Remote Audits

Notes for our customers

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Background
Digitalisation is advancing rapidly in all sectors, and this also applies to certification. Here, one of the possibilities opened up by digitalisation is the use of remote audits.

The difference compared with a normal audit is that a remote audit does not require the physical presence of the auditor on site. This way of working is already employed in some cases, as it means that particular experts can be consulted in the audit, documents can be exchanged before the audit itself or evidence can be provided that a corrective action has been closed.

Remote audits also become particularly useful when auditing an organization with several sites and global networks.

In fact, there are many opportunities for the use of remote audits.

A remote audit can be used as part of the on-site audit. In this case, the auditor performs a part of the audit on site, and the rest takes place via interactive web-based communication.

A specialist on particular subjects can be consulted during the audit as a remote expert. The expert is then not physically present on site.

If documents are exchanged virtually during or before an audit, this is called remote evidence.

Best ways to use remote audits
It makes sense to use a remote audit if an organization has a large number of sites. It does not matter in which country these sites are. A remote audit means that it is no longer necessary to travel to the site itself, and this saves both time and travel costs.

The time needed for the audit varies according to the size of the audited organization. For example, if the time for an audit is set at 10 hours, 8 of the hours can be on site and 2 can take place via remote audit. This means that those taking part in the audit do not need to stay overnight or travel to the organization again on the second day (applies to both the certification body and the client).

If experts on specialist themes are required, as many as necessary can be involved by means of remote audit – without unnecessary additional costs. The quality of the audit does not suffer in any way.

How does a remote audit work in practice?
A remote audit does not differ significantly from a traditional on-site audit. The only difference is that a part of the time normally spent on site is replaced by interactive web-based communication. All those taking part in the audit are informed about the audit in advance as normal, so it is still possible to find out about technical aspects or prepare necessary documents beforehand.

The only important thing is that the auditor and the auditees make sure that the remote equipment is in good working condition for the audit and that they know how to use it.

If the necessary infrastructure is in place, remote audits can be organised and carried out conveniently and easily.

What technical facilities are needed?
In order to ensure good understanding on all sides during the remote audit, appropriate hardware (such as laptops/computers with Internet access, webcam, headsets, sound system, …) and also software (conference tools such as WebEx or Skype for Business) must be present.

Data security and confidentiality
All participants in the audit must be aware of the risks and opportunities associated with the use of interactive web-based communication. For example, a secure connection and careful use of the data are essential in connection with data and information security. The possibilities for use of remote audits are limited in the case of organizations with very high security constraints.

And the same is true for remote audits as for any other kind of audit: all data are treated confidentially. No video or audio of conversations are recorded during the audit. There is no third-party access to web-based communication.

Final note
The quality of an audit – whether on site or remote – primarily depends on those who take part.

We support you safely and securely along your chosen path based on digital and networked technology. Everywhere and at all times.

Remote Audits

Checklist for our customers

Are you ready for a remote audit?

It is easy to find out.

Available rooms

☐ Preferred: Is a quiet conference room available?   ☐ Alternative: Is a quiet office available?

Infrastructure

☐ Is there a stable internet connection?
Usual web browsers: Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer

☐ Preferred: wired connection   ☐ Alternative: Connection via WLAN

☐ Is a computer/laptop/tablet/whiteboard available for the connection?

☐ Is there a camera for video communication?

☐ Preferred: Is there a Conference Cam? (with at least 2 Megapixels)   ☐ Alternative: Webcam available?

☐ Is audio equipment available?

☐ Preferred: Audio conference system available?   ☐ Alternative: Headset with microphone available?

☐ Do all the people relevant to the audit have an email address?
The email address is required in order to invite the participants to the remote audit.

Software

☐ Preferred: Video conference software available?
(Cisco WebEx or Microsoft Skype for Business)

☐ Alternative: If no video conference software is available:
- for WebEx: low initial time for plug-in installation (without additional costs)
- for Skype for Business: Participation only possible with account (with associated costs)

Documentation

☐ Preferred: Are all the necessary documents available in digital form?

☐ Alternative: Is there a possibility of scanning in or photographing documents? (using Webcam e.g. along with: preinstalled "Camera" App)? Only necessary if hardcopy documents are present.