

Results of Approval of Certification Body “SPEKTRCert” by Auditors of EFNDT

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Abstract. In 2006 the Certification Body (CB) “SPEKTRCert” sent application for approval by EFNDT. Together with the Russian Society for NDT and Technical Diagnostics (RSNTTD) it was decided to use the new option proposed by the EFNDT for countries where there is no formally recognized (at international level) the State Accreditation Body responsible for NDT personnel certification. Discussed are results of conducted approval.

Introduction

The European Federation for NDT (EFNDT) and its Certification Executive Committee (CEC) for several years has been developing procedures to set out the EFNDT requirements in respect of approval of Certification Bodies providing certification of personnel competence in accordance with the requirements of standard EN473. The main goal of such approval is to provide for international recognition of NDT personnel certification bodies where there is no established national system of accreditation recognized in Europe. In year 2006 the last revision of documents was approved [1] and it became possible to apply for EFNDT approval. The Certification Body of JSC MSIA “Spectrum” (Russia) forwarded application form to the EFNDT practically immediately after set of documents was approved.

1. Some historical facts

The fact of applying for EFNDT approval does not mean that in Russia NDT personnel certification schemes do not exist. On the contrary, there are several: the most widely used is Scheme approved by ROSTEKhnADZOR (Agency appointed by the Government of Russia to be responsible for industrial safety at potentially hazardous facilities) as well as Voluntary system of personnel certification in the field of NDT and diagnostics established by the Russian Society for NDT and Technical Diagnostics (RSNTTD). Any person can apply to gain voluntary certification of certain level to the CB that passed conformity assessment within the RSNTTD voluntary system of personal certification. Assessment of CBs is performed by correspondent RSNTTD Body in accordance with requirement of the standard EN ISO/IEC 17024:2003 “Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons”. Both mentioned schemes are based on national and international standards and documents relevant to personnel certification. The schemes are in use for many years and a number of persons who gained certificates is impressive (annually, for different levels certified are thousands of specialists). Nevertheless, those certificates do not have international recognition as in Russia there is no officially appointed Accreditation body. Some Russian certification Bodies had to apply for accreditation from International Accreditation Bodies while CB “SPEKTRCert” supported by the RSNTTD decided to become a pioneer on the way proposed by the EFNDT.

2. EFNDT approval results

For “SPEKTRCert” it was very important to have an international recognition to become a part of the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) administrated by the CEC of EFNDT and to start, as soon as possible, to use the Question Bank developed by BINDT (UK), DGZfP (Germany) and Cofrend (France).

After confirmation received from EFNDT the “SPEKTRCert” started preparations for assessment. Were revised all documents of Quality Management System developed earlier. Many documents were developed in addition to existing ones to provide compliance to all new standards and guidelines.

The approval procedure was split in two stages.

At first stage (in July, 2006) the EFNDT auditors evaluated readiness of CB “SPEKTRCert” to perform certification in accordance with requirements of ISO/IEC 17024:2003, EN473:2000 and IAF GD 24:2004. They followed procedure developed by CEC EFNDT [2]. Special attention was paid to performance of documents, requirements imposed on training centers and maintenance of the documents. Assessors visited examination center where practical exams are conducted, checked examination specimens and made several recommendations. Everyone involved in the evaluation process from both sides was really interested and enthusiastic. In the process of audit the Russian specialists were collecting new knowledge and experience as implemented procedure is not 100% the same as has been in use in Russia.

After first audit the correction actions were taken and report was sent to CEC. Based on the results of first evaluation it was recommended to start persons’ certification in compliance with requirements of EN473 that should be followed by surveillance audit in approximately six months.

In November, 2006 the “SPEKTRCert” started to certify NDT specialists in accordance with EN 473. Since then a total of eight examinations had been conducted, and six certificates were awaiting issue after follow-up audit and pending agreement on the form of the certificate.

In March, 2007 the follow-up (surveillance) audit was arranged during which were revised the results achieved by “SPEKTRCert” to the moment. The general impression of assessors was positive and final report was prepared where some minor comments and observations were done. The assessment team recommended approval of CB after corrective actions to clear non-compliances are satisfactorily implemented by an agreed date). The corrective actions were taken and report was sent to CEC EFNDT for final approval.

After two audits performed by appointed EFNDT assessors the CB “SPEKTRCert” was approved as complying with requirements of ISO/IEC 17024:2003, EN473:2000 and IAF GD 24:2004 and Certificate on approval and of Certificate of Registration under MRA were issued (see Fig. 1). The approval is valid for three years.

Conclusion

Audit of Certification Body “SPEKTRCert” seeking EFNDT approval was first after all documents for approval were set by CEC EFNDT.

The work done together by teams of EFNDT assessors and specialists from certification



Figure 1. Certificates issued by the EFNDT to Certification Body “SPEKTRCert”

body is of great importance for all participants and EFNDT as institution.

As positive results can be mentioned the following:

- 1). Practical use of procedures developed by the EFNDT;
- 2). Experience exchange between Russian Certification Body and European assessors;
- 3). It was recommended that EFNDT stages regular workshops for its CB approval auditors and documents and procedures further improvement
- 4). Shown very positive and encouraging example to other countries where there is presently no national system of accreditation.
- 5). The Certification Body “SPEKTRCert” from now can use Bank of Questions developed by the members of EFNDT (BINDT, DGZIP and Cofrend) that will help to provide harmonization of certification process.
- 6). One more Certification Body acting in accordance with European regulating documents started to work in Russia in the area of NDT persons certification.
- 7). Now we will have an opportunity to compare available Questions Banks from EFNDT, ASNT and RSNTTD and compare the qualification and certification levels of specialists in Europe, Russia and USA.
- 8). One more task that can be put in front of all interested parities - to make extra efforts to harmonize standards EN 473 and new version of ISO 9712:2005 and to issue certificates that will comply with both standards and make more attractive to users the cervices provided by certified NDT specialists .

References

- [1] EFNDT/CEC/P/05-001 “EFNDT approval o Certification Bodies”
- [2] EFNDT/CEC/P/05-002 “Procedure for the audit of Certification Bodies seeking EFNDT approval”