Third Edition – 2025

GAS.MCB-04:2025

Requirements for Auditing and Certification of Management Systems of Organizations with Multiple Facilities

Contents

0. FOREWORD

This document establishes additional GAS requirements for the certification of management systems of organizations with multiple sites (multisite organizations) and serves as a specialized supplement to GAS.MCB-01:2025 “Accreditation Criteria for Management System Certification Bodies.”

The document is designed to:

- ensure a consistent approach to the assessment of management systems of organizations with a central management function and two or more operational sites;
- harmonize auditing practices for multisite clients;
- improve the effectiveness and objectivity of the certification process through risk-based site selection (sampling);
- ensure confidence in the certification results issued by GAS-accredited bodies.

All basic requirements defined in GAS.MCB-01:2025 remain valid and fully applicable unless otherwise specified in this document. This document defines only additional provisions related to the certification of organizations with multiple sites (manufacturing, administrative, service, or other types of sites).

1. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This document establishes additional GAS requirements for management system certification bodies conducting audits and certification of organizations with multiple sites (multisite organizations).

The document applies in cases where:

- the organization has two or more sites carrying out operations within a single management system;
- there is a central management function that establishes, implements, maintains, and controls the management system across all sites;
- the management system applies to all sites, and processes are interrelated and centrally managed;
- the certification body conducts audits using a site selection (sampling) methodology in accordance with ISO/IEC 17021-1 requirements and relevant industry guidance documents.

This document applies to the certification of management systems, including (but not limited to):

- ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 45001, ISO 27001, ISO 50001, ISO 37001;
- integrated management systems;
- other management system standards where the declared scope covers multiple sites.

The document does not apply where individual sites have their own management systems that are not subject to the central management function or not covered by a unified certification program.

2. NORMATIVE AND REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

This section lists the international standards and internal GAS documents whose provisions are mandatory when certifying multisite organizations.

The documents listed are valid at the time of publication of this document. In case of their revision or replacement, the latest editions, including all amendments and updates, shall be used.

International standards:

- **ISO/IEC 17021-1:2023** Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirements;
- **ISO/IEC TS 17021-2…, -10** (as applicable to the respective management systems);
- **ISO 19011:2018** Guidelines for auditing management systems;
- **ISO 9000:2015** Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary.

Internal GAS documents:

- **GAS.MCB-01:2025** — Criteria for accreditation of management system certification bodies (baseline document applied together with this standard);
- **GAS.MCB-03:2025** — Additional GAS criteria for management system certification bodies in the aerospace and defense industry;
- **GAS.G-01:2025** — Code of ethics for GAS experts, assessors, and personnel;
- **GAS.G-02:2025** — Policy on the use of GAS accreditation marks and references;
- **GAS.G-03:2025** — Policy on conflict of interest and impartiality;
- **GAS.G-04:2025** — Procedure for appeals and complaints;
- **GAS.G-05:2025** — GAS policy on sustainable development and climate responsibility.

Note: Certification bodies are responsible for applying this document together with the GAS baseline requirements and international standards when evaluating multisite organizations.

3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

3.1 General provisions

The terms used in this document shall be interpreted in accordance with GAS.MCB-01:2025 “Criteria for Accreditation of Management System Certification Bodies,” as well as the international standards ISO 9000, ISO/IEC 17021-1, and ISO 19011.

3.2 Interpretation of specific terms

Multisite organization — an organization that has a head office (central function) and two or more separate sites where similar processes or functions are performed under a single management system.

Central function — the body, department, or office responsible for establishing, implementing, maintaining, and continually improving the management system applied to the entire multisite organization.

Site — a distinct location where processes covered by the organization's management system are carried out; a site may be permanent, temporary, or mobile.

Sampling — the process of determining the number of sites to be audited, based on a risk-based approach, type of activity, degree of autonomy, and complexity of operations.

Single management system — an integrated or unified management system coordinated by the central function and applied across all sites of the organization.

4. REQUIREMENTS

4.1 General provisions

The certification body shall ensure that certification of multisite organizations is carried out in accordance with:

- the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO 19011;
- the criteria of GAS.MCB-01:2025;
- the provisions of this document, which establish additional rules regarding planning, site selection, audit execution, and decision-making.

The objective is to confirm that the management system covers all sites, is centralized, controlled, and functions as a single entity.

4.2 Requirements for a centralized management system

An organization can be certified as multisite only if:

- there is a central management body responsible for the management system;
- policies, procedures, and processes are unified across all sites;
- the central body conducts internal audits and management reviews covering all sites;
- a single system for managing nonconformities, corrective, and preventive actions is maintained.

4.3 Determination of a representative sample of sites

The certification body shall:

- apply a risk-based approach when selecting sites for audit;
- determine the number of sites to be audited considering:
- differences in functions and processes;
- number of employees;
- complexity of operations;
- results of previous audits;
- geographical location;
- document the rationale for the sample selection.

Note: The central office must be audited at each audit.

4.4 Audit planning and execution

The certification body shall ensure:

- a coordinated audit plan covering the central body and selected sites;
- assessment of management system conformity at each selected site;
- verification of the effectiveness of centralized management;
- documentation of differences in operations among sites;
- surveillance audits with periodic rotation of sites in the sample.

4.5 Certification decision

The decision shall:

- be based on the combined results of audits of the central body and sampled sites;
- consider whether the management system functions as a single, controlled structure;
- allow for the denial of certification of the entire multisite if one or more sites have uncorrected critical nonconformities.

4.6 Traceability requirements

The certification body shall maintain:

- a complete register of multisite organization sites;
- records of site selection, risks, and rationales;
- audit results for each site;
- records of corrective actions;
- evidence that the certificate covers specifically defined sites.

4.7 Conditions for restricting or canceling the certification scope

The certification body may limit or cancel the scope of certification if:

- the existence of a centralized management system is not confirmed;
- the organization refuses to provide a full list of sites;
- sites have significantly different systems or procedures;
- critical nonconformities are found at individual sites affecting the entire system.

4.8 Surveillance audits in multisite certification schemes

The certification body shall ensure that surveillance of certified multisite organizations is conducted systematically, according to a risk-based approach, covering a sufficient number of sites to confirm the continued effectiveness of the management system.

The certification body shall:

- plan surveillance audits to ensure all sites included in the certificate are audited during the certification cycle;
- rotate sites in surveillance audits based on previous audit results, operational changes, and risk levels;
- confirm that the central management function continues to exercise control and maintain a unified management system;
- verify corrective actions at all sites where nonconformities were identified;
- adjust the frequency and depth of surveillance audits based on risk analysis, complaints, structural or operational changes.

Audit results shall be documented in a consolidated report demonstrating that the management system operates coherently at all levels.

4.9 Determination of site sampling (Sampling)

The certification body shall apply a risk-based approach to determine the number of sites to be audited under multisite certification, considering:

- the total number of sites (N);
- process complexity and criticality of products/services;
- results of previous audits;
- geographical location and legal requirements;
- level of centralization of management.

The minimum number of sites to be audited during initial audits, surveillance, and recertification shall be determined according to the Multisite Sampling Methodology (Annex A), which is an integral and mandatory part of this document.

5. FINAL PROVISIONS

5.1 This document is mandatory for management system certification bodies that perform or plan to perform certification of multisite organizations.

5.2 Compliance with the requirements of this document is monitored by the GAS Accreditation Agency during initial, surveillance, and recertification assessments of accredited bodies.

5.3 In the event of changes to international standards or GAS internal documents, certification bodies are required to ensure timely updates to their own procedures in accordance with the new requirements.

5.4 The current version of this document and all its annexes is published by the GAS Accreditation Agency on the official website (gas.international).

5.5. Decisions regarding the review, update, or withdrawal of this document are made by the GAS Accreditation Agency.

Annex A

METHODOLOGY FOR DETERMINING THE MULTISITE SAMPLE

(integral part of the document)

A.1 General provisions

This methodology establishes the rules for determining the minimum number of sites to be included in the audit sample during:

- initial certification audits;
- surveillance audits;
- recertification.

The methodology is based on the principles of risk orientation, representativeness, and traceability of the management system in multisite organizations.

A.2 Conditions for applying the sample

Sampling is allowed only if the following conditions are met:

1. The organization has a single management system controlled by the central function.
2. The central function exercises managerial control over all sites (policies, procedures, internal audits, management review).
3. All sites perform identical or interrelated processes within the single management system.
4. The certification body has confirmed the centralized management structure during the preliminary analysis.

If any of the above conditions are not met, certification is carried out without sampling, through a full audit of all sites.

A.3 Determination of sample size

A.3.1 Initial certification

The minimum number of sites to be audited is determined by the following formula:

$$n = \sqrt{N}$$

where:
***N** – total number of sites;*
***n** – number of sites to be audited (rounded up to the nearest whole number).*

The central management function is subject to mandatory audit regardless of the calculated result.

A.3.2 Surveillance audits

The minimum number of sites for surveillance is:

$$n = 0{,}6 \times \sqrt{N}$$

The selection of sites should be rotated annually so that all sites are covered during the certification cycle (usually 3 years).

A.3.3 Recertification

The minimum number of sites:

$$n = \sqrt{N}$$

Decisions on applying the sampling may be adjusted taking into account:

- results of surveillance audits;
- presence of critical nonconformities;
- changes in organizational structure or processes.

A.4 Adjustment factors (risk correction)

A risk coefficient may be applied to the basic formula:

Risk level	Description	Adjustment coefficient
Low	stable audit results, no complaints	0,8
Medium	minor nonconformities	1,0
High	major nonconformities, high-risk sectors	1,5

$$n = risk\ factor \times \sqrt{N}$$

A.5 Documentation of the Sampling

The certification body shall:

- provide justification for the sampling;
- document the process of selecting sites;
- confirm that the sample is representative and covers all types of activities, risks, and geographic regions.

A.6 Exceptions

A full audit of all sites shall be conducted in cases of:

- suspicion or confirmation of fraud or data falsification;
- significant changes in the management system;
- major nonconformities affecting the entire system;
- regulatory or contractual requirements.