



## TRUSTED MARK<sup>®</sup> SCHEME

### Trust 200 - Certification Process

In accordance with  
ISO/IEC 17065:2012

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## **Introduction**

This 'TRUSTED MARK' Scheme Certification Process details the various steps involved in the certification. A brief outline is as follows –

1. Qualification of Certifying Body (CB)
2. Client (Retail organization) submits its details and requests for quote
3. Client receives quote from various CBs and selects the CB by signing the contract
4. CB selects the auditor(s) for the audit and finalizes the exact audit date & methodology
5. CB carries out offsite review of data submitted by the client
6. IRF Trusted Mark secretariat submits Mystery Audit report
7. CB auditor(s) complete the onsite audit and issues NC, if any
8. Client takes the corrective action and submits the evidences.
9. Auditor closes the NC offsite or by onsite verification.
10. Auditor submits report to CB Certification Committee with a positive recommendation
11. CB Certification Committee reviews the audit report and evidences collected and takes certification decision
12. CB issues the client a single e-certificate/ paper certificate under intimation to IRF
13. IRF Trusted Mark secretariat uploads the certificate details on its website and provides Client with decorative certificates/ plaques for display in store/ banner and other marketing material
14. Surveillance / Surprise Audit

## **Key notes**

Each process activity is detailed with guidance templates.

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## 1. Qualification of CB

- a. The Certification Body shall be registered as a legal entity in India, or be a defined part of a legal entity, such that it can be held legally responsible for all its certification activities.
- b. It must be in operation as CB for at least 5 years. The CB shall be accredited to the national accreditation body (of the respective country) against ISO/IEC 17065. The accreditation body shall be IAF member.
- c. The certification body shall be responsible for and shall retain authority for its decisions relating to certification. This includes the granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, reducing, suspending and withdrawing of certification.
- d. The CB shall not offer any consultancy to any client. It may offer training on **'Trusted'** Scheme provided the training is generic and not client specific (which may be considered as consultancy).
- e. The certification body shall have the financial stability and resources required for the operation of the certification system.
- f. CB shall develop its certification system in compliance with ISO/IEC 17065. The CB shall be accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Certifying Bodies (NABCB) (IAF member) within 1 year of accreditation launched by the accreditation body. However CBs can start audit with provisional approval from IRF till the time they get accreditation from NABCB. In case there is delay in CB's accreditation by NABCB, certified client status will stay same.
- g. A list of all approved CBs shall be maintained by the IRF Trusted Mark secretariat and also posted on the website. The list shall be amended periodically on addition or deletion of any CB by the accreditation body.

## 2. RFQ from Client

Any client willing to apply for certification shall contact the IRF Trusted Mark secretariat and pay the required registration fee and the application form (Trust 201) duly filled. IRF Trusted Mark secretariat shall provide the list of approved CBs. The client can select CB(s) from the list of approved CBs and ask for RFQ. The client can submit RFQ to one or more selected bodies.

The information required by the CBs to produce quote does not include any confidential information.

### Star ranking –

- *The client may carry out its internal star ranking before inviting the CB.*
- *CB shall follow its own audit methodology and give rating. The final score for star ranking shall be based on the findings of the CB auditor.*
- *In case the client has multiple sites, the lowest ranking received in any of the sampled site shall be the star ranking for the client.*
- *There is a possibility that the star ranking given by CB and its internal ranking may not agree. The client may not decide for 60 days window to correct the deficiencies. CB shall then carry out a re-audit (at additional charge at prevalent rate). The star ranking given by CB during re-audit shall be final.*

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### 3. CB Contract Agreement

The selected CBs shall provide contract agreement to the client. CB may interact with the client representative for more client details. This may include visit to client location to understand the operations. Alternately, the client may ask the CBs for a presentation.

IRF has defined the standard audit man-day table, which details the audit time for specific client (Trust 202). The audit time may vary depending on the size / turnover of the client, number of locations, number of employees and complexity of business. The man-day table also addresses multi-site situation or situation where one site may support the other site e.g. central kitchen and restaurant front end or central stores and multi stores. The IRF Trusted Mark Secretariat has fixed Man Day rate at INR 15,000/- excluding travel, lodging, boarding and applicable taxes across CBs to avoid any competition based on rates.

Client hence selects the CB based on CB credentials, location logistics and his / her comfort with the CB.

The contract agreement shall be developed by respective CB, however it shall be compliant to ISO / IEC 17065 requirements. The agreement shall at the minimum, address confidentiality of information, indemnity, conflict resolution and contract termination.

The client may compare quotes and decide on a specific CB. Client shall sign the contract agreement provided by CB. Alternately, the client may issue Purchase Order / Work Order to CB. However, in such cases, the terms and conditions specified in the contract agreement shall be considered binding on both the parties (Client and CB).

Client may ask for quote to increase the scope of certificate or add more sites or recertification after expiry of the existing certificate. Trust 202 addresses such situations.

### 4. Audit finalization

Once the contract agreement is signed by both the parties (Client and CB), either party shall contact the other to decide upon the audit dates. Client shall inform the CB of the planned dates. The IRF Trusted Mark secretariat may decide to witness the audit at its own discretion. CB shall identify qualified auditor(s). Any audit carried out by a non-qualified auditor shall be considered NULL and VOID. Such situation shall be reviewed by the Trusted Board Certification Committee (CC). The Committee can take necessary action against the CB, which may include cancellation of the contract or deregistering the CB from the list of approved CBs.

### 5. Offsite Review (Document Review)

The client shall submit to CB, completed self-evaluation with supporting evidences.

The qualified CB auditor shall review the documents offsite and assess the adequacy of the system as well as preparation of the client. The auditor may issue NONCONFORMITY on any system requirements. Client shall have to close the NC prior to Onsite audit. The Onsite audit shall be completed within 90 days of Offsite audit. In case the onsite audit is not done during the period, offsite audit shall have to be done again on a chargeable basis.

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CB shall provide a formal audit detailing the review findings (covering all standards), NC if any and tentative audit plan for the onsite audit.

6. Mystery Audit

The mystery audit shall be conducted by the IRF Trusted Mark secretariat or its appointed auditor/s in the sample outlets every year.

The IRF Trusted Mark secretariat shall appoint mystery shoppers from its audit team or subcontractor. Care shall be taken to preferably use a local person (to avoid travel costs). Any competent member of its audit team or appointed subcontractor can act as a mystery shopper provided the report is submitted before GAP correction is recommended by the CB and / or during surprise audit and the client does not recognize the mystery shopper. The report of mystery audit will be submitted to CB within 15 days from the date of receiving intimation of CB finalisation from the retailer. The mystery audit fee calculations/ costs will be communicated to applicants after registration for the certification scheme.

The mystery shopper shall visit the client's business venue - offline or online, as applicable and carry out a purchase by ordering online or shopping or availing desired services in person. In case of restaurant, he shall eat at the restaurant. In case of fun zone or Cineplex, he shall play at the fun zone or enjoy the movie. In case of online he shall order online and in case of salon / spa / care he shall make prior booking / reservation before purchasing services.

The mystery shopper shall focus on efficiency and friendliness of staff, customer friendly initiatives, refund / returns / exchange policies and ease of business (entire cycle from entry to the shop to billing) and / or any other pre-defined activity. He shall report his findings in a template developed by respective CB.

The onsite auditor shall retain and produce suitably the purchased goods along with the bill. The bill and material shall also be the objective evidence of the mystery shopping and a copy of the bill shall be included in the report. In case of availed services as in case of restaurant, fun zone and Cineplex etc, it is not possible to retain and produce material evidence. In such case documents like booking confirmation slip, show ticket, F&B invoice etc can be retained and produced.

The onsite auditor shall issue NC or OFI (Opportunity for improvement) related to onsite audit and mystery audit. All such reporting of mystery audit will be submitted to CB as mentioned above for assessment.

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## 7. Onsite Audit

CB shall schedule the onsite audit in concurrence of the client. Onsite audit will be done only for those outlets, which are in operation for a minimum of 6 months period as on the audit day. The logistics shall be arranged for the auditors by the client / charged to the client at actuals. This may include travel, stay and food during the audit visit. In case of multisite audit, the audit team may be large and hence logistics shall be planned carefully.

The audit team shall have a team leader where more than 1 auditor are used e.g. a large client, multisite operations etc. The audit team must be involved in offsite audit for the client.

This shall ensure familiarization with the documentation. The audit team may include subject expert and / or translator, if required. Expert and translator shall be additional to the team i.e. they shall not be counted for man-days. In addition, the audit team may also include IRF and/or accreditation body observer.

The audit starts with an opening meeting for mutual introduction, finalizing the audit plan and explaining the audit process. CB may develop its own checklist to facilitate the audit.

Auditee shall cooperate with the auditor by making himself available, responding to all audit questions and providing evidences. Auditor shall cover all the processes and address all the criteria requirements. He shall record all findings (conformance and non-conformance). The audit shall be open and transparent with client debrief at the end of each day. The auditor shall verify regulatory compliances related to the specific site (outlet).

Regulatory compliances as referred in the standards (Trust 150) document are of following types –

1. **Mandatory essential compliances** which are required to operate an outlet / e-commerce business
2. **Product / service specific compliances** which will vary from segment to segment and format to format
3. **Location/Other requirements specific compliances** which will be location dependent

The first set of compliances is to be verified 100% during audit. The second and third sets will be format and location dependent respectively which will be verified on sampling basis.

If the client is found to be prosecuted / deviating from applicable compliance at any given time during the certification cycle, the certification shall be cancelled.

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The NC shall be classified as major NC if the client has failed to address any standard in totality. Closure of such NC may require onsite verification. The NC is considered minor, if the standard is fulfilled but stray (one off) case of noncompliance is observed. Such NC can be closed offsite (evidence like report, photographs etc.) and may not require onsite verification.

The audit shall end with a closing meeting. The auditor / team leader shall discuss the audit findings, clarify on any nonconformity (NC) and OFI (Opportunity for improvement) issued, discuss the corrective and preventive action and timelines and declare conclusion of the audit.

The conclusion can be

- ✓ A positive recommendation for certification if no NC are found
- ✓ A subjective positive recommendation for certification if few minor NCs are found. Client shall take necessary corrective actions and submit evidences to auditor / team leader. These NCs can be closed offsite and a re-visit is not required. Auditor can give positive recommendation only after closure of all NCs.
- ✓ A deferred recommendation if major NC is found. Major NC requires an onsite visit by the auditor to close the NC. Positive recommendation can be given only after closure of all NCs.

Client has 90 days to submit corrective action evidence to close the NC. In case the NC is not closed within 90 days, complete re-audit shall be required (as if the earlier audit is NULL and VOID).

A formal audit report shall be submitted to the client at the end of the audit (in paper format or email). The report shall be accepted by the client (by signing the report or by confirmatory mail). CBs can develop their own report template.

## 8. Corrective Action

At the end of the audit, the auditor / team leader submits the audit findings. Client may decide to accept or reject any or all OFI. Client shall record the decision taken on each OFI. In case the OFI is accepted, client shall record the action taken. In case the OFI is rejected, client shall record the justification / logic for rejecting the OFI.

Corrective action for every NC (Major or minor) is mandatory. Client shall understand the NC and identify the root cause. Client may decide to follow Why-Why or any other technique to identify the root cause. Client shall identify the correction (action taken to 'fix' the NC), corrective action (action taken to ensure that such situation does not recur) and preventive action (action to determine if similar situation may occur elsewhere).

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Client shall submit to the auditor / team leader, the root cause, correction, corrective action and preventive action planned. On acceptance of the auditor / team leader, client shall implement the action and submit evidence to the auditor / team leader.

9. Follow-up Audit

The auditor / team leader shall review the action plan for effectiveness and give his acceptance / observation. On receipt of evidences from the client, auditor / team leader shall determine if the verification requires onsite visit or the NC can be closed offsite. If offsite closure is possible (in case of minor NC), the auditor / team leader shall review the evidences and determine the effectiveness. If onsite verification is required, the follow-up visit is planned and auditor is selected.

A formal opening meeting may not be required but a closing meeting is required. The auditor shall discuss the findings, comment on evidences verified and effectiveness of the action and finally conclude the meeting with conclusion.

In case the action taken is not effective, CB may decide to keep the NC open and client shall take necessary action to close the NC. However, if the 90 days period (from the date of initial issue of NC) is over, a complete re-audit of client activities shall be planned.

10. Recommendation report to CB Certification Committee

The auditor / team leader shall submit complete report with positive recommendation and supporting evidences to the CB certification committee. CB may develop a review checklist to ensure systematic review of the report.

11. CB Certification Committee and its Certification decision on recommended report

CB shall form a Certification Committee with defined operating procedures. All members of the certification committee shall be qualified auditors. No person involved in the audit shall be involved in the review of the audit report and every report shall be reviewed by at least two members. The committee may use a technical expert as a support. The committee shall review the selection of the auditors, adequacy of audit time, completeness and effectiveness of the audit, quality of findings, effectiveness of corrective actions accepted by the auditor / team leader and any feedback received from the client. The committee may seek clarification on any particular point from the auditor / team leader and also from the client, if required.

The CB Certification committee may accept the recommendation of the auditor / team leader or may decide to reject the recommendation. Adequate reason shall be given to the auditor for rejecting the client. CB shall then decide on future action. This may include getting further clarification or evidence to be submitted to the certification committee; partial or complete audit. The final approval shall be by the CB certification committee.



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## 12. Certificate Issuance

CB shall issue the certificate to the client based on positive recommendation of the certification committee. The CB can design the certificate; however the certificate at the minimum shall include the name and location(s) of client, scope of certificate, unique certification number, issue date and expiry date. Issue date shall be the date the certification committee takes the final decision on issuance of certificate. Expiry date shall be 3 years from the date of issue. The certificate shall be signed by authorized signatory of the CB. The certificate shall also have the name and address of the certifying body.

For example,

Client signs contract with CB	01 Jan 2016	NC evidences submitted on	29 Mar 2016
Offsite audit done on	03 Mar 2016	NC closed by auditor on	03 Apr 2016
Onsite audit done on	17 Mar 2016	Certification committee approval	07 Apr 2016
Certificate issue date	07 Apr 2016	Expiry date of certificate	06 Apr 2019

Certifying body may upload the certificate details on its website.

## 13. Trusted Mark website upload

Post issuance of e-certificate/ paper certificate by the CB, the client shall clear the commercials (payment of management fees etc.) with IRF Trusted Mark secretariat. Client will receive required number of decorative certificates for display in stores along with IRF certificate kit including logo, marketing material and guidelines, memento etc. from IRF secretariat after making necessary payments/ fees etc.

IRF Trusted Mark secretariat shall upload the certificate details on its website and communicate to industry/ consumers through its magazine / newsletter / mass emails etc. Client may decide to organize a function at its own cost.

## 14. Surveillance / Surprise Audit

The certificate is valid for a period of 3 years. During this period, CB shall carry out yearly surveillance audit. CB shall conduct at least 2 surveillance audits (at the end of 12, and 24, months from the initial onsite date). In addition there shall be one surprise audit of randomly picked single store anytime during certification cycle.

### Audit schedule illustration

*If certification audit is done in Dec 2016 then first surveillance shall be done within 9 - 12 months (Sep – Dec 2017) and second surveillance within 21 – 24 months (Sep – Dec 2018).*

*Recertification shall be done before 36 months (Dec 2019).*

The surveillance audit shall be carried out onsite and shall include IRF mystery shopping and onsite audit as detailed above. The surveillance audit shall be a planned activity mutually agreed between the client and CB. The audit report shall be made by the auditor with recommendation for continuing certification. The report shall be submitted for review to

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the CB certification committee and committee decision recorded. In case of any major NC issued during the audit, the certificate shall be suspended till the NC is resolved. A minor NC shall not affect the continuation of certificate but client has to take necessary action to close the NC.

The CB shall inform the IRF Trusted Mark secretariat of the results of surveillance audit. In case of major NC, the secretariat may decide to initiate action against the client and may include removal of the client from the list of certified retailers on the website.

A client may decide to change the CB during the 3-year period. The client can enter into a new contract with new CB. Client may decide to transfer the contract for remaining certification period or may decide to enter into a contract for new certificate. In such cases, the new CB shall issue the certificate which, in addition to issue and expiry date shall also “Certified since...” date reflecting the initial certification.

CB may have to carry out special / surprise audits on the certified client for any of the following reason –

01. Scope change (addition, reduction or change)
02. Location change (addition, deletion or change)
03. Management change (ownership transfer etc.)

CB shall receive a request from the client requesting for a change in any of the above. CB shall review the situation and determine if offsite audit is required. An onsite audit and IRF mystery shopping may be carried out prior to issue of new certificate. The process followed shall follow the process defined above.

*Fluctuations in the rating during the certification cycle –*

- *During surveillance audit there is possibility that an outlet shows drop in star ranking. Such outlet will be allowed a window of 60 days to correct its ratings through re-audit. If score improves the earlier rating will be reinstated. If score does not improve then the outlet would have lower rating as per audit findings.*
- *The above window is available to the client provided number of lower rated outlets do not exceed threshold of 30%. If retailer receives multiple ranking, lowest 30% ranked outlets shall be re-audited.*

### **Key Notes:**

- Certification shall be for a retail brand and not for each store.
- The client shall give details of number of sites (> 6 mths in operation) for each format in Trust 201.
- Client shall conduct internal audit for each site under each format (100%) at least once a year. CB shall review the internal audit data during its audit.
- CB shall carry out sampling of sites using square root approach for each format.
- The sites audited during surveillance shall be new i.e. not audited earlier.
- The sites selected shall be spread over the geographical area on which the client operates.

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## **'Trusted' Certification Mark- Application & Audit Stages**

### **Registration with IRF Trusted Mark Secretariat**

Applicant to submit to **IRF Trusted Mark Secretariat**: Latest Business Profile (last 3 months old) and completed application form with Registration fee



### **Receive Notification**

Applicant to receive the followings –

1. Notification of acceptance of registration
2. List of Approved CBs
3. Standards requirement checklist for Self-evaluation
4. Notification of sample size and applicable fee for Mystery Audit (MA)



### **Mystery audit**

IRF Trusted Mark Secretariat begins the Mystery audit after receiving applicable fee from the applicant

### **CB finalisation**

- Applicant to finalise on CB for audit from the list of Approved CBs
- Submit Self-evaluated standards requirement checklist to the finalized CB



### **IRF Mystery audit report**

IRF Trusted Mark Secretariat to submit Mystery audit report to the finalized CB within 15 working days from the date of receiving intimation from applicant reg CB finalisation



### **e-audit by CB**

CB auditor to e-audit the declaration and the Self-evaluated standards checklist submitted by the Applicant and to finalise the dates for Site audit to suit mutual convenience



### **Site audit**

CB auditor/Expert to visit the site for verification of documents and conduct interviews with applicant's concerned staff



### **'GAP' correction**

CB to send its GAP report based on its Site audit and IRF Mystery audit with recommendation for corrective actions

Applicant to submit status on corrective actions within recommended timeframe



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### **Completion of CB audit**

If all corrective actions are satisfactory, the CB Audit is completed. CB to issue e-certificate to the certified retailer on receipt of their audit and certification fee. CB will inform IRF Trusted Mark Secretariat who will send demand for required fee payable and draft of the 'Trusted' Mark Usage Agreement to the applicant



### **Administration process**

Applicant to inform to IRF Trusted Mark Secretariat - number of certificate copies required (decorative plaques for display at all outlets) - Applicant to make Full Term Management Fee + Yearly Fee + other applicable fee payment to IRF Secretariat.

'Trusted' Mark Usage Agreement to be signed

**Certified Applicant to receive 'Trusted' Certificate/s and Welcome Kit**

Note:

- The application will be considered Null & Void if complete set of required audit items as per the checklist are not submitted/ presented to chosen CB within 6 months from the date of CB finalisation
- From the date applicant enters into audit stage through submission of all required audit items, it will take around 3-4 months to complete the audit in order for retailer to be certified – subject to no major discrepancies.
- The scheme owner is free to change the sequence of audit stages to suit audit requirements

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