

# Carrying out remote assessments (remote audits) Guide for ECB customers



## ECB•S R13

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## 1. Introduction

Topics such as globalisation and digitalisation do not stop at the performance of audits. The European Certification Body (ECB) GmbH also carries out so-called remote audits - i.e. audits from a distance. In this form of auditing, the auditor is no longer physically on site, but connects remotely with the help of various technical possibilities, such as the well-known methods of telephone or video chats. In this way, audits can be carried out easily and quickly over long distances.

We also use remote audits in the event of extraordinary events or circumstances (e.g., a pandemic) with significant restrictions on economic and social life worldwide. Despite the restrictions that will then prevail, the ECB will responsibly fulfil its mandate and continue to carry out the required monitoring at its customers' premises. This instrument will then replace the usual on-site audits until further notice and as far as possible. In this way, we can verify the competence of the production site and continue to maintain your ECB-S certification.

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### 2. Use of remote audits

Please note that only the ECB decides in which cases remote audits are carried out. The customer shall have no legal claim to the performance of remote audits. ECB shall invite to such remote assessments.

#### 2.1 Scope of remote audits

In principle initial audits cannot be carried out by remote evaluation. In these cases, further procedures will be agreed with the customer on a case-by-case basis.

#### 2.2 Preparation of remote audits

##### 2.2.1 Additional check of documents

For the efficient execution of a remote audit, an intensive preparatory document review in advance is essential. The ECB auditor will request additional documents and records from the certificate holder or the production site. It is in their interest to comply with these requests at short notice.

##### 2.2.2 Technical prerequisite

Proper communication is crucial for remote monitoring. Therefore, before the start of the actual remote assessment - if possible, the previous working day - the technical connection should be established and sufficiently tested (see section 3).

##### 2.2.3 Rejection of a remote audit by the customer

If a remote assessment is not possible for the certificate holder or the production site for comprehensible reasons, ECB offers to enable the maintenance of certification by means of an extended document check and a telephone conference. The on-site assessment must then be carried out as soon as possible.

Reasons for this may be:

- Data security politic / data protection
- Missing ability to work because of staff shortage/missing availability of employees (e.g. short time)

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- Missing technical precondition (e.g., bandwidth of internet connection, availability of equipped workplaces)

**The reasons described above must be proven by the certificate holder by means of appropriate records or documents. Oral statements or e-mails from individual employees are not sufficient as justification.**

### 3. Organisational and technical regulations

To perform remote audits the ECB employees have the following technical possibilities:

- Microsoft TEAMS video conference
- GoToMeeting video conference
- In exceptional cases telephone conference

#### 3.1 Technical implementation

##### 3.1.1 Hardware

For performance of remote audits ECB propose to their customers the following hardware:

- Laptop and at least one monitor
- Camera, depends on the performance of the device
- Microphone and loudspeaker, ideally with headset
- Internet connection
- Smartphone/tablet with installed *TEAMS App* oder *GoToMeeting App* for mobile transmission from the premises of the manufacturing plant

##### 3.1.2 Software

ECB carries out remote audits using the *Microsoft TEAMS* or *GoToMeeting* videoconferencing software. Participation in the videoconference is possible in two ways - firstly by installing the application on a suitable device, and secondly by using a suitable Internet browser (for example Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome). It is not necessary for the customer of the certification body to purchase their own license for *Microsoft TEAMS* or *GoToMeeting*. The customer will receive an email with the necessary dial-in data in sufficient time before the remote assessment takes place.

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### Note on the use of alternative software

ECB organises via *Microsoft TEAMS* or *GoToMeeting* the invitation as well as the implementation of the remote audit planning, if necessary, using several assessors. We therefore ask our customers to understand that only in justified exceptional cases other software solutions can be used for remote assessments. In this case, the organization of the meeting, especially the invitation to the meeting, must be made by the customer. Should such an exceptional case exist, the use of alternative software must be discussed between the customer and the certification body.

## 4. Procedure of the remote audit

- A remote audit is carried out by agreement between the ECB and the auditee.
  - Obstacle, e.g., the customer does not have the necessary technical possibilities.
- All those involved in the "remote audit" must have the competence and ability to operate the electronic infrastructure used in such a way that the desired results can be achieved.
- The technical infrastructure, which is of vital importance for flawless communication, must be set up well in advance of the remote audit and tested sufficiently.
- The auditor must be provided with more comprehensive documentation in advance.
  - An exchange of documents, if possible, also during the audit, is desirable.
- More detailed scheduling in the audit plan
  - It must be clear to all parties involved what comes when.
  - If necessary, several, shorter dates are planned (enormous load)
    - Maximum 3 to 4 hours in a row with breaks after approx. 1 ½ hours
  - If necessary, two ECB auditors are used.
- Data security must be ensured and is discussed with the customer in advance.
  - No video recordings
  - Sharing documents on the screen
  - Screen printing only after approval
  - Recording on site with mobile phone/tablet only in coordination (employees can leave the picture if necessary)

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- Antitrust regulations must be complied with (especially if several parties participate in the audit (e.g., ATM-safes and safe companies).
  - At the beginning of the audit, antitrust obligations are pointed out, e.g.
    - No exchange of prices, price components and price-forming factors (e.g., discounts)
    - No communication of sensitive company data from which competing companies can derive strategic benefit