

## **GUIDELINES FOR INTERNAL AUDIT TO ISO 9001:2000**

With the introduction of ISO 9001:2000, internal audit has greater impact as a tool for organizations to evaluate their systems' effectiveness and to seek continual improvement. These guidelines for internal audit is introduced by BCA to assist companies certified to ISO 9001:2000 to draw greater value from their internal audits.

### **1 What is an Internal Audit?**

An internal audit is an exercise where a team of competent auditors conduct as assessment of the organization's quality management system to determine whether it is able to effectively produce products and services that meet customer and all relevant requirements.

### **2 What is not an Internal Audit?**

An internal audit is not:

- i) a fault finding mission;
- ii) looking at documentation only; and
- iii) purely a check on compliance to procedures.

### **3 What does the standard require?**

It requires the audit to determine whether the quality management system:

- i) conforms to the quality plan for product realization;
- ii) conforms to the requirements of ISO 9001:2000;
- iii) conforms to the system requirements established by the organization; and
- iv) is effectively implemented and maintained.

### **4 What are the auditor requirements?**

To achieve an effective audit, the auditors shall possess the following attributes and skills:

- i) complete a formal course on internal auditing (can include in-house training, if conducted by a competent trainer);
- ii) be technically conversant with the organization's processes; and
- iii) have a good understanding of ISO 9001:2000 requirements.

### **5 Can the audit be outsourced?**

Yes, outsourcing is an acceptable practice. However, the organization shall establish procedures for the outsourcing process, including the criteria for selection of auditors, and the review and analysis of audit results.

## **6 How can we achieve an effective audit?**

To achieve an effective audit, the following shall be observed:

- i) appoint competent auditors;
- ii) plan the audit, taking into consideration the status and importance of the processes and areas to be audited, as well as the results of previous audits;
- iii) conducts the audit using the process model approach;
- iv) do not concentrate on documentation, but to focus on the effectiveness of the processes to determine whether they can achieve the desired results; and
- v) assist the organization to identify areas for further improvements.

## **7 What are the audit strategies available?**

A process approach audit could adopt one of the following strategies:

- i) Vertical audit – audit by functions, departments or individual process
- ii) Horizontal audit – auditing either downstream or upstream of organization's business process, which cuts across functions.

## **8 What are auditors required to look for?**

- i) Overall conformance to the requirements of the standard;
- ii) demonstration of management commitment;
- iii) ability of the processes to meet customer requirements;
- iv) effectiveness in achieving customer satisfaction; and
- v) demonstration of continual improvement.

## **9 Are the audit results required to be analyzed?**

Yes, the analysis would provide information relating to:

- i) customer satisfaction;
- ii) conformity to product requirements;
- iii) characteristics and trends of processes and products including opportunities for preventive action; and
- iv) suppliers.