The certification of a management system based on standard ISO 9001 or ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 respectively, consists of the offer and contract phase, the audit preparation, performance of the Stage 1 audit with evaluation of the management documentation, performance of the Stage 2 audit, issue of certificate and surveillance/recertification.

The auditors are selected by the Head of the INAT Corporate Europe Co. W.L.L. in accordance with their approvals for the particular sector and their qualification.

1. Certification procedure

1.1 Initial Enquiries

To fully understand the needs and requirements of the potential clients, INAT-MSC requires information with regards to the organization. The format for "Application for Management System Certification" which is downloadable from the site must be completely accomplished and uploaded on the website or e-mail. The online "Certification Inquiries" may also be used by the potential Clients.

Based on the provided data, INAT-MSC will be able to calculate the audit duration and provide a proposal. Once both party agreed a formal "Contract" will be signed.

1.2 Audit preparation

Following signing of the contract, the Lead auditor / Auditor prepares for the audit based on the questionnaire filled in by the customer and the calculation sheet, and discusses and agrees the further procedure with the organization to be audited.

During preparation for the surveillance or recertification audit, the organizations to be audited have the duty to report fundamental changes in their organizational structure or changes in procedure to the certification body.

1.3 Documentation Review (Optional)

A desktop or off location review of the management system documentation of the organization might be also offered in the certification proposal. A written report of the documentation review will be submitted by INAT-MSC to the Client.

1.4 Stage 1 Audit

The Stage 1 audit is conducted in order to audit the management system documentation of the customer, assess the site and site-specific conditions of the customer and hold discussions with the personnel of the organization in order to determine the degree of preparedness for the Stage 2 audit, review of the client's management system documentation (The client shall submit the documents at least 2 weeks before the stage 1 audit.), evaluation of the location and site specific conditions, review of general understanding of the requirements of the standard, identification of processes and key performance parameters, review of the identification of statutory and regulatory

aspects, review of the necessary resource and time allocation for the stage 2 certification audit, confirmation of performance of internal audits and management review.

If nonconformities were identified in the stage 1 audit, these must be corrected by the customer before the stage 2 audit.

If at the end it cannot be established positively that the customer is ready for the Stage 2 Audit, the audit is broken off after the Stage 1 Audit.

The lead auditor is responsible for the coordination of the activities of the stage 1 audit and if necessary for coordination and cooperation of the auditors concerned amongst themselves.

1.5 Stage 2 Audit

The customer receives an audit plan at the beginning of the stage 2 audit. The plan is agreed with the customer in advance.

The audit begins with a start-up meeting, in which the participants are introduced to each other. The procedure to be followed in the audit is explained. Within the framework of the audit at the organization's premises, the auditors review and assess the effectiveness of the management system which has been installed. The basis for this is standard ISO 9001 or ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 respectively.

The task of the auditors is to compare the practical application of the management system with the documented processes and to assess them in relation to fulfilment of the requirements of the standard. This is achieved by means of questioning of the employees, examining the relevant documents, records, orders and guidelines and also by visiting relevant areas of the organization.

A final meeting takes place at the end of the on-site audit. At least those employees take part in the audit who have management functions within the organization and whose areas were included in the audit. The lead auditor reports on the individual elements and explains the positive and negative results. If nonconformities are established, the lead auditor can only recommend the organization for issue of the certificate after acceptance or verification of the corrective actions by the audit team. Attention must be drawn to this fact in the final meeting.

The audit is documented in the audit report (the documentation must be separate for stage 1 and stage 2 audits) and is completed by means of further records (e.g. audit questionnaire and handwritten records).

1.6 Issue of Certificate of Approval

The certificate of approval is issued when the certification procedure has been reviewed and released by the head of the certification body or his deputy or nominated representative. The person who reviews and releases the procedure may not have participated in the audit.

The certificate can only be issued when the nonconformities have been accepted or verified by the audit team. Normally the certificates are valid for 3 years.

2. Surveillance Audit

The certification requires periodic surveillance audits to determine whether the implemented management system remains in compliance with the standard identified in the certification. Surveillance audits are normally done on an annual basis during the period of validity of the certificate.

The date of the first surveillance audit following initial certification shall not be more than twelve (12) months from the last day of the stage 2 audit. Non-performance of surveillance visits at interval greater than 365 days results in Certificate of Approval losing its validity.

The client receives a report following the surveillance audit.

3. Recertification Audit

Recertification audits – including the review of corrective actions of identified nonconformities – have to be completed prior to the expiry of the certificate. The recertification shall consider a continuous certification.   In the recertification audit, a review of the documentation of the management system of the organization takes place and an on-site audit is conducted, whereby the results of the previous surveillance programme(s) over the period of the certification are to be taken into consideration. All requirements of the standard are audited. Activities related to the recertification audit may include a stage 1 audit if there are significant changes in the management system or in connection with the activities of the organization (e.g. changes to the law).

The audit methods used in the recertification audit correspond to those used in a stage 2 audit.

4. Special Audit

4.1 Extension audit

If it is intended to extend the scope of an existing certificate, this can be implemented by means of an extension audit. An extension audit can be conducted within the framework of a surveillance audit, a recertification audit or at a time which is set independently.

 The period of validity of a certificate does not change as a result. Exceptions must be justified in writing.

4.2 Short-notice announced audits

It may be necessary at short notice to investigate complaint, in response to changes or as follow up on suspended client. In such cases the certification body shall describe the conditions under which these short notice announced visits are to be conducted, it does not exist the possibility to raise against members of the audit team Objection.

5. Takeover of certificates of other certification bodies

In general, only certificates from accredited certification bodies can be taken over. Organizations with certificates which originate from non-accredited certification bodies are treated like new clients.

A "Pre-Transfer-Review" must be conducted by a competent person from the certification body which is taking over the certificate. This review generally consists of an examination of important documents and a visit to the client.

Certificates which have been suspended, or where there is risk of suspension, may not be taken over. Any nonconformities which have not been corrected should as far as practicable be clarified with the previous Certifier before the takeover. Otherwise they must be dealt with in the audit.

The further surveillance programme is based on the programme which has been in place up to the time of the takeover of the certificate.

6. Certification of multi-site organizations

If an organization which has several sites is certified to ISO 9001 or ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001, these sites must also be audited. Certification of organizations with several production sites/branch offices/locations etc. with similar types of activity and which operate under a single management system may be done alone by means of random sampling procedure.

7. Management of nonconformities

An analysis of the causes must be performed for each nonconformity and corresponding corrective actions must be implemented. The organization has the duty, depending on the seriousness of the nonconformity, to inform the audit team within 30 days either with regard to the corrective actions which have been laid down and the dates for their implementation or that the corrective actions have been implemented. If this period is not observed, the audit is considered not to be successful, i.e. not to be passed. No certificate can be issued, or an existing certificate is withdrawn.