



# Your certification process explained

**IN VITRO DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL DEVICE REGULATION  
(EU) 2017/746 ARTICLE 16(3)**

**SGS**

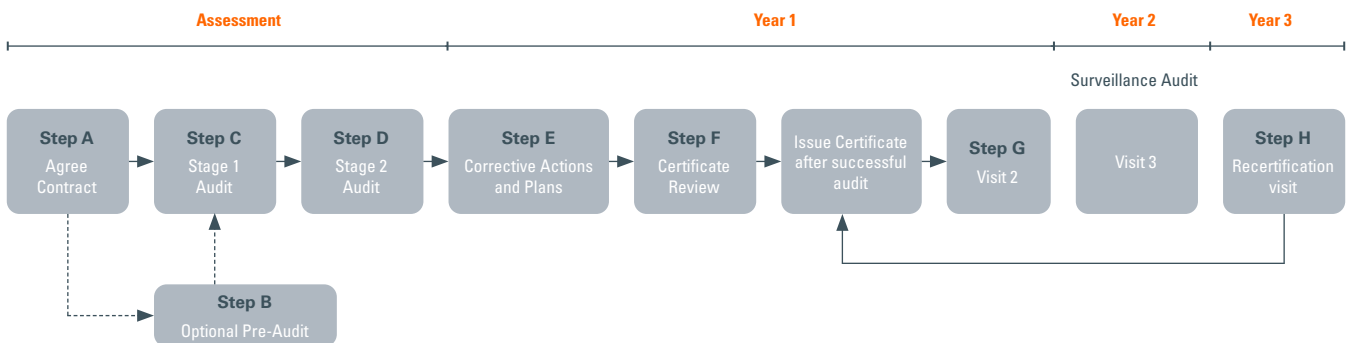
This important document outlines the audit process for the above referenced regulation. It outlines each stage of the audit process and gives essential guidance to organisations seeking certification and the regulatory and commercial conditions that apply. It is essential that it is read and understood to minimise non-conformities and delays in certification.

# SGS designation and approval status

SGS Fimko Ltd (further in the document written as SGS) is a Notified Body for your range of products. Certification will be undertaken to attest that your quality management system as a distributor or importer carrying out any of the activities mentioned in points (a) and (b) of Article 16(2) complies with the relevant requirements of Article 16(3).

SGS Fimko's scope and applicable conformity assessment routes (Annexes) are published in the [NANDO database](#).

## Overview of our certification process



The certification cycle is normally based on 3 years with at least one surveillance audit every 12 months.

## Step A: Pre-assessment and application

### PRE-ASSESSMENT:

We will need a filled in IVD Questionnaire (for company information) and a list of devices or device types to be handled by you in your distributor/

importer role, including applicable risk classes and IVDR codes / EMDN Codes) from you for our initial non-binding estimate of the certification costs.

Supplied with our estimate are the IVDR Article 16 application documents.

### APPLICATION:

If you are satisfied with our initial estimate, we will need your commitment to the application process. To apply for certification and to start the assessment process the Application form must be completed, signed and returned to this office. Additionally, SGS requires the following elements:

- the documentation on your quality management system,

- a documented description of the procedures in place to fulfil the obligations arising from the quality management system and required under IVDR and the undertaking by the distributor/importer in question to apply those procedures,

- a description of the procedures in place to ensure that the quality management system remains adequate and effective, and the undertaking by the distributor/importer to apply those procedures,

- a copy of your quality manual, procedures and any work instructions that demonstrate compliance with In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Device Regulation (EU) 2017/746 including but not limited to its Article 16,
- a copy of the IVDR certificates for the products (in vitro diagnostic medical devices) that would be subject to your role as importer/distributor
- Your application needs to be submitted in English. We can accept that your QMS is in your local language (if accepted during proposal stage by the Notified Body) or in English. Please note that the acceptable language for any related correspondence with NB 0598 is English

We recommend this is done as soon as your decision to proceed has been taken to allow maximum time for planning. Your application will be processed, and we will contact you to arrange the next steps of the audit process and dates. Because the application review is a demanding task, requiring multiple persons and taking at least one working day, we will invoice an application fee from you before we start the review.

## Step: Application review

In the application review we ensure that the application material is complete, the selected conformity assessment route(s) is (are) applicable and that SGS is designated, competent and able to certify the types of devices that you

have listed in the application. Based on the application review we can prepare a detailed offer for certification and proceed to signing of the certification agreement.

The offer is valid for 30 days. Once the 30 days end, we will review the offer again and issue a new one if necessary.

**Special Conditions:** In addition to conditions set out in the SGS Codes of Practice, SGS General Conditions for Certification and Regulations Governing the Use of SGS Certification Marks the following apply:

### APPLICANT (OR CERTIFIED CLIENT)

The applicant retains full product liability for registered products or services and full responsibility for correct categorisation, classification and adherence to standards.

The applicant undertakes that no other application to a different notified body for this scope is outstanding. The circumstances of any previous Notified Body application will be documented by the applicant and sent to SGS before an application is accepted.

The applicant undertakes to carry out all obligations arising from a certified quality management system and applicable regulations and maintain its adequacy and efficiency.

The application is valid for a period up to 1 year maximum after acceptance. If the assessment has not been scheduled after this period, then the application becomes void and applicant needs to re-confirm all submitted information to get a new Contract proposal. If the manufacturer is not able to provide sufficient evidence of corrections and corrective actions of any major QMS audit nonconformity within 6 months after the last day of stage 2, we must conduct another stage 2 prior to recommending certification.

To continue the certification process, the manufacturer must submit a new certification application.

The applicant understands that the termination of an ongoing certification process by the applicant before its completion will be handled as a refusal to certify and will be reported accordingly.

The applicant undertakes to inform SGS in advance of implementation, of any change that could impact the compliance of the device with the In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Device Regulation (EU) 2017/746 or affect the risk to benefit ratio or clinical evaluation of the device.

The applicant is responsible for the all the fees and costs associated with any activity that SGS considers necessary to grant or maintain certification or which is required by a European Competent Authority.

The applicant is responsible for informing SGS of all information necessary to ensure that audits, and communications can be efficiently and effectively undertaken, and that certification accurately reflects the current activities and product ranges

and that SGS is aware of all significant proposed changes. The changes section below gives more information.

The applicant is responsible for the right of access of SGS to defined suppliers and subcontractors both for the purposes of unannounced audits and scheduled audits and this must be included in your contract with critical suppliers and sub-contractors.

The applicant will facilitate as far as is legally possible the obtaining of visas for auditors to undertake audits.

The applicant takes full responsibility for the safety and security of the audit team whilst on site and for scheduled audits for advising on safe travel and accommodation arrangements when necessary.

## SGS

SGS undertake that no information will be disclosed to a third party, except to a regulatory or enforcement authority, where they are entitled to be informed under In Vitro Diagnostic Medical device regulation (EU) 2017/746. This excludes information publicly available in EUDAMED according to In Vitro Diagnostic Medical device regulation (EU) 2017/746 as this cannot be considered as confidential.

SGS retains the absolute right to refuse to certify the quality system or the device in a case where the applicant is not able to provide documentation or records required to provide evidence for compliance in appropriate time or is not able to correct major nonconformities in appropriate time while the certification process is ongoing.

SGS retains the absolute right to suspend, withdraw or amend the scope of certification by informing the

organisation and giving the reasons in writing. This includes suspension following a refusal to accept a scheduled or unannounced audit at your location or that of a defined critical supplier or sub-contractor or following undue restrictions or pressure during the audit.

SGS retains the right to take photographs of devices and manufacturing sites, to take samples from the audit site and the market and to take copies of documents and electronic data.

SGS retain the right to undertake any audit, assessment or regulatory action deemed necessary to grant or maintain certification or to check compliance including visits to suppliers, sub-contractors and distributors and testing of product without a further application and to charge for such work. When requested SGS will provide a written explanation for the need of any

additional audit, assessment, test or regulatory action but SGS is not obliged to inform the client before such action is undertaken.

Unless stated in the offer it has been assumed that no further audits to suppliers, subcontractors or additional sites are required. However, during the audit process if further information indicates a different situation, you will be informed, and additional visits agreed at additional cost.

Upon request by client, an optional informal pre-audit may be performed to clarify and confirm the scope of the application before proceeding to Stage 1 audit. The pre-audit is possible only after the certification agreement has been signed by both parties.

# Step: Stage 1 audit – preparedness review

This activity is conducted on or off site, depending on the circumstances and your existing certification, once we have received your application. This step of the audit process includes an appraisal of your Quality Management System documentation and intended scope of certification, including products, processes and locations and related statutory and regulatory aspects. This stage will include;

- Review of all documents and elements listed in Annex IX section 2.1
- an evaluation of your location and site-specific conditions, and discussions with you to determine your preparedness for the stage 2 audit;

- a review of your status and understanding regarding the requirements of the standard(s) and regulations, with respect to the identification of key performance or significant aspects, processes, objectives and operation of the management system;
- a review to ensure that internal audits and management reviews are being planned and performed, and that the level of implementation of the management system confirms that you are ready for the stage 2 audit

Stage 1 determines compliance with the documentation requirements of In Vitro Diagnostic Medical device regulation (EU) 2017/746 and the allocation of resources and working documentation for the Stage 2 audit.

You will receive a Stage 1 audit report outlining any deficiencies (findings) to enable immediate action to be taken prior to moving forward through the process. An audit plan for the stage 2 on-site audit will also be forwarded to you at this stage. If you are requested to send SGS copies of technical documentation these will also be reviewed, and you will receive copies of any non-conformities if appropriate. The reviews will normally be incorporated into one final report at the end of Stage 2. Serious deficiencies with the documentation, preparedness, existing certification or certification of a critical sub-contractor could result in you being advised of additional costs and/or delay to the Stage 2 audit.

# Step: Stage 2 audit – assessment process

This step is usually conducted several weeks after the Stage 1 activity to ensure that you have time to implement the findings of the Stage 1 Audit. We are led by you in relation to the time between Stage 1 and Stage 2 activities but 4 weeks minimum would be

recommended and both stages should be planned well in advance.

This on-site audit determines compliance against your documented system, In Vitro Diagnostic Medical device regulation (EU) 2017/746 Article 16(3) and relevant parts of ISO 13485.

Unless undertaken off site it will also include a review of selected technical documentation. This audit will also confirm the status of relevant suppliers and sub-contractors, your critical processes and the eligibility for IVDR (EU) 2017/746 Article 16 certification.



All assessment conclusions are based on sampling of audit evidence to demonstrate effective implementation of the management system, control over the processes and progress made towards achieving your stated quality objectives and compliance with IVDR (EU) 2017/746.

At SGS our audit approach is designed to contribute value to the process and to ensure that your management system is achieving your goals.

On conclusion of the audit the audit team will make a recommendation dependent on the findings and subject to the submission of corrective action plans for any non-conformances (Corrective Action Requests). The auditor will talk through the findings which may comprise major and minor non-conformances. The auditor will also agree with you the name, address and proposed scope details which will appear on your certificates.

Complete audit documentation set will be then reviewed by the Notified Body before taking certification decision based on auditor's recommendation.

**Audit Findings:** If a major non-conformance is identified, the certification decision will be deferred until corrective action has been taken. Minor non-conformance will not prevent recommendation for registration but may delay it, as planned action must be submitted to and reviewed by SGS, prior to the certification decision taking place. Verification and closure of minor non-conformances will take place at the next routine surveillance visit.

## Step: Corrective actions and plans

Any major non-conformance will have a corrective action plan and date agreed during the audit. Certification will be deferred until corrective action has been taken and verified by SGS either on site or by document review as appropriate. If a Major CAR isn't closed in 1 year,

then the contract will be closed and so the entire audit process must start again from proposal stage.

All minor non-conformances will have a corrective action plan and date agreed during the audit or immediately after and the corrective actions must be

completed by the next audit. Failure to address the root cause and take effective corrective action for major non-conformances or to submit effective corrective action plans and dates for minor non-conformances will prevent final review and certification.

## Step: Certification review

At the end of Stage 2 the report is compiled off site and reviewed with the other audit documentation, root cause analysis, corrective action plans and any corrective actions taken, and a certification decision made. This step can sometimes lead to limited changes

in the non-conformances and scopes about which you will be informed. Once the certification decision has been made, the certificate is processed and sent to you along with the formal report.

The certification has a maximum validity of five years. Decision and justification for the applied validity will be made case by case. The certification cycle is normally based on 3 years with at least one surveillance audit every 12 months.

## Step: Ongoing surveillance visits

Once issued certificates are only valid subject to regular audits to check satisfactory maintenance of your quality management system. Ongoing scheduled audits (surveillance visits) are usually conducted annually to verify continued implementation of your quality management system in accordance with planned arrangements, the requirements of the standard(s) and the requirements of the regulations. The first surveillance must be conducted within 12 months of the end of the stage 2 audit.

In some cases, dependent on the scale, nature of your operations and scope of certification 6-monthly surveillance visits have been agreed at the proposal stage. Certain mandatory elements will be reviewed at every visit together with other pre-selected processes

You will be sent an **IVD Client Pre-Audit Questionnaire** prior to every scheduled audit which will remind you to check on recent changes and gradual changes.

It is essential that this is completed and returned to the SGS office well before the audit, but it must not be used to replace the **IVDR Notification of Changes or Regulatory Action** reporting.

An audit plan will be forwarded in advance of the agreed audit date. Please note that the flexibility in the timing of ongoing visits is strictly limited by accreditation requirements.

# Step: Recertification

SGS operates a system of continuous certification. As part of this programme, it is not necessary to conduct a new full Stage 1 and 2 audits rather we conduct a recertification visit which is more in-depth than a surveillance visit, and which may include an off-site document review and will ensure that we review all aspects of your system.

You will be sent an **IVD Client Pre-Audit Questionnaire** prior to every scheduled audit which will remind

you to check on recent changes and gradual changes. It is essential that this is completed and returned to the SGS office well before the audit, but it must not be used to replace the **IVDR Notification of Changes or Regulatory Action** reporting.

For the Recertification you need to submit a summary of changes and scientific findings for the certified devices.

More detailed information of what is required is provided in the **FPIVDR2001 IVD Client Pre-Audit Questionnaire**.

The recertification audit must be carried out and major non-conformances closed prior to the expiry of your current certificate. The recertification audit is the first visit of your new certification cycle.

## Changes requests for changes to your scope of certification

In the event of any developments that will alter your scope of current certification, e.g. change of site or product range, reductions in scope, company name change etc it is important you inform us as soon as possible.

Certification does not usually extend to these changes until SGS undertakes the appropriate actions. Changes and additions to scope or significant changes in the quality management system or changes to critical subcontractors

can be included at any time during the certification cycle but SGS require to be informed in advance so that a revised contract can be issued. A SGS form **IVDR Notification of Changes or Regulatory Action** is available from this office and must be used for this purpose.

For definition of significant changes please refer to MDCG 2022-6. SGS reserves the right to update the definition, based on internal procedures and future MDCG guidance.

The scheduling of any extension to scope of audit can take place at the same time as a surveillance/recertification visit or can be carried out between visits depending on the nature and timing of the change. This is carried out by an on-site audit and the certification process carries on through STEPS described above.

### NOTIFICATION OF OTHER CHANGES

Other changes to the operation of your company and important regulatory events also need to be notified to SGS using the **IVDR Notification of Changes or Regulatory Action** form. This information is required by SGS to successfully plan scheduled audits and unannounced audits and answer queries

from regulatory authorities. Examples of changes that need to be included are: number of employees; periods of unavailability, changes in shift patterns, new processes; changes to relevant subcontractors and/or suppliers and manufacturing sites and adverse events reported outside the EU.

It is your responsibility to obtain from an appropriate SGS office, auditor or website the current **Medical Devices Notification of Changes or Regulatory Action** form and use it to notify SGS of all changes. This form contains guidance on what changes to report.

## General

### TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATION

If you have other current certification assessed by an accredited or approved certification body and this certification is up to date and in good standing, you can transfer to SGS at any time during the certification cycle.

We will conduct a review of your current certification and for us to do this you will need to send us a copy of the relevant certificate(s), the previous two audit reports, including the status of any outstanding corrective actions,

and the approximate due date of your next visit. Following a review, we will provide you with a proposal to take over this certification within the existing cycle or starting a new cycle as preferred.

## SGS RANGE OF ADDITIONAL MEDICAL DEVICE CERTIFICATION SERVICES

For many organisations the potential market for medical devices and services is worldwide and additional certification and approvals may be required in the future.

It is the policy of the SGS Group to obtain all possible global approvals to support you.

Therefore, we have auditors with knowledge of a wide range of regulatory requirements.

### USEFUL REFERENCES

- ISO 14971 Medical devices – Application of risk management to medical devices should be used in constructing your quality management system and technical documentation
- In addition to understanding the requirements, Commission Recommendation of 24 September 2013 on the audits and assessments performed by notified bodies in the field of medical devices (2013/473/EU) is useful in understanding the assessment process
- The EC Commission has many documents available on their website [https://ec.europa.eu/health/md\\_sector/new\\_regulations/guidance\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/health/md_sector/new_regulations/guidance_en) which are essential for classifying your devices, designing the quality management system and ensuring the correct technical documentation is available
- European Harmonised Standards whilst not being mandatory are used by most manufacturers to demonstrate compliance with In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Device Regulation (EC) 2017/746 (IVDR) and so are recommended. Please check the applicable standards from the website [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/european-standards/harmonised-standards\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/european-standards/harmonised-standards_en)

## About SGS

SGS is the world's leading Testing, Inspection and Certification company. We operate a network of over 2,500 laboratories and business facilities across 115 countries, supported by a team of 99,500 dedicated professionals. With over 145 years of service excellence, we combine the precision and accuracy that define Swiss companies to help organizations achieve the highest standards of quality, compliance and sustainability.

We offer the following main services:

- Inspection services – we inspect and check the quantity, weight and quality of traded goods. Inspection usually takes place when goods are moved from one type of transport to another
- Testing services – we test quality and performance of products against various health, safety and regulatory standards. We use state-of-the-art laboratories on or close to customers' premises
- Certification services – we confirm that systems or services meet the standards set by governments,

standardisation bodies (for example, ISO 9001) or our customers' products. We also develop our own standards to meet our clients' needs. SGS as an accredited certification body can provide confidence to clients that professional, experienced auditors are used, and standards are consistently applied

- Verification services – SGS verification services ensure that products and services comply with global standards and local regulations. Combining global coverage with local knowledge, unrivalled experience and expertise in virtually every industry, SGS covers the entire supply chain from raw materials to final consumption
- Training services - We offer over 50 different training solutions in a variety of management systems complemented by a wide range of other specialised courses. These are offered publicly, via e-learning or can be delivered in-house to suit your needs

Our certification section provides independent certification and audits to a range of standards, including:

- Quality Management Systems (ISO 9001);
- Environmental Management (ISO 14001);
- Occupational Health and Safety (OHSAS 18001);
- EC directives (CE Mark) and other regulations;
- Medical Device Certification (ISO 13485, MDSAP and UKCA);
- Welding Quality Assurance ISO 3834;
- AQAP Quality Assurance;

For more information on any of our services visit [www.sgs.fi](http://www.sgs.fi).

**When you need to be sure**

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