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|  | CERTIFICATION REGULATIONS SG | Sigla: RG 01 |
| | | Rev.: 00 |
| | | Data: 27/05/2025 |

**CERTIFICATION REGULATIONS FOR
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

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**CERTIFICATION
REGULATIONS
SG**

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1. Introduction and Scope

NCERT S.r.l. (hereinafter NCERT) operates as a management system certification body with reference to internationally recognized standards.

These Regulations apply to the activities carried out in accordance with UNI EN ISO/IEC 17021:2015 and may be amended in relation to changes to the documents in force, which will be communicated to Client Organizations.

Where the reference standard for certification and or the accreditation regulations require specific conditions, these will be indicated in the relevant specific Regulations.

2. General provisions

These Regulations govern the certification services and the Organization contractually undertakes to comply with the provisions set out herein. The Regulations are applied independently and impartially to all Organizations that apply for or have obtained access to NCERT certification services.

Organizations therefore undertake to make available the documents defining and implementing the system, to cooperate during all verification activities by ensuring access to all areas, information, and personnel. Where the presence of the Organization's consultants is permitted, the Organization ensures that they do not interfere in any way with the conduct of the audit activities.

3. Certification process

3.1 Certification application

The Organization interested in certification submits a request for a certification quotation to NCERT by using the dedicated request for quotation questionnaire, duly completed.

It is a necessary condition for starting the process that the management system has been operating for at least three (3) months.

The application is accepted by NCERT only if it is completed in all its parts and accompanied by the required documentation.

Once the Organization's request for quotation has been received, NCERT reviews the documentation to verify the completeness of the information provided, with particular reference to the definition of the scope for which certification is requested and the elements set out in IAF MD 05 for determining the time required for audit activities.

Following a positive outcome of the review of the certification application, NCERT issues the certification offer containing the certification scope and the amounts relating to the certification activities.

The financial quotation is drawn up on the basis of the tariff schedule in force. By signing and accepting the offer, the contractual relationship between the parties is finalized. The Organization,

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by signing the offer, simultaneously declares that it accepts its terms and the contents of this document.

3.2 Audit planning

Receipt of the signed offer marks the start of the Certification process; NCERT defines the audit programme and starts the planning activities.

NCERT communicates to the Organization the names of the Audit Team (GVI) appointed to conduct the audit.

The Organization has the right, stating the reasons for its request, to reject the appointed GVI within 3 working days from the date of the audit notification.

NCERT communicates the dates on which the audit will be carried out and sends the relevant plans.

The Organization is responsible for applying the requirements set out by the applicable workplace health and safety regulations and undertakes to provide NCERT with complete and detailed information on the specific risks present in the environment in which the GVI will operate.

Where information is subject to specific confidentiality clauses on the part of the Organization, the latter must inform NCERT in order to allow the GVI to understand the methods for obtaining such information.

Furthermore, should it become necessary during the certification process to carry out audits at the Organization's suppliers, in any case connected to the requested certification scope (for example, review of outsourced processes), the Organization must allow access to its suppliers' premises, and where applicable, to the inspectors of the Accreditation Body.

3.3 Pre audit

At the Organization's request, during the certification application phase and before the start of the initial process, a preliminary audit (pre audit) may be carried out. Its sole purpose is to determine the Organization's level of readiness with respect to the requirements of the reference standard.

It is also specified that pre audit activity is not consultancy, meaning the preparation and production of manuals, guidelines and procedures, or providing specific advice on the development and implementation of the management system for the specific certification.

The pre audit is carried out at the Organization using the same criteria as an audit. In particular, the pre audit does not include planning activities and therefore does not include an audit plan or prior document review.

Any issues that emerge are expressed only as recommendations, while no nonconformities are raised.

Pre audit activity does not affect the certification process of the Organization requesting it and does not entail any reduction in the duration of a subsequent assessment.

The pre audit may also be requested when the reference standard is updated and when extending to new certification schemes.

3.4 Stage 1 audit

The initial audit is carried out in two phases (Stage 1 and Stage 2) under the responsibility of an NCERT Audit Team Leader (RGVI), in accordance with audit plans previously sent to the Organization, which indicate the purposes and methods for conducting the audit.

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For each audit, an opening meeting is held in the presence of the Organization's management and, where appropriate, those responsible for the functions or processes to be audited. The opening meeting includes introduction of the participants, including a description of their roles, confirmation of the audit plan, discussion of any changes and any other relevant arrangements such as the duration of the closing meeting and any interim meetings between the audit team and the Organization's management, the criteria for classifying nonconformities (if applicable) and the resulting corrective actions, and confirmation of the audit team's confidentiality.

Finally, during the closing meeting the outcome of the audit is communicated and clarifications are provided on the results recorded in the report, and on the time limits for implementing any actions in response to the nonconformities raised during the audit.

The Stage 1 audit aims to:

- examine the documented information of the Organization's management system;
- evaluate the Organization's site specific conditions and exchange information with the Organization's personnel in order to determine the level of readiness for the Stage 2 audit;
- review the Organization's status and understanding of the standard requirements, with particular reference to the identification of key performance or significant aspects, processes, objectives, and operation of the management system;
- collect the information needed regarding the scope of the management system, the Organization's site or sites, the processes and equipment used, the levels of controls established, particularly in the case of multisite Organizations, and the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements;
- review the allocation of resources for Stage 2 and agree with the Organization on the details of that phase;
- obtain sufficient knowledge of the management system and of the Organization's site activities, within the scope of the management system standard or other normative documents, for the purpose of effective planning of Stage 2;
- assess whether internal audits and management reviews have been planned and carried out, and whether the level of implementation of the management system provides evidence that the Organization is ready for the Stage 2 audit.

Where possible, it is advisable that at least part of Stage 1 is performed at the Organization's premises. However, for particularly small companies Stage 1 may be conducted remotely.

Between the Stage 1 audit and the Stage 2 audit, an appropriate period must elapse to allow potential areas of concern identified during Stage 1 to be addressed.

If the document review during Stage 1 highlights potential areas of concern that do not affect the effectiveness of the management system, the Stage 2 audit may nevertheless be carried out, with the possibility that the same issues may result in nonconformities at Stage 2.

If the identified potential areas of concern may have a significant impact on the Organization's management system, they must be resolved before proceeding to Stage 2, within 6 months of the last day of Stage 1. Otherwise, a new Stage 1 shall be carried out.

However, in cases of particular logistical situations and or specific requests by the client Organization, where there are no shortcomings at Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2 activities may be carried out consecutively.

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No more than 6 months may elapse between Stage 1 and Stage 2, otherwise a new Stage 1 must be carried out.

3.5 Stage 2 audit

The Stage 2 audit is carried out, after a positive outcome of Stage 1, with the purpose of assessing the implementation, including the effectiveness, of the Organization's management system against the reference standard or standards.

Stage 2 shall take place at the Organization's site or sites and shall include the following activities:

- collection of information and evidence of conformity to all requirements of the applicable standards;
- monitoring, measurement, reporting and review of performance against key performance objectives and targets;
- collection of evidence regarding the capability and performance of the Organization's management system with reference to compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements;
- control of the Organization's processes;
- evaluation of records of internal audit activities and management reviews.

At the end of the assessment, the GVI, by delivering the Audit Report, communicates the conclusions on the effectiveness of the Organization's management system against the reference standard, illustrating the findings.

On that occasion, the Organization has the opportunity to discuss with the GVI, clarify its position on what has been presented, and express any reservations regarding the audit conclusions.

3.6 Nonconformities and corrective actions

The audit activity may reveal deficiencies relating to requirements of the reference standard that have not been met.

NCERT classifies such deficiencies into three levels:

Major Nonconformity (NCM): failure to meet a requirement that affects the ability of the management system to achieve the intended results. For example, significant doubt about the effectiveness of the controls in place, or that the products or services provided by the Organization do not meet specified requirements.

A high number of minor nonconformities associated with the same requirement or aspect may represent a systemic issue and therefore constitute a major nonconformity.

Minor Nonconformity (NCm): a deficiency that does not affect the ability of the management system to achieve the intended results.

Observation (OSS.): elements which, if not properly managed, may develop into a nonconformity situation, or which may represent areas for improvement of the Organization's management system.

In the event that any Nonconformities are identified (major and minor), the Organization must send to NCERT, within 10 working days, a Proposal that includes an analysis of the causes of such

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deficiencies, the treatment and corrective actions to prevent such deficiencies from recurring in the future; the Organization also proposes the implementation timelines for such actions.

The RGVI evaluates the proposed actions and, if they are not accepted, informs the Organization in writing, and the Organization will draw up a new proposal.

The Organization may, where the type of nonconformity allows, formulate the action plan for resolving the identified nonconformities directly during the audit closing phase.

Within three (3) months from the audit date, the Organization must implement the corrective actions to resolve the major and minor nonconformities.

For major nonconformities, NCERT verifies effectiveness through a follow up activity, documentary or on site at the Organization, to be carried out within six (6) months from the closing of Stage 2.

If, within those time limits, it is not possible to verify the implementation of treatments and corrective actions, for initial certification a second Stage 2 audit is required, whereas during surveillance the certificate must be suspended.

For minor nonconformities, the Organization implements the corrective actions within the established time limits and NCERT verifies the effectiveness of the treatments and corrective actions during the next scheduled audit.

The RGVI may recommend a supplementary verification, when deemed necessary, providing the reasons in the audit summary.

3.7 Certification decision

NCERT, through the Technical Decision Committee, carries out a careful review of the documentation relating to the GVI report and all documents forming the certification file.

After a positive outcome of the Technical Decision Committee, NCERT issues and sends to the Organization the relevant certificate of conformity to the reference standard, the NCERT mark, and the regulations for use of the mark. The issued certificate, in addition to other information, indicates the expiry date, within which the renewal process must be completed, including a positive decision on the file, in order to maintain history and the certificate number.

The Technical Decision Committee may also decide not to grant certification, and NCERT will formally inform the company of the reasons that led to that decision.

3.8 Certificate

The certificate is valid for three years from the date of first issue.

The certificate issued by NCERT is issued in the language contractually agreed; certificates in other languages may be issued on request in the manner set out in the certification offer. The certificate is sent only after settlement of the invoice relating to the audit activity.

The issued certificate, as well as the audit reports, are the property of NCERT and the Organization undertakes to return them in the event of amendments or cancellation.

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3.9 Surveillance audits

To maintain the three year certification cycle, NCERT carries out periodic surveillance audits in the first and second year following the certification decision, and a certification renewal audit in the third year, before the certification expires.

Surveillance audits shall be conducted at least once a year, calendar year. The date of the first surveillance audit following initial certification shall not exceed 12 months from the date of the certification decision.

In the event of an extraordinary event or circumstance outside the Organization's control, commonly referred to as force majeure, such as war, strike, riot, political instability, geopolitical tension, acts of terrorism, crime, pandemic, floods, earthquakes, cyber piracy, other natural disasters or man made disasters, as provided for in IAF ID 03, certification activities, for example surveillance and renewal, may be postponed in voluntary schemes, for example all management systems, by six (6) months, without loss of validity of the issued certificates, unless a different regime has been established for specific schemes.

Certificates that have expired or are expiring during this emergency period may therefore be extended by a maximum of six (6) months.

3.10 Certification renewal

The renewal activity aims to confirm the continuing conformity and effectiveness of the management system, as well as its continuing relevance and applicability to the certification scope. Renewal audits are conducted on site and aim to assess the continued fulfilment of all requirements of the relevant management system standard or other normative document. The renewal activity includes review of the audit reports from the previous surveillance audits and considers the management system's performance over the most recent certification cycle.

Certification renewal activities may require a Stage 1 where significant changes have occurred in the management system, in the Organization, or in the context in which the management system operates, for example changes in legislation.

NCERT may restore certification within 6 months of expiry.

3.11 Additional audits

NCERT reserves the right, with written justification to the Organization, to carry out additional audits, sometimes unannounced; this may occur, for example, to verify the implementation of corrective actions for nonconformities, to address any requests arising at the time the certificate is issued, to lift the suspension of a certificate, upon receipt of information on serious malfunctions or complaints related to the certified system, when the Organization makes changes to its system considered relevant by NCERT, and so on.

At the end of the visit, the Organization receives the relevant report.

Any refusal by the Organization to accept such audits automatically triggers the procedure for suspension of the certificate.

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Such additional audits, at the Organization's expense, do not replace or change the process and frequency of periodic surveillance audits.

3.12 Monitoring and presence of observers

NCERT may provide for the possibility of monitoring the auditors appointed to carry out the audit at Organizations at any stage of the certification process, and in this case communicates such activity to the Organization.

Where necessary, NCERT may use the collaboration of Technical Experts or appoint Observers. Audits may also be attended by inspectors of the Accreditation Body, witness audit. Any refusal of the presence of the above inspectors results in certification not being granted, or in revocation. NCERT Observers and Evaluators may also participate.

Neither the observers nor the technical experts may conduct the audit; they may only support and monitor the GVI's activities.

4. Suspension, withdrawal, or renunciation of certification

4.1 Suspension

For reasons deemed serious and explained in writing to the Organization, NCERT may suspend certification that has already been granted for a limited period of time.

NCERT may implement suspension when:

- the Organization's certified system has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements, including those relating to the effectiveness of the management system;
- the Organization does not allow the surveillance or renewal audit to be carried out with the required frequency;
- the Organization does not properly manage complaints;
- audits highlight significant deficiencies in the system;
- the Organization does not comply with the provisions for the implementation of corrective actions;
- the Organization does not inform NCERT of ongoing judicial measures against it linked to noncompliance with statutory and regulatory requirements impacting the certified management system;
- the Organization is in breach of the contractual obligations undertaken towards NCERT, of the provisions of these Regulations, or of the rules for use of the mark or certificate;
- arrears in payments for services, fees and expenses for more than one (1) month after the due date towards NCERT;
- misuse of the NCERT mark;
- upon the Organization's reasoned written request where it believes it cannot temporarily ensure the effectiveness of its management system

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In the event of suspension, NCERT gives official notice to the Organization by certified email, also communicating the conditions for lifting the suspension.

During the suspension period, the Organization may not use the certificate and the marks, nor present itself as a certified Organization.

If the Organization meets the conditions set by NCERT within the indicated time limits, the suspension may be lifted.

Any subsequent lifting of the suspension is also made public in the same manner. The costs related to the suspension and reinstatement of the certificate are borne by the Organization.

The maximum duration of a suspension may not exceed six (6) months. Otherwise, NCERT proceeds with withdrawal of the certificate.

4.2 Withdrawal

For reasons deemed particularly serious and justified in writing to the Organization, NCERT may withdraw the certificate when:

- the Organization does not comply with the conditions set by NCERT for lifting the suspension of certification;
- the Organization ceases production and provision of the services mentioned in the certificate scope, or in the event of bankruptcy;
- NCERT changes the conditions of its certification scheme or regulations and the Organization does not intend to comply with the new requirements;
- the Organization breaches the agreements entered into with NCERT;
- the Organization does not accept changes to the financial conditions;
- arrears not remedied after suspension of the certificate;
- the Organization does not accept the audit being carried out in the presence of the Accreditation Body.

Withdrawal of the certificate is officially notified to the Organization by certified email.

If, following withdrawal of the certificate, the Organization continues to refer to it in any way, NCERT is free to protect itself in the manner and before the authorities it deems most appropriate.

4.3 Renunciation

The client organization may renounce the granted Certification at any time, by notifying in writing via PEC at least 60 (sixty) days in advance of the date scheduled for renewal or the annual surveillance audit.

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5. Use of the Certificate and the NCERT certification mark

Organizations that have successfully completed the certification process have the right to use the Certification Mark, in compliance with the provisions of the document Regulations for Use of the Mark.

Where the Organization has specific needs in using the mark that are not covered in the Regulations for Use of the Mark, it must contact NCERT to obtain prior authorization.

NCERT will take the actions it deems appropriate, at the Organization's expense, to prevent any continuation of misuse or misleading references to certification and or to use of the certificate or mark.

The Organization must immediately cease referring to the certificate and the NCERT certification mark after any expiry, suspension, or cancellation of the certificate, in the event that changes to the system have been made that are not accepted by NCERT, if NCERT changes the rules of the certification scheme and the Organization does not intend to comply, or in the presence of any other circumstance that may negatively affect the certified system.

NCERT verifies correct use of the certificate and the certification mark during surveillance and renewal audits and on the basis of information from the market; in the event of incorrect use, NCERT undertakes the necessary actions which may include requests for major corrective actions, suspension or withdrawal of certification, publication of the infringement, and legal action.

6. Change to the scope of the certificate

The Organization may request extensions or reductions of the certificate scope in relation to changes in products, processes, services, sites, and so on compared to those mentioned in the certificate, An extension is granted following a new audit with a favorable outcome relating to the elements subject to the extension.

Similarly, NCERT may adopt measures to reduce the certificate scope based on information communicated by Organizations, in the presence of deficiencies not resolved within the specified time limits and or relating to specific aspects whose exclusion does not affect the rest of the system, in the absence of activities relating to products or processes subject to certification, or upon expiry of authorizations relating to products or processes subject to certification.

The process for planning certificate extension activities is similar to that for the initial application, with particular reference to defining the scope and calculating the audit days.

Issuance of the new certificate entails cancellation and replacement of the previous one.

7. Changes to the certification scheme

If substantial changes are made to the rules or requirements of the certification scheme, NCERT informs certified or certifying Organizations, taking into account any observations submitted by them.

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NCERT specifies the date on which the changes enter into force and any required corrective actions, allowing the time necessary for their adoption.

Failure by the Organization to comply with the established corrective measures within the agreed time limits may lead to the application of suspension measures and subsequent withdrawal of certification.

8. Changes to the certified system

The certified Organization must promptly inform NCERT in writing of any substantial changes it intends to make to its system and or any changes that may affect conformity to the requirements of the reference standard for certification, such as:

- legal, commercial, organizational or ownership aspects, or those relating to organization and management, for example personnel with key roles or decision making authority, technical personnel;
- contact addresses and sites;
- the scope of the activities performed included in the certified management system;
- significant changes to the system and processes.

The Organization shall accept NCERT's determinations, justified in writing, regarding any need to carry out an additional visit, suspend or reduce certification, or repeat the certification process in full. Failure to notify NCERT may lead to suspension measures and subsequent withdrawal of certification.

10. Complaints and appeals

10.1 Complaints

Anyone may submit complaints regarding NCERT's activities.

Such complaints must be submitted in writing and sent by post, email, or certified email.

In order to be considered valid, the complaint must contain the following information:

- First and last name of the person who submitted the complaint
- Company name, if applicable, postal address and email address;
- Reason for the complaint;
- Reference to the service, relevant office, and personnel concerned by the complaint.

NCERT acknowledges receipt of the complaint in writing, indicating the name and role of the person who will handle the complaint and the time frame, no longer than 2 months from receipt, within which feedback will be provided.

The Organization concerned will also be informed of the handling method, ensuring accessibility to information and assistance.

NCERT will ensure that complaints are managed with the utmost cooperation and by undertaking the measures within its competence, the appropriate actions for resolution, and where applicable, the appropriate corrective actions, always ensuring Impartiality, Fairness, Confidentiality, Completeness, and Sensitivity.

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The person or organization that submitted the complaint is kept informed of the activities carried out to handle it and of the results.

The person or organization that submitted the complaint is informed of the possibility to file an appeal in the event of unsatisfactory actions.

If the complaint is made against an organization certified by NCERT, that organization will be informed by written notice.

NCERT establishes with the certified organization whether the subject of the complaint and its resolution should be made public and, if so, the manner, always in compliance with applicable regulations.

10.2 Appeals

An appeal against NCERT decisions may be submitted within 30 days from the date of notification of the decision.

NCERT accepts appeals in the form of a written request addressed to NCERT.

Such request must contain the reasons for disagreement with explicit reference to the relevant paragraph of these Certification Regulations.

NCERT examines the appeal within three (3) months from its submission and communicates the outcome and any consequent actions to the Organization and to the relevant NCERT functions.

Except in cases where the appeal is recognized as founded, any costs relating to the appeal remain the responsibility of the appellant

The appeal does not suspend the enforceability of the decision taken by NCERT until any different ruling resulting from examination of the appeal.

11. Renunciation, suspension, withdrawal of NCERT accreditation

NCERT undertakes to promptly inform the client Organization of any renunciation, suspension or withdrawal of accreditation in the accreditation scheme or sector under which the Organization's certification falls, and to support the Organization during any transition to another accredited body.

If NCERT renounces accreditation for the sector in which the Organization is certified, the Organization will be notified at least two (2) months in advance, and for those two months the responsibility for the certificate assurance will remain with NCERT.

12. General conditions

These Regulations and the certification offer constitute the contractual agreement between the Organization and NCERT, the Contract. Unless otherwise agreed, no amendment to the Contract shall be deemed valid and effective unless it is set out in writing and signed by the Organization and by NCERT.

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12.1 Obligations of the client Organization

The client Organization undertakes to provide truthful and complete information at the time of application and throughout the entire validity cycle of certification and must also:

- ensure access to its premises for NCERT audit personnel, including any Observers, and, when requested, also for the personnel of the Accreditation Body.
- make available to NCERT the necessary information and facilities when requested, including the assistance of duly trained and authorized personnel, and a space equipped with the main tools for drafting and reproducing reports and for holding meetings.
- ensure access to its Suppliers' premises for the Body's audit personnel and, when requested, for the personnel of the Accreditation Body, if during the certification process it becomes necessary to carry out audits at such premises for investigations related to the requested certification scope, for example review of outsourced processes;
- ensure compliance with the time schedules agreed with NCERT for periodic maintenance audits, surveillance and renewals.
- provide NCERT and, where applicable, the personnel of the Accreditation Body with all available information regarding risks, even potential, that such personnel might encounter during visits.
- bring, and keep, its products and or services in conformity with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, such as Directives, Laws and Regulations;
- promptly communicate to NCERT any noncompliant situations detected by supervisory Authorities, as well as any suspensions or revocations of authorizations, concessions, and so on relating to the products or services connected to the issued certification, any ongoing judicial and or administrative proceedings regarding the subject of certification, and keep NCERT informed of developments in such proceedings.
- ensure the completeness and truthfulness of the documents and information made available to the GVI appointed by NCERT.
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12.2 NCERT obligations

NCERT undertakes to ensure that its personnel, during their stay at the client Organization, comply with all health and safety regulations.

13. Fees and payments

The fees communicated to the client Organization include all phases of the audit programme and issuance of the certificate, as well as the periodic surveillance activities performed by NCERT to maintain the certificate.

NCERT reserves the right to revise the fees if the client Organization's requests subsequently prove not to be in line with the information initially provided, or with that used to obtain a quotation. Any fee revision will be notified to the client Organization.

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Additional charges will be required for activities not initially quoted, as well as for audit or surveillance activities required following identification of nonconformities, such as, by way of example:

- repetition of single phases or of the entire audit programme, or activities resulting from failure to comply with the rules and recording procedures, supplementary verification;
- additional activities resulting from suspension, withdrawal and or reinstatement of the certificate;
- repetition of audit activities due to changes to the management system or to products, processes or services.

Payments shall be made in accordance with the conditions set out in the invoice relating to the requested service.

NCERT reserves the right to charge additional amounts on top of the current fees in the event of requests for additional services, cancellation or rescheduling of services, partial or full repetition of the audit programme or of the activities referred to in these Regulations.

In particular, postponement, at the client Organization's request, of activities already planned and agreed that require the presence of NCERT personnel at the Organization, entails additional charges as per the offer.

Unless otherwise indicated, all fees do not include travel and accommodation expenses.

In the event of late payment of invoices, NCERT is entitled to payment of default interest as provided by law.

All costs related to debt collection are borne by the client Organization, including any legal costs.

14. Confidentiality

All information and documentation collected and or verified during the assessment of the management system are strictly confidential.

This obligation does not apply where NCERT is required to publicly communicate the existence or withdrawal of an Organization's certificate and the Organization's right regarding suspension of an Organization's certificate, and or where required by law and or other provisions.

NCERT ensures that all confidential information obtained during certification activities is treated in a strictly confidential manner at all levels of its organizational structure, unless otherwise required by law, by provisions of Accreditation Bodies or scheme owners, or by written authorization from the Organization concerned.

15. Publication

These Regulations, in their most up to date version, are published and made available on the website www.ncert.it