GUIDANCE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF CERTIFICATION SCHEMES AND ACCEDITATION OF PERSON CERTIFICATION BODIES IN COMPLIANCE WITH ELOT EN ISO/IEC 17024

ESYD G-SCHEMPERS

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1. Introduction

Bodies operating certification of persons or PCBs carry out audits in order to verify a person's compliance with specific and documented requirements, specifications and procedures. The context of the above three elements is briefly called certification scheme for persons.

The certification of persons provides assurance that the certified person meets the requirements of the certification scheme for persons, according to which certification was granted. If the certification is provided under the status of accreditation, i.e. by a PCB accredited for this scheme, then this certification is notably reliable, systematic and validated, since the PCB complies in a documented manner with a number of requirements, concerning the quality of its services. These requirements are defined by the International accreditation standard ELOT EN ISO/IEC 17024.

It should be emphasized here that accredited certification of persons cannot and should not be applied indiscriminately in any subject requiring a certificate of competence of the individual and especially in cases where, for reasons of public interest (e.g. protection of health and safety of persons and animals, environment, property, etc.) the state itself for specific professional activities has regulated by law the assessment of the capacity of these persons and the conditions for the exercise of these activities.

In order to apply accredited certification to an object, many parameters must be considered, such as the impact of that object on the health and safety of citizens and the protection of the environment, or the relevant requirements of the national and/or international market for the development of technology, and specialization, depending on the requirements of impartiality, avoidance of conflicts of interest, confidentiality, competition rules, legal requirements, etc. From such a multilevel examination, very useful conclusions may come out about whether the determination of a person's competence should be subject to a mechanism of accredited certification of persons or to the granting of a form of attestation, approval, license, etc. By default, a PCB's and the corresponding scheme's compliance with the requirements of ELOT EN ISO/IEC 17024 offers an added value to the provided services and recognition in national and/or international level.

2. Scope

This guidance is supplementary to the application of ELOT EN ISO/IEC 17024, intended for use by any interested party, regarding the way of development, validation and maintenance of a certification scheme for persons, which will be incorporated in an accredited environment. Initially, the compliance with this guidance should be examined by ESYD during the review of the application for scheme acceptance, and where necessary during the assessment in the premises of the PCB. It should be noted that the certification of persons applies only in combination with specific certification schemes.

This guidance aims, in the view of the ongoing development of technical professions and the international trends to verify the competence of professionals, at clarifying concepts, giving directions and assisting in the best possible application of ELOT EN ISO/IEC 17024, through the relevant ISO / CASCO instructions and EA documents.

3. Definitions

The definitions are clearly defined in the respective standards and it is not considered necessary to repeat the definitions in this Directive.

4. Development, Acceptance, and Examination of the potentiality of accreditation of the person certification scheme

4.1 Development and acceptance of a certification scheme for persons

The owner of the certification scheme must be a legal entity and not a natural person. We can distinguish two (2) different cases:

- The owner of the scheme is also the PCB that offers the relevant conformity assessment service
- The owner of the scheme is different from the PCB that offers the relevant conformity assessment service

For an *owner* to develop a Person Certification Scheme (PCS), so that an evaluation and then accreditation of the PCBs who will apply it, will follow, he must submit a "study on the potentiality of accreditation of the scheme" to ESYD, which will describe in detail the Certification Scheme. The study will be submitted with an application (standard - EN ISO / IEC 17024) to the ESYD and must contain the following information (paragraph 8.2, points a to f of the ISO / IEC 17024 standard) and have taken into account at least the following documents:

- EA 1/22 A-AB:2020 “EA Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes by EA Accreditation Body Members”
- ISO CASCO ‘How to develop schemes for the certification of persons’ (Guidance of ISO/IEC 17024)

In order to secure the applicants, so that to avoid issues of disputing the ownership of the scheme the applicants are invited to take legal action in advance of the copyright deriving from the content of the scheme.

Issues of impartiality, conflict of interest, impartiality of the PCBs should, as far as possible, be resolved before the evaluation at the applicants' premises.

The following should be documented in the study:

a) Object of the certification

The object of the certification scheme is to describe the scope and limits that apply. It also informs the certified person and other interested parties about the nature and limits of the certification.

The description of the object can be:

- the title of a job (e.g., assistant cook, firefighter)
- the title of the certification (e.g., certified quality management systems auditor / inspector)
- one sentence (e.g., energy auditor / inspector of residential buildings and commercial buildings)
- a more detailed description of the certification

(e.g., certified digital media sellers are marketing professionals, consulting and critical thinking, and their revenue comes from selling ads on digital media. They achieve this by understanding the digital ecosystem, having skills in the field of digital media sales and their commitment to maintaining high standards of ethical and professional practice in the field).

b) Job description and job tasks

Each job consists of several different tasks. Task is essentially a work-related activity. A certification scheme includes a description of the tasks required to perform the job. The scheme developer determines the scope of the tasks.

A certification scheme may also include the framework in which the tasks are performed.

For example, the job and task description for a certification scheme for commercial airline pilots includes the context of the specific type of aircraft operated by the pilot.

c) Required competence

Once the tasks for a specific job have been defined, knowledge and skills are identified. Competence is the ability to apply the knowledge and skills to achieve the intended results (to perform the tasks competently). A person certification scheme contains a method for verifying the tasks, knowledge and skills required to perform the job competently.

d) Abilities (where applicable)

Depending on the nature of the job, it may be necessary to identify the abilities required. (Note 1 Par. 8.2 of the Standard).

An example of a scheme that includes abilities related to physical characteristics would be a scheme that requires a firefighter to lift a certain weight.

e) Prerequisites (where applicable)

Prerequisites are the qualifications or competence required by a certification scheme for persons before one can be certified.

An example of a prerequisite is requiring completion of safety training prior to certification.

The existence of prerequisites depends on each case. (ISO / IEC 17024§ 8.2.e). When the prerequisites are part of the person certification scheme, they must be related to the competency requirements (paragraph 8.4.c of EN ISO / IEC 17024).

f) Code of Conduct (where applicable)

Code of conduct is the statement of the expected behavior of the certified person. May contain a description of professional or ethical rules, or rules of conduct.

In addition to the above, the study should document the following:

1. The intention to develop the scheme arises from a documented need of the market (requests from professional associations, unions, chambers, etc.).
2. The need to develop the scheme is accepted by "end-users" collective bodies (consumers, employers, etc.).
3. National priorities and/or relevant legislative requirements and/or national, European, International standards, have been identified. The scheme must take into account regulations and legislation, technical standards, code of good practice, customer-market requirements, environmental aspects, occupational health and safety, food safety, etc.
4. Purpose of the scheme is the development, improvement and promotion of the relative profession, creating a sense of confidence in the market, as well as the overall common good.
5. The existence of the same or a similar scheme has been checked in the national and international market.
6. The interested parties have been identified and have been invited to participate in the certification scheme. Those parties that accept the invitation, must

nominate a representative (relevant invitations must be sent to the interested parties and there must be a documented acceptance of the scheme with a corresponding formal appointment of representatives). ESYD, in each case, may request from the owner of the scheme to invite bodies for which their participation is deemed necessary.

7. If the scheme is not developed by a PCB, the relevant points of annex 3 must be answered.
8. The owner of the PCS (Person Certification Scheme) must state whether the application of the PCS (Person Certification Scheme) concerns the national market or has a European - international character according to the document EA 1/22 A-AB: 2020.

It is reminded that schemes that are going to be applied abroad should meet the requirements of document EA 1/22 A-AB: 2020.

ESYD, after reviewing this study, will decide on the possibility of **Accreditation** of the scheme.

By accepting the possibility of accreditation of a certification scheme by ESYD:

- In the event that the provisions of §4.2 of the document EA 1/22 A-AB: 2020 do not apply, the ESYD may **sign a relevant contract with the owner of the certification scheme** and start the accreditation process for each PCB that submits a relevant application.
- In the case that the provisions of §4.2 of the document EA 1/22 A-AB: 2020 apply, the ESYD sends the application and all relevant documentation to EA (European Accreditation).

4.2 Publication of information regarding the acceptance of Certification Schemes

On the website of ESYD, there is a posted list of all the schemes, which the ESYD has accredited and which are active, as well as information about those for which it is possible to submit a relevant application for accreditation.

4.3 Submitting a certification scheme for accreditation

If there is a positive decision on the possibility of accreditation of the scheme by the ESYD, the owner of the scheme should submit **appropriate documentation** regarding the following, in order to proceed with the accreditation process in question (see and Annex 2). In any case the following must be submitted:

1. Members of the Interested Parties Committee and how they are delegated (relevant invitations to interested parties and substantiated acceptance with appointment of representatives).

2. The name and scope of the scheme
3. The group of persons/professionals that the scheme aims at (target group)
4. Detailed job and task description of the scheme
5. The required competence of the certified person, possible certification gradations-levels and the syllabus that correspond to the previous description
6. Physical or/and mental attributes of the candidate and the mechanisms of their assessment
7. Prerequisites for certification (e.g., training program, level of education, physical abilities, etc.)
8. Required code of conduct (annex 1)
9. The criteria for initial certification, maintenance of certification, recertification (e.g., the duration of the examination, the examination score and the pass/fail score, general rules, etc.)
10. Assessment methods for initial certification, maintenance of certification, recertification of the candidate (i.e., examinations, theoretical and/or practical), which may include possible specificities of candidate assessment (special knowledge in reading, writing, language and arithmetic, etc.)
11. The criteria for suspending and withdrawing certification
12. The criteria for changing the scope/level of certification
13. The experts involved in the development and maintenance of the scheme
14. The requirements related to the assessment of the competence of the certified person (technical standards, legislative requirements, etc.)

Consequently, ESYD will assess the compliance of the scheme and/or the PCB with the requirements of this Guidance and/or the accreditation standard or other mandatory documents.

4.4 Basic prerequisites and process of the person certification scheme.

Attention should be paid, among other things, to the following:

1. There should be a certification scheme for each certification category (par. 8.1 of the EN ISO / IEC 17024 standard). However, a scheme can cover more than one certification category. A certification is a specific profession, occupation or set of skills related to a job. For example, a certification category in relation to crane operation could be construction crane operation, crane bridge operation, displacement crane operation, etc. A certification scheme could be developed for each of these categories. An example of a scheme covering more than one category would be a scheme that covers the categories of an Auditor and Lead Auditor.

2. When the person certification scheme is related to "legally regulated or regulated profession" in the sense of article 3 par. 1 a) of p.d. 38/2010 (Government Gazette A'78) "*Adaptation of Greek legislation to Directive 2005/36 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005, concerning the recognition of professional qualifications*", **the PCB is**

obliged, under penalty of exclusion, to impose as a prerequisite, the presentation of evidence proving the possession of the specified professional qualifications required for the lawful practice of the profession in question (e.g. professional title).

Specifically for person certification schemes related to the legally regulated professions that fall under the provisions of law 3844/2010 (FEK A'63) "Adaptation of Greek legislation to Directive 2006/123 of the European Parliament and of the Council on services in the internal market and other provisions ", **the PCB should, in addition to the above, under penalty of exclusion, make it a prerequisite for the requested certification, the presentation of the relevant license (or announcement) required for the legal exercise of these professions. These requirements should be checked at all stages of certification (application, evaluation, supervision, re-certification).**

Also, in order not to confuse economic operators, the certificate should clearly state that the certification is not a license for the legal practice of the certified profession, while it should be explicitly stated that the holder of the certificate does not secure professional rights with the such certificate, unless this is provided for by relevant laws, regulations or administrative provisions. In addition, to avoid confusion, the names of schemes and certificates should not be synonymous with the names of regulated professions.

In addition to the above, since the above-mentioned schemes should certify upgraded/specialized knowledge to professionals in relation to legal requirements of their profession, the specifications of the schemes should be, in particular: a) the subject of the certified competency and the certification grades (if any), b) the prerequisites of the certified (e.g. professional experience) and c) the assessment methods for the initial certification (e.g. theoretical examination, practical examination), **not to be inferior to the requirements and procedures on the basis of which the professional gained access to the exercise of his profession (e.g. aptitude tests for obtaining a relevant license).**

3. The owner of a scheme during the development and revision of the scheme, must keep and have available to the PCB appropriate documentation with evidence - documents proving the compliance of the scheme with the elements of Annex 4 (paragraph 8.4 of the standard EN ISO / IEC 17024). In particular, the owner should initially and periodically study issues related to the identification and alignment of prerequisites, mechanisms of automated or non-automated examination systems, the need for equipment-installations, the duration of certification and the mechanisms of supervision of the certified, to be validated. evaluation process etc.

4. When submitting the application for accreditation, the PCB is obliged to submit evidence (objective evidence) of the validation of the scheme after the completion of a pilot application (successfully completed a test period) for at least 90 days, including examinations and certification decision, for a minimum number 4-7 candidates for certification, otherwise his application will be rejected. Participants in the validation exam must meet and comply with the criteria for the initial certification as set out in the certification scheme.

5. Validation of the scheme, i.e., its pilot application, presupposes that evidence will be produced that the scheme operates in practice objectively, validly and reliably as well as in full compliance with its development rationale, market requirements, relevant standards and legislation, and not used occasionally.

   The owner or the PCB must demonstrate to the ESYD that the scheme was based on mechanisms such as interviews with professionals, questionnaires for the target audience, professional standards, practices, etc. The scheme should also be accompanied by a file of comments and corrections as well as the final documented acceptance by the committee of the interested parts.

6. When the prerequisites for a candidate for certification are set, such as those mentioned in par. 2, a specific level of knowledge and / or physical ability, participation in an educational program, etc., then they must be clear, recorded and available to the public. Successful completion of an approved training program may be a prerequisite for a certification scheme, but the approval of such programs should not affect impartiality or reduce assessment and certification requirements.

7. All certification requirements must be comprehensible, applicable and tailored to the category of persons targeted by the scheme.

8. In order to determine a candidate's compliance with the certification requirements, there must be at least one type of examination, during which measurable evidence is collected that leads to an impartial judgment of the candidate's professional competence. These indicators can be simulated or real time (simulation or real time), written exam, group or individual work, role-playing techniques (RP) etc.

9. Examination systems during their development and subsequent maintenance must be based on three basic principles:

   A) validity. For the exams to be valid, they must evaluate only those things provided by the scheme, and the evidence collected, to prove that the criteria are met. The performance of the candidate must cover a satisfactory range of competencies related to the subject of certification. The test conditions must adequately simulate the actual working conditions.

B) reliability. There is an unambiguous correlation between the interpretation / recognition of the produced items-products of the candidate with the result of the examination. The grading method is clear and prescribed. Repeatability must be ensured at different examination times, in different examination areas, on different subjects, with different examiners. Here the examiners play a very important role and specifically their competence, their experience, their knowledge, their personal characteristics and their level of ability.

C) objectivity (fairness). Exams should not favor or wrong any candidate in relation to others. There should be no conflicts of interest e.g., interpersonal or employment relationships, financial dependencies or other factors etc.

10. The conditions for alternating examination and/or enrichment issues at regular intervals should be specified in order to enhance objectivity and confidentiality. The issues must be managed very carefully by all involved.

11. Where a change in the parameters of the scheme occurs, then the application to the certified must be prescribed (time and other arrangements and how the changes are notified to the persons concerned).

12. The scheme must consider regulations and legislation, technical standards, code of good practice, customer-purchase requirements, environmental aspects, occupational health and safety, food safety, etc.

13. Other organizations, bodies which cooperate with the owner of the scheme such as examination centers, KEK, IEK which provide educational services, etc., should be covered by contracts with the owner of the scheme and demonstrate that there is no conflict of interest or any other activity which contradicts the corresponding paragraph of ELOT EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012. In any case the owner of the scheme is responsible for the application of all paragraphs of ELOT EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012. Also, the certification scheme will not contain requirements that conflict with ISO/IEC 17011, or EU Regulation 765/2008, or accreditation standards and also, where applicable, with mandatory EA, IAF and ILAC documents.

4.5 Scheme Review

The owner of the certification scheme must inform the ESYD for each modification of the scheme, by submitting an application accompanied by the payment of the relevant application fees. These fees are defined as extension fees (EUR 140+VAT).

In any case, the ESYD evaluate the changes made to the scheme and decide whether the scheme continues to be acceptable, or whether a detailed examination is required before a decision is made to accept the scheme after its revision.

5. Guidance Implementation

Any interested party wishing to develop a certification scheme after the date of issue of this Agreement shall require submission to the ESYD, study according to 4.1.

PCBs, which undertake to operate an acceptable owner scheme, should have the approval of the owner, an approval which is in no way confused with the assessment carried out by the accreditation body[1]. The criteria for placing the scheme in the PCB must be specific and defined by the owner and available to anyone, unless otherwise provided for by law.

When carrying out the witness assessments candidates for certification should meet the criteria and requirements arising from the certification scheme so that the conclusions from the witness assessments cover the requirements of the scheme.

A prerequisite for carrying out the witness assessment is the participation of at least 4-7 candidates. The purpose of witness assessment is to verify the correct application of the organization's certification process, including the evaluation of each candidate in accordance with the prerequisite criteria set out in the certification scheme, the validation process of the certification scheme, the effectiveness of the selected examination methodology (theoretical/practical part), the objectivity of the examination methodology, verification of the database management system, the suitability of the examination methodology in relation to the purpose of the certification scheme, etc.

The study and the application for accreditation (see paragraph 4.4) shall be sent to the ESYD by the person concerned, together with an application fee deposit (600€ plus VAT) for each scheme. An additional **140€** plus VAT must be paid for each **sub scheme** or classification[2] submitted. In cases where a visit to the offices of the person concerned (in case of owner) is needed to collect documents, then this will be done in accordance with the current procedure of visiting (and compensating) the evaluation teams of the ESYD.

1. *It should be noted that the owner's contribution to the accreditation of PCBs for a particular scheme may consist only of the level of expertise of the evaluation team. Moreover, any accreditation body of the EA may cooperate (subcontracting) only with another accreditation body, a member of the EA-MLA (EA policy).*
2. *Promising means for example when there is an application for professional NKE with a) penetrating fluids and b) magnetic particles etc.*
3. *Classification means, for example, where there is an application for professional NKE in magnetic fluids at (a) level 1 and (b) level 2.*

It should be noted that in the applications to be submitted to the ESYD will, first describe which studies are for accreditation together with the cost of the application, including the cost of the studies. The body will be informed if and which studies are acceptable for accreditation.

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Typical contents of code of conduct

The certified person must:

a) Act professionally and ethically.

b) Seek for recognition, development and reputation of the profession.

c) Undertake those tasks for which he/she is certified and/or not use certification in a task other than that defined by the certification scheme. Furthermore, he/she must not undertake tasks for which he/she does not have the competence.

d) Inform and not conceal from his/her clients and/or his/her employer's clients, potential conflicts of interest.

e) Not reveal any confidential information, unless otherwise provided by law or after agreement with any interested party.

f) Be free from any kind of pressure (money, gifts, etc.) from anyone who could affect his/her professional judgment.

g) Ensure that his/her services are fair and professional, based on objective criteria.

h) Not act in such a way that could affect or harm the reputation of the PCB or the certification process and cooperate in any investigation when violation of code of conduct occurs.

i) Retain a complete and reliable record of complaints or appeals, concerning service provision.

Annex 2: Typical questions for the correct development of a certification scheme

- Which is the scope of certification?
- How is the scope of certification described in the certificate and in the scheme?
- Which are the conditions for validity of certification?
- Which is the certification mark and what impact it has on the market?
- Which are the applicable standards or specifications, which fall within the requirements?
- How is fulfillment of examination requirements documented?
- What legislative requirements exist and how they are fulfilled?

- How are the requirements and their implementation made publicly available to the market?
- What is the rationale for developing the scheme?
- Who developed the scheme?
- What methods are used to ensure the declaration of compliance with the scheme requirements?
- Which method is used and how it was chosen, for monitoring compliance with scheme requirements (surveillance)?
- How they were formulated and which are the conditions for issuing, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing certification?
- What are the rights and obligations of a certified person and how they are communicated to him/her?
- What are the obligations of a PCB?
- What arrangements are made for collecting complaints for the work provided by a certified person?
- Where is the certification process described?
- How the examiners and the person responsible for certification decision are selected?
- How the personnel involved in the certification process is selected?
- Where are the records of certified persons maintained?

Annex 3: Scheme owner

Where a scheme owner is involved, the following information should be available:

- Who exactly is the owner?
- What is the owner's involvement with the scheme scope and what is the rationale of the scheme development?
- What is the owner's legal entity?
- What are the rules for cooperation with PCBs?
- Is there 'cooperation' of the owner with any accreditation body within EA.

Annex 4: Documents to be kept by the owner of a scheme and to which the PCB must have access

a) Participation of appropriate experts

The PCB should have access to documents demonstrating the participation of appropriate experts in the development of the person certification scheme. The owner of the scheme should document which experts were involved in the development of the scheme and should provide information on the relevance of their expertise. Expertise should be linked to the adequacy of the scheme.

b) Use of an appropriate structure that fairly represents the interests of all interested parties, without any interest.

The PCB should have access to documents demonstrating that the development of the scheme represents the interests of all interested parties. The owner of the scheme should have documents demonstrating that the parties concerned are represented in a fair manner, without any interest.

If the documents are not available or are not available, PCBs should take additional actions to ensure that all interested parties have been given the opportunity to express their views without any interest prevailing.

c) Harmonization of prerequisites, where appropriate, with adequacy requirements.

The PCB must have access to documents proving that the prerequisites are in line with the adequacy requirements. The owner of the scheme should indicate how the prerequisites have been identified, the rationale for selecting the specific prerequisites and how they relate to the adequacy requirements.

An example of a prerequisite not related to the adequacy requirement could be the requirement of a university engineering degree as a prerequisite for building certification.

d) Harmonization of evaluation mechanisms with adequacy requirements.

The PCB should have access to the documents indicating the evaluation mechanisms. The PCB should also have access to documents demonstrating that the evaluation mechanisms are in line with the adequacy requirements. This requires documents showing that the knowledge and skills associated with the tasks are included in the evaluation mechanisms. However, evaluation mechanisms should not include an assessment of knowledge and skills that go beyond the adequacy requirements as defined by the scheme.

The owner of the scheme must keep documents linking the evaluation mechanisms to the adequacy requirements.

e) A job or practice analysis carried out and updated for:

- Highlight the tasks for successful performance
- Highlight the required capacity for each task
- Highlight prerequisites (if applicable)
- Confirm the evaluation mechanisms and the content of the examination
- Highlight the requirements and the recertification interval.

The PCB should have access to documents proving that a job or practice analysis has been carried out as part of the development of the scheme. Job analysis is a method used to determine tasks and relative competence. Methods in general shall include an

analysis of the relevant tasks, knowledge, skills and/or competences that make up competence as required by the subject matter of the work. The job analysis provides the basis for the validity of any evaluations used when issuing credentials. Other conditions for job analysis are job analysis, practice analysis, performance analysis and role profiling.

The documented analysis of the job should highlight the tasks and competence required (knowledge and skills) and provide the basis for determining the prerequisites, if any, and the recertification requirements.

There are several methods for job analysis, such as interviews, focus groups, surveys and job observation. Regardless of the method used, sufficient details should be provided to assist in the development of fair and valid evaluations.