

## MUSCAT QUALITY SERVICES SPC

### IMPARTIALITY/NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

#### 1. Introduction

Muscat Quality Services SPC impartiality policy is according to the fundamentals laid down in ISO/PAS 17001:2005, Requirements and principles of conformity assessment (impartiality): adherence to conflict-of-interest issues (identify, avoid, mitigate, and manage perceived and actual conflicts of interest), balance, detachment, disclosure, independence, neutrality, and objectivity.

#### 2. Purpose

This policy aims to identify the possible risks to Muscat Quality Services SPC impartiality (correlated to the products evaluation and certification process) and elucidate the suitable methods followed to minimize and eliminate it.

#### 3. Scope:

This policy applies to:

- a) Inspection and certification processes for products, services, and management systems.
- b) All personnel, subcontractors, consultants, and external entities associated with Muscat Quality Services SPC.
- c) Marketing, operational, and decision-making processes impacting impartiality.

#### 4. General

Muscat Quality Services SPC shall proceed all certificates applications taking in consideration the following: self-reliance, liberty from conflict of interests, freedom from prejudice, fairness, objectivity, neutrality, equity, righteousness, equivalence, evenness, freedom from collusion and complicity, freedom from fanaticism and favoritism, and Sapience. In addition, all certification body representative (personnel, institution, or influence) who may affect the certification process shall act impartially.

#### 5. Obligation to impartiality.

All certification personnel shall sign an impartiality declaration that include a dedication to evaluate product with impartiality.

Muscat Quality Services SPC Organization shall commit to maintain impartiality while evaluate or study the products. The certification personnel shall process any request with impartiality, extreme responsibility, and systematic way to fulfil its duties, following the

standardized policies and procedures stipulated in this manual or its correlated appendix. Muscat Quality Services SPC as a certification service organization shall provide its service with impartiality.

## **6. Factors affecting compromising impartiality:**

Muscat Quality Services SPC shall be fully responsible of its certification approach and shall not compromise its impartiality by any internal or external factors which may include the commercial influence, financial greed, or any other factors.

## **7. Organizational risk associated controls**

The impartiality of Muscat Quality Services SPC accredited certification procedures and programs should be secured against any action or interaction (relationship) of the organization or personnel involved in providing the certification service which encompass members of committees engaged with certification process related activity.

Muscat Quality Services SPC and any party of the same legal entity and entities fallen under its organizational regulation shall not:

- a) be the designer, manufacturer, installer, distributor, or maintainer of the studied, evaluated and certified product.
- b) be the designer, implementer, operator, or maintainer of the studied, evaluated and certified product.
- c) be the designer, implementer, provider, or maintainer of the studied, evaluated and certified product.
- d) Propound or deliver consultancy to its customers.
- e) propound or deliver management system consultancy or internal auditing to its customers

Where the certification strategy requires the evaluation of the customer management system.

The certification body's (personnel or organization) organizational control shall not restrain the following:

- a) information exchange (Discussing findings, explaining requirements and providing sample form) between the organization and its clients
- b) the use, installation and maintaining of evaluated and certified products which are essential for the operations of the certification process.

## **8. Consultancy:**

Muscat Quality Services SPC does not provide consultancy services to its clients or own interests in consultancy firms.

Subcontractors are required to adhere to the same impartiality standards, with annual reviews of compliance.

Evaluation individuals offering Consultancy Internal or external personnel shall not be used to evaluate or make a certification decision for any Muscat Quality Services SPC certification activity for a product for which they have provided consultancy for less than one year period. Muscat Quality Services SPC shall retain annually update the Conflict-of-Interest Survey for all individuals engaged in certification process to recognize prospective risks to impartiality.

## **9. Subcontractor Compliance:**

External employee Engaged in Certification procedures:

Muscat Quality Services SPC shall have a legally binding agreement with any entity that offer the subcontracted service involved with the certification procedures.

The contract shall include provisions requiring compliance with all confidentiality and conflict of interest policies of the certification body (personnel and organization).

The contract shall oblige the contractor to reveal any situation known to them that may present them or Muscat Quality Services SPC with a conflict of interest.

## **10. Relationship with separate entities (Contractors):**

Muscat Quality Services SPC shall assure that procedures followed by any separate legal entity, which it or the legal entity of which it formed a part have relationships, is not compromising the impartiality of its certification programs. The Committee obliged to review the possible impact of separate entities regarding to risk assassinated with its impartiality and maintaining counter to risk to impartiality during the risk evaluation process regarding outsourced and subcontractors.

### **10.1. Activities of Separate Legal Entities**

The Impartiality Committee are obliged to review regularly Muscat Quality Services SPC activities as a certification organization and relationships to other legal entities.

a) When the separate legal entity proposes or produces a product certified under Muscat Quality Services SPC programs or proposals or provides consultancy, the certification body's management individuals and personnel in reviewing and the process of making the certification decision shall not be involved in the programs, action, and activity of the separate legal entity.

b) management of Muscat Quality Services SPC as a certification body shall not include any employees from the separate legal entity work frame, separate legal entity personnel shall not be involved in the review or the decision-making activities of certification programs.

## **11. Marketing and promotions Related to Certification Programs:**

Muscat Quality Services SPC shall not claim or indicate that certification process would be smoother, effortless, without complications, without obstacles, quicker, or cheaper if a specified consultancy organization were used (indirect marketing).

## **12. Impartiality Management Constant Risk Evaluation:**

Muscat Quality Services SPC shall identify risks to its impartiality on a constant basis. This shall contain those risks that emerge from its certification activities, from its relationships, or from the relationships of its employees. Muscat Quality Services SPC shall review relationships that may be grounded by contracts, finances, governance, management, marketing (including promotions & branding), ownership, individuals, joint resources, and payment of a sales commission or other incentive for the referral of new clients as part of constant risk assessment efforts. Muscat Quality Services SPC shall conduct evaluations of risks to impartiality in a constant manner by ways of the following:

- a) Risk analysis to impartiality form and its review (annually) on Management Reviews or organization meetings.
- b) supervisors or colleague reviews of certification processes
- c) Prior to or within close range of expiration of subcontractor agreements (renewal evaluation)
- d) Prior to agreements renewal (annually) with approved testing laboratories or any separate legal entity
- e) Internal and external assessments.

Muscat Quality Services SPC shall express the result of those test directly and clearly to the Commission.

## **13. Non-Discriminatory Conditions**

The policies and procedures under which Muscat Quality Services SPC operates, and the administration of them, are non-discriminatory. Procedures are not used to impede or inhibit access by applicants, other than as provided for in this International Standard.

Muscat Quality Services SPC has made its services accessible to all applicants whose activities fall within the scope of its operations.

Access to the certification process is not be conditional upon the size of the client or membership of any association or group, nor the certification is conditional upon the number of certifications already issued. There is no undue financial or other conditions.

Muscat Quality Services SPC has confined its requirements, evaluation, review, decision and surveillance (if any) to those matters specifically related to the scope of certification.

## 14. Mechanisms to Safeguard Impartiality:

MQS have a mechanism as (MQS-ICM) for safeguarding its impartiality. The mechanism provides input on the following:

- a) The policies and principles relating to the impartiality of its certification activities;
- b) Any tendency on the part of MQS to allow commercial or other considerations to prevent the consistent impartial provision of certification activities;
- c) Matters affecting impartiality and confidence in certification, including openness.

The mechanism is formally documented to ensure the following:

- a) A balanced representation of significantly interested parties, such that no single interest predominates (internal or external personnel of MQS are considered to be a single interest, and shall not predominate);
- b) Access to all the information necessary to enable it to fulfil all its functions.

Where the top management of MQS does not follow the input of this mechanism, the mechanism is having the right to take independent action (e.g. informing authorities, accreditation bodies, stakeholders). Through terms of reference its ensured that, In taking appropriate action, the confidentiality requirements of clause 4.5 of this manual relating to the client and MQS are respected.

Input that is in conflict with the operating procedures of MQS or other mandatory requirements is not followed. Management documents the reasoning behind the decision to not follow the input and maintains the document for review by appropriate personnel.

As every interest cannot be represented in the mechanism, MQS identifies and invites significantly interested parties.

Impartiality risk investigation shall be performed annually and documented by Muscat Quality Services SPC impartiality commission. The commission shall follow several methods of assessment to safeguard

Organization impartiality. Investigation methods may be as followed: FMEA (failure modes and effects analysis), FMEA (Failure Mode Event Analysis), FTA (Fault Tree Analysis). All risks by virtue of Muscat Quality Services SPC policies, procedure, programs, actions, relationship with other parties of any separate legal entity or any representative individuals shall be assessing. Furthermore, the assessment shall include risks derived from business decisions and approach, marketing strategies, financial deliberation.

All objections correlated to impartiality or conflict of interest for Muscat Quality Services SPC certification programs shall be presented to Muscat Quality Services SPC Impartiality Committee for review and resolve accordingly with the Complaint Policy.

## 15. Risk assessment

**Risk evaluations shall be performed frequently by Muscat Quality Services SPC Impartiality Committee (management board ) as restricted by Muscat Quality Services SPC Impartiality work .**

### 15.1. Detection and limitation of impartiality risks (4.2.4)

Any risk to impartiality identified by the Muscat Quality Services SPC Impartiality Committee (management) shall be recorded. The management shall set up a plan for risk elimination or limitation that shall be implemented according to the recommended schedule and procedures. The outcomes of risk assessment shall be provided to Muscat Quality Services SPC administration team which shall be used as database for Management Review process.

### 15.2. Reporting Assessments and procedures of the Committee shall be recorded as required in the Muscat Quality Services SPC Impartiality work manual

## 16. Response and Solutions to Risks to Impartiality:

Whenever a risk to impartiality is detected regardless its source (Muscat Quality Services SPC personnel, program, action, procedures representative, actions, separate legal entities). Muscat Quality Services SPC impartiality team (management) shall act to eliminate or minimize the risk. The detected risk and followed actions must be documented and the information must be shared with Muscat Quality Services SPC Impartiality Committee (management team).

## 17. Disciplinary Measures:

Violations of the impartiality policy will result in disciplinary actions, ranging from warnings to removal from duties.

Persistent non-compliance may lead to termination of contracts or employment.

## 18. Public Statement:

Muscat Quality Services SPC reaffirms its commitment to impartiality, transparency, and non-discrimination in all inspection and certification activities. Leadership ensures that policies are implemented effectively, and stakeholders' trust is upheld.

On behalf of Muscat Quality Services SPC



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