	UGANDA NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS CERTIFICATION SCHEME	Document No: **CERT/OP/01**
Document Title: **PROCEDURE FOR PRODUCT CERTIFICATION**		Issue No: 04 Revision No: 03 Effective Date: 9/02/2024

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS	
Document Number	**Document Title**
Act No.1 of June 1983 as amended 2013	Uganda National Bureau of Standards Act (Cap 327)
Statutory Instruments 2021 No. 68	The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (Certification) Regulations, 2021
Statutory Instruments 2022 No. 108	The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (Certification) (Amendment) Regulations, 2022
ISO/IEC 17065	Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
ISO 19011	Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems
CERT/QM/01	UNBS Certification Quality Manual

Approved by: Deputy Executive Director/Standards	Approval Date: **9th February 2024**
Reviewed by: Manager Certification Department	
Prepared by: Head Audit Planning and Accreditation Management	

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The details of changes made to this document are captured in the Revision History section at the end of this document.

1.0 Scope

This procedure covers the processes from the time an inquiry is made for product certification through to the time the electronic permit is issued and the life of the permit throughout the certification cycle.

This procedure shall apply to the certification of commodities in respect of which both compulsory and voluntary standard specifications have been declared.

The procedure also covers the certification process for commodities specified in Part II of Schedule 3 to the Certification Regulations for which after granting of the certification permit, Digital Conformity Marks must be acquired, affixed on the commodity and activated. Guidance on Digital Conformity Marking (DCM) has been provided in *CERT/PC/ID02 Digital Conformity Marking Guidelines for Locally Manufactured Products.*

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to define how the certification process shall be conducted in fulfillment of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 and as per the UNBS Act, "*The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (Certification) Regulations, 2021*" and "*The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (Certification) (Amendment) Regulations, 2022*".

3.0 Definitions

The definitions given in the UNBS Certification Quality Manual CERT/QM/01 and *The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (Certification) Regulations* shall apply.

i. *CIMS – Certification Information Management System* – the web-based system hosting the UNBS certification process.

ii. *Certification Mark* means a standards mark and a distinctive mark (as declared under section 16 and section 18(1)(b) of the UNBS Act).

iii. *Digital Conformity Mark* is the distinctive mark in form of a device-readable or app-readable mark or code affixed or imprinted on a unit of a commodity of the category specified in Part II of Schedule 3 to the Certification Regulations, embedding conformity-related data pertaining to the unit of the commodity on which it is affixed or imprinted. The application of the digital conformity mark is for the purpose of enabling the authentication, tracking and tracing of commodities.

4.0 Responsibility

The Head Product Certification shall in consultation with the Manager Certification Department take responsibility for implementing this procedure.

Other responsibilities have been highlighted under the different sections.

5 Description of the Product Certification Process

5.1 Inquiry

5.1.1 Any inquiry pertaining to a manufacturer seeking product certification will be forwarded to the any Certification Officer who will ensure that the potential applicant is rightly guided on the certification requirements and process and issued with the "*Information on Product Certification Process (CERT/PC/ID01)*" document or other useful information, e.g. brochures.

5.1.2 Inquiries from new clients are entered into the *MSME Register* (on *cims.unbs.go.ug)* upon handling a specific client/inquiry.

5.2 Application

5.2.1 To apply for certification, the applicant shall access the online certification platform using *cims.unbs.go.ug*, create an account, sign in using the log-in details provided and start 'New Application'. They shall complete all the required information and submit the application. The information contained in the application interface is as per *CERT/PC/F02 Application for UNBS Certification Mark*.

5.2.2 Each application shall be uniquely identified with a system generated number in the format PC/YYYY/XXXX (PC - Product Certification; YYYY - the year in which the application is generated (not submitted); XXXX – the unique identifier for the specific application). This number shall be used as the *e-file* reference for that particular certification cycle. No hard copy files may be retained.

5.2.3 An application can only be submitted once all the required fields have been completed and the required supporting documents have been attached.

5.2.4 By clicking the check box and completing the submission, the applicant confirms that they agree to and accept the terms and conditions stated in the *Certification Agreement CERT/F15* which is the undertaking by the applicant to comply with certification requirements.

5.2.5 A separate application shall be made for each commodity covered by a particular standard and for each manufacturing facility or site. A company making applications for several commodities shall differentiate each commodity for which certification is being sought by type, trademark, brand, variant or other characteristic.

5.2.6 The evaluation shall be done using a Uganda Standard, East African Standard, International standard or other normative document (but not company specifications). Draft standards can only be used upon obtaining written approval from the Deputy Executive Director – Standards.

5.3 Application Review

5.3.1 Once the application is received, the Head of Product Certification shall assign a Case Officer, who shall ascertain the completeness of the application, conduct the technical adequacy review and highlight deficiencies, if any. The Case Officer may require the applicant to submit additional information or to make alterations to the application as may be required before accepting the application and billing.

5.3.2 Once all issues of concern have been resolved with the applicant, a notification for *Payment of Product Certification Fees*, *CERT/PC/F14* shall be generated by the Case Officer, reviewed by the Head Product Certification and sent to the applicant. The billing of fees is as per *Schedule 2 of the Certification Regulations* and *CERT/POL/01 Policy on Certification Fees*.

5.3.3 An application shall be valid for a period of **9 months** after which, if a permit has not been granted, the application shall be automatically disabled and the applicant shall submit a new application.

5.3.4 All redundant applications and those for which payment is not received within **3 months** of billing shall also be disabled at 3 months from the submission date.

5.3.5 The Head of Product Certification shall monitor the progress of all applications on a monthly basis assisted by the respective Section Heads.

5.4 Pre-evaluation visit *(Optional)*

5.4.1 The lead auditor may, where necessary, conduct a pre-evaluation visit to clarify matters relating to an application of a novel product. A pre-evaluation visit may be necessary on the basis that the documentation and discussions with the applicant indicate that this would be beneficial to resolve any differences in

understanding. The lead auditor shall also advise on whether to continue with the evaluation without this visit.

5.4.2 An applicant may also request for a pre-evaluation visit as part of the normal application process.

5.4.3 If a pre-evaluation visit is required, the time for the visit shall be agreed to with the applicant.

5.4.4 The lead auditor shall:

i. Determine if the applicant fully understands the purpose of the certification audit;

ii. Discuss the scope of the certification and carry out a brief examination of the production process and available facilities;

iii. Identify critical gaps and determine if the plans for the factory and product evaluation can proceed;

iv. May take samples of the commodities applied for certification for independent laboratory analysis;

v. Determine resource requirements to conduct the factory and product evaluation.

5.4.5 A formal report shall be given at the end of a pre-evaluation visit and the applicant given time to address any deficiencies, in any case not exceeding three (3) months.

5.5 Selection of Audit Team

5.5.1 Upon confirmation of payment of the applicable fees, the HAA shall select the audit team (headed by a lead auditor) suitable to undertake the evaluation from the *Qualified and Approved Auditors' list CERT/F08.* The audit team may be supported by technical experts from within or outside UNBS or by authorised officers.

5.5.2 The lead auditor shall manage the certification process for the assigned applications for a particular certification cycle.

5.5.3 Auditors shall declare any vested interest they have or have had with the applicant that could cause them to act in an impartial manner. None of the members of the audit team shall have been employed and/or involved in consultancy activities with the applicant for a period of not less than two (2) years prior to the evaluation date.

5.5.4 All auditors shall sign the *Confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements CERT/F04* (for certification auditors) and *CERT/F05* (for contracted personnel), consistent with the *Policy for Management of Confidentiality, CERT/POL/05*.

5.6 Preparations for the certification evaluation

5.6.1 Once the audit team has been constituted, the HAA shall communicate the audit date to the audit team and the applicant through CIMS.

5.6.2 The details of the applicant, commodities, audit date and audit team shall be entered in the *Certification Audit Schedule (CERT/F30)* by the HAA and concurrently added to the *CIMS Audit Schedule*.

5.6.3 Upon scheduling, the Lead Auditor shall:

a) Ensure that the audit team receives all the relevant documentation for the evaluation;
b) Identify any aspects, which may need special attention;
c) Prepare and plan for the on-site implementation of the audit.
d) Determine the resource requirements for the evaluation exercise. These shall be arranged in consultation with the HAA.

5.6.4 An *Audit plan* in the format *CERT/PC/F04* shall be prepared and shared with the applicant at least seven (07) days before the evaluation and communicated to all involved in the evaluation. The applicant shall be expected to agree to the audit date and audit team through the online system and in case of any dissatisfaction, they will have the provision to reject with justification and any proposals for consideration. The applicant shall be kept informed of the progress of the application and reason(s) for any delay.

5.6.5 The audit team prepares checklists and forms to allow for a smooth audit. The members of the team shall ensure that they are familiar with all aspects of the application.

5.7 The Evaluation/Audit

The evaluation shall be conducted in English. Interpretation/translation services shall be provided by the applicant, whenever required.

5.7.1 The Opening Meeting

5.7.1.1 On the day of the audit, the auditors shall hold an opening meeting with the top management or their authorised representatives in accordance with ISO 19011.

5.7.1.2 All items on the *CERT/PC/F07 Audit Opening and Closing Meeting Agenda* shall be addressed during the meeting, as applicable.

5.7.1.3 The completed *Attendance Register CERT/F06* is considered a record of the opening meeting.

5.7.2 Factory Evaluation

5.7.2.1 The Lead Auditor shall ensure that the commodity and manufacturing facility are evaluated to ascertain conformity to the certification requirements, including the product requirements in standard specifications.

5.7.2.2 The lead auditor may assign a member of the audit team to evaluate particular aspects of the application.

5.7.2.3 The audit team shall be allowed unhindered access to the manufacturing facility, quality assurance facilities and any other support facility of the commodity specified in the application, and access to relevant documentation or records related to raw materials, production processes, quality (including inspection and testing) and quantities of commodities to be certified.

5.7.2.4 The audit team shall conduct the audit through physical observation, document review and interviews with the responsible persons.

5.7.2.5 The evaluation shall be carried out using appropriate product and labelling checklist(s) and the *Audit Report template CERT/PC/F05*. Additional notes may be captured using the A*udit Trail forms CERT/F01*. Information that may lead to a non-conformity is noted, including the place/department where it occurred.

5.7.3 Commodity Sampling, Evaluation and Testing

5.7.3.1 Representative samples shall be drawn by the audit team or authorised officer, in the presence of the applicant or their representative as per sampling procedure specified in the applicable standard(s) for independent laboratory testing.

5.7.3.2 Commodity sampling, evaluation or testing may be done at the applicant's manufacturing facility, warehouse or other storage facility, market or other location where the sample is available.

5.7.3.3 Commodity sampling, evaluation or testing may be carried out by an auditor or authorised person using field testing equipment, or using the applicant's testing equipment, in the presence of the applicant or a person authorised by the applicant.

5.7.3.4 The cost of obtaining, transporting and testing of samples and any other expense incurred in connection with the commodity evaluation shall be borne by the applicant.

5.7.3.5 The applicant shall sign the *Agreement on sampling CERT/PC/F09* and this shall be amongst the audit documents submitted with the audit report in CIMS.

5.7.3.6 The samples shall be handled such that there is no damage/deterioration or alteration until the tests are done.

5.7.3.7 **Witnessing of In-plant Testing**

5.7.3.7.1 Where UNBS does not have capacity for testing a commodity, the samples shall be tested at the applicant's facility (where capacity is available) using the applicant's testing equipment by or under the supervision of the auditor, technical expert or authorised officer and using the relevant standard test methods for the commodity.

5.7.3.7.2 The commodities shall be evaluated against the requirements contained in the specified standards, and other documents as determined by UNBS.

5.7.3.7.3 The result of tests shall be recorded by the company in their appropriate test forms duly signed by the analyst. The auditor or authorised officer may secure a copy of the results and shall fill out the *Witnessing of activity form CERT/PC/F06*.

5.7.3.7.4 In case of failure, the auditor shall record the results in the *Corrective Action Report Form (CERT/F02)*.

5.7.3.7.5 The auditors may also conduct quantity control verifications on the commodity for example weight, height, thickness, number, and other physical measurements, as applicable, either using UNBS field testing equipment or the applicant's testing equipment.

5.7.4 Termination of Audits

5.7.4.1 The Lead auditor may terminate an audit in the event of:

a) An extraordinary event/circumstance or emergence occurring just before or during the audit;
b) Failure to provide access to relevant locations, key staff and/or information;
c) Intimidation, discrimination, obstruction, aggression, health/safety threat and/or violence towards the audit team;
d) An unforeseen circumstance experienced by an audit team member (e.g. accident or sickness);
e) The applicant being subject to legal actions by the authorities; or
f) If the applicant requests to terminate the audit, with proper justification.

5.7.4.2 The Lead auditor shall contact the HAA or HPC to discuss the challenges experienced, in order to get consensus that termination is appropriate.

5.7.4.3 The reasons for the team's decision and the implication of terminating the audit shall be discussed with the representative(s) of the management of the applicant to agree on a possible solution and/or way forward.

5.7.4.4 The lead auditor shall record on the *Termination of Audit Recommendation CERT/F49*, that the audit was terminated and no conclusion with regards to the outcome of the audit could be made and that a re-audit of the facility was recommended. A copy shall be left with the applicant or their representative.

5.7.4.5 The applicant shall also be advised on the *Handling of Complaints, Disputes and Appeals Procedure, CERT/OP/06*, (is available on www.unbs.go.ug) as a recourse, should they be dissatisfied by the action.

5.7.4.6 The audit may only be rescheduled once the issues leading to the audit termination have been satisfactorily resolved.

5.7.5 Auditors' Meeting

5.7.5.1 Upon completing the factory and commodity evaluation, the audit team shall hold a private meeting amongst themselves to review their findings. *Guidance on audit findings* is given in *CERT/OP/15*.

5.7.5.2 Where non-conformances have been identified, the lead auditor shall complete *CERT/F02 - Corrective Action Report Form*.

5.7.5.3 A summary of findings shall be recorded in the *On-site and Recommendation Report CERT/PC/F08* and shall be submitted along with the other audit documents for review and certification decision.

5.7.5.4 The Lead Auditor shall summarize the conclusions of the audit team with regard to the certification requirements.

5.7.5.5 No minutes of this meeting shall be maintained.

5.7.6 The Closing Meeting

5.7.6.1 At the end of the evaluation, the audit team will once again meet with top management or their authorised representatives.

5.7.6.2 The presentation of the summary of the audit team's findings by the lead auditor shall be in accordance with ISO 19011 (Refer to *CERT/PC/07 Audit Opening and Closing Meeting Agenda*). All items on the agenda shall be addressed during the meeting.

5.7.6.3 The filled *Corrective Action Report Form (CERT/F02)* shall be acknowledged by the company representative and the lead auditor shall retain a copy. The company shall at this point keep the original corrective action forms which shall later be submitted to the lead auditor upon completion of the filling of the corrective actions undertaken.

5.7.6.4 Both the *On-site and recommendation report (CERT/PC/F08)* and the *Corrective action forms (CERT/F02)* shall be left with the applicant after the closing meeting. The applicant shall be given the original copies while the lead auditor shall retain the copy for the company file.

5.7.6.5 The closing column of the *Attendance register (CERT/F06)* signed at the opening meeting shall then be signed off by all those attending the closing meeting. This shall be considered the record of the closing meeting.

5.7.6.6 Should the applicant not agree with the contents of the forms, they shall be advised on how to take up the matter in accordance with procedure *CERT/OP/06: "Handling of complaints, appeals and disputes*".

5.7.6.7 Should there be non-conformance reports, the company shall be informed that they have up to 30 days from the date of the evaluation to forward the proposed corrective actions and a maximum of three months (3) to clear all non-conformances.

5.7.7 Sample Testing

5.7.7.1 The lead auditor shall make sure that the samples are coded with the sample number electronically assigned in CIMS (traceable to the application number) and physically delivered to the UNBS Sample Reception as soon as possible.

5.7.7.2 The samples may also be tested at a laboratory under the UNBS Laboratory Recognition Scheme.

5.7.7.3 The commodities shall be evaluated against the requirements contained in the specified standards, and other documents as determined by UNBS and notified to the applicant.

5.7.7.4 The *e-test report(s)* shall be automatically emailed to the applicant through the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). The test reports are accessible on the CIMS interface under the "*LIMS Test Reports*" tab for access by the audit team.

5.7.7.5 Where samples fail, the applicant shall be notified, using *CERT-PC-F19 Failures in Test Results,* to undertake the necessary corrective action. The lead auditor shall draw more samples for independent testing at the applicant's cost. Such samples shall be coded and manually submitted using the *Request for tests form CERT/PC/F10* and the details of the sample shall be entered in the *Online Sample Submission Register* CERT/PC/RG04.

5.7.8 Corrective Actions and Follow-up

5.7.8.1 The applicant shall take corrective actions on the identified non-conformances. The company shall implement and complete the corrective actions within the agreed period.

5.7.8.2 The Lead Auditor shall monitor the timely implementation of the corrective actions by the applicant.

5.7.8.3 The applicant shall notify UNBS of the corrective actions completed after which a follow-up visit(s) shall be conducted, if necessary. Certification can only be granted after all corrective actions have been adequately implemented by the applicant.

5.7.8.4 Failure on the part of the applicant to take corrective actions or to notify UNBS of completion of such actions within the agreed period, the Lead Auditor shall notify the Head of Product Certification who shall inform the company in

writing. Continued non-compliance shall constitute discontinuance of the evaluation after which the applicant will have to re-apply.

5.7.8.5 Refer to *Guide on audit findings (CERT/OP/15)*.

5.7.9 Final report writing and preparation of file for review

5.7.9.1 The Lead Auditor shall complete the *Audit Report CERT/PC/F05*, detailing the audit findings, commodity testing results, status of any non-conformances raised, recommendations and the accompanying attachments.

The lead auditor's recommendation may be:

i. Unconditional certification to be granted;
ii. Conditional certification to be granted subject to handling of the non-conformances within a specified timeframe;
iii. Deferral of certification (with clear justification).

5.7.9.2 The respective Section Head shall ensure that the Lead Auditor prepares the audit report for submission to the Certification Review Committee (CRC) and that the audit report is complete and adequate for the basis of making certification decisions.

5.7.9.3 For applicants that hold **valid systems certification** from UNBS and the certified system is relevant to the safety and quality of the commodities under consideration for certification, an audit shall not be conducted. *(Refer to ISO17065:2012 clause 7.3.5 and 7.4.5)*. The assigned lead auditor shall review the information submitted including verification of raw materials and quality plans, labelling or marking and shall obtain and submit the commodity samples for testing and the valid systems certificate attached to inform the certification decision.

5.7.9.4 The audit report, once finalized, shall be forwarded by the respective Section Head to the CRC Chairperson for review and simultaneously to the applicant.

5.7.9.5 *Delegation* – To ensure continuity of service, the HAA may delegate lead auditor responsibilities to another audit team member, should the lead auditor not be able to complete the certification process timeously due to conditions, for example prolonged absence (long leave), exit from certification service, or termination of employment with UNBS. The delegated lead auditor shall then handle the assigned file until the certification process is completed. A follow up audit may be scheduled upon request of the delegated auditor to facilitate completion of the process, at no extra cost to the applicant.

5.8 Certification Review

5.8.1 The execution of the review process shall be in accordance with CERT/OP/03 '*Terms of Reference for the Certification Review Committee*'.

5.8.2 Upon receipt of the company electronic file, the Chairperson Certification Review Committee (CRC) shall assign a suitable member of the CRC to review the file. The date of the next review committee meeting shall be accordingly communicated which shall be the date by when the assigned reviewer shall have completed the review of that particular file.

5.8.3 The reviewer shall review the file and complete the *Review Committee Recommendation Report* in the format CERT/PC/F13.

5.8.4 If all the applicable certification requirements have been met, the company is recommended for grant of permit. The committee recommendation shall be completed by the CRC Chairperson on the day of the CRC meeting.

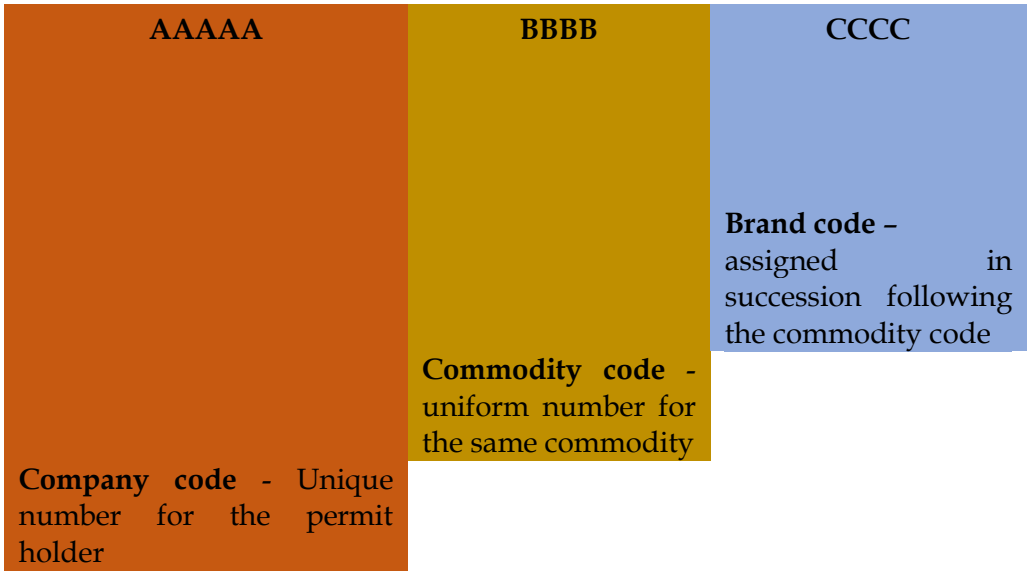
5.8.5 In cases where the CRC is not satisfied, then the recommendation shall be to defer certification. Once this position is confirmed by the Executive Director, the Lead Auditor or delegated auditor shall communicate to the company, highlighting the issues to be addressed. The company file shall be reviewed by the Head Product Certification and presented again to the Executive Director for decision when the issues that led to deferral have been resolved, in any case within the 9 months application validity period.

5.9 Certification Decision and Permit Issuance

5.9.1 The decision to grant certification is made by the Executive Director following the recommendation of the Certification Review Committee. The applicant cannot claim certification until they have been issued with an *e-permit*.

5.9.2 Once approved, the electronic permit (*e-permit*) shall be issued by the Head of Product Certification. The effective date for the initial certification is the date that the permit has been issued, while the expiry date is automatically calculated from the effective date of certification for 12 months. The date when certification has been granted by the Executive Director shall be indicated as the certification decision date. The *e-permit* then becomes available for

download on the online system by the applicant. The permit number shall be in the format, "AAAAA-BBBB-CCCC":



5.9.3 When a company is issued a permit to use the Certification Mark, the Register of permit holders CERT/PC/RG05 is automatically updated in real time in CIMS and the same is linked with the UNBS website. The system automatically generates dates for the surveillance audit notification at 6 months and the renewal (and permit expiry) notifications, 9, 10, 11 and 12 months respectively, after the effective date of the permit (date of permit issuance).

5.9.4 After obtaining the permit to use the certification mark, for commodities specified in *Part I of Schedule 3* to the Certification Regulations, where digital conformity marking is not applicable, the certification mark (in schedule 4 of the regulations) shall be printed on the label or affixed on the commodity in a visible, legible and indelible manner.

5.9.5 **Digital Conformity Marking (DCM)** - For commodities specified in *Part II of Schedule 3* to the Certification Regulations, after obtaining the permit to use the certification mark, the manufacturer shall proceed to register in the *Digital Conformity Solution (DCS)* portal using the link https://service.dcs.go.ug/ (also provided in the CIMS account of the permit holder). The product certification process for these commodities shall only be completed after the Digital Conformity Marks are acquired, affixed on the commodity and activated.

The permit holder shall affix or imprint on every unit of the commodity a digital conformity mark before releasing the commodity from the factory or production site. The commodities shall be so marked in a visible place, as appropriate for the type of commodity or package, by placement of the digital conformity mark, before the commodity is placed on the market. Further guidance on Digital Conformity Marking has been provided in *CERT/PC/ID02 Digital Conformity Marking Guidelines for Locally Manufactured Products*.

5.9.6 The **permit is not transferable**. A permit shall be issued for each commodity and at the specific location for which certification has been applied for and granted. A permit holder shall apply for a new permit in the following circumstances:

i. In the case of relocation of the manufacturing facility;
ii. Where there is a change in the legal status of the company, including a change in the names or ownership of the company;
iii. Where there has been any modification in the commodity or manufacturing process that affects the inherent properties of the commodity.

In the above circumstances, the permit holder shall notify UNBS within 21 working days after the change.

5.9.7 **Liability of permit holder** – The permit holder shall ensure that the commodity in respect of which a permit has been granted always conforms to standard requirements and shall be liable for any damage or injury arising from the normal use of the commodity.

5.9.8 The Application and use of UNBS Certification Marks and permits/certificates is governed by *CERT/POL/04 Policy on Use of Marks and Reference to Certification and/or Accreditation* and *UNBS Certification Agreement, CERT/F15*.

5.9.9 Any appeals shall be handled as per procedure *CERT/OP/06 Procedure for handling of complaints, appeals and disputes*.

5.10 Surveillance Activities

5.10.1 Surveillance audits or commodity sampling and testing shall be carried out at least once during the validity period of the permit(s) to ensure that the

requirements for certification are being maintained. During surveillance, the auditor or authorised officer shall be allowed unhindered access to the manufacturing facility, related ancillary services, including access to relevant documentation related to production and quality and quantity of certified commodities.

5.10.2 CIMS shall trigger notifications for surveillance audits at 6 months from the date of permit issuance. The company shall become available on the interface of HAA for scheduling at the earliest available opportunity. Surveillance activities may be conducted without notice.

5.10.3 Once scheduled, the *Audit Report CERT/PC/F05* template shall become active on the interface of the assigned Lead auditor for recording the findings. The surveillance audit may involve factory and/or commodity evaluation. Commodity sampling may be done at the manufacturing facility, warehouse or other storage facility, market or other location where the commodities are available. During surveillance, the auditor shall as applicable ensure that the corrective actions arising out of the initial evaluation have been properly implemented. *An on-site and recommendation report CERT/PC/F08* shall be submitted to the permit holder, as applicable. The *Audit Report CERT/PC/F05* is only complete after uploading the test reports results of the samples obtained from the surveillance activities.

5.10.4 Where there are several applications for a particular permit holder and permits were issued on different dates, and the surveillance audits are triggered on different dates, then the Lead Auditor shall conduct surveillance for all commodities (covered by different applications) of the permit holder at once. Also, where a surveillance is conducted earlier than scheduled, for example, in response to a compliant or where it is part of an earlier application, then the findings shall be entered into CIMS when the system becomes active at 6 months.

5.10.5 For companies with different production lines, it is important that the auditor collects samples from different lines from those initially sampled at the previous audit to ensure that all lines are periodically sampled to allow for generalisation of conclusions.

5.10.6 Upon completion of the evaluation, the lead auditor (or delegated auditor) shall forward the file to the respective Section Head or Head Product Certification Division who shall review or assign a peer reviewer competent in the scope under consideration to review the file and recommend continued certification or sanctions, as applicable.

5.10.7 Surveillance audits may be conducted where there are complaints, commodity failures, modifications to a commodity, production process or key personnel in the organisation assess the impact of these changes on the quality and safety of the commodities.

5.10.8 Should the company be found not complying with the terms and conditions of the permit, it shall be given 30 days to close the non-conformances, beyond which, it shall be reported by the Head of Product Certification Division to the Manager Certification Department who shall write to the permit holder to immediately (within 7days) submit to UNBS an action plan on how it plans to address the non-compliances. Failure to do so shall lead to suspension. Refer to *Policy on Suspension, Reduction, or Withdrawal of Certification CERT/POL/03* and *CERT/OP/13 Procedure for Suspension, Withdrawal, Scope Reduction or Termination of Certification*.

5.11 Extension of Certification Scope

5.11.1 A company may apply for extension of scope through CIMS for commodities related to those for which they already hold valid certification. The applicant shall not be required to undergo an audit provided production is undertaken in the same premises and on the same production line of commodities whose permits are valid.

5.11.2 The assigned lead auditor shall review the information submitted including verification of raw materials and quality plans, labelling or marking and shall obtain and submit the commodity samples for testing to inform the certification decision. Attention shall be paid to such commodities during the next scheduled audit.

5.11.3 Where extension of certification scope is sought for unrelated commodities, then a full audit shall be conducted.

5.12 Renewal of permit

5.12.1 A product certification permit shall be valid for a period of one (1) year (12 months) and the validity cannot be extended. Notifications for renewal of permits shall be made through CIMS at least three (3) months prior to the expiry of the permit to ensure timely application and completion of the renewal processes.

5.12.2 Further renewal notifications shall be sent at least 2 months and 1 month to expiry respectively and a final reminder sent on the date of permit expiry.

5.12.3 To apply for recertification, the applicant shall log into CIMS using their credentials, click "*Apply for renewal*" and update the company profile and the information submitted in the initial application, as applicable. A new application number shall be assigned and a new e-file created for that cycle.

5.12.4 A renewal audit shall be conducted in the same manner as for the initial application.

5.12.5 Automatic renewal - A permit shall be renewed without undertaking an audit in the following circumstances:

i. the permit holder has demonstrated conformance to requirements within the previous certification cycle as verified through surveillance audits or sampling and testing and/or

ii. for those that have valid systems certification from UNBS relevant to the safety and quality of the commodity under consideration for certification *(Refer to ISO17065:2012 clause 7.3.5 and 7.4.5)*.

Upon application for renewal of permit, the company shall pay the applicable fees and the assigned Lead Auditor shall obtain and submit commodity samples for testing, confirm conformance to labelling requirements and process the file using relevant information from the previous evaluation and forward for review and certification decision. During the subsequent audit, the audit team shall conduct evaluation and/or commodity sampling and testing to ascertain continued compliance.

5.12.6 The Head Product Certification shall ensure as far as possible that the renewal decision is made before the permit expiry date. The permit number granted at the initial certification shall be retained and the effective date for the certification shall be the day after the current expiry date. Should circumstances cause the recertification decision to be made after the permit expiry date, then the effective date for the renewed permit shall only be the date of permit issuance.

5.12.7 Harmonisation of permit dates (validity) shall be an administrative decision taken by the Manager Certification Department.

5.12.8 On the day of expiry of the permit, a final notification shall be sent in CIMS to inform the permit holder of the termination of the certification agreement under the respective permit(s). If by this time the permit holder has not applied for recertification, then the company shall be formally notified of the consequences by the Manager Certification Department.

5.12.9 A company *e-file* can only be active for 1 year from the date of issue of the last permit. The *e-file* will be moved into archives in CIMS once the latest issued permit expires. The file will be kept for a minimum of 5 years for reference purposes.

5.12.10 Expired permits shall not be maintained in the directory of certified products as the certification agreement with UNBS shall be automatically terminated for such permit. A register for expired permits is maintained on CIMS and the UNBS website and similarly for suspended and withdrawn or cancelled permits.

6.0 Time Scale for Product Certification Process

6.1 Generally, certification takes between 1 – 3 months from receipt of the application with adequate accompanying documents. Refer to *CERT/PC/ID01 Information on Product Certification Process* and the UNBS Customer Service Charter (on UNBS website www.unbs.go.ug) - for an indication of the specific time expectations for each stage of the application process.

6.2 UNBS shall make every effort to ensure that all applications are processed as efficiently as possible. The time taken to process an application depends on a number of factors some of which are outside the control of UNBS. The timing is generally dependent on:

i. The quality of the applicant's documentation and the extent to which it complies with the certification requirements. A delay can occur due to insufficiencies or inadequacies in documents submitted together with the application;
ii. How efficiently the applicant organisation clears the non-conformances after the initial evaluation;
iii. The availability of suitable auditors;
iv. The availability of the resources within UNBS
v. How fast commodity testing results are received from the laboratories.

7.0 Records

The records generated by this procedure have been highlighted in the different sections of this procedure and are outlined in CERT-F 21 Master list of documents.

8.0 Revision History

Date of Revision	Section/ Paragraph	Description of Changes
July 2017	Whole document	Amended to assign responsibilities
July 2019	File name	Changed from "*Product Certification Process Procedure*" to "*Procedure for Product Certification*' to allow for consistency of file name with the document title.
	Title page	Replaced '*The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (Certification) Regulations, 1995*' with '*The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (Use of Distinctive Mark) Regulations, 2018*'.
	Title page	Renamed ISO19011 to be consistent with the 2018 revision (3rd edition).
	Whole document	Replaced "*Certification Mark*" to "*Distinctive Mark*"
	1	Scope – added *electronic* permit
	2	Purpose - Replaced '*UNBS Certification Regulations of 1995* with '*UNBS Act and the UNBS Use of Distinctive Mark Regulations, 2018*'.
	3	Definitions – Added CIMS – Certification Information Management System
	5.1	Inquiry – removed CERT/PC/F01 and CERT/PC/F02; Provided for the recording of inquiries in the '*MSME Register*' to replace the Inquiry Register CERT/PC/RG01
	5.2	Application - removed the need to complete CERT/PC/F01 and CERT/PC/F02 and introduced application and application review through the Certification Information Management System (CIMS) and the creation of an e-file and file numbering changed. The following other documents are no longer necessary to be retained: CERT/PC/RG02 Application Register; CERT/PC/RG03 Product Files Directory; CERT/PC/F03 Application Review Report. The tasks of the certification Administrator at this stage were incorporated into CIMS. Formalised the requirement to seek approval of DED-S before use of FDUS for certification purposes.
	5.3	Application Review – responsibility for ascertaining completeness and adequacy review of application assigned to a Case Officer. Removed certification proposal letter

	5.5	Introduced the submission of PRNs for verification before audit team selection. Removed the provision for a minimum of 2 auditors to conduct an evaluation. Introduced the provision for an auditor not to conduct an evaluation at a facility where they have been previously employed until after 2 years.
	5.6	Provided for the scheduling and confirmation of resources for the evaluation by the Head Audit Planning and Accreditation Management; Increased time for audit plan notification from 5 days to 10 days; Introduced the need to have the client agree or disagree with the audit plan.
	5.7	Provided for the client to arrange for interpretation and translation services, when required.
	5.7.2.4	Deleted CERT/PC/F17 and replaced with audit report template
	5.7.3.2.4	Provided for the uploading of the Request for test form CERT/PC/F10 along with other audit documents (after audit).
	5.7.5.4	Deleted – *"No other report is submitted to the applicant after this".*
	5.7.6.1	Provided for the forwarding of e-test reports from LIMS (Laboratory Information Management System) to the email of the client and to certification.
	5.7.7	Provide for the forwarding of audit report to the client. The following documents are no longer necessary to be retained: CERT/PC/F12 Pre-review checklist; CERT/PC/F11 Company File Folio; CERT/F20 File Review Request Form.
	5.8	Provided for the forwarding of e-files to the CRC, scheduling of CRC meetings and actual review of files. Provided for the review of resolution of issues of deferred permits by the Head Product Certification before forwarding to the Executive Director for decision. Provided for real time automatic updating of the Certified Products Register both in CIMS and website. Permit Issuance Register, CERT/PC/RG06 no longer needed to be retained.
	5.9	The Certification Decision – added "and permit issuance" to the subtitle; Section recast to align to actual practice in CIMS
	5.10	Surveillance audits – recast to align to the actual practice in CIMS; Surveillance Audit Report CERT/PC/F16 replaced with Audit Report CERT/PC/F05.
	5.11	Provided for application for scope extension through CIMS Removed the submission of pre-package verification reports for

		labels for consideration of scope extension.
	5.12	Recertification - Switched with 5.13 to improve flow Provided for the renewal application to be made in CIMS. Introduced automatic renewal Provided for clarity on dates on the permits Provided for action upon permit expiry and archiving of the file
	5.13	Time scale for product certification process - Switched with 5.12 to improve flow; Added UNBS Service Charter Provided for delays caused by product evaluation results from laboratories
	Annex	Deleted the '*Product Certification Process Flow chart*'
Aug. 2020	5.3.2	Clarified responsibilities of Case Officer and HPC
	5.3.3	Changed 5.3.3 a, b, c and d to 5.3.3, 5.3.4, 5.3.5, 5.3.6 respectively. a) (5.3.3) Extended validity of application from 6 months to 9 months and provided for disabling of applications. b) (5.3.4) Provided for disabling of redundant applications and those for which no payment has been received at 3 months. c) (5.3.5) Provided for disabling of non-progressive applications, 6 months from the date of confirmation of applicable fees. d) (5.3.6) Provided for monitoring of the progress of applications by Section Heads.
	5.7.4	Introduced Section on *Termination of Audits* as 5.7.4. Accordingly, the subsequent numbering changed.
	5.7.6.1.2	Introduced the *Online Sample Submission Register*
	5.7.7.2 5.7.7.4	Replaced Head Product Certification with respective Section Head to align with current practice
	5.7.7.5	Provided for delegation of files to be completed in the event that the assigned lead auditor is unable to follow through with the process.
	5.8.5	Included timelines for resolution of issues leading to deferral not to exceed 3 months
	5.9.1	Removed review of CRC recommendations by DED-S before ED decision
	5.10.6	Provided for lead auditor and delegated lead auditor
	5.12.2	Replaced Lead Auditor with Case Officer and introduced the Section Heads and reminder 1 month before expiry, if no application is received.
	5.12.8	Replaced Lead Auditor with Case Officer
	Entire document	Introduced Section Heads to align with the responsibilities assigned in CIMS consistent with the revised job descriptions.

August 2021	5.3.2	Updated CERT/PC/F14 *Payment of Product Certification Fees* to with the new billing system.
	5.3.5	Deleted section requiring disabling of applications after 6 months from payment confirmation, if certification process is not completed, to allow the full 9 months since all payments are now made upfront.
	5.3.6	Becomes 5.3.5 after deletion
	5.9.2 5.9.3	Deleted sections that required payment of certification fees since all fees are paid upfront in a single instalment.
	5.9.4	Becomes 5.9.2 Updated permit numbering system Deleted "*The time lag between the decision date and the effective date is dependent on the time taken by the client to pay certification fees*".
	5.12.2	Reworked to provide for further renewal notifications before permit expiry and to align with practice.
	5.12.3	Updated to read "Apply for Renewal" and not 'New Application'
	5.12.6	Updated section to have the old permit number maintained upon renewal. Removed the requirement for payment before permit issuance to align with new billing system.
	5.12.9	File to be retained for a minimum of 5 years (not 3 years) to align with CERT/OP/07.
Feb. 2024	Title page	Updated the certification regulations
	Whole document	Replaced: 'product' with 'commodity', as applicable 'Audit client' to 'applicant' or 'permit holder', as applicable
	1.0	Provided for Digital Conformity Marking and further clarity on applicability for both compulsory and voluntary standards.
	2.0	Replaced UNBS Use of Distinctive Mark Regulations, 2018 with the Certification regulations of 2021 and 2022.
	3.0	Added definitions of: ii. Certification Mark iii. Digital Conformity Mark
	4.0	Amended responsibility from Manager to Head of Division
	5.1.3	Deleted – covered in 5.2.4
	5.2.4	Amended with an addition for clarity
	5.2.5	Amended to align with regulation 4(4)

	5.3.3	Amended to reflect the spirit of the regulation 4(7)
	5.5.1	Modified to remove old provision for submitting PRNs and revised and merged with 5.5.2 to align with regulation 7.
	5.6.4	Revised audit plan notice from 10 days to 7 days
	5.6.5	Deleted on-site
	5.7.1	Created and numbered the paragraphs.
	5.7.3	Created and numbered the paragraphs and modified to align with regulation 12(2).
	5.7.3.2.2	Removed requirement for 2 sets of samples
	5.7.3.2.4	Deleted - Removed *Request for tests form CERT/PC/F10*
	5.7.3.4	Merged with 5.7.3
	5.7.3.7	Modified to align to regulation 12(6)
	5.7.4.4	Deleted "….. at audit client's cost"
	5.7.6.1	Renamed "Sample Testing" and modified to align to regulation 12 and the online sample submission and clarified on action taken on failures in product tests.
	5.7.7.3	Statement modified
	5.7.7	Section 5.7.7 renumbered and modified due to duplication and misnumbering, hence: 5.7.7 Sample testing 5.7.8 Corrective actions and follow up 5.7.9 Final report writing and preparation for review
	5.8.5	Removed "... not exceeding 3 months from the date of deferral" and replaced with "…within the 9 months application validity period"
	5.9	Replaced "*Distinctive Mark*" with "*Certification Mark*", as applicable
	5.9.2	Amended the permit number format, "AAAAA-BBBB-CCCC-~~20YY~~", thus "AAAAA-BBBB-CCCC to align with implementation.
	5.9.4 5.9.5	Introduced to provide clarification on application of the certification mark: 5.9.4 for non-DCM products 5.9.5 covers products under the Digital Conformity Marking (DCM) scheme
	5.9.6	Introduced section on non transferability of permits

	5.9.7	Introduced section on Liability of permit holder
	5.9.8 & 5.9.9	Sections switched to improve flow 5.9.8 Added UNBS Certification Agreement, CERT/F15
	5.10.1	Clarified on the extent of access for surveillance activities
	5.10.2	Provided for unannounced surveillance activities
	5.10.3	Provided more clarity on product sampling
	5.10.7	Changed special visits to surveillance audits and statement modified
	5.11.2	Amended to remove the physical verification exercise and added labelling
	5.12	Changed from ”Re-certification” to ”Renewal” in entire section as applicable.
	5.12.5	Amended to align with the regulations and created subsections
	5.12.10	Amended to provide for register of expired, suspended and withdrawn or cancelled permits.
	5.12.13	Provided for updating of company profile, as applicable
	5.13	Renumbered to 6.0