

NUSTAR CERTIFICATION & INSPECTION PVT LTD.	
Document name	SOP for Safeguarding Impartiality
Document no	NCIPL /Impartiality/SOP/05
Issue Date	15/04/2024
Review schedule	Annual
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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

FOR

Safeguarding Impartiality

Approved by –
C E O

Prepared by-
Tech. Manager

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1.0 Purpose of the procedure:

To lay down documented guidelines for safeguarding impartiality in our assessment and certification processes.

2.0 Scope:

This procedure is applicable over all activities performed by the NCIPL, in matters related to assessment and certification of client's management system.

3.0 Responsibility:

CEO of NCIPL and members of the CSI are responsible for effective implementation of this procedure.

4.0 Authority:

This procedure is authorized by the CEO and can be amended only by him.

5.0 Procedure:

5.1 NCIPL has established a system to identify, analyze, evaluate, treat, monitor, and document the risks, arising out of any conflict of interest of its top management, auditors, certification decision makers, due to its relationship with any organization or business interest, or from the activities of other associated persons, bodies or organizations.

5.2 The system requires that the CEO shall review and document, at least once in every 6 months, all potential risks and threats to the impartiality of our assessment and certification process (Refer document SMR-1). However in case of any imminent threat or risk, the issue is identified and documented in record SMR-1, by the CEO, even before the scheduled time. The CEO interacts with subject experts and the risk/ threat is analyzed, evaluated and appropriate action is taken to neutralize or minimize the risk/ threat. Result of action and result is monitored and associated information is recorded in folder SMR-1.

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5.3 To ensure impartiality in its assessment and certification process, NCIPL has resolved and established a policy that it shall never establish any subsidiary or any joint venture or any business partnership that may pose an unacceptable threat to impartiality. It has further resolved to not accept applications for assessment & certification from organizations where its auditors or decision makers have any relationship of direct financial interest.

5.4 After taking action to neutralize or mitigate risk/ threat, the top management reviews, whether any residual risk falls within unacceptable or acceptable risk. If it falls within acceptable threat range, further action is not taken. Monitoring is done and as and when the risk escalates additional action is taken to eliminate the risk.

If even after taking action to contain/ eliminate the threat, it still poses unacceptable risk to our impartiality, the issue is discussed with the Impartiality committee and their advice is recorded in the minutes of the Impartiality committee (SMR-4). The CEO acts upon the recommendations of the impartiality committee.

6.0 Constitution of the Impartiality committee:

To oversee all issues related to impartiality and to ensure elimination of actual or perceived partiality, NCIPL has established a 5 member “Committee for safeguarding Impartiality” commonly called the Impartiality committee. The committee is not employee of NCIPL, and has supervisory authority over its assessment and certification process. Members of the Impartiality committee, are selected from the civil society and are not employee of the NCIPL. The CEO who is the Secretary/ convener of the committee and a nonvoting member, implements the decisions of the committee. Care is taken to ensure that no single group interest shall prevail over the decisions of the committee. Presently the members of the Impartiality committee represent following interests.

- a. clients of the certification body
- b. customers of organizations whose management system has been certified
- c. representative of Association of Industries
- d. Representatives of governmental/ Non Governmental organization.

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6.1 Required competence for appointment:

a. clients of the certification body

The certified organizations are asked to nominate an appropriate person to become a member of our impartiality committee. To become eligible for appointment, the nominated person -

- i. Should have minimum 5 years work experience in managerial position
- ii. Should have minimum Graduate level education.
- iii. Should have working knowledge of English
- iv. Should have understanding about the purpose and benefits of the audit and certification process.
- v. Should be ready to devote at least ½ day every month, as and when required

b. customers of organizations (whose management system has been certified)

The customers of the certified organizations are asked to nominate an appropriate person to become a member of our impartiality committee. To become eligible for appointment, the nominated person -

- i. Should have reputation in the society
- ii. Should have minimum Graduate level education.
- iii. Should have working knowledge of English
- iv. Should have understanding about the purpose and benefits of the audit and certification process.
- v. Should be ready to devote at least ½ day every month, as and when required

c. representative of Association of Industries

Different associations of industries/ Chambers of commerce are requested to nominate an appropriate person to become a member of our impartiality committee. To become eligible for appointment, the nominated person -

- i. Should be office bearer of any Industrial association registered with the Govt.
- ii. Should have minimum Graduate level education.
- iii. Should have working knowledge of English
- iv. Should have understanding about the purpose and benefits of the audit and certification process.

- vi. Should be ready to devote at least ½ day every month, as and when required

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d. Representatives of governmental/ Non Governmental organization.

Govt. /Semi Govt. organization or NGOs / Different associations of industries/ Chambers of commerce working in the field of promotion of industries interest, quality, promotion of business etc. are requested to nominate an appropriate person to become a member of our impartiality committee. To become eligible for appointment, the nominated person -

- i. Should be office bearer of managerial level.
- v. Should have minimum Graduate level education.
- vi. Should have working knowledge of English
- vii. Should have understanding about the purpose and benefits of the audit and certification process.
- ii. Should be ready to devote at least ½ day every month, as and when required

e. Consumer

Consumer forums / associations / Professional associations are requested to nominate an appropriate person to become a member of our impartiality committee. To become eligible for appointment, the nominated person -

- i. Should be office bearer of the organization at managerial level.
- ii. Should have minimum Graduate level education.
- iii. Should have working knowledge of English
- iv. Should have understanding about the purpose and benefits of the audit and certification process.
- v. Should be ready to devote at least ½ day every month, as and when required

6.2 Appointment & training:

The members nominated by the respective interest groups are appointed as members of the Impartiality committee by the CEO at least for one year. Their tenure may be extended for one or more years as per decision of the CEO. The CEO selects those candidates who have received endorsement (for representing their interest) from their respective organizations.

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After their acceptance to become member of the impartiality committee they are provided awareness & training about –

- a. the responsibilities and authority of the committee and its members
- b. our organizational staff, their competency, work experience, responsibilities, audit & certification process including the process of client application, application review & audit programming, audit process, report review and decision making process.
- c. Our Manuals, SOPs and provisions for ensuring impartiality, Internal audit , Appeal and complaint process etc.

Ref: Training record

6.3 Responsibilities:

i. To advise and help in development of policies and procedures in order to improve credibility and impartiality of the auditing and certification process.

ii. To investigate complaints/ appeal related to actual or suspected impartiality and to take appropriate corrective or preventive action.

iii. In case of suspected breach of impartiality the committee to order in writing to suspend the validity of the issued certificate, pending full investigation. The Impartiality committee to ensure full or partial re audit by some other auditor, and to ensure appropriate evidence based decision by the Technical committee about continuation, withdrawal, or reduction in scope of certificate is taken.

iv. To gather information from both internal and external sources to reveal any situation known to them that may present them or the certification body with a conflict of interests. To ensure that The certification body use this information as input for identifying threats to impartiality raised by the activities of such personnel or by the organizations that employ them.

v. To ensure that the certification body does not use personnel, either internal or external, whose background and professional activities cannot demonstrate that there is no conflict of interests.

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7.0 Terms of reference and rules of operation

- The Impartiality Committee meets at least once every 6 months and reviews assessment and certification processes. Those cases where bias is suspected, are investigated in detail. Appropriate action is taken to correct the situation and further management system improvement is done to prevent occurrence of such cases.
- Any member of the impartiality committee can call a meeting of the impartiality meeting even before 6 months, and call any document/ record for perusal by the committee.
- The committee can order revision and addition in Manuals, SOPs work process to eliminate chance of bias, if any.
- Minutes of the meeting of the impartiality committee is documented and maintained for at least 3 years.
- The Impartiality committee performs ombudsmen job, and credibility and reputation of the certification body depends on its performance.

Ref: Record of appointment of Impartiality committee members and its Head
Record of Meeting Schedule
Record of Minutes of meeting

7.1 Decision making process and authority: For any decision to become effective at least three out of 5 members should support the decision in writing. The CEO (Nonvoting) of NCIPL acts as Secretary / convener of the committee and implements decisions taken by the committee. The Impartiality committee members have full authority to ask for any record which might provide information about audit and certification process.

Ref: Record of MOM and decisions taken during the meeting

7.2 Benefits & Compensation: The Chairperson and members of the impartiality committee are not employees of NCIPL and as such are not paid any salary. However they

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are paid conveyance facility and food & refreshments whenever they come to attend meeting of the Impartiality committee.

8.0 **Ref:** ISO 17021-1:2015 standard requirements

RECORDS TO BE MAINTAINED

RETENTION PERIOD

RECORD OF CSI MEMBERS

3 YEARS

SCHEDULE OF MEETING

DO

RECORD OF MOM

DO

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