



THE GLOBAL STANDARD
FOR LIVESTOCK DATA

Section 8 Guidelines for ICAR Certificate of Quality

Section 8 – Certificate of Quality

DRAFT for Consideration by ICAR Board

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Change Summary

Date of Change	Nature of Change
April 2018	First draft put into standard template for ICAR Guidelines. Scope figure added. Definitions and terminology moved to front of document.
June 2018	Edits from CoQ-EAG incorporated. Links to other parts of ICAR website added. Template changes – file name and figure layout, incorporated.

1 Introduction

1.1 Preamble

The ICAR Certificate of Quality programme was established by the 2006 ICAR General Assembly. It replaced the earlier use of the permanent ICAR Special Stamp, which became invalid by 2009.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the ICAR certificate of quality is to support ICAR member organisations in maintaining a high quality of service in those fields of activity that ICAR has guidelines for or are otherwise within the scope of the work of ICAR, and to ensure continuous improvement in service quality.

1.3 Benefits

The benefits of the ICAR Certificate of Quality to member organisations include:

- a. A unique mark that identifies product and service quality for customers which meets or exceeds the published ICAR guidelines
- b. A marketing tool for organisations which will identify their conformance with internationally recognised standards
- c. A time-sensitive approval period which will ensure to customers that the service provider has routinely met the ICAR criteria thereby providing enhanced confidence in the quality of service or product received.
- d. A mark of the demonstrated leadership of ICAR in the international marketplace through the provision of value-added services for its members.
- e. An advisory review carried out by independent experts.

2 Definitions and Terminology

Table 1 contains a list of important definitions for terms and abbreviations used in these guidelines.

Table 1. Definitions of terms used in these guidelines.

Term	Definition
Applicant	The ICAR member organisation that requests certification for services available on the market.
Audit	An external survey of the work of the applicant.
Auditor	The external specialist who surveys the work of the applicant.
CoQ	ICAR Certificate of Quality.
Consultative review (CR)	A review made on paper 30 months after certification.
Expert advisory group (EAG)	The group who develops and runs the Certificate of Quality programme.
Field of activity (FoA)	Business area for which ICAR certification is available.
Key performance indicator (KPI)	A measurable value that demonstrates how effectively an organisation is achieving key service quality objectives.

Term	Definition
Standard operating procedure (SOP)	A set of step-by-step instructions compiled by the organisation to help workers and customers carry out complex routine operations.

3 Scope

Figure 1 gives a pictorial summary of the main elements of this guideline.

In summary, section 8 of the ICAR Guidelines covers the procedures from the submission of the application by a member through to the awarding of the ICAR Certificate of Quality.

Figure 1. The scope of this Guideline



4 The expert advisory group

The ICAR Chief executive appoints a chairperson and members to the Expert advisory group on the ICAR Certificate of quality. The objectives of the CoQ EAG are to provide advice and recommendations to the ICAR Chief executive on:

4.1 The content of the CoQ programme

- a. Fields of Activity (FoA) to be audited
- b. Content and relevance of the Questionnaires
- c. Questions and criteria in the Questionnaires
- d. Key performance indicators (KPI) for each FoA
- e. Methods of evaluation for each FoA
- f. Rules for the CoQ programme

4.2 The Management of the CoQ programme

- a. Quality Management of the CoQ programme
- b. Auditor recruitment, evaluation, and training
- c. Assigning of auditors to events
- d. Post-Audit/Review surveys and other relevant surveys
- e. Ownership of the relevant SOP's and Section 8 of the Guidelines
- f. Provide critical input into other sections of the Guidelines and the Guidelines in general
- g. Liaise with Chairpersons of WG's and SC's as necessary
- h. Liaise with Technical Advisor CoQ and Secretariat as necessary.

The expert advisory group communicates with the ICAR Board:

- a. Annual report of the CoQ EAG Chairperson to the Chief Executive who will report to the ICAR Board.
- b. The ICAR Staff support person as identified from time to time by the ICAR Chief Executive. All communications with the EAG are to be copied to this person.
- c. Participation by the Chairperson in meetings with the Chief Executive, at least once per year.

4.3 Questionnaires and evaluation grounds

Audit and consultative review questionnaires are designed and updated by the Certificate of Quality Expert Advisory Group. The group is also responsible for creating key performance indicators for each field of activity, and for keeping the evaluation grounds unified.

5 The fields of activity available for certification

The fields of activity available for certification are determined by the EAG and updated in this Guideline whenever there are changes.

Certification is possible in at least the following fields of activity:

1. Animal identification (cattle)
2. Animal identification (other species)
3. Milk recording (cattle)
4. Beef recording (cattle)
5. Milk recording (other species)
6. Meat recording (other species)
7. Production recording (other traits)
8. Herdbook recording
9. Conformation recording
10. Data processing
11. Laboratory analysis (milk)
12. Reference laboratory (milk)
13. Laboratory analysis (DNA)
14. Genetic evaluation (dairy cattle)
15. Genetic evaluation (beef cattle)
16. Genetic evaluation (other species)

These fields of activity are applicable to cattle and other relevant farm animals such as buffaloes, goats, sheep and camelids.

Should a member, or organisation, require consideration for an ICAR Certificate of Quality for an activity which is not listed above, the application should be made to the ICAR Secretariat.

6 Certification requests

Any ICAR member can request certification by application to the ICAR Secretariat. The member decides which fields of activity they want to certify and states those fields of activity in the application, keeping in mind that activities performed outside the member organisation, or not practiced at the time of certification cannot be certified. The application forms are found in the appendix to this Guideline.

7 Audit procedure

7.1 Reminder

The ICAR Secretariat sends a reminder to any member holding a valid certificate 6 months before the expiry of the old certificate. The applicant may also apply without waiting for the reminder.

7.2 Application and prepayment

It is advisable that members apply for certification 6 months before the desired approval date. The application is sent to the ICAR Secretariat for further action. The application has to specify which fields of activity the applicant wishes to have audited and certified. The payment of the administration fixed fee should follow immediately. The price list is available [here](#) on the ICAR website.

As a response to these steps, the ICAR Secretariat will provide the applicant with the relevant questionnaires (see [here](#) for examples) and the EAG chairperson will name of the auditor within two weeks of the application. The auditor must be chosen so that he/she is in no way dependent of the organisation audited or of its direct competitors.

7.3 Scheduling

After application, the applicant together with the appointed auditor and the EAG chairperson will agree on the audit schedule. It has to include a date when the questionnaires are due plus allow a four-week clarification phase between that date and the visit. It will also include the dates for the visit. If the applicant fails to deliver the questionnaire at the appointed time and the visit is delayed, a rescheduling fee will have to be paid by the applicant.

ICAR Board meeting schedules should also be consulted at this phase to see when it is possible to receive the final approval for certification.

7.4 Internal audit

The applicant will then conduct an internal audit and fill in the relevant questionnaires. The applicants should not to minimal with their answers to the questionnaire but they should provide statistics, procedures and other information that will make the answers more understandable. The questionnaire will be returned to the EAG chairperson and to the auditor for inspection by the appointed date. All materials related to the audit given to the EAG chairperson, the ICAR Secretariat and the auditor are treated as confidential and not distributed further.

7.5 Clarification phase

The auditor is then allowed two weeks to get acquainted with the documentation and ask for additional clarifications. The applicant has to answer the auditor's questions within two weeks after receiving them.

7.6 Auditor's visit

After the clarification period, the auditor will visit the applicant. The auditor must be shown all relevant activities in practice. If there is a number of local organisations participating in the application, the number of visited organisations is the square root of the total number of organisations. The applicant will cover all local expenses of the auditor (meals and accommodation). Apart from that, the ICAR Secretariat will charge the applicant a fixed travel cost. The auditor purchases his/her own tickets and sends a bill to the ICAR Secretariat to recover the money.

7.7 Final payment

After the visit the ICAR Secretariat will send the bill for the final payment. The final payment is due immediately. The current price list can be found [here](#) on the ICAR website.

7.8 Auditor's report

The auditor has to finish his/her report within two weeks after the visit and to deliver it to the ICAR Secretariat for ICAR Board approval. The ICAR Secretariat will also send the report to the applicant after ICAR Board decision. The auditor is not allowed to give the report directly to the applicant, but he/she can and should of course summarise his/her findings and demands to the applicant in a final wrap-up meeting before departing.

In his/her report, the auditor may:

- a. consider the application failed, specifying the reasons why a certificate cannot be granted
- b. demand changes before granting the certificate
- c. recommend granting the certificate but set a condition about changes before the next consultative review or audit
- d. give advice
- e. just recommend granting the certificate

7.9 Evaluation survey

After the report is finalised, the EAG Chairperson will send a link to the audit evaluation survey to both the auditor and the applicant.

7.10 Auditor remuneration

The auditor shall send a bill for his/her services to the ICAR Secretariat after finalising the Audit report according to the price list given by the ICAR Secretariat. Travel costs are returned according to actual bills.

7.11 Board approval

After receiving the Auditor's report, the ICAR Board will approve or fail the candidate's application in its next meeting.

7.12 Certificate delivery

The Certificate can be delivered immediately after ICAR Board approval. The usual practice is to do that at the next ICAR General Assembly.

8 Consultative review procedure

A consultative review is due 30 months after a certificate has been granted. Its purpose is to consult the changes made during the certification period. The consultative review process is largely similar to the audit process above, with a few changes.

8.1 Reminder

The ICAR Secretariat sends a reminder to any member holding a valid certificate 24 months after granting a certificate. The applicant may also apply for the consultative review without waiting for the reminder.

8.2 Application and prepayment

The member applies for the consultative review upon receiving the reminder. The application has to specify which fields of activity the member wants to continue holding a certificate for. New fields of activity cannot routinely be added at the Consultative Review phase. The payment of the administration fixed fee should follow immediately. The current price list can be found [here](#) on the ICAR website.

As a response to these steps, the ICAR Secretariat will provide the applicant with the relevant questionnaires (see [here](#) for examples) and the EAG Chairperson will name the auditor within two weeks of the application.

8.3 Scheduling

After application, the applicant together with the appointed auditor and the ICAR Secretariat will agree on the consultative review schedule. It has to include a date when the questionnaires are due plus allow a four-week clarification phase before writing the Auditor's report.

8.4 Questionnaire

The applicant will then fill in the relevant questionnaires. They are advised not to be minimal with their answers but to provide statistics, procedures and other information that will make the answers more understandable. The questionnaire will be returned to the auditor for inspection by the appointed date.

8.5 Clarification phase

The auditor is then allowed two weeks to get acquainted with the documentation and ask for additional clarifications. The applicant has to answer the auditor's questions within two weeks after receiving them.

8.6 Final payment

The final payment for the audit is due immediately after the clarification period. The ICAR Secretariat will send the bill. The price list is maintained at the ICAR website.

After the clarification period the ICAR Secretariat will send the bill for the final payment. The final payment is due immediately. The current price list can be found at the ICAR website.

8.7 Auditor's report

The auditor has to finish his/her report within two weeks after the clarification period and to deliver it to the ICAR Secretariat for approval. The ICAR Secretariat will also send the report to the applicant together with a letter of approval or disapproval.

In his/her report, the auditor may

- a. consider the application failed, specifying the reasons why a certificate cannot be granted
- b. demand changes before granting the certificate
- c. recommend granting the certificate but set a condition about changes before the next audit
- d. give advice
- e. just recommend granting the certificate

8.8 Evaluation survey

After the report is finalised, the EAG Chairperson will send a link to the audit evaluation survey to both the auditor and the applicant. They will thus have the opportunity to rate and give feedback on several aspects of the audit.

8.9 Auditor remuneration

The auditor shall send a bill for his/her services to the ICAR Secretariat after finalising the Audit report according to the price list given by the ICAR Secretariat.

9 Appendices

Forms, questionnaires, auditor report templates and fees are all available [here](#) on the ICAR website.