QUALICOAT Quality Manual

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1 Document History

Version	Date	Change Description	Responsible
01	April 2019	MK Version 18.2.19 migrated to the new format and further updates according different meetings, accreditation test run and input from Future WG	Sue Paredi

2 Introduction

QUALICOAT is a global quality label organisation committed to maintaining and promoting the quality of coating on aluminium and its alloys for architectural applications.

QUALICOAT is constituted as an association with its registered office located in Zurich, Switzerland.

To determine whether a coating meets a customer's requirements, the results need to be measurable against Specifications. Working on behalf of customers who have their products coated, QUALICOAT defines comprehensive quality requirements and monitors their compliance by licensed plants worldwide.

QUALICOAT's mission is to provide best practice rules to obtain a good quality coating on aluminium. To achieve this goal, QUALICOAT is committed in particular to:

1. establishing specifications for processes, products and tests to be used by the coating plants
2. developing and improving these specifications
3. granting licenses to coating plants that apply for the quality label
4. testing and approving chemicals and coating products to be used
5. monitoring the correct application of the specifications in licensed coating and decorating plants as well as in coating manufacturers' and chemical suppliers' plants

The governing bodies of the Association are the:

- Meeting of Association Members
- Executive Committee
- Board of Governors

These governing bodies are described in more details under chapter 6.

The certification activities of QUALICOAT are carried out by the QUALICOAT Secretariat which conducts the administration of the association.

3 Scope

This QUALICOAT Quality Manual (identified as QQM) has the aim to demonstrate the fulfilling of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 Standard relating to the Certification of products of the aluminium surface finishing industry according to QUALICOAT specifications.

The QUALICOAT Quality manual also applies to the products and technologies that have been developed for decorative coatings under the sub-label QUALIDECO (e.g. sublimation technology and “powder on powder” technology). Although separate Specifications have been established for QUALIDECO, this label is subject to the overall supervision of QUALICOAT and the same procedures apply, unless otherwise specified in this manual.

4 Normative References

ISO/IEC 17065:2012

Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services

ISO/IEC 17000:2019

Conformity assessment - Vocabulary and general principles

ISO/IEC 17020:2012

Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection

ISO/IEC 17025:2017

General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories

ISO/IEC Guide 28:2004

Conformity assessment - Guidance on a third-party certification system for products

QUALICOAT Specifications

for a quality label for liquid and powder organic coatings on aluminium for architectural applications - Current edition published and updated on https://www.qualicoat.net/main/specifications.html

QUALIDECO Specifications

for a quality label for decoration of coated aluminium used in architectural applications
http://www.qualideco.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49&Itemid=48

Update Sheets

to QUALICOAT *(Doc SPEC-LUS)* and QUALIDECO Specifications *(Doc SPEC-LUS-QDC)*.

5 Terms & Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms & definitions given in ISO/IEC 17000 and in the following apply in alphabetical order:

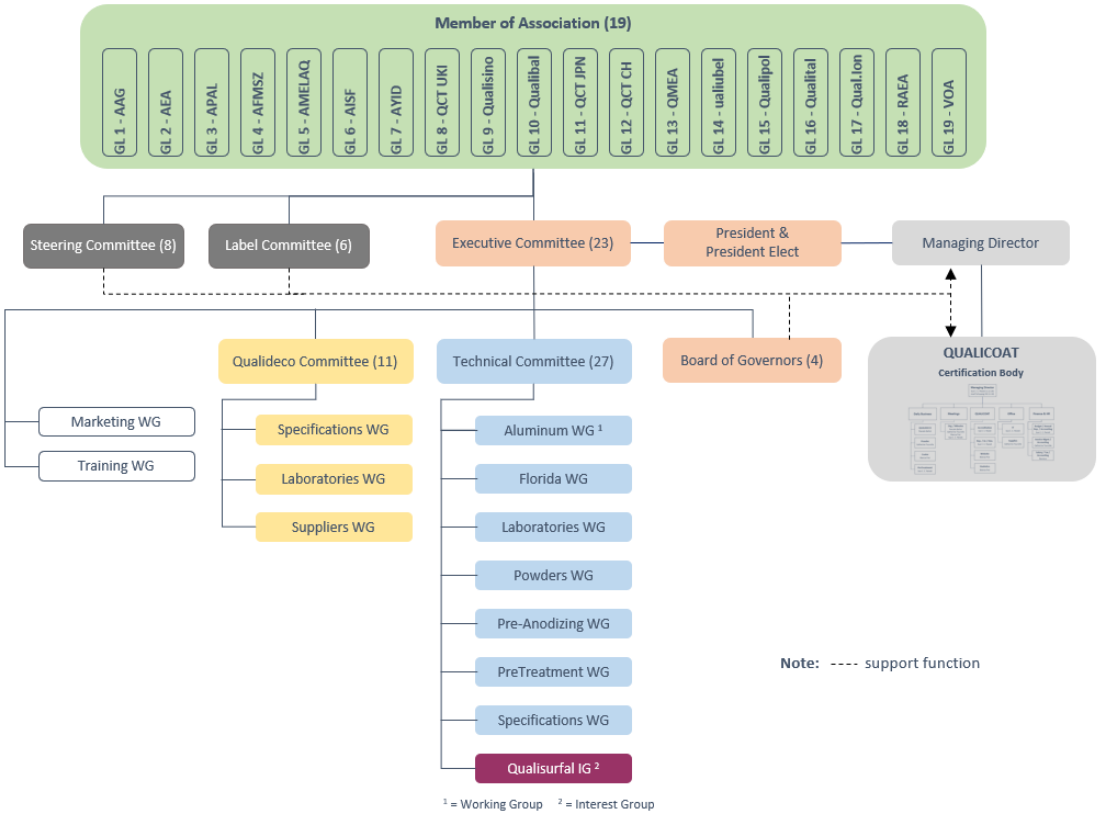
Appeal	Formal objection formulated by one of the actors of the certification scheme against a decision notified by the Label Committee
Applicant	Organisation asking for permission to use the quality label
Certification	Activities carried out by the Secretariat of QUALICOAT for the management of the QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO quality labels (= certification scheme) according to ISO/IEC 17065. The QUALICOAT Secretariat is the certification body.
Client	Applicant, Licensee or Holder of an approval (Coating or chemical manufacturer/ supplier)
Coating Applicator	Applicator of coating materials. Company that has one or several plant installations.
Complaint	Communication, manifestation of a disagreement (other than an appeal) about a decision.
Conformity	activities or products in accordance with the prescriptions of the Specifications of the quality label QUALICOAT or QUALIDECO. Conformity assessment involves a set of processes that show that products, services or systems meet the requirements of the QUALICOAT or QUALIDECO.
Consultancy	participation in: • the designing, manufacturing, installing, maintaining or distributing of a certified product or a product to be certified, or • the designing, implementing, operating or maintaining of a certified process or a process to be certified, or the designing, implementing, providing or maintaining of a certified service or a service to be certified.
Decoration (QUALIDECO)	a single combination of a paper or plastic film with a powder (sublimation technology) or of a base coat with a top coat (powder on powder technology)
Decorator (QUALIDECO)	Applicator of decorations
Evaluation	Combination of test methods used to test finished products, coating materials, and chemical products in order to assess their conformity to QUALICOAT or QUALIDECO Specifications.
Film Supplier (QUALIDECO)	Supplier of paper or plastic film used for transferring decorations.
General licence	Permission to grant licences and approvals in a certain territory.
General Licensee (GL)	National or international association holding the QUALICOAT general licence for a defined territory.
Individual Licensee (QUALICOAT)	Coating plant located in a country without General Licensee and holding a QUALICOAT Licence.

Individual Licensee (QUALIDECO)	Decorating plant, film supplier or powder supplier located in a country without General Licensee and holding a QUALIDECO Licence.
Impartiality	Presence of objectivity. Objectivity is understood to mean that conflicts of interest do not exist or are resolved so as not to adversely influence the activities of the body.
Licence	Confirmation that a company (coater, decorator, QUALIDECO film or powder supplier) operates in accordance with the QUALICOAT or the QUALIDECO Specifications.
Licensee	Holder of the licence
Plant installation	A production site with one or more pre-treatment lines and coating lines used for coating aluminium for architectural applications.
Powder Supplier	Supplier of powder coating material
Product	Result of a process
Process	Set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs
QUALICOAT Specifications	specified requirements, including product requirements, that are fulfilled by the client as a condition of establishing or maintaining certification for coating aluminium for architectural applications.
QUALIDECO Specifications	specified requirements, including product requirements, that are fulfilled by the client as a condition of establishing or maintaining certification for coating aluminium for decoration purposes for exterior architectural applications
Quality label	trademark registered by the Association for Quality Control in the Lacquering, Painting and Coating Industry (QUALICOAT, QUALIDECO).
Review	Verification of the evaluation activities prescribed by QUALICOAT or QUALIDECO, and the results of these activities, with regards to fulfilment of requirements specified in the QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO Specifications
Service	result of at least one activity necessarily performed at the interface between the supplier and the customer, which is generally intangible
Scope of certification	identification of • the product(s), process(es) or service(s) for which the certification is granted, • the applicable certification scheme, and the standard(s) and other normative document(s), including their date of publication, to which it is judged that the product(s), process(es) or service(s) comply.
Scheme owner	person or organization responsible for developing and maintaining a specific certification scheme. In the present case, QUALICOAT is the scheme owner
Surveillance	Systematic repetition of conformity assessment activities as a basis for maintaining the validity of the statement of conformity and renewing the existing licences and approvals
Testing bodies	Testing laboratories and Inspectors are independent quality testing and inspection bodies duly authorised by the General Licensee or QUALICOAT.

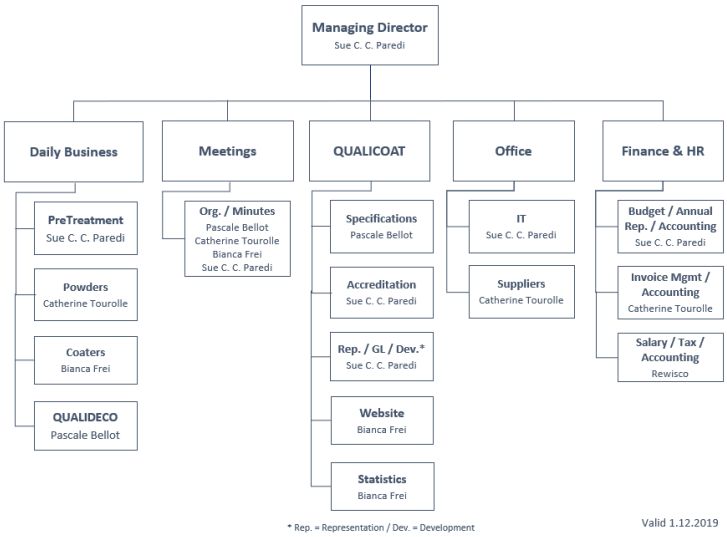
6 Organisation

6.1 Organisation Chart of QUALICOAT

The duties, responsibilities and authorities of management and other certification employees and Committees are defined in the Articles of the Association for Quality Control in Lacquering, Painting and Coating Industry QUALICOAT and in different procedures.



Organisation Chart of the Certification Body



6.2 The Governing bodies

6.2.1 Meeting of Association Members

This is the supreme body of QUALICOAT. It consists of the delegates appointed by the members, each member having only one delegate. The members are non-profit national or international associations or organisations that have entered into a general licence agreement with QUALICOAT *(Doc O-AA)*.

6.2.1.1 The General Licensees (GL)

6.2.1.1.1 The General Licensees are national or international associations that hold a QUALICOAT general licence in a defined territory, enabling them to grant licences or approvals in this specific territory.

6.2.1.1.2 The requirements for General licensees are governed by a Master License Agreement as described under 7.2.3 - 7.2.5 and clarified in the Guidelines for General Licensees *(Doc G-GL)*.

6.2.2 Executive Committee

This committee is composed of representatives of the members: one delegate per member or two delegates if a member has more than 15 licensees. Approx. 50% of the delegates should represent the coating plants, 20% the coating manufacturers, 20% the chemical producers and 10% the aluminium industry *(Doc O-AA)*.

While the Meeting of Association Members is solely responsible for so-called regulatory formalities, the Executive Committee has strategic, political and technical responsibility for the Association *(Doc O-AA)*.

- Current Composition of the Executive Committee

6.2.3 Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is a group of persons appointed by the Executive Committee whose role is to reduce the workload of the Executive Committee, to shorten the decision-making process and to support the QUALICOAT Managing Director and the Secretariat *(Doc O-BoG)*.

6.3 The Committees (non-governing bodies)

6.3.1 The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is a group of people appointed by the Meeting of Association Members to serve as last appellate instance in case of disputes related to the granting of licenses or approvals under the QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO Specifications. The composition, roles and rules are defined in the Steering Committee description *(Doc O-SC)*.

The Steering Committee can be called upon by any actor of the certification activity, including members of the Executive, Technical, Label and QUALIDECO committees.

6.3.2 Technical Committee

The same rules as for the composition of the Executive Committee apply (refer to 6.2.2).

The Technical Committee is responsible for ensuring that all the rules applying to the coating plants, the suppliers of coating and decorating materials, the suppliers of chemical systems, and the testing bodies are kept up to date with the state of the art at all times *(Doc O-AA)*.

- Current Composition of the Technical Committee

6.3.3 The Label Committee

The Label Committee is a group of people appointed by the Meeting of Association Members to ensure that the certification rules are respected. Its task is to advise the QUALICOAT Certification Body when needed and to be the first instance to decide on any disagreement or complaint related to a certification decision. The composition, roles and rules are defined in the Label Committee description *(Doc O-LC)*.

The Label Committee is consulted for any inspection results (new applications for licences, systems or materials approvals and/or routine visits) which are not clearly negative or positive or in case of disagreement on the outcome of an inspection between the General licensee and the Certification Body or between employees of the Certification Body.

6.3.4 QUALIDECO Committee

This committee is composed of a Convenor and of representatives of all interested parties nominated by the General Licensees. The QUALIDECO Committee handles all matters linked to the label QUALIDECO *(Doc O-AA)*.

- Current Composition of the QUALIDECO Committee

6.4 Working Groups and Special Interest Groups (non-governing bodies)

6.4.1 Working Groups

Both Executive and Technical Committee appoint Working Groups as and when required to explore new products and processes, to study deficiencies in the finishing processes, and to maintain and modify the Specifications.

- Current list of active working groups

6.4.2 QUALISURFAL

QUALISURFAL is a Special Interest Group established under the umbrella of the quality label organisations QUALICOAT and QUALANOD (Association for Quality Control in the Anodizing Industry).

In the coating or decorating sections, this interest group is composed of representatives of QUALICOAT or QUALIDECO on one side, and of representatives of accredited and independent testing bodies engaged for external testing and inspection, on the other.

The QUALISURFAL interest group meets at least once a year. Purpose of these annual meetings is to define the functioning and terms of reference, to exchange information and to harmonise testing procedures in all countries, in order to allow mutual recognition of test reports and procedures for external monitoring.

6.4.2.1 The Testing Bodies

The Testing bodies are laboratories which have to be accredited according to ISO/IEC 17025 for the test methods prescribed by QUALICOAT in the Specifications and to participate in interlaboratory tests. They perform tests and inspections on behalf of QUALICOAT according to the Specifications and/or procedures determined by QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO.

The selection of testing bodies is the responsibility of the General licensee or of QUALICOAT in the countries without a General Licensee. The selection is based on the requirements defined by QUALICOAT in the procedure for evaluating testing laboratories and inspectors *(Doc P-QTB)*.

In those countries where the General Licensee is not accredited, QUALICOAT must approve the selection.

Inspectors are regularly visited and testing laboratories from time to time by the Managing Director or designated employees of the Certification Body to check their conformity with the operational requirements of QUALICOAT. For this visits the checklist and the visit confirmation form for testing bodies will be used *(Doc CH-TB-Visit, Doc F-Visit-Conf and CO-Insv)*.

All testing bodies approved by QUALICOAT are members of the **Coating section and/or Decoration section (QUALIDECO) of QUALISURFAL**.

6.5 The QUALICOAT Certification Body

The **QUALICOAT Secretariat** is the association's official contact office for members and third parties and is the QUALICOAT's Certification Body. The Certification Body is managed by the Managing Director, who is an employee of QUALICOAT.

The Managing director attends all meetings of the governing bodies and working groups, prepares the minutes of the meetings and acts on behalf of the governing bodies in implementing all resolutions falling within their remit.

The Managing director may be assisted at the meetings by another employee of QUALICOAT and may be represented by an employee of QUALICOAT at the meetings of QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO working groups.

The personnel of the Certification Body is employed by QUALICOAT and works in accordance with the employment agreement *(Doc CB-EA)*, the employment handbook *(Doc CB-EH),* the job descriptions *(Doc CB-JD)* and the procedures defined in QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO specifications.

The employees work under the authority of the Managing Director.

The responsibilities of the Certification Body are clearly defined and shown in the following two tables:

Topics	BP	CT	BF	SP	
Daily Business					
Powders	Dep. x Class 3 👁	x Class 1-2 Dep. 👁			
Powder Florida Results	x	Dep. 👁			
Pre-Treatment			Dep. 👁	x	
Coaters		Dep. 👁	x		
France (Powder, Coater, PreTreatment)	x		Dep.		
Qualideco	x		Dep. 👁	(Dep.)	
Supervision Inspections					
Preliminary visits		X	x	x	
Witness Audit					
Coating plants			x	x	
Powders		x		X	
PreTreatment				x	
Qualideco	x		Dep.	(Dep.)	
Specifications	x	Dep.	Dep.		

x = main responsibility | Dep. = Deputy | 👁 = 4-eye check

Topics	BP	CT	BF	SP
Meetings				
Preparation[1], Minutes	x	x	x	x
Member of Association	Dep.			x
Executive Committee	Dep.			x
Technical Committee	x			Dep.
Board of Governors	Dep.			x
Specifications WG	x	Dep.		
Qualisurfal		Dep.	x	
Aluminium WG		x		Dep.
Florida WG	Dep.	x		
Laboratories WG		x	Dep.	
Powders WG	x	Dep.		
Pre-Anodizing			Dep.	x
PreTreatment WG			Dep.	x
Training WG			x	Dep.
Marketing WG			x	Dep.
Qualicoat 3.0		x	Dep.	
Qualideco (Spec, Labor, Florida, Committee)	x		Dep.	(Dep.)

[1] = location, restaurant, agenda, documents, invitations

Topics	BP	CT	BF	SP		Rewisco
QUALICOAT						
Articles of Associations	Dep.			x		
Commercial Register	Dep.			x		
Accreditation	Dep.			x		
Statistics		Dep.	x			
Website		Dep.	x			
Personnel & Insurance				x		Dep.
GL visits	Dep.			x		
Representation		(x)	(x)	x		
Networking / potential collaboration		(x)	(x)	x		
Development				x		

X = main responsibility | Dep. = Deputy

Topics	BP	CT	BF	SP	Rewisco
Finance					
QC (invoices) & Payments	x (QDC)	x (P, C)		x (A)	x
Salary payments				x	x
Accounting		x		Dep.	x
Year-end closing		Dep.		x	x
Tax				Dep.	x
Annual report		Dep.		x	
Budget		Dep.		x	
Office (Infrastructure)					
Office			Dep.	x	
IT			Dep.	x	
Post, supplies, etc		Dep.	x		

6.6 Authorities and responsibilities

QUALICOAT has defined the following responsibilities:

a. Supervision of the finances of the Certification Body: **Meeting of Association members**

b. Development of certification activities (to enhance the quality label): **Executive Committee, Managing Director**

c. Development of QUALICOAT Specifications: **Technical Committee, Executive Committee**

d. Evaluation (inspections and tests): **Qualified Inspectors** and **approved Testing Laboratories** accredited ISO/IEC 17025

e. Review (inspections and tests): **General Licensees, QUALICOAT Certification Body**

f. Responsiveness to complaints and appeals: **General Licensees, Managing Director, Executive Committee, Label Committee, Steering Committee**

g. Contractual arrangements: **General Licensees, Managing Director**

h. Supervision of the implementation of the policies and procedures: **Managing Director, Board of Governors, Executive Committee**

i. Decisions on certification: **QUALICOAT Certification Body**

j. Delegation of authority to committees or employees, as required, to undertake defined activities on its behalf about product certification: **General Licensees, Executive Committee**

k. Provision of adequate resources for certification activities: **Board of Governors, Managing Director**

l. Development of policies relating to the operation of the Certification Body: **Managing Director**

m. Management system of the Certification Body: **Managing Director**

n. Certification Body employee's competence requirements: **Managing Director**

6.7 Procedures and forms

6.7.1 The appointment (or election), mission and operations of QUALICOAT Committees involved in the Certification process are governed by the Articles of Association *(Doc O-AA)*.

6.7.2 QUALICOAT has defined procedure and forms to be signed by any committees that are involved in the certification process. In these documents and forms signed there is evidence that such committees are free from any commercial, financial and other pressures that might influence decisions.

6.7.3 QUALICOAT has the authority to appoint and withdraw members of such committees.

6.8 Mechanism for safeguarding impartiality

6.8.1 QUALICOAT has a structure that safeguards impartiality.

6.8.2 As described under section 7.4, the Certification Body applies the four-eye principle for the review of the evaluation activities performed by the testing bodies and recorded in the inspection or testing reports.

6.8.3 The Certification Body requests the Label Committee (as described under 6.3.3) to take a decision on any inspection results (new applications for licenses, systems or materials approvals and/or routine visits) which are not clearly negative or positive or in case when the General Licensee and the Certification Body disagree on the results of the inspection. The same applies to disagreement on inspection results within the employees of the Certification Body.

6.8.4 If one of the parties involved, including the plant that has been inspected, objects to the decision of the Label committee, it can appeal of the decision in writing within two weeks to the Steering Committee (as described under 6.3.1) that will take a final decision.

6.8.5 The role of the Label Committee is also to submit to the Technical Committee and/or to the Board of Governors proposals for modifications of the Specifications or changes in the procedures implemented by the Certification Body when risks for the impartiality have been identified (see 7.4.12 - 7.4.15), or when the Specifications need to be updated to conform to new standards. Details of the scope and the procedures of the Label Committee are determined by the Executive Committee.

6.8.6 If risks for the impartiality of the Certification Body are identified during the annual internal audit, the auditor informs the Board of Governors and Managing Director of the Certification Body, mentioning whether it is necessary to take actions to eliminate or reduce the risk to the minimum. If necessary, the Board of Governors defines policies and procedures to minimize risks to impartiality.

6.8.7 Should a disagreement arise between the Certification Body and a General license about the provisions of the Master License Agreement (disagreements other than those mentioned under 6.8.3. to 6.8.5.), both parties will request the QUALICOAT Executive Committee to take a final decision. The disagreement shall be documented and saved accordingly.

7 Legal and Contractual Matters

7.1 Legal Responsibility

7.1.1 QUALICOAT is an Association established in accordance with Art. 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code and domiciled at Tödistrasse 48 in 8002 Zurich *(QUALICOAT Articles of Association, Ed. 11.2018 – Doc O-AA)*.

7.1.2 The UID (Business Identification Number) of the QUALICOAT Association is: CHE-103.825.440.

7.1.3 QUALICOAT is registered in the Swiss Commercial Register (Handelsregister) under the number CHE-103.825.4440 / HR01-1004635308 / TR-No. 19317

7.1.4 QUALICOAT is committed to comply with national and international competition rules and, for this purpose, has drawn up an “Antitrust Reminder” that is circulated at the beginning of the meetings *(Doc O-ANT)*.

7.2 Certification agreement

7.2.1 QUALICOAT, registered originally as Swiss Trade Mark No. 352 316, is presently registered as international sign Nr. 513 227 according to the Madrid Convention concerning the international registration of trade marks.

7.2.2 QUALIDECO is registered as Swiss Trade Mark No. 519 001 (until 9th January 2024) and as a European Union Trade Mark (EUTM) no 3.217.296 (until 9th June 2023).

7.2.3 QUALICOAT provides certification services to coating plants, decorating plants, suppliers of coating materials and chemical systems, suppliers of decorative materials, directly or through General licensees bound by a Master Licence Agreement.

7.2.4 QUALICOAT has described all certification requirements in the **Master Licence Agreement** *(Doc A-MLA)* between QUALICOAT (and/or QUALIDECO) and each of the General Licensee and in the **Licence Agreement** *(Doc A-LA)* between the General Licensees and the Licensee. Any disagreement shall be escalated to the Board of Governors. In case no satisfied solution can be found, the next escalation level would be the Executive Committee. Termination of a Master Licence Agreement and exclusion of a General Licensee can only be decided by the Members of Association.

7.2.5 QUALICOAT requires that the General Licensees are either accredited to ISO/IEC 17065 or operate according to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 under the supervision *(Doc CH-GLS)* of the QUALICOAT Certification Body, as specified in the QUALICOAT Guidelines for General Licensees *(Doc G-GL)*.

7.2.6 QUALICOAT ensures that in this Licence Agreement it requires that the client complies at least, with the following:

a. the client always fulfils the QUALICOAT Specifications *(Doc SPEC-QCT)*, including implementing appropriate changes when they are communicated by the Certification Body (refer to 9.10);

b. if the certification applies to ongoing production, the certified product continues to fulfil the product requirements;

c. the client makes all necessary arrangements for
   - the conduct of the evaluation (refer to 9.4) and (if required) surveillance (refer to 9.9) including provision for examining documentation and records, and access to the relevant equipment, location(s), area(s}, employees, and client's subcontractors;
   - investigation of complaints
   - the participation of observers, if applicable;

d. the client makes claims regarding certification consistent with the scope of certification.

e. the client does not use its product certification in such a manner as to bring the Certification Body into disrepute and does not make any statement regarding its product certification that the Certification Body may consider misleading or unauthorized;

f. upon suspension, withdrawal, or termination of certification, the client discontinues its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference to the certification and takes action as required by the certification scheme and takes any other required measure;

g. if the client provides copies of the certification documents to others, the documents shall be reproduced in their entirety or as specified in the QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO Specifications; the client is not authorized to change the certificate issued by QUALICOAT.

h. in making reference to its product certification in communication media such as documents, brochures or advertising, the client complies with the requirements of the Certification Body or as specified by the QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO Specifications;

i. the client complies with any requirements that may be prescribed in the certification scheme relating to the use of marks of conformity, and on information related to the product, as specified under Appendix A1 of the QUALICOAT Specifications *(Doc SPEC-QCT)* or under Chapter 6 of the QUALIDECO Specifications *(Doc SPEC-QDC)*.

j. the client keeps a record of all complaints made known to it relating to compliance with certification requirements and makes these records available to the Certification Body when requested, and
   - takes appropriate action with respect to such complaints and any deficiencies found in products that affect compliance with the requirements for certification;
   - documents the actions taken

k. the client informs the Certification Body, without delay, of changes that may affect its ability to conform with the certification requirements.

7.3 Use of licence, Certificates and Marks of conformity

7.3.1 QUALICOAT grants authorisation to use the Quality Labels QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO on condition that the applicant operates in accordance with the Specifications. This authorisation is governed by a Licence Agreement with Suppliers *(Doc A-S)*.

7.3.2 QUALICOAT exercises the control of conformity through the evaluation made by the inspectors during the visit in the plants and the review of these evaluation activities by the Certification Body.

7.3.3 The granting of a licence or approval entitles the holder to use the Quality Label for the products specified. The licence or approval cannot be transferred, except in one specific case as indicated under 7.3.4.

7.3.4 Exception to the no-transfer rule: When a licensed coating plant is purchased by another company, the licence can be transferred to the new company under the condition that the production facilities of the coating plant remain unchanged at the same location, according to QUALICOAT Specifications.

7.3.5 QUALICOAT defines the rules for the use of the quality label in the Appendix A1 of the QUALICOAT Specifications and under Chapter 6 of the QUALIDECO Specifications and specifies that incorrect references to the certification scheme, or misleading use of licenses, certificates, marks, or any other mechanism for indicating a product is certified, found in documentation or other publicity, shall be dealt with by suitable action.

7.3.6 In case of unauthorised use of the quality label by a company not holding a QUALICOAT licence or approval, the Certification Body intervenes directly or indirectly through a General Licensee by a registered letter, requires the immediate termination of the unauthorised use of the quality label.

7.4 Management of impartiality

7.4.1 QUALICOAT Certification activities are undertaken impartially. The criteria for granting licences and approvals that are set out in the QUALICOAT or QUALIDECO Specifications are authoritative for the Certification Body and apply to its work with everyone involved in the quality organisation.

7.4.2 QUALICOAT is responsible for the impartiality of its certification activities and does not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise its impartiality. The costs for granting licences and approvals are stipulated by QUALICOAT in the relevant Scale of Contributions *(Doc O-SoC)* and apply to all licensees and product approvals.

7.4.3 In order to guarantee the impartiality, the inspection reports that have already been reviewed by the General licensees are assessed again by an employee of the Certification Body and entered into the database (four-eye principle or two-person rule).

7.4.4 In case of divergences in the assessment of the inspection report, the employee of the Certification Body requires clarification from the General licensee. If the Certification Body and the General licensee

do not agree on the results of the inspection, the inspection report is sent to the Label Committee who has to take a decision within two weeks.

7.4.5 The four-eye principle also applies for the rating of the reports of inspections carried out in the plants of individual licensees or for the inspection reports sent by General Licensees who do not have enough employees or whose employees are not adequately trained for the review. In such case, two persons of the Certification Body review and assess the inspection reports independently.

7.4.6 If the employees of the Certification Body cannot agree on the outcome of an inspection carried out at a plant as mentioned under 7.4.5, the inspection report is sent to the label committee who has to take a decision on the outcome of the inspection within 2 weeks.

7.4.7 The procedures described under 7.4.3 to 7.4.6 apply to the testing reports covering the approval of coating systems.

7.4.8 The inspection reports relating to the approval of chemical systems are assessed by two persons of the Certification Body, as described under 7.4.3 to 7.4.6.

7.4.9 The inspection reports relating to the approval of QUALIDECO decorating systems, films and coating suppliers are assessed by two persons of the Certification Body, as described under 7.4.3 to 7.4.6.

7.4.10 QUALICOAT has developed a procedure to ensure a consistent assessment of the inspection reports by the General Licensee and the Certification Body and drawn up a list of preventive or corrective measures as well as a list of non-conformities *(Doc P-EVA)*. A similar procedure for QUALIDECO has been developed as well *(Doc P-EVA-QDC)*.

7.4.11 Through close monitoring and reminders' notices sent to the General licensees, QUALICOAT Certification Body ensures that the inspectors perform the number of inspection visits required by the Specifications.

7.4.12 QUALICOAT identifies risks to its impartiality on an ongoing basis, out of the activities in relation with the General Licence, testing laboratories, companies and Certification body employees, and at least once a year during the internal audit. Potential threats to impartiality are listed in List of potential risks to QUALICOAT impartiality *(Doc OP-L-Imp)* and are analysed according to the defined procedure *(Doc P-Imp)*.

7.4.13 When a risk to impartiality is identified, QUALICOAT will start corrective actions to eliminate or minimize such risks. These corrective actions will be made available to the Board of Governors as specified in 6.2.3.

7.4.14 In order to prevent potential conflicts of interest, working processes may be modified or new rules may be established in order to guarantee the impartiality of the Certification Body.

7.4.15 QUALICOAT commitment to impartiality is documented in the QUALICOAT Specifications under General Information *(Doc SPEC-QCT)*.

7.4.16 QUALICOAT ensures that itself and the General Licensees

a. are not designers, manufacturers, installers, distributers or maintainers of the certified product;

b. are not designers, implementers, operators or maintainers of the certified process;

c. do not offer or provide consultancy to its clients;

d. do not offer or provide management system consultancy or internal auditing to its clients where the certification scheme requires the evaluation of the client's management system.

7.4.17 QUALICOAT ensures that activities of General Licensees do not compromise the impartiality of its certification activities, as recorded in the Master Licence Agreement signed by them.

7.4.18 QUALICOAT ensures that Certification Body's activities are not marketed or offered as linked with the activities of an organisation that provides consultancy.

7.4.19 The QUALICOAT employees that review or make a certification decision have signed a document confirming that they have not provided consultancy on the product for a specific period preceding their hiring *(Doc CB-EA)*.

7.4.20 QUALICOAT, during the updating of the risk evaluation, will take action to respond to any risks to its impartiality, arising from the actions of other persons, bodies or organisations, of which it becomes aware.

7.4.21 All QUALICOAT Certification Body employees (either internal or external), GL and committees who could influence the certification activities have to sign the Declaration of Impartiality *(Doc O-DoI)*.

7.5 Liability and financing

7.5.1 QUALICOAT has subscribed an insurance and has reserves to cover liabilities arising from its operations.

7.5.2 QUALICOAT has the financial stability and resources required for its operations as for its budget approved by the Associations Members. The costs of the Certification Body are funded by contributions of the various members of the organisation (coating plants, coating suppliers, chemical suppliers), in accordance with the Scale of Contributions established by the Executive Committee.

7.5.3 QUALICOAT has its own bank account, its own Tax Identifying Number (Reg. Nr. J0000329229) and own VAT number.

7.5.4 The annual accounts of QUALICOAT are audited every year by an independent auditor, who delivers a report on the results of the annual audit to the Meeting of Associations Members.

7.6 Non-discriminatory conditions

7.6.1 The policies and procedures under which QUALICOAT operates, and the administration of them, are non-discriminatory and are specified in the Specifications. QUALICOAT procedures ensure that any applicant who abides with the Specifications has access to the certification process.

7.6.2 QUALICOAT make its services accessible to all applicants whose activities fall within the scope of its operations. The QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO Specifications are publicly available on the QUALICOAT website www.QUALICOAT.net.

7.6.3 QUALICOAT ensures that the access to the certification process is not conditioned upon the size of the client or to a membership of any association or group, nor its product certification is conditioned upon the number of certifications already issued.

7.6.4 QUALICOAT confines its requirements, evaluation, review, decision and surveillance (if any) to those matters specifically related to the scope of certification.

7.7 Confidentiality

7.7.1 QUALICOAT is responsible, through legally enforceable commitments, for the management of all information obtained or created during the performance of certification activities. QUALICOAT informs the client, in the Application forms for coaters, chemical suppliers, powder of suppliers and QUALIDECO *(P-APPL-Coat, P-APPL-Chem, P-APPL-Powd, P-APPL-QDC)*, of the information it intends to place in the public domain.

7.7.2 QUALICOAT informs the client in the Licence Agreement, when QUALICOAT is required by law, QUALICOAT is authorized to release confidential information and the client or person concerned will, unless prohibited by law, be notified of the information provided.

7.7.3 Information about the client obtained from sources other than the client (e.g. from the complainant or from regulators) are treated as confidential.

7.7.4 The employees of the Certification Body are committed to maintaining strict confidentiality of all information and data relating to individual companies (coating plants, testing laboratories, suppliers, etc.) that may be entrusted in the course of their work.

7.7.5 The confidentiality requirement is expressly mentioned in the Employment Handbook *(Doc CB-EH)*.of the employees of the Certification Body.

7.7.6 The confidentiality requirement also applies to the members of the various QUALICOAT Committees and is recalled together with the Antitrust Rules in a document distributed at the start of each meeting and signed by the participants *(Doc O-ANT)*.

7.7.7 If documents of individual companies have to be shown or discussed at meetings, the employees of the Certification Body make sure that those documents are anonymised. This confidentiality requirement applies for the General licensees as well.

7.8 Publicly available information

7.8.1 QUALICOAT maintains (through its website) or makes available upon request:

a. information about (or reference to) the certification scheme(s), including evaluation procedures, rules and procedures for granting, for maintaining, for extending or reducing the scope of, for suspending, for withdrawing certification;

b. a description of the means by which the Certification Body obtains financial support and general information on the fees charged to applicants and to clients;

c. a description of the rights and duties of applicants and clients, including requirements, restrictions or limitations on the use of the Certification Body's name and certification mark and on the ways of referring to the certification granted;

d. information about procedures for handling complaints and appeals

7.8.2 Documents currently available on the QUALICOAT Website

- QUALICOAT Specifications (Doc SPEC-QCT) and Update sheets (SPEC-USxx) (if applicable)
- List of General Licensees & national associations (OL-QCT)
- Members of the QUALICOAT Executive Committee (OL-EC)
- Members of the Technical Committee (OL-TC)
- List of active working groups (OL-WG)
- List of QUALICOAT Testing bodies (QUALISURFAL testing laboratories and inspectors) (OL-TB-Insp) (OL-TB-lab)
- List of QUALIDECO Testing bodies (testing laboratories and inspectors) (OL-TB-Insp-QDC) (OL-TB-lab-QDC)
- How to apply for a QUALICOAT licence?
- List of Licensed QUALICOAT Coaters (OL-L-Coat)
- Lists of Approved and cancelled coating systems - QUALICOAT (OL-L-Powd)f
- Lists of Approved and Cancelled Chemical Systems - QUALICOAT (OL-L-Chem)
- Information for coaters
- Information for manufacturers

QUALIDECO

- QUALIDECO Specifications and Update sheets (SPEC-USxx-QDC) (if applicable)
- Members of the QUALIDECO Committee
- How to apply for a QUALIDECO licence?
- List of Licensed Decorators (OL-L-D-QDC)
- List of Licenses powder suppliers (OL-L-PS-QDC)
- List of licensed film suppliers (OL-L-FS-QDC)
- List of Powder Suppliers with approved class 1 decoration systems

- List of Powder Suppliers with approved class 2 decorations
- List of Film Suppliers with approved class 1 decoration systems
- List of Film Suppliers with approved class 2 decorations

8 Resources

8.1 Certification Body Employees

8.1.1 General

8.1.1.1 QUALICOAT has a sufficient number of employees (both internal employees and persons working under an individual contract or a formal agreement) to cover its operations related to the certification schemes and to the applicable standards and other normative documents.

8.1.1.2 QUALICOAT's Certification Body's employees encompass the following persons:

- the Managing director (employment agreement)
- the Office Manager (employment agreement)
- several administrative and technical assistants (employment agreement)

8.1.1.3 All employees work according to the procedures defined in QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO Specifications and the instructions given in the database user manuals (which are partly written in German language for the benefit of the local employees).

8.1.1.4 QUALICOAT employees are competent for the functions they perform, including making required technical judgements, proposing new procedures and implementing them after approval by the Executive Committee.

8.1.1.5 QUALICOAT requires from the certification employees a good command of languages, including technical terminology, in order to carry out the activities of certification within an international environment.

8.1.1.6 The employees currently employed by the QUALICOAT Certification Body are listed in the annexed document *(Doc CB-LE)* and information on their educational / professional background can be found in their personnel dossier.

8.1.1.7 The confidentiality commitment is included in the employment agreement of the Certification Body's employees or in the formal agreement signed with external employees or organisation mandated by QUALICOAT to carry out certification activities.

8.1.1.8 All QUALICOAT Committee members, or employees acting on the Certification Body's behalf, confirm with their signature on the Antitrust and Confidentiality Reminder *(Doc O-ANT)* at each meeting their

commitment to keep confidential all information obtained or created during the performance of the certification activities, except as required by law or by the certification scheme.

8.1.2 Employment Agreement with Employees

For each employee involved in the certification process QUALICOAT has a signed employment agreement or other document by which they commit themselves to the following:

a. to comply with the rules defined by the Certification Body, including those relating to confidentiality and independence from commercial and other interests;

b. to declare any prior and/or present association on their own part or on the part of their employer, with:

- a supplier or designer of products, or
- a provider or developer of services, or
- an operator or developer of processes to the evaluation or certification of which they are to be assigned;

c. to reveal any situation known to them that may present them or the Certification Body with a conflict of interest.

8.1.3 Management of competence for employees involved in the certification process

8.1.3.1 QUALICOAT has established job descriptions *(Doc CB-JD)* for the employees and the various functions involved in the certification process. These job descriptions define the functions and the competencies of the employees involved in the certification process.

8.1.3.2 QUALICOAT has determined the training needs for the employees of the Certification Body in the document called Personal Development Plan *(Doc CB-PDP)* which will be reviewed and updated at least once a year through the employee performance review process.

8.1.3.3 Internal Guidelines for the Certification Body *(Doc CB-GS)*, PreTreatment *(Doc CB-G-Chem)*, Coaters *(Doc CB-G-Coat)*, Powders *(Doc CB-G-Powd)* and QUALIDECO *(Doc CB-G-QDC)* manuals describe the various steps of the administrative work performed by the Certification Body. These documents are also used for the initial training of the new employees of the Certification Body and are partly written in German.

8.1.3.4 General training and development (association management, software programmes and language courses) is provided to the employees of the Certification Body as and when required through participation in external training programmes. All the training needs are documented in the Personal Development Plan (refer to 8.1.3.2).

8.1.3.5 Specialised training required to carry out the certification work in the field of aluminium finishing takes place on the job, through hands-on experience and interactions with experts, participation in QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO meetings, visits to finishing and suppliers' plants, training courses focused on the aluminium industry, visits of testing laboratories, participation in training courses

organised for inspectors, as well as occasionally accompanying a QUALICOAT and/or QUALIDECO inspector on a plant inspection.

8.1.3.6 The Managing Director monitors the Personal Development Plan of the employees. The evaluation takes place at least once a year during a performance review meeting which will be recorded through the Performance Review Form *(Doc CB-PR)* and kept in the personnel dossier.

8.1.3.7 The Board of Governors monitors the performance as well the Personal Development Plan of the Managing Director. The evaluation takes place once a year during a performance review meeting which will be recorded through the Performance Review Form *(Doc CB-PR)* and kept in the personnel dossier.

8.1.3.8 QUALICOAT has updated records on the employees involved in the certification process that have: (personnel dossier)

- Name and address
- Employer(s) and position held
- Educational qualification and professional status
- Experience and training
- The assessment of competence
- Performance monitoring
- Job description for the Certification Body (functions and competencies)
- Date of most recent updating of each record

8.1.3.9 **Training for the employees of the General licensees**: The Certification Body has drawn up a training programme for new employees of the General Licensees. If possible, new employees of the General licensee should spend 1-2 days in the office of the Certification Body to learn the certification process and to be made aware of the requirements and administrative procedures applicable to the certification *(Doc O-Training-GL)*.

8.1.3.10 The General Licensees are requested to organise an annual training for their licensees.

8.2 Resources for Evaluation

8.2.1 Internal resources

8.2.1.1 Evaluation activities are not performed by QUALICOAT Certification Body ‘s employees; those activities are outsourced to independent testing bodies accredited to ISO/IEC 17025, which work according to QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO Specifications.

8.2.1.2 The Managing director or designated employees of the Certification Body may carry out a primary **non-committal** evaluation visit in plants (especially those located in a country without GL) that wish to apply for a QUALICOAT licence or for an approval of a powder coating system but are unsure whether

their facility or equipment meets with QUALICOAT requirements. In such cases, the potential applicant has to bear the travelling costs of the QUALICOAT employee according to the procedure for granting licences or approvals in countries without General Licensees *(Doc P-GLA)*.

To perform this preliminary visit the checklist preliminary visit will be used *(Doc CH-Pre-Visit)*. The findings of the visit are reported in the Preliminary Visit Form *(Doc F-Prel-Visit)* and the responsible persons are fully informed about the outcome of the visit.

The results of the preliminary visit are indicative and cannot replace any official inspections carried out for granting a licence or an approval for a powder coating system.

8.2.1.2.1 A preliminary visit for coater plants is optional. Should the visited coating plant meet with the requirements of QUALICOAT specifications, the plant still has to officially apply *(Doc F-Appl-QCT or Doc-F-Appl-QDC (QUALIDECO))* for the QUALICOAT label and undergo the mandatory inspection visits in order to obtain the label.

8.2.1.2.2 A preliminary visit for the powder suppliers is mandatory prior to processing an official application for approval of a powder coating system, but conclusions of the visit remain non-committal. Should the visited powder supplier meet with the requirements of QUALICOAT specifications, the powder supplier still has to officially apply *(Doc F-Appl-QCT or Doc-F-Appl-QDC (QUALIDECO))* for the QUALICOAT label and undergo the mandatory inspection visits in order to obtain the label.

8.2.2 External Resources: Outsourcing to Testing Bodies

8.2.2.1 QUALICOAT or its General licensees outsource evaluation activities only to testing bodies that meet the applicable requirements of the ISO/IEC 17025 for the test methods prescribed by QUALICOAT.

8.2.2.2 The selection of testing bodies is the responsibility of the General licensee or of QUALICOAT in the countries without a General Licensee.

8.2.2.3 The selection is based on the requirements defined by QUALICOAT in the procedure for evaluating testing laboratories and inspectors *(Doc P-QTB)*. In those countries where the General Licensee is not accredited, QUALICOAT must approve the selection.

8.2.2.4 The testing bodies are under the direct control of the General licensees or of QUALICOAT (in the countries without General licensees).

8.2.2.5 The testing bodies operating in countries without a General Licensee sign an agreement *(Doc A-TB)* with QUALICOAT governing their work and stipulating the minimum requirements to be met.

8.2.2.6 The testing bodies working for QUALICOAT are members of the QUALISURFAL Group / Coating section, those working for QUALIDECO are members of the QUALISURFAL Group / Decorating section.

8.2.2.7 The testing bodies meet at least once a year with QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO representatives to exchange experience and report on any problems encountered in performing the inspections and on any possible difficulties in interpreting the specifications or in performing specific tests.

8.2.2.8 During the annual meetings, representatives of QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO give the inspectors details of the latest Technical Committee's resolutions, any changes in the specifications and the development of testing and inspection criteria.

8.2.2.9 QUALICOAT's Managing Director or designated employees of the Certification Body regularly accompany inspectors during a plant's inspection to check that those inspectors work according to the newest specifications (witness audit). From time to time, visits of testing laboratories to check their conformity with the operational requirements of QUALICOAT. Observations made by QUALICOAT employees during the inspection visit shall be brought to the attention of the inspectors and/or testing laboratories and submitted in anonymised format to the meetings of the General Licensees and/or QUALICOAT Committees for discussion *(Doc CH-TB-Visit, Doc F-Visit-Conf and Doc CO-Insv)*.

8.2.2.10 QUALICOAT maintains a list of testing laboratories and of inspectors working for QUALICOAT that is publicly available on QUALICOAT's website (refer to 7.8.2).

9 Process

9.1 General

9.1.1 The QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO Specifications provide the basis for granting and renewing the respective QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO licenses and approvals. The requirements against which the products of a client are evaluated are defined in those Specifications.

9.1.2 The Specifications set out the minimum requirements for facilities and equipment, chemicals, coating materials and finished products in order to achieve high quality on products for architectural applications.

9.1.3 The Specifications govern in-house control in the plants and the performance of regular inspections by the testing institutes.

9.1.4 The Specifications are revised, updated and if, required, expanded by the Technical Committee and/or by the QUALIDECO Committee. New Specifications are published, and Update sheets added at regular intervals, always after approval by the Executive Committee of QUALICOAT.

9.1.5 If explanations are required as to the application of QUALICOAT Specifications these are formulated by QUALICOAT Technical Committee or by QUALICOAT Executive Committee.

9.1.6 If explanations are required as to the application of QUALIDECO Specifications these are formulated by QUALIDECO Committee.

9.1.7 The General licensees may translate the Specifications in their national languages. However, in case of doubt, the English version of the Specifications remains the Master Version and supersedes all national editions

9.2 Application

9.2.1 Companies wishing to apply for a QUALICOAT licence or a QUALICOAT approval have to complete an application form *(Doc F-Appl-QCT)* and send it to the QUALICOAT Secretariat and/or the General Licensees. In this form the applicants give all the necessary information and confirm that they have knowledge of QUALICOAT Specifications and of the Scale of contributions. The relevant application form can be downloaded from the QUALICOAT website:

- How to apply for a QUALICOAT licence?

9.2.2 A company which already has the QUALICOAT label and is interested in obtaining a QUALIDECO licence must to complete and submit the QUALIDECO application from *(Doc F-Appl-QDC)* to the General Licensees or to the QUALICOAT Secretariat in countries without a national association, identifying the technology used in its production and the material used for decoration. The relevant application form can be downloaded from the QUALIDECO website:

- How to apply for a QUALIDECO licence?

9.2.3 QUALICOAT publishes information for coaters and for manufacturers, drawing the attention of the applicants on the QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO requirements, explaining “how to apply”. The relevant application form can be downloaded from QUALICOAT’s website.

- Information for coaters
- Information for manufacturers
- Information for QUALIDECO applicants

9.3 Application Review

9.3.1 QUALICOAT and/or General Licensees make a review of the information obtained to ensure that:

a. The information about the client and the product is sufficient for the conduct of the certification process.

b. Any known difference in understanding between the Certification Body and the client is resolved, including agreement regarding standards or other normative documents.

c. The scope of certification sought is defined.

d. The means are available to perform all evaluation activities.

9.3.2 QUALICOAT and/or the General Licensee have the competences to identify when the client's request for certification includes a type of product, or a certification which is not covered by QUALICOAT or QUALIDECO specifications.

9.3.3 In these cases (refer to 9.3.2), QUALICOAT and/or the General Licensee decline to undertake this specific certification.

9.3.4 If requested by the applicant, the QUALICOAT Managing Director or designated employees of the Certification Body or the General licensee may pay a preliminary, non-committal, visit to the applicant to assess the plant’s conformity to the QUALICOAT requirements (refer to 8.2.1.2 - 8.2.1.2.2).

9.4 Evaluation

9.4.1 Once the application has been accepted by QUALICOAT and/or the General Licensee, QUALICOAT or the General licensee sends the application form to the testing institute operating in the country concerned, asking him to carry out the mandatory inspections and/or testing prior to approval.

9.4.2 QUALICOAT and/or the General Licensee ensures that all necessary Information and/or documentation is made available for performing the evaluation tasks (e.g. QUALICOAT inspection and Testing forms).

9.4.3 The QUALICOAT Specifications stipulate the following conditions:

9.4.3.1 For granting **a QUALICOAT licence:** the detailed requirements are found in Chapter 5 of the Specifications.

9.4.3.1.1 The inspector carries out the evaluation with the inspection report called “Master Inspection Form for coating plants” *(Doc F-MIR-Coat)*

9.4.3.1.2 In countries without General licensee, QUALICOAT has clarified the procedure for granting a licence in the document Procedure for granting licences and approvals in countries without General Licensees *(Doc P-GLA)*

9.4.3.2 For granting **a QUALICOAT approval for organic coatings**: the detailed requirements are found in Chapter 4 of the Specifications. The inspector carries out the evaluation with the inspection report called "Master Testing Form for coating systems" *(Doc F-MTR-Powd)* or *(Doc F-MIR-Powd)* for the powder plants itself.

9.4.3.3 For granting **a QUALICOAT approval for chemical systems**: the detailed requirements are found in Appendix A6 of the QUALICOAT Specifications. The inspector carries out the evaluation according to the inspection report called "Testing report for PreTreatment systems *(Doc F-MIR-Chem)*.

9.4.4 The QUALIDECO Specifications stipulate the following requirements for:

9.4.4.1 Granting **a QUALIDECO decorating licence** using sublimation technology: the detailed requirements are found in Chapter 2 of the QUALIDECO Specifications.

9.4.4.2 Granting **a QUALIDECO decorating licence using powder on powder technology**: the detailed requirements to be found in Chapter 4 of the QUALIDECO specifications.

For both QUALIDECO licences, the inspector carries out the evaluation according to the inspection report called QUALIDECO Master Inspection form *(Doc F-MIR-D-QDC)* for decorators.

9.4.4.3 For granting **a QUALIDECO licence to film and powder suppliers**: detailed requirements are found in Chapter 3 of QUALIDECO Specifications. The inspector carries out the evaluation according to the inspection report called QUALIDECO Inspection report for granting a licence to a Film Supplier *(Doc F-MIR-FS-QDC)* / QUALIDECO inspection report for granting a licence to a Powder Supplier *(Doc F-MIR-PS-QDC)*.

9.5 Review

9.5.1 For the review of the inspections reports, the General Licensee and QUALICOAT work according to the Procedure for evaluating inspection results *(Doc P-EVA)*.

9.5.2 QUALICOAT and/or the General Licensee reviews all information and results related to the evaluation.

9.5.3 The inspection reports are assessed by the General Licensee. Under the supervision of QUALICOAT, the General Licensee decides whether or not to grant an approval or an extension and sends the inspection report with its results to the QUALICOAT Certification Body.

9.5.4 In the case of individual licensees (companies located in a country without GL), the inspection report is sent directly to QUALICOAT and the review is carried out by two employees of the Certification Body. These two persons review and assess the inspection reports independently and decide or not grant a licence or an approval or an extension.

9.5.5 Deadlines for submission of inspection reports: All inspection reports (including test results) shall reach QUALICOAT Certification Body within three months of the dates of the inspections. If a plant inspection was unsatisfactory, the General Licensee has to send the report to QUALICOAT's Secretariat within one month of the inspection.

9.5.6 Recommendations for a certification decision based on the review are documented. QUALICOAT carries out the review activities that it undertakes with its internal resources (refer to 8.2.1) and shall manage outsourced resources (refer to 8.2.2) in accordance with the evaluation plan (refer to 9.4.1). The products are evaluated against the requirements covered in the QUALICOAT Specifications.

9.5.7 The Certification Body and/or the General Licensee always informs the client in writing of the results of the evaluation and mentions any observations, when applicable. If issues or nonconformities have arisen, they are specified to the client. These will be documented and the General Licensee or the client without a General Licensee in the country receive a confirmation letter *(Doc CO-Coat)*, *(Doc CO-Powd)* and *(Doc CO-Chem)*.

9.5.8 If one or more nonconformities have arisen, QUALICOAT Certification Body and/or the General Licensee provides information regarding the additional evaluation tasks needed to verify that issues or nonconformities have been corrected.

9.5.9 Through close monitoring and reminders' notices sent to the General licensees, QUALICOAT Certification Body makes sure that the inspectors perform the number of inspection visits required each year by the Specifications.

9.5.10 All relevant documentation (e.g. confirmation letter, pictures, mail correspondence) are saved in the defined data folders.

9.6 Certification Decision

9.6.1 QUALICOAT is responsible for, and retains authority for, its decisions relating to certification.

9.6.2 The employees of the QUALICOAT Certification Body makes the certification decision based on all information related to the evaluation, its review, and any other relevant information. The QUALICOAT employees are not involved in the evaluation process (refer to 9.4)

9.6.3 The employees of the QUALICOAT Certification Body assigned to make a certification decision is employed by or is under contract with QUALICOAT.

9.6.4 QUALICOAT will notify the client in writing directly or through General Licensee of a decision not to grant certification and will identify the reasons for the decision (refer to 9.5.7).

9.7 Certification Documentation

9.7.1 QUALICOAT sends to the client – directly or through the General Licensee - the licence or approval certificate containing the following:

a. The scope of the certification namely QUALICOAT Specifications and/or QUALIDECO Specifications

b. The name and address of the client
c. The name and address of the Certification Body
d. The date certification is granted (the date shall not precede the date on which the certification decision was completed)
e. The term or expiry date of certification, if certification expires after an established period
f. The accreditation logo including the certification number of QUALICOAT
g. Any other information required by the certification scheme

9.7.2 QUALICOAT licence or approval certificate is signed by the QUALICOAT President and Managing Director according to ISO/IEC 17025.

9.7.3 QUALICOAT licence certificate is issued only after:

a. The decision to grant or extend the scope of certification (refer to 9.6) has been made;
b. Certification requirements have been fulfilled;
c. The certification agreement (refer to 7.2) has been signed.

9.7.4 QUALICOAT issues the following licence or approval certificates:

- Licence certificates *(Doc C-Coat)* (QUALICOAT Licence Number)
  Validity: 1 year or until the end of the current year for licences granted during the year
- Approval certificates for coating materials *(Doc C-Powd)* (QUALICOAT P-Number)
  Validity: 1 year or until the end of the current year for approvals granted during the year
- Approval Certificates for chemical systems *(Doc C-Chem)* (QUALICOAT A-Number)
  Validity: 3 years or 5 years. A certificate is established annually.

9.7.5 QUALIDECO issues the following certificates

- Licence certificate for decorator *(Doc C-D-QDC)* (Country Code + QUALIDECO Number)
  Validity: 1 year or until the end of the current year for licences granted during the year
- Licence certificate for powder supplier *(Doc C-PS-QDC)* (QUALIDECO PS-Number)
  Validity: 1 year or until the end of the current year for licences granted during the year
- Licence certificate for film supplier *(Doc C-FS-QDC)* (QUALIDECO FS-Number)
  Validity: 1 year or until the end of the current year for licences granted during the year

9.7.6 QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO certificates

- The General Licensee nor the client are authorized to change the certificates issued by QUALICOAT.

9.8 Directory of certified products

9.8.1 QUALICOAT maintains a database containing at least:

a. Identification of the product (QUALICOAT or QUALIDECO licence or approval);
b. Validity of the certification;
c. Identification of the client.

9.8.2 Extracts of the database are published and updated on QUALICOAT website (refer to 7.8.2).

9.8.3 QUALICOAT will provide information, upon request, about the validity of a given certification

9.9 Surveillance

9.9.1 QUALICOAT Specifications define periodic surveillance activities.

9.9.2 Chapters 4 and 5 and Appendix A6 of the QUALICOAT Specifications *(Doc SPEC-QCT)* provide the basis for surveillance to maintain the QUALICOAT licences and approvals.

9.9.3 Surveillance activities utilize evaluation, review or a certification decision, the requirements in 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6, as for a new certification.

9.9.4 QUALICOAT licensed coaters and Approved Coating Materials are subject to routine inspections or tests each year, as prescribed by the Specifications.

9.9.5 QUALICOAT Approved Chemical Systems are subject to full testing surveillance programme according to Appendix 6 of the QUALICOAT Specifications.

9.9.6 Sections 2.3, 3.2, 4.3. and 5.3. of the QUALIDECO Specifications *(Doc SPEC-QDC)* provide the basis for surveillance to maintain the QUALIDECO licences.

9.9.7 As part of the surveillance activities, the QUALICOAT Managing Director or designated employees of the Certification Body regularly accompanies inspectors during a routine plant visit and visits of testing laboratories from time to time. Purpose of this visit is to verify, among others, that the inspectors / testing laboratories work with the latest version of the Specifications, have the testing equipment required and perform the tests according to QUALICOAT Specifications. For this visits the checklist and visit confirmation for testing bodies will be used *(Doc CH-TB-Visit, F-Visit-Conf and Doc CO-Insv)*.

9.9.8 As stipulated in the Master License Agreement (item 6), QUALICOAT Managing director visits the General licensees from time to time to review the licensing process and discuss any pending issue, among others those listed in the document Checklist for Licensees supervision *(Doc CH-GLS)*.

9.10 Changes affecting certification

9.10.1 The QUALICOAT Specifications are published and Update Sheets added at regular intervals. These Specifications are publicly available on QUALICOAT website and inspectors verify during each inspection that clients use the update version.

9.10.2 New editions of the Specifications and Update sheets are sent electronically to General Licensees, Individual licensees and testing bodies.

9.10.3 QUALICOAT will take the following actions to implement changes affecting certification:

a. Publication and distribution of New Specifications or Update sheets.

b. Evaluation: if required, modifications of the inspection reports (refer to 9.4)

c. Review: if required, modifications of the review criteria (refer to 9.5)

d. Decision (refer to 9.6)

e. Issuing revised formal certification documentation (refer to 9.7) to extend or reduce the scope of certification, if applicable

f. Issuing certification documentation of revised surveillance activities

These actions will be completed in accordance with applicable parts of 9.4 - 9.9.

9.10.4 Records (refer to 0) will include the rationale for excluding any of the above activities (e.g. when a certification requirement that is not a product requirement changes, and no evaluation, review or decision activities are necessary).

9.11 Termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification

9.11.1 When a nonconformity with certification requirements is substantiated, either as a result of surveillance or otherwise, QUALICOAT will consider and decide upon the appropriate action.

9.11.2 When the appropriate action includes evaluation, review or a certification decision, QUALICOAT will fulfil the requirements mentioned in sections 9.4 to 9.6.

9.11.3 If certification is terminated (by request of the client), suspended or withdrawn, QUALICOAT will take actions specified by the certification scheme and shall make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information (e.g. data base), authorizations for use of marks, etc., in order to ensure it provides no indication that the product continues to be certified.

9.11.4 If a scope of certification is modified or reduced, the Certification Body shall take actions specified by the QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO certification schemes and shall make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, authorizations for use of marks, etc., in order to ensure the reduced scope of certification is clearly communicated to the client and clearly specified in certification documentation and public information.

9.11.5 **Suspension of licence**: In case of political unrest or unforeseen circumstances and after consultation with the testing body responsible, the inspection can be suspended for a maximum period of 12 months by the General Licensee or by QUALICOAT. After this period, the licence will be cancelled.

9.11.6 **Suspension of approvals for coating materials**: a suspension of approvals for coating materials may apply to individual colours and means that the use of a specific colour is currently forbidden. However, evaluation tests are ongoing to check conformity of the individual colour with the Specifications.

9.11.7 A **suspension of approvals for chemical systems** is not foreseen. Only the cancellation of the approval can apply.

9.11.8 QUALIDECO Specifications do not foresee the suspension of QUALIDECO licences. Only the cancellation can apply.

9.11.9 If certification is suspended the Certification Body shall formulate and communicate the following to the client: actions needed to end suspension and restore certification for the product(s) in accordance with the certification scheme; any other actions required by the certification scheme.

9.11.10 The employees of the Certification Body shall be competent in their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the handling of suspended certifications (refer to 8.1).

9.11.11 Any evaluations, reviews or decisions needed to resolve the suspension, or that are required by the certification scheme, shall be completed in accordance with the applicable parts of 9.4 to 9.6, 9.7.3, 9.9 and 9.11.3.

9.11.12 If certification is reinstated after suspension, the Certification Body shall make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, authorizations for use of marks, etc., in order to ensure all appropriate indications, exist that the product continues to be certified.

9.11.13 If a decision to reduce the scope of certification is made as a condition of reinstatement, the Certification Body shall make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information, authorizations for use of marks, etc., in order to ensure the reduced scope of certification is clearly communicated to the client and clearly specified in certification documentation and public information.

9.12 Records

9.12.1 QUALICOAT retains records to demonstrate that all certification process requirements (according to the ISO/IEC 17065 Standard and the QUALICOAT Specifications) have been effectively fulfilled (refer to 10.4).

9.12.2 QUALICOAT keeps records confidential. Records will be transported, transmitted and transferred in a way that ensures confidentiality is maintained (refer to 7.7).

9.12.3 QUALICOAT has determined records shall be retained for a period of minimum 10 years electronically.

9.12.4 Information entered in the various databases are kept for at least 10 years.

9.13 Complaints and Appeals

9.13.1 QUALICOAT has a Complaints *(Doc P-CO)* and Appeals *(Doc P-AP)* Procedure which applies to all actors of the certification scheme, including QUALIDECO certification.

9.13.2 If a licensed coater or decorator, a supplier of powder coating systems or a supplier of a chemical system disagrees with the decision taken by a General licensee and/or the Certification Body, following evaluation and review by the Certification Body, it can send a complaint and require that the case be examined by the label committee. The request should be made in writing to the General Licenseeor Certification Body without a General Licensee within 2 (two) weeks following receipt of the certification or non-certification decision.

9.13.3 If the General licensee and the Certification Body do not agree about the outcome of the inspection, they shall require the Label Committee to take a decision. The request should be made in writing to the Label Committee within 2 (two) weeks of the receipt of the evaluation and review documents by the Certification Body

9.13.4 Upon receipt of the complaint, the Label Committee has to take a decision within 4 (four) weeks, justifying his decision in writing.

9.13.5 If one of the parties disagrees with the decision taken by the Label committee, within 2 (two) weeks of the decision receipt, it can appeal of the decision in sending a written formal objection to the Steering Committee.

9.13.6 The Steering committee serves as last appeal instance in case of disputes or disagreements between actors of the Label Schemes QUALICOAT or QUALIDECO.

9.13.7 Upon receipt of an appeal, QUALICOAT Certification Body will confirm whether the complaint or appeal relates to certification activities for which it is responsible and, if so, will address it.

9.13.8 Upon receipt of the complaint or appeal, the QUALICOAT Certification Body shall acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint or appeal and make a corresponding entry in the Complaint Register of the Certification Body.

9.13.9 QUALICOAT Certification Body is responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information (as far as possible) to progress the complaint or appeal to a decision.

9.13.10 The decision resolving the complaint or appeal will be made by, or reviewed and approved by, person(s) not involved in the certification activities related to the complaint or appeal.

9.13.11 To ensure that there is no conflict of interest, QUALICOAT employees (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy (refer to 5, Conformity) for a client, or been employed by a client, will not be used by QUALICOAT to review or approve the resolution of a complaint or appeal for that client within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment.

9.13.12 Decisions and/or recommendations taken by the Steering Committee are released by majority. In the event of an equal vote, the chairman shall have the casting vote. The Steering Committee takes a final decision, justifying its decision in writing to the parties involved.

9.13.13 It is formally documented that this mechanism ensures that:

a. a balanced representation of significantly interested parties, such that no single interest dominates (internal or external employees of the Certification Body are considered to be a single interest, and shall not dominate);
b. the Steering Committee has access to all the information necessary to enable it to fulfil all its functions.

9.13.14 QUALICOAT shall give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the complaint process to the complainant.

9.13.15 QUALICOAT shall give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the appeal process to the appellant.

9.13.16 QUALICOAT will take any subsequent action needed to resolve the complaint or appeal.

10 Management System

10.1 General

According to Option A of the ISO/IEC Norm 17065, QUALICOAT has established management system that addresses the following items:

a. system documentation (e.g. manual, policies, definition of responsibilities, refer to 10.2);
b. control of documents (refer to 10.3);
c. control of records (refer to 10.4);
d. management review (refer to 10.5);
e. internal audit (refer to 0);
f. corrective actions (refer to 10.7);
g. preventive actions (refer to 10.8).

10.2 System Documentation

10.2.1 QUALICOAT has established, documented, and maintained a Quality Policy and objectives. QUALICOAT Policy is issued on QUALICOAT web site publicly and the objectives are acknowledged and implemented at all levels of the QUALICOAT organisation.

10.2.2 The Managing Director ensures his commitment to the development and implementation of the management system and its effectiveness in achieving consistent fulfilment of the ISO/IEC Norm 17065.

10.2.3 The Managing Director has responsibility and authority that include the following:

a. ensuring that processes and procedures needed for the management system are established, implemented and maintained;

b. yearly reporting on the performance of the management system and any need for improvement.

10.2.4 All documentation, processes, systems, records, etc. related to the fulfilment of the requirements of this Label Scheme are included, referenced, or linked to documentation of the management system.

10.2.5 All employees involved in certification activities have access to the parts of the management system documentation and related information that are applicable to their responsibilities.

10.3 Control of Documents (Option A)

10.3.1 QUALICOAT has established procedures to control the documents (internal and external) that relate to the fulfilment of the ISO/IEC Norm 17065.

10.3.2 General documents of the Certification Body such as letters, circular letters or emails, notices and agendas of meeting, minutes of meetings are not incorporated into the Quality Manual since they are classified as general correspondence and are stored electronically. However, any general document that directly affects the work of the Certification Body will be incorporated into the QQM.

10.3.3 The Specifications including the Update sheets are incorporated into the QQM as soon as they have been approved by the relevant Committees because they are determining for the work of the Certification Body and the testing bodies.

10.3.4 All documents associated with the Specifications, such as inspection reports or those that introduce new procedures for the quality label are incorporated into the QQM as soon as they have been approved by the QUALICOAT Executive Committee.

10.3.5 A sample of the latest versions of the licenses and approval certificates are always incorporated into the QQM.

10.3.6 In addition, the list of Committee members, General licensees and testing bodies are incorporated into the QQM and must always be kept up to date.

10.3.7 Instructions issued by the QUALICOAT Executive Committee that directly or indirectly affect the work of the Certification Body must be incorporated into the QQM.

10.3.8 Documents that describe new processes and procedures for the Certification Body are incorporated into the QQM after approval by the QUALICOAT Managing Director. If required, these documents are explained to the employees of the Certification Body in different training sessions.

10.3.9 Changes in the Certification Body employees must be documented in the list of employees *(Doc CB-LE)*.

10.3.10 The Job descriptions for the employees of the Certification Body and a sample of the employment contract must be incorporated into the QQM where necessary.

10.3.11 Trainings of the employees of the Certification Body must be documented in the Personal Development Plan *(Doc CB-PDP)*.

10.3.12 The Guidelines for the day-to-day work of the Certification Body are an important working tool for the Certification Body employees. For this reason, these guides should be kept as up to date as possible. As the guidelines are regularly updated to reflect new procedures and/or improvements, efforts should be made to incorporate an updated version of these Guidelines into the QQM at least once a year.

10.4 Control of records (Option A)

10.4.1 The documents referenced in the QQM relate to the processes and procedures of the Certification Body, and the quality label QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO.

10.4.2 **Classification**

The documents have been classified into following categories, each with a separate reference number:

A	Agreement	Documents that must be signed by two parties of the certification activities, e.g. Master Licence Agreement, certificate
C	Certificate	Official document signed by the President of Qualicoat and by the Managing Director of the Certification body
CB	Certification Body	All relevant documents for the QUALICOAT Secretariat to fulfil their certification activities
CH	Checklist	Document which supports the Certification Body on visits especially for GLs, testing and inspection bodies
CO	Confirmation	Information sent by the certification body to a company and confirming the certification decision.
F	Form	Document prescribed by the Specifications of QUALICOAT and QUALIDECO, approved by the QUALICOAT Executive committee, to report inspections and testing results, e.g. inspection form or testing form
G	Guidelines	Document determining or recommending best practices for conducting specific activities.
MA	Manual	Qualicoat Quality Manual
O	Organisation	document relating to the organisation of the certification body and describing the role of a committee, member of employees,
OL	Organisation List	List relating to the organisation giving the composition of committees, working groups, or enumerating the companies holding the QUALICOAT / QUALIDECO licences.
OP-L	Operations List	List relating to the certification activities, like list of approved and cancelled chemical products
P	Procedure	Document determining the criteria applied by QUALICOAT for the assessment or execution of specific certification activities.

SPEC	Specifications	The Specifications establish the minimum requirements which plant installations, organic coating materials, chemical conversion materials, processes and finished products have to meet in order to obtain the QUALICOAT or QUALIDEO quality label.

10.4.3 **Identification**: The documents in the QQM are identified as follows:

- Alphabetical prefix according to the classification described in 10.4.2 above = Document Code
- Reference to the relevant section of the QQM
- Date Approved
- Approved by which committee or person
- Valid from
- Version 01, 02, 03, …
- Number of pages of the document
- The indications on which committees or persons have approved the documents are shown on the first page of the document.
- Example:

Document Code:	A-MLA
QQM Section:	5.1.5
Date Approved:	15.5.2018
Approved by:	Executive Committee
Valid from:	1.1.2019
Version:	01
No. of pages:	3

10.4.4 All the documents are included as attachments to the QQM and linked to the relevant section of the QQM by hyperlink. Specific documents such as the lists which are regularly updated are linked with the QUALICOAT Website.

10.4.5 **Updating of documents**: New documents are incorporated into the QQM after approval by the relevant Committees or Managing Director.

10.4.6 If required, new documents are distributed to all employees of the Certification Body and explained during a training session.

10.4.7 The documents are available to all employees of the Certification Body in electronic format.

10.4.8 After an update of the QQM, previous versions of the QQM documents are retained electronically for five years. Then they are disposed of.

10.4.9 Only those persons defined as owner in the list of Official documents (refer to 11) are entitled to make changes in the necessary documents.

10.4.10 The documents are protected against changes by unauthorised persons.

10.4.11 All QUALICOAT data and databases are stored in an external datacentre hosted by our IT provider. Daily backups are performed 7 days a week and beginning of the new week the oldest backup will be overwritten. Backup process is monitored and an error log file will be sent to info@qualicoat.net.

10.5 Management review (Option A)

10.5.1 General: QUALICOAT has planned a yearly review of its management system in order to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness, including the stated policies and objectives related to the fulfilment of ISO/IEC Norm 17065.

10.5.2 Review inputs

The input to the management review includes information related to the following:

a. results of internal and external audits;
b. feedback from clients and interested parties related to the fulfilment of ISO/IEC Norm 17065;
c. feedback from the mechanism for safeguarding impartiality;
d. the status of preventive and corrective actions;
e. follow-up actions from previous management reviews;
f. potential risk to the impartiality of the Certification Body
g. the fulfilment of objectives;
h. changes that could affect the management system;
i. appeals and complaints.

10.5.3 Review outputs

The outputs from the management review shall include decisions and actions related to the following:

a. improvement of the effectiveness of the management system and its processes;
b. improvement of the Certification Body related to the fulfilment of the ISO/IEC Norm 17065;
c. resource needs;
d. training and development opportunities for the employees of the Certification Body.

10.6 Internal audits

10.6.1 QUALICOAT has established a checklist for internal audits *(Doc CH-AUD)* to verify that it fulfils the requirements of this International Standard and that the management system is effectively implemented and maintained.

10.6.2 The Audit Procedure *(Doc P-AUD)*, taking into consideration the importance of the processes and areas to be audited, as well as the results of previous audits.

10.6.3 Internal audits are normally be performed at least once every 12 months or completed within a 12-month time frame for segmented (or rolling) internal audits.

10.6.4 A documented decision-making process will be followed to change (reduce or restore) the frequency of internal audits or the time frame in which internal audits shall be completed. Such changes will be based on the relative stability and ongoing effectiveness of the management system. Records of decisions to change the frequency of internal audits, or the time frame in which they will be completed, including the rationale for the change, shall be maintained.

10.6.5 QUALICOAT ensures that:

a. internal audits are conducted by employees knowledgeable in certification, auditing and the requirements of the ISO/IEC Norm 17065;
b. auditors do not audit their own work;
c. employees responsible for the area audited are informed of the outcome of the audit;
d. any actions resulting from internal audits are taken in a timely and appropriate manner;
e. any opportunities for improvement are identified.

10.7 Corrective Actions

10.7.1 QUALICOAT has established a Procedure for identification and management of nonconformities in its operations *(Doc P-CAPA)*.

10.7.2 QUALICOAT will also, where necessary, take actions to eliminate the causes of nonconformities in order to prevent recurrence.

10.7.3 Corrective actions are appropriate to the impact of the problems encountered.

10.7.4 The procedure defines requirements for the following:

a. identifying nonconformities (e.g. from complaints and internal audits);
b. determining the causes of nonconformity;
c. correcting nonconformities;
d. evaluating the need for actions to ensure that nonconformities do not recur;
e. determining and implementing the actions needed in a timely manner;
f. recording the results of actions taken;
g. reviewing the effectiveness of corrective actions.

10.8 Preventive Actions

10.8.1 QUALICOAT has established procedures for identification and management of preventive actions to eliminate the causes of potential nonconformities *(Doc P-CAPA)*.

10.8.2 Preventive actions taken are appropriate to the probable impact of the potential problems.

10.8.3 The procedure for preventive actions defines requirements for the following:

a. identifying potential nonconformities and their causes;
b. evaluating the need for action to prevent the occurrence of nonconformities;
c. determining and implementing the action needed;
d. recording the results of actions taken;
e. reviewing the effectiveness of the preventive actions taken.

11 List of Official Documents

The list of official documents *(Doc OL-Doc)* can be found under \00 - QC Organisation\00 - Admin\OL-Doc\OL-Doc List of Official Documents Vxx.xlsx.