

APEX ISO CERTIFICATION (PTY) LTD

PUBLIC INFORMATION - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document defines the Terms of Reference for the Public Information Function within Apex ISO Certification (Pty) Ltd.
- 1.2 The Public Information Function ensures that accurate, current, and non-misleading information about Apex's certification services, processes, and accredited status is publicly available to interested parties in all geographical areas in which Apex operates.
- 1.3 This function operates under the governance of the Apex ISO Certification Quality Management System (QMS) and ensures compliance with the information requirements set out in ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Clause 8.1 and relevant SANAS accreditation criteria.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this Terms of Reference is to:
 - Define the responsibilities and authority for maintaining and publishing public information;
 - Ensure transparency in Apex's certification processes and decisions;
 - Prevent the dissemination of inaccurate or misleading information;
 - Maintain stakeholder confidence in Apex's impartiality, competence, and integrity; and
 - Demonstrate compliance with SANAS and ISO/IEC 17021-1 information requirements.

3. Membership and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Public Information Function shall be overseen by the Managing Director and Nominated Representative, supported by the Administration and Communications Team.
- 3.2 Responsibilities include:
 - a) Maintaining and updating all publicly available information, including website content, publications, and electronic media;
 - b) Ensuring that all published information remains accurate, verifiable, and current;
 - c) Coordinating the approval of all public information through the Nominated Representative before release;
 - d) Retaining records of published material and revision histories in accordance with MAN.3.0 Control of Documents and Records; and
 - e) Responding to information requests from clients, regulators, or other interested parties.

4. Conflict of Interest, Impartiality, and Confidentiality

- 4.1 All personnel responsible for public communication shall act impartially and avoid statements that could mislead clients or create unfair competitive advantage.
- 4.2 All members shall maintain the confidentiality of client-specific information, except where disclosure is required under accreditation or regulatory obligations.
- 4.3 Personnel responsible for public information shall sign an Impartiality and Confidentiality Declaration upon appointment and renew it annually.

5. Mandate and Scope

5.1 The Public Information Function is mandated by the Directors of Apex ISO Certification (Pty) Ltd to:

- a) Publish and maintain accurate information concerning:
 - Audit processes;
 - Certification decision processes (granting, refusing, maintaining, renewing, suspending, restoring, withdrawing, expanding or reducing scope);
 - The types of management systems and certification schemes operated;
 - The use of Apex's name, certification mark, and logo;
 - Procedures for information requests, complaints, and appeals; The Policy on Impartiality.
- b) Provide, upon request, information on:
 - Geographical areas of operation;
 - The status of a given certification;
 - The name, normative reference, scope, and geographical location of certified clients, unless restricted for security or confidentiality reasons.
- c) Ensure that all advertising and public statements are factual and not misleading.

6. Operating Process

- 6.1 All public information activities shall follow the documented processes defined in Quality Management System
- 6.2 The Nominated Representative shall approve all updates to public information prior to publication.
- 6.3 Requests for information, complaints, and appeals received through public channels shall be logged, acknowledged, and handled in accordance with Appeals and Complaints Procedure.
- 6.4 Records of all publications, including version control and approval history, shall be maintained for audit purposes.

7. Meetings and Review Procedures

- 7.1 The Public Information Function shall be reviewed at least annually during Management Review meetings, or more frequently when changes to Apex's scope, policies, or accreditation status occur.
- 7.2 Any changes requiring urgent publication (e.g. updates to accreditation status, scope extensions, or contact details) shall be approved and implemented without delay.
- 7.3 Minutes and actions relating to public information reviews shall be maintained as part of the Management Review records.

8. Review and Amendments

- 8.1 This Terms of Reference shall be reviewed periodically (minimum annually) to ensure continuing relevance and compliance with ISO/IEC 17021-1 requirements.
- 8.2 All amendments shall be approved by the Managing Director before implementation and issued under controlled document revision.