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Title: <b>Policy on Impartiality and Confidentiality</b>		Copy No: Page 1 of 5	Rev No: 6 Effective date: 03 <sup>rd</sup> April 2025

## 1. Introduction:


This policy defines how ECAE CD manages impartiality and confidentiality when undertaking management system and product certification activities.

## 2. Impartiality:

- 2.1 ECAE CD's management is committed to ensure that the operations of all certification activities are undertaken in an impartial and unbiased manner.
- 2.2 All personnel, either internal or external or committees thereof, who could influence any certification process, are obliged to act impartially and shall not allow commercial, financial or other pressures that would compromise their impartiality in any way.
- 2.3 All personnel and members of committees involved in any of the certification activities shall be required to sign the OF/CD/2.19 Confidentiality and Impartiality agreement.
- 2.4 All auditors shall be required to sign the OF/CD/2.7 The code of conduct for auditors and technical experts.
- 2.5 Certification services are provided in such a way that activities and relationships do not cause any possible conflict of interest. However, if any relationship creates a threat to impartiality, ECAE CD documents and demonstrates how to mitigate such threats and the relevant information will be available for those concerned through the risk register OF/CD/1.15.
- 2.6 The top management of ECAE is committed and takes measures so that if a relationship of a person or employee involved in the certification activity with the organization to be audited is found to pose a threat to impartiality and is to the extent to which impartiality could be compromised, then the Certification Body shall immediately cease the involvement of that particular person or employee in any certification activity of the organization to be audited.
- 2.7 ECAE CD shall not provide management system consultancy to any of its potential or certified clients. The Top Management of ECAE is committed to respect and support the independent operation of the ECAE CD and if any relationship (internal or external) that poses an unacceptable threat to impartiality exists, and then certification service shall not be provided.

## 3.0 Committee for Safe guarding impartiality: (CSI)

- 3.1 ECAE CD has set up a committee for safeguarding impartiality whose Terms of Reference are as follows:
  - 3.1.2 Ensuring that the certification service provided by the ECAE CD is impartial
  - 3.1.3 Ensuring that corrective actions are taken on matters relating to impartiality during the certification processes.
  - 3.1.4 Advising ECAE CD on issues related with the principles and regulations of certification and also on matters affecting confidence on certification including openness and public perception.
  - 3.1.5 Ensuring that the impartiality and the independence of the ECAE CD is safeguarded and that the certifications are carried out according to the defined requirements
  - 3.1.6 Assisting the ECAE CD in the development of policies relating to impartiality of its activities.


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Title: <b>Policy on Impartiality and Confidentiality</b>		Copy No: Page 2 of 5	Rev No: 6 Effective date: 03 <sup>rd</sup> April 2025

3.1.7 Directly notifying relevant governmental authorities whenever findings are not consistent with the impartiality policies and statements of the ECAE CD and the CB declines to take action as advised by the committee without a justifiable reason.


### **3.2 Appointment of Members**

- 3.2.1 The selection and appointment of the members of the CSI of ECAE CD is carried out by the Director, Certification from the interested groups based on relevance and significance to ECAE activities and so that no individual interests dominate.
- 3.2.2 The number of members of the Committee for safeguarding impartiality is at least six. The members of the committee are represented from the relevant Ministries, Professional associations, chamber of commerce, private industrial associations, certified clients, Consumers of products and services from certified clients. At least one member of the management of the ECAE CD is represented in the CSI. ECAE CD formally invites the above described institutions/ interested parties/ in letter to send their delegates /representative/ to be member of the CSI.
- 3.2.3 Members of the CSI should, as a matter of principle, not be active in the committees of other certification bodies. The management of the ECAE CD is to be informed of any double memberships.
- 3.2.4 The duration of participation of external members of the CSI is initially for a period of 2 years and can be correspondingly extended.
- 3.2.5 The chairman of the CSI is elected by open voting from the circle of members of the CSI for a period of two years during an ordinary meeting. ECAE CD representative can neither vote nor be a chairman but may assume the role of a secretary. At the same time, deputy to the chairman must also be elected who acts on behalf of him in case of his absence.
- 3.2.6 The CSI shall hold at least two meetings per year according to the meeting schedule. If requested by a member(s) unscheduled meetings can be called.
- 3.2.7 Quorum for the meeting is achieved if at least half of the members are present. In case of equal votes, the chairman shall make the decision. The implementation of the resolutions is the responsibility of the management of the ECAE CD.
- 3.2.8 If, for any reason, the management of the ECAE CD cannot implement the resolution, a justification must be provided.
- 3.2.9 The CSI has the authority to take independent actions if the management of the ECAE CD does not accept the recommendation of the CSI. The independent actions include but not limited to the following:
- 3.2.9.1 Setting up an independent committee to clarify disputable /debatable circumstances that are created b/n the CSI and the ECAE CD on matters related to impartiality.
- 3.2.9.2 Directly notify the accreditation body if findings are not consistent with the impartiality policies and statements of the ECAE CD.

### **4.0 Confidentiality:**

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Title:	<b>Policy on Impartiality and Confidentiality</b>	Copy No: Page No: <b>Page 3 of 5</b>	Rev No: 6 Effective date: <b>03<sup>rd</sup> April 2025</b>


- 4.1 ECAE CD is committed to confidentiality and shall not disclose any information acquired regarding the client in all activities within the certification process. This includes any confidential information of the client e.g. business relations and trade secrets.
- 4.2 ECAE CD shall inform its clients in advance of any confidential information it intends to place in public media apart from that information that is required to be publicly accessible.
- 4.3 Information about the client from other sources other than the client shall be treated as confidential.e.g. Complaints.
- 4.4 All personnel, including committee members, technical experts, subcontracted/external bodies or individuals acting on behalf of the ECAE CD, shall keep confidential all information obtained or created during the certification activity.
- 4.5 All involved personnel (certification director, auditors, technical experts, trainees, certification decision committee members, etc.), involved in the certification activities and process, or acting on behalf of ECAE CD shall sign the impartiality and confidentiality agreement OF/CD/2.19.

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Title: <b>Policy on Impartiality and Confidentiality</b>		Page No: Page 4 of 5	Rev No: 6  Effective date: 03 <sup>rd</sup> April 2025

### Annex 1

Ser.no	Interested party	Needs and expectation
1	Boards of ECAE	Performance report on revenue in providing certification services, providing certification service impartially with competent personnel, so that the certification services to be accepted world wide /Accreditation/
2	Ministry of Trade and regional integration.	Fulfilling the legal requirements, and conducting the audit as per the international and regional standards, and performance reports on providing certification service.
3	Ethiopian Foods and drugs authority.	Addressing legal requirements of food and related products and drugs on certification provision activities, reports on certification activities, performance report on certification activities /if they required/.
4	Ethiopian consumers' protection association.	Provision of information on certified clients /if requested/
5	Ethiopian Environmental protection authority.	Addressing legal requirements regarding environmental protection from certification activities
6	Addis Ababa Environmental protection authority.	Addressing legal requirements regarding environmental protection from certification activities
7	Clients	Impartial, competent, accessible and consistent certification service.
8	Accreditation bodies	Fulfilling the requirements of applicable ISO/IEC requirements, IAF/MD requirements, other requirements of the accreditation bodies
9	Impartiality committee	Availing all required resources for its review and assessment of impartiality and being notified if there is any change. Information on openness and assignment of duties and responsibilities to the committee.
10	Auditors and certification personnel.	Availing all required resources for certification activities, and providing training and updating their knowledge and skill. Proper information on clients to be audited, incentives and motivation.
11	Community under area of certified client	Expect trusted certification services to be provided for clients and availing updated certified clients on publically applicable medium of communication.

<b>Author:</b> <u>Zewdu Tesfaye</u> Certification Team Leader	<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Approval:</b> <u>Amsalu Enyew</u> Certification Directorate	<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

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<p>Title:</p> <p><b>Policy on Impartiality and Confidentiality</b></p>		<p>Page No:  Page 5 of 5</p>	<p>Rev No: 6</p> <p>Effective date:  03<sup>rd</sup> April  2025</p>

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