dedicated to exclusively serve exporters. Since its incorporation in 1986. The membership and activities of the Chamber have grown considerably due to its achievements. The membership includes leading Export Houses together with a large number of SMEs. The Chamber is the 'Voice of the Exporter'.

To meet the requirements of Members to Promote and develop trade in the local and international market place, NCE has developed a service for the issue of a 'Certificate of Conformity' {CoC}. This service will be based on initial self-assessment by the applicant, and subsequent audits to be conducted by the Chamber as per conformity criteria detailed in this manual.

1.2. (10) Principles implemented by NCE

The 10 Principles of operations followed by the NCE, approved by the Management Committee, and ratified by the Council, in November 2018.

Principle 1: Creating Opportunities for Sri Lankan Enterprises to Be Successful in The International Market Place: - Support Members to gain better access to markets.

Principle 2: Transparency and Accountability: - Deal openly and fairly in all operational and procedural matters with regard to all Chamber activities.

Principle 3: Trading Practices: - Encourage Members to operate with concern for the social, economic and environmental well-being of Sri Lanka and prevent them been exploited for profit of others.

Principle 4: Payment of a Statutory Wages : - Encourage Members to pay wages and statutory commitments to all its employees according to National requirements.

Principle 5: Child Labour and Forced Labour: - Ensure Members do not employ anyone under the age of 18 and no involuntary, forced or bonded labour is used by creating awareness on the rules and regulations governing Child Labour and Forced Labour .

Principle 6: Non-Discrimination, Gender Equity and Freedom of Association: - Encourage Members not to support discrimination on all aspects and provide equal pay & opportunities for women and men. Encourage Members to provide special training and support women to take leadership and provide harassment free work environment to all (women & men).

Principle 7: Working Conditions: - Encourage Members to provide a healthy and safe work place all its employees.

Principle 8: Capacity Building: - Encourage Members to develop management / technical skills for employees to create better productivity and opportunities in work place.

Principle 9: Promotion of 'Good Values': - To promote encourage the values of coexistence and harmony among Members.

Principle 10: Environment: - Guide and encourage members to use environmentally friendly raw materials and production methods and safe guard the nature.

Further NCE Members who wish to obtain a CoC shall follow 08 Principles of Good Governance described below.

Principle 1: Trading Practices: - Operate with concern for the social, economical and environmental well-being of Sri Lanka and prevent them been exploited for profit of others.

Principle 2: Payment of a Statuary Wages: - Pay wages and statuary commitments to all its employees according to National requirements.

Principle 3: Child Labour and Forced Labour: - Not employ anyone under the age of 18 and no involuntary, forced or bonded labour is used.

Principle 4: Non-Discrimination, Gender Equity and Freedom of Association: - Not support discrimination on all aspects and provide equal pay & opportunities for women and men. To provide special training and encouragement to women to take leadership and provide harassment free work environment to all (women & men).

Principle 5: Working Conditions: - Provide a healthy and safe work place all its employees.

Principle 6: Capacity Building: -Develop management / technical skills for employees to create better productivity and opportunities in work place.

Principle 7: Promotion of 'Good Values': - Promote the values of coexistence and harmony among all stakeholders.

Principle 8: Environment: - Use environmentally friendly raw materials and production methods and safe guard the nature.

These values are to be upheld as continuous improvement basis at all applicant Organizations.

The NCE shall monitor these commitments following a Self-Assessment Declaration submitted by Members who wish to obtain the CoC which will be followed by scheduled audits by the Chamber.

The NCE will not be liable directly or indirectly to any party on account of the issuance of the CoC, or any other related matters.

1.3 Authority

NCE will certify, decertify, and recertify the systems of its Members based on conformity to CoC criteria. The NCE shall be the sole authority to grant, maintain, extend, suspend, or withdraw the right to retain, or use of this certificate, mark, or any other indicators of certification.

1.4 Scope

This Manual provides the guidelines that should be followed for the CoC program. Although participation is voluntary, adherence to the guidelines is mandatory.

1.5 Purpose

The objective of this Certification Program Manual is to provide guidelines to applicants on the requirements for certification.

The guidelines are based on a continuous improvement process to be implemented by the applicant. Evaluations will be conducted based on information submitted by the member organization on self-assessment declaration basis by the applicant, audit conclusions by the NCE as per conformity criteria and evidences gathered during audits. The program also serves the following:

- Support members to follow 08 Principles of Good Governance
- Increase awareness of the CoC certification program among Members

1.6 Manual

This Manual is a comprehensive presentation of the NCE CoC Certification Program and details all requirements.

2 Contents

The contents of the Manual serve as an overview of the program itself. The Manual contains the following chapters:

2.1 Member Registration

The CoC is only provided to **Members of NCE**. Any member who wishes to register with the program should submit the application together with a declaration accepting and following the 8 Principals Good Governance describe in detailed under 1.2 of this Manual with a non-refundable processing fee.

2.2 Submitting self-evaluation declaration Documents and other supporting documents for the certification.

All relevant documents consistent with this Manual as required within these criteria should be submitted.

2.3 Certification Review

The review process requires the completion of a self-evaluation declaration with the objective information/subjective information as detailed in this manual. The result of this process will determine the initial decision on Certification by the NCE Secretariat by following the operational manual and procedures.

2.4 Grant of Certification

Based on completion of specific requirements outlined in this manual along with the checklist, the Chamber may request additional information, and conduct Audits for greater clarification at its own discretion to grant the certificate.

Once successful conformity assessment is completed, a report will be submitted to the Management Committee of NCE for final decision on certification.

In the instance, where the Applicant is a member of the Management Committee; representative/s are expected to withdraw themselves from the decision making to ensure the impartiality.

2.5 Denial of Certification

If an Initial Decision to deny certification is made, a Member has a right to appeal to know the reason for denial by the Chamber.

2.6 Decertification

Decertification is the process by which the NCE revokes a certification it has previously granted to a Member organization. It is an important part of the Certification Program because it serves to ensure that the requirements of the program are followed, and that certified systems maintain the same level of quality or improved as per those presented for review/evaluation.

2.7 Quality Monitoring Process

Under the Certification Program, the NCE will implement a monitoring process that will help ensure that Members certified are continuously monitored over time. The monitoring process is a mandatory part of the program, and includes annual review, site visits and any other deemed necessary.

2.8 Maintenance and Revision.

Version 1.0 of the Manual will continue to be improved and expanded as experience and circumstances dictate. The Manual will be reviewed periodically and updated to meet current trends. The NCE is responsible for revising this document consistent with the standards applicable for local and international trade. Changes in policy requiring immediate implementation will be notified via policy memoranda and will be issued to each registered Member.

2.9 Program Methodology

The Certification programme shall include an initial certification and surveillance evaluation based on a two years' certification cycle. Recertification evaluation will be carried out in the second year prior to the expiration of certification. The two-year certification cycle begins with the decision for certification or recertification. Determination of evaluation and site visits shall consider the size of the member organization, products and processes, as well as the demonstrated level of effectiveness, and results of any previous conformity assessments.

The NCE shall have a certification team, with the needed competence to achieve the objectives of certification

2.10 Principles that will be adhered to the NCE:

- **Impartiality**

In order to maintain confidence, it is essential that the decisions of the NCE be based on objective evidence of conformity (or nonconformity) obtained by the NCE, to ensure that its decisions are not influenced by other interests, or by other parties.

- **Competence:**

Competence of the personnel of NCE is necessary to deliver certification to provide confidence. Competence is the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills.

- **Responsibility**

The Member organization has the responsibility for conformity with the requirements for certification

- **Openness**

The Chamber needs to provide public access to, or disclosure of, appropriate and timely information about its certification process, and about the certification status (i.e. the granting, extending, maintaining, renewing, suspending, reducing the scope of, or withdrawing of certification) of any organization, in order to gain and maintain confidence in the integrity and credibility of certification. Openness is a principle of access to, or disclosure of, appropriate information.

- **Confidentiality**

To gain privileged access to information that is needed by the Chamber to assess conformity to requirements for certification adequately, it is essential for the Chamber to keep confidential, any proprietary information about a client.

- **Responsiveness to complaints**

Parties that rely on certification expect to have complaints investigated and, if these are found to be valid, should have confidence that the complaints will be appropriately addressed, and that a reasonable effort will be made to resolve the complaints. Effective responsiveness to complaints is an important means of protection for the Chamber, its Members and other users of certification against errors, omissions or unreasonable behavior. Confidence in certification activities is safeguarded when complaints are processed appropriately.

3 Process Requirements

3.1 Application

An authorized representative of the Member organization should provide the necessary information to enable it to establish the following:

- The general features of the applicant organization, including its name and the address(es) of its physical location(s), significant aspects of its processes and operations, and any relevant legal obligations; such as its activities, human and technical resources, functions and relationship to a larger corporation, if any;
- information concerning all outsourced processes used by the organization that may affect conformity to requirements;

3.2 Application Review

Before proceeding with certification, NCE should conduct a review of the application and obtain supplementary information to ensure that sufficient details for conduct of evaluation are available.

3.3 Obtaining and Verification of Information

Should analyze all information provided by a Member and information gathered during the site visits. (If applicable)

3.4 Conformity Assessment

Collect Information on conformity to applicable requirements of this manual, or other normative document.

3.5 Determining the Site audit

NCE will make the decision the regard to the need of a site visit on the basis of an evaluation related to the findings and conclusions for Conformity Assessment and any other relevant information (e.g. public information, comments of Government authorities).

3.6 Initial Certification

The NCE team will analyze all information gathered during the conformity assessment process and site visit/s for this purpose.

3.7 Surveillance Activities

Surveillance assessment will be conducted once a year. The date of the first surveillance assessment following initial certification shall not exceed more than 12 months from the date of Certification.

3.8 Recertification

A recertification assessment is planned and conducted to evaluate the continued fulfilment of all of the requirements of the Manual or other applicable document. The purpose of recertification is to ensure the continued improvement and effectiveness of the systems of the organization as a whole, and its continued relevance, and applicability related to the scope of certification.

3.9 Appeals

The NCE shall be responsible for all decisions at all levels of the appeals-handling process. (**Process:** For receiving, validating and investigating an appeal, and to decide what actions are to be taken in response to it)

3.9.a Steps to be followed:

1. Receiving, validating and investigating an appeal, and to decide what actions are to be taken in response to it.
2. Tracking and recording of appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them;
3. Ensuring that appropriate correction, corrective and preventive action are taken.
4. NCE should acknowledge receipt of an appeal and shall provide the appellant with progress reports and the outcome.
5. NCE should give formal notification to the appellant at the end of the appeals handling process

3.10 Complaints

3.10.a Steps to be followed:

1. Receiving, validating and investigating the complaint, and deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it;
2. Tracking and recording complaints, including actions undertaken in response to them;
3. Ensuring that appropriate correction, corrective and preventive action are taken.
4. NCE shall acknowledge receipt of a complaint, and shall provide the complainant with progress reports, and the outcome.
5. NCE shall provide formal notification to the complainant at the end of the complaint-handling process

3.11 Applicant's Certification Records

NCE shall maintain records on the certification activities of all Members, including organizations that submit applications, as well as all organizations that are awarded or rejected and also whose certification has been suspended or withdrawn.

Records on certified Members shall include the following:

- application information as well as initial, surveillance, and recertification assessment reports;
- certification agreement;
- verification of correction, corrective and preventive actions;
- records of complaints and appeals, and any subsequent corrections, corrective, and preventive actions;
- documentation of certification decisions;
- related records that may be necessary to establish the credibility of the certification, such as evidence of the competence of assessors, and technical experts.

4 Principles & Compliance Criteria

4.1 Principle 1: Trading Practices

The organization trades with concern for the social, economic and environmental well-being of Sri Lanka and prevents them from being exploited for the profit of others.

The organization adopts trading and operational policies that are acceptable to all stakeholders.

4.2 Principle 2: Payment of a Fair Wage

The organization shall follow or better recommendations issued by The Wages Board of Sri Lanka and honor all statutory payments to its employees.

4.3 Principle 3: Child Labour and Forced Labour

The organization should adhere to Rights of the Child related to the national law for the employment of children. The organization should ensure there is no forced labour in its workforce.

The organization Shall not employ anyone below the age of 18 or under the age defined by national law as Workers and no bonded or forced labour is used any of its activities.

4.4 Principle 4: Non-Discrimination, Gender Equity and Freedom of Association

The organization does not discriminate in hiring, remuneration, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement based on race, caste, national origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, political affiliation, HIV/AIDS status or age.

The organization has a clear policy and plan to promote gender equality that ensures that women as well as men have the ability to gain access to the resources that they need to be productive, and also the ability to influence the wider policy, regulatory, and institutional

environment that shapes their livelihoods and lives. Where women are employed within the organization, even where it is an informal employment situation, to ensure they receive equal pay for equal work. The organization recognizes women's full employment rights and is committed to ensure that women receive their full statutory employment benefits. The organization takes into account the special health and safety needs of pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers.

The organization respects the right of employees' freedom of association.

4.5 Principle 5: Working Conditions

The organization should provide a safe and healthy working environment for employees and should comply with national laws on health and safety.

Working hours and conditions for employees should comply with conditions established by national laws.

The organization will be accountable to all stakeholders, and respects the sensitivity and confidentiality of any commercial information that is supplied. The organization should find appropriate, participatory ways to involve employees in its decision-making processes. It should ensure that relevant information is provided to all its partners. Communication channels should be kept good, and open at all levels of the supply chain.

4.6 Principle 6: Providing Capacity Building

The organization should seek to increase positive developmental impacts through Ethical Trade.

The organization should develop the skills and capabilities of its own employees to create better productive and opportunities in the work place

Organizations who are working directly with small suppliers should develop specific activities to help these suppliers to improve their management skills, production capabilities, and access to markets - local / regional / international / mainstream, as appropriate.

4.7 Principle 7: Promoting Good Values

The organization should raise awareness of the aims of ethical trade, and of the need for greater justice in world trade . The organization shall make efforts to enlighten stakeholders about itself, the products it markets, and other relevant information or harvest of the products. Honest advertising and marketing techniques should always be used.

4.8 Principle 8: Environment

Organization should maximize the use of raw materials from sustainably managed sources in their ranges. They should use production technologies that seek to reduce energy consumption and where possible use renewable energy technologies that minimize greenhouse gas emissions. They should seek to minimize the impact of their waste streams on the environment and safeguard the nature.

Controlled