

# MERCHANT SHIPPING SECRETARIAT

## VERIFICATION AUDIT OF SEAFARER RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT SERVICE PROVIDER

### Audit Process Guidance

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to assist Seafarer Recruitment and Placement Service (SRPS) providers with background and guidance in preparation for verification audit conducted by the Merchant Shipping Secretariat (MSS).
- 1.2. As the competent authority, MSS conducts verification audits at an applicant's business location and branches, and is an essential step in verifying compliance for the issuance of the Certificate of Authorisation (COA). Initial audit applies to the issuance of a new five-year COA and the renewal of an existing COA. Annual verification audit shall include a general inspection of the seafarer recruitment and placement service provider including document verification to ensure the compliance of the provisions of applicable regulations.

#### 2. CORE ELEMENTS OF THE VERIFICATION AUDIT

- 2.1. The core elements of the Audit are based on the requirements of the *Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour) Regulations No.11 of 2022 and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006*, that includes the following, but not limited to:
  - 2.1.1. Quality management systems (QMS), including policies and procedures;
  - 2.1.2. Seafarers' contract of employments;
  - 2.1.3. Credentials of SRPS supervisory staff;
  - 2.1.4. MoUs/contracts/agreements with ship-owners/employers;
  - 2.1.5. Seafarer and vessel registry; and
  - 2.1.6. Seafarers' complaints procedures and handling.

#### 3. SCOPE AND CONDUCT OF THE VERIFICATION AUDIT

- 3.1. The verification audit will normally include the following activities:
  - 3.1.1. An initial meeting between the SRPS applicant and MSS personnel;
  - 3.1.2. Company orientation;

- 3.1.3. QMS review (policies, procedures, records and work instructions);
- 3.1.4. Audit of other pertinent documentation or information;
- 3.1.5. Staff interviews and discussions; and
- 3.1.6. A closing meeting, to include a summary of findings and next steps.

#### **4. APPLICAN'S INVOLVEMENT**

- 4.1. To ensure an efficient and accurate audit process, the SRPS applicant is asked to ensure all key personnel are available for discussions with MSS audit staff, including:
  - 4.1.1 Employees with recruitment responsibilities;
  - 4.1.2 Manager(s) responsible for Quality Assurance and employees familiar with the Quality Management System (QMS); and
  - 4.1.3 Other employees responsible for supporting and administrating recruitment and placement processes.
  
- 4.2. In addition, the Auditor(s) will require some logistical support, including:
  - 4.2.2 Access to all requested records and documents;
  - 4.2.3 A secure room or work area to review applicable documentation and consult with the applicant's staff, and
  - 4.2.4 Internet access and power supply.

#### **5 AUDIT SCHEDULE**

- 5.1. The audit schedule will be communicated in advance and the verification audit will normally be conducted during business hours.

#### **6 DOCUMENTATION REVIEW**

- 6.1. As part of the Verification Audit, MSS will request and review a significant number of documents. As part of your company's SRPS application, you should be prepared to provide the following documentation to the auditor(s):
  - 6.1.1 Declaration of compliance;
  - 6.1.2 Credentials of supervisory staff;
  - 6.1.3 Quality Management System (most current and approved version), including related policies and procedures;
  - 6.1.4 Various policies, procedures or instructions relating to seafarers and seafarer recruitment in accordance with the national regulations;

- 6.1.5** Copy of the QMS certificate in accordance with ISO 9001;
- 6.1.6** Access to records or data bases containing seafarers' information, including certifications and training;
- 6.1.7** An organizational chart that includes the SRPS provider organization and functions;
- 6.1.8** Internal audit reports, in the case of a renewal application;
- 6.1.9** Management review documentation;
- 6.1.10** Vessel specific insurance certificates, if applicable;
- 6.1.11** Current register of recruited seafarers;
- 6.1.12** Seafarers feedback/complaints register and monitoring system;
- 6.1.13** Vessel register;
- 6.1.14** Current contracts of employments and/or seafarer agreements; and
- 6.1.15** Current collective agreements.