



# QFE-034 Third Party Effectiveness Verification Program

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## 1. Purpose

This program is data driven to determine that the accredited TL 9000 certification process is in place, effective and consistently applied globally. The accredited third-party certification process depends on organizations implementing the requirements and measurements of TL 9000 properly and effectively to demonstrate conformance to a QuEST Forum authorized accredited certification body during initial, surveillance and recertification audits. Accreditation Bodies and Certification Bodies are also required to effectively operate a system in conformance to QuEST Forum requirements. Accreditation bodies are to demonstrate conformance to QuEST Forum. Each accredited certification body is to demonstrate conformance to its Accreditation Body, which is approved by the QuEST Forum.

Listings of the QuEST Forum approved Accreditation Bodies and accredited Certification Bodies may be found on the web site [tl9000.org](http://www.tl9000.org/abcb/cb.html) under resources. <http://www.tl9000.org/abcb/cb.html>

## 2. Definitions

- AB Approval Board – Team of QuEST Forum member individuals with no conflict of interest and with an executed confidentiality agreement with respect to CB performance on file with QuEST Forum, responsible for review, recognition and re-review of accreditation bodies in the QuEST Forum TL 9000 program as well as responsibilities within this process.
- CB - Certification Body
- AB - Accreditation Body
- OSWG – QuEST Forum Oversight Working Group
- UTD - University of Texas at Dallas
- Trigger 1 – An approved value based on a particular measurement that when reached drives an AB to perform an AB investigation (e.g. assessment) of a CB's TL 9000 activities
- Trigger 2 – An approved value based on a particular measurement that when reached drives an AB to:
  - Perform an investigation (e.g. assessment) of a CB's TL 9000 activities,
  - Perform a market surveillance of a CB's TL 9000 certified organization

## 3. Responsibilities

- UTD – Responsible for capturing data, generating scorecards, and providing trigger notifications
- CB – Responsible for collecting and submitting data required to UTD for scorecard generation
- AB - Responsible for:
  - Performing CB investigations at the direction of the QuEST Forum
  - Performing Market Surveillance at the direction of the QuEST Forum
- AB Approval Board – Responsible for:
  - Setting scorecard triggers for OSWG approval
  - Notifying ABs for required actions to be taken when scorecard triggers are reached
  - Approving Market Surveillance Audit plans
  - Evaluating corrective action plans as a result of AB investigations or Market Surveillance
- OSWG – Responsible for:
  - Approving this process
  - Approving scorecard triggers
  - Ensuring AB Approval Board members meet the criteria noted in the definitions section above.

## 4. General Process Description

The basic concept of this evaluation process is to collect certification bodies that indicates the effectiveness of the accredited third-party certification system with respect to TL 9000 (see the data items to be collected below). QuEST Forum will aggregate that data and develop normative performance values for each measurement criterion. Once that normative performance value is known, trigger values to indicate deviation from the norm and drive performance improvement activities are established. Those trigger values will be developed by the AB Approval Board and presented to the OSWG for approval. See Figure 1 for a flow chart of the process.

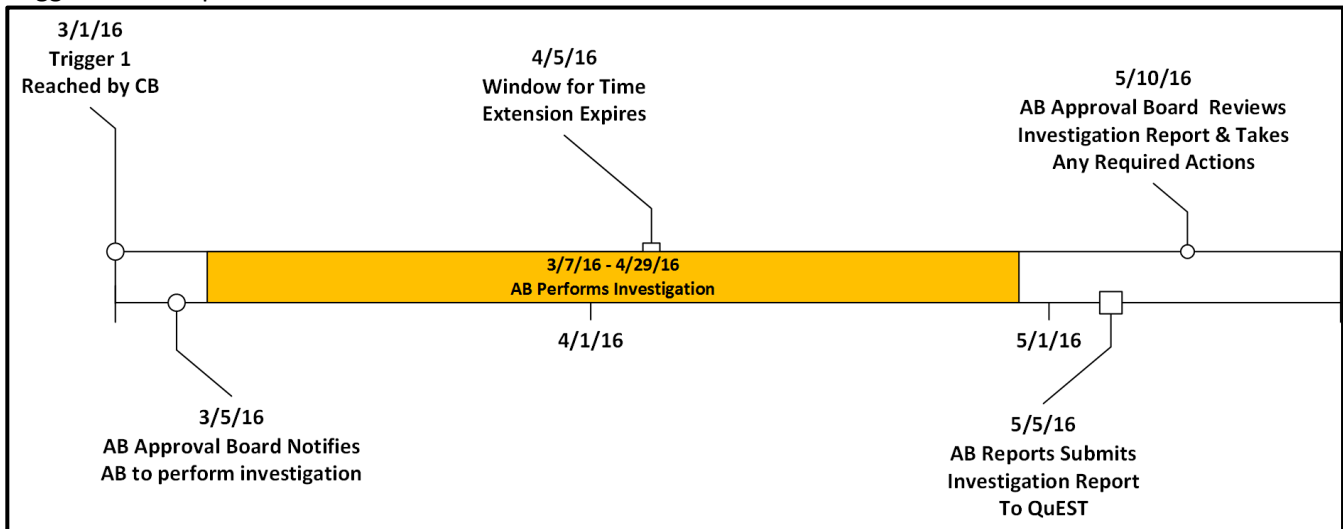
Two trigger values of increasing severity are established.

- Trigger value 1 (least severe) drives a request that the appropriate AB perform an investigation of the identified CB and report back Root Cause Analysis, related actions and timeframes for completion by the CB. (See accreditation body investigation below)
- Trigger value 2 (greater severity) indicates a much larger deviation from the norm and will not only require an AB investigation, but also a market surveillance by the AB of an organization certified by the CB to further analyze the performance of the CB. (See market surveillance below). Should the AB determine during the investigation that Market Surveillance is not appropriate, it may propose an exception to QuEST. Such requests must be submitted with the specified 30-day time frame.

### 4.1 Accreditation Body Investigation

Each QuEST Forum approved AB must conform with international standard ISO/IEC 17011, be a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and as such respond to complaints of interested parties (QuEST Forum). The methods of resolving complaints or concerns must be part of the documented systems within the AB. Since QuEST Forum has confidence in the requirements of the IAF and ISO/IEC 17011, we have confidence that the internal processes of each AB will suffice for any QuEST forum requested investigation. The AB shall report back to the QuEST Forum with results of its investigation within 60 days of notification by QuEST Forum of Trigger 1 being reached. The AB Approval Board must approve any extension to this timeframe within 30 days of notification.

Trigger 1 – Example timeline



## 4.2 Accreditation Body Market Surveillance - IAF Informative Document (ID) 4

There have been growing concerns in recent years about the effectiveness of the third party certification methodology in ensuring that expected outcomes from management system certification are being achieved consistently around the globe. As a result of work carried out by the ISO 9000 Advisory Group (IAG) and the IAF Technical Committee, the philosophy “Output Matters!” has become widely recognized and forms a core element of the Strategic ISO/IAF “Action Plan to monitor and improve the effectiveness of Accredited Management System Certification”.

Consistent with this philosophy, one of the specific actions in the ISO/IAF Action Plan (Item 3.3) was “Development of criteria for the performance of ‘Market Surveillance visits’ ” by the ABs at the certified organizations to check the effectiveness of the management system. A methodology for conducting such visits was developed within IAF ID-4. The IAF informative document provides direction on how short market surveillance visits might be used by ABs or others in order to complement traditional oversight techniques.

This procedure requires ABs to perform market surveillance on each CB that reaches scorecard Trigger level 2.

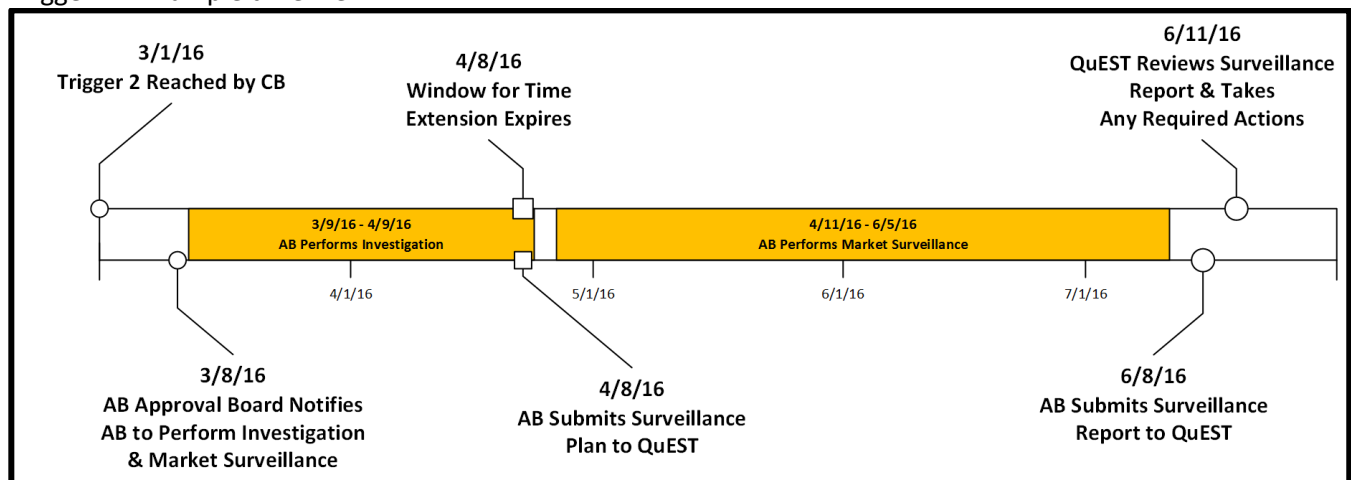
Once Trigger 2 is reached, the relevant AB will be directed by the AB Approval Board to use IAF ID-4 as a basis for the market surveillance with the addition of certain TL 9000 specific requirements:

- Conformance with the QuEST Forum Code of Practice
- Any additional requirements issued by the AB Approval Board team based on a specific concern

The selection of the organization to be assessed for the market surveillance and the duration of the assessment shall be determined by the Accreditation Body. The plan for the market surveillance shall be submitted to the Approval Board for approval within 30 days of notification that Trigger 2 is reached. Any information that could identify the organization being assessed shall be omitted from the plan.

The AB shall report back to the QuEST Forum with results of their Market Surveillance within 90 days of notification by QuEST Forum of Trigger 2 being reached. The AB Approval Team must approve any extension to these timeframes within 30 days of notification that Trigger 2 has been reached.

### Trigger 2 – Example timeline



## 4.3 Required Data to be collected and reported by Certification Bodies (may be modified periodically) Quarterly Basis



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- Number of Surveillance Audits
- Number of Certification / Re-certification Audits
- Number of certificates issued
- Number of major non-conformities
- Number of minor non-conformities
- Number of OFIs
- Number of Audit Days by Certification/Re-certification/Surveillance
- Minimum number of audit days per Certification/Re-certification/Surveillance

### 4.4 Establishing trigger levels

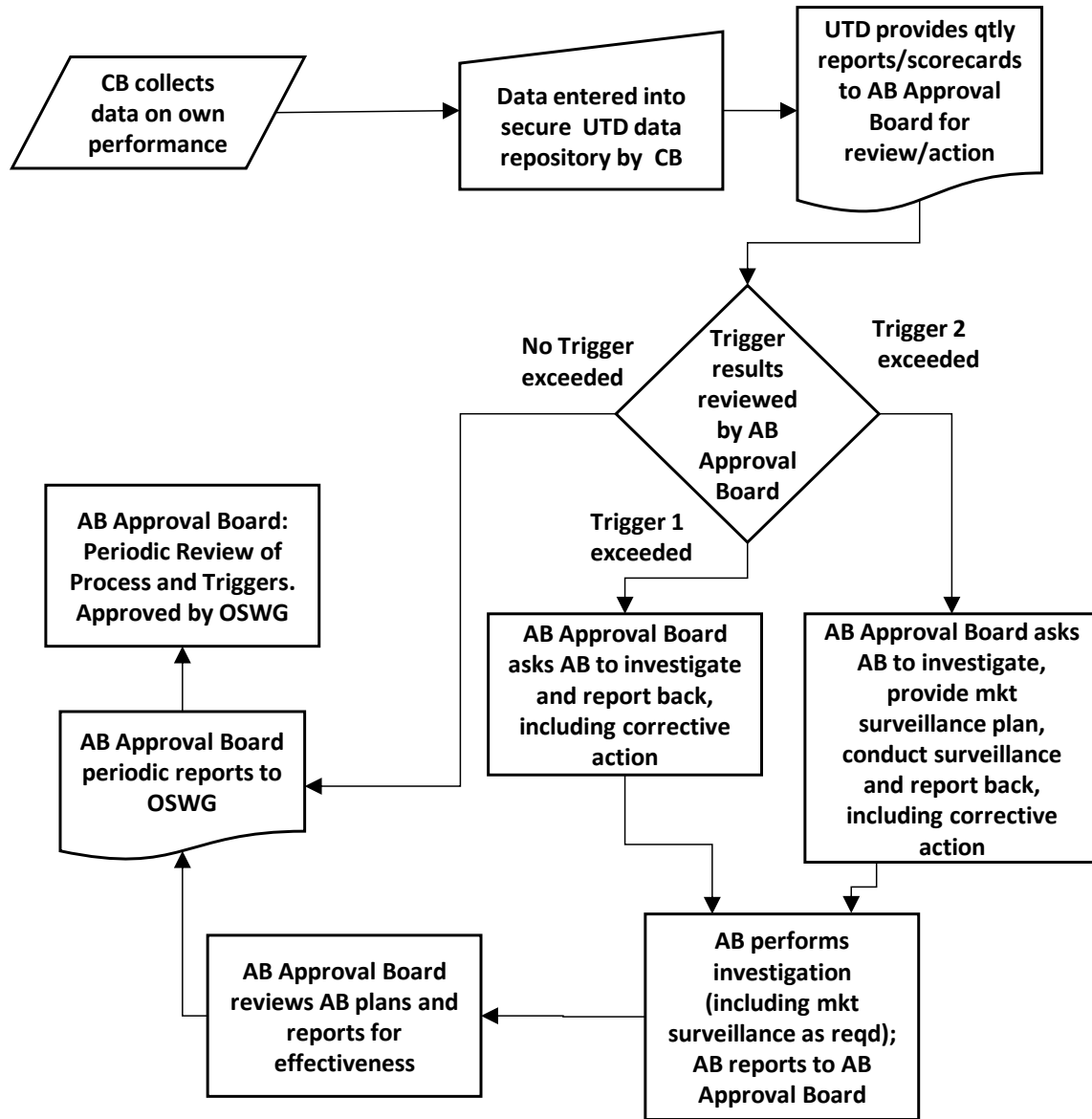
The initial analysis of the AB Approval Board Team indicates that one set of triggers shall be set at this time:

Measurement	Sampling Period	Trigger 1	Trigger 2
Total Major and Minor NCs per audit day	The most recent one year period	25% below the norm	40% below the norm

The normative level will be based on the most recent one year period each quarter. The AB Approval Board will continue to monitor the data submitted quarterly by both the ABs and the CBs. As appropriate, the trigger points used will be adjusted and presented to OSWG for approval.

It is anticipated that additional triggers will be set in the future based on the measurements defined above. Any additional triggers will be presented to the OSWG for approval.

Figure 1 High Level Process Flow





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### 5. REVISION HISTORY

01/01/ 2017 This document was initially released as QFP-034 on 01/01/2016 and replaced that document.

03/08/2018- Revision 1.1 added missing text in section 4.2 and clarification in section 4.5

03/11/2020 – Revision 2.0 removed AB data reporting requirements