



**INTERNATIONAL AUTOMOTIVE TASK FORCE
CERTIFICATION BODY PROBLEM-SOLVING MANUAL**

8 May 2020



IATF CB PROBLEM-SOLVING MANUAL

FOREWORD

This document has been created by an IATF Global Oversight subgroup for internal use by the IATF Oversight offices and their contracted IATF Certification Bodies (CBs). This manual is based on input from the IATF Oversight offices, IATF witness auditors, responses from CBs to subject-related surveys and a detailed analysis of previously completed CB responses to IATF witness audit findings.

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The latest version of this document can be downloaded from the HELP section of the IATF Audit and NC Management Platform (AMP).



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INTRODUCTION

Scope: This IATF CB Problem-solving Manual applies to all the IATF-recognized CBs when responding to nonconformities identified from IATF office assessments and IATF witness audits. It also applies to special nonconformities that were issued to CBs due to performance-related issues, complaints received from IATF members, or any violation of the Rules for achieving and maintaining IATF recognition.

Purpose: This IATF CB Problem-solving Manual aims to improve the first-time pass rates of CB nonconformity responses by achieving consistency:

- in the way the CBs execute the problem-solving process and
- in the evaluation of responses by IATF Oversight office Response Reviewers (RSRs).

Definitions: The following terminology is used in this document:

Certification Body (CB):

A Certification Body contracted to an IATF Oversight office.

Containment:

The action of keeping the nonconforming situation under control or within limits; preventing any further negative impact on the effective certification of IATF clients; and/or the effective monitoring and management of activities in relation to the IATF requirements by the CB until the corrective action(s) is/are implemented and verified.

Containment shall be considered from a global perspective unless investigation confirms that it is a localised issue.

Correction:

The immediate action taken to remedy the nonconforming situation (i.e. fix the negative effects that have already occurred, e.g. through re-auditing or reworking of the nonconforming process results/products) in order to protect the integrity of the IATF 16949 certification scheme.

Corrective Action:

The permanent, systemic action(s) taken designed to prevent a recurrence of the nonconformity (NC). Each root cause identified shall have at least one corresponding corrective action.

Fresh Eyes Reviewer:

A CB person not directly involved in the problem-solving process, with the appropriate competence/experience/skills, who shall undertake a review of the completed problem-solving response prior to submission to the relevant IATF Oversight office.

Note: This role is mandatory for each type of nonconformity specified in the scope above, unless the relevant IATF Oversight office has waived this requirement based on the CB's NC response performance targets.

IATF Audit and NC Management Platform (IATF AMP system)

The IATF AMP is a computer software application used by the IATF Oversight offices and IATF recognized Certification Bodies to manage their tasks related to IATF office assessments and IATF witness audits, including the management of all types of nonconformities.



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IATF Auditor:

Unless specified, this term covers individuals contracted by the IATF to undertake IATF office assessments and/or IATF witness audits.

Problem:

In general, this denotes an undesirable deviation of an actual state from a target /nominal/normal state. In this manual the term “problem” and “problem-solving” are used synonymously to mean “nonconformity”/“nonconforming situation” and “nonconformity management” respectively.

A problem in the specific context of this manual is:

The failure of a specific CB system or process to fulfil one or more IATF requirements (Rules/SIs in conjunction with related FAQs, CB-Communiqué, contract with Oversight in conjunction with related CB processes and relevant regulations in countries where the CB operates) which constitutes a certain level of risk to the IATF certification scheme in the achievement of its objectives, namely:

- a) the effective certification of one or more IATF clients by the CB and/or
- b) the effective monitoring & management of activities in relation to the IATF requirements by the CB and/or
- c) the effective monitoring and controlling of the CB’s activities in relation to the IATF requirements by the relevant IATF Oversight office.

Problem Investigation:

This is the process of collecting as much objective data as possible to comprehend and understand the nature, magnitude (scale and scope) and the risks associated with the problem and to draw up a concise problem statement.

Note: Consideration shall be given to collecting data on a global basis in order to determine the scope and scale of the problem (Who, Where, When, ...) Furthermore, the CB shall review the internal system(s), procedure(s) and form(s) related to the problem and identify where the breakdown in the process occurred.

Problem Statement:

A concise description of the problem stated in such a way that it conveys the scope of the problem and what needs to be accomplished by the problem-solving process.

Notes:

- a) The problem statement is an output of the problem investigation.
- b) Based on the output of the problem investigation, multiple problem statements may be defined against one nonconformity statement.
- c) Unlike the nonconformity statement which is often phrased in a generic manner, the problem statement shall refer specifically to the CB’s management system-related terms, definitions and processes.
- d) The problem statement(s) is/are the starting point of the root cause analysis.

Response Reviewer (RSR):

A person assigned by an IATF Oversight office to review the CB’s response(s) to a specific nonconformity.

Note: For an IATF office assessment or witness audit, the IATF Auditor concerned is usually the RSR.



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Root cause:

The ultimate reason(s) for the problem's occurrence.

Note: For each problem statement there shall be at least one root cause identified.

Verification of corrective action:

Checks performed by the CB to verify that all the corrective actions taken have been successful in permanently resolving the issue and preventing its recurrence.

Structure of this document

This document is structured around a complete problem-solving cycle starting with the appointment of a problem-solving team up to IATF Oversight office acceptance of the CB response. It includes the following sections:

- 1.0 Appointment of a problem-solving team
- 2.0 Problem-solving – Standard Method
- 3.0 Problem-solving – Simplified Method
- 4.0 CB response rejection and requests for clarification

CBs are expected to establish and maintain a documented nonconformity management/ problem-solving process based on this manual to meet the relevant requirements of the Rules for achieving and maintaining IATF recognition (see IATF Rules 2.4.3 and 2.6).



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1.0 APPOINTMENT OF A PROBLEM-SOLVING TEAM

The CB process for problem-solving shall include as a minimum:

a. Requirements for appointing problem-solving teams including:

- The responsibility and authority to appoint problem-solving teams.
- The provision to review the nonconformity and appoint a problem-solving team comprising a minimum of two (2) members within five (5) days after the issuance of any new nonconformity – at least one (1) member representing the CB's global operations (i.e. contracted office) and the other from its regional or country office where the nonconformity was reported, if applicable.

Notes:

1. Consideration shall be given to involving the relevant CB Global Process Owner/Senior Leadership person responsible for the affected processes containing the root cause(s) in the problem-solving process.
 2. In the event of witness audit nonconformities, consideration shall be given to involving the CB auditor(s) witnessed in the problem-solving process.
 3. The Team membership may change depending on the identification of the confirmed root cause(s) of the problem.
- The provision to appoint other members to provide necessary additional inputs and process knowledge to ensure that the overall team knowledge and composition represents the processes associated with the reported problem.
 - The provision to appoint one of the members as the problem-solving Team Leader who will have the necessary authority for decision-making.
 - The provision to appoint external, sub-contracted individuals as experts in the problem-solving process, but not as the Team Leader.
 - The provision to appoint a person as “Fresh Eyes Reviewer” to review the completed problem-solving response in order to ensure robust cross functional implementation and problem resolution validation before it is submitted to the relevant IATF Oversight office. The relevant IATF Oversight office may waive this requirement based on the CB's nonconformity response performance targets.
 - A provision that the appointed problem-solving team, together with the Fresh Eyes Reviewer, shall have the overall responsibility for ensuring the adequacy of the problem-solving responses prior to submission to the relevant IATF Oversight office.
- b. The initial development and ongoing maintenance of the necessary competencies of the problem-solving team and of the Fresh Eyes Reviewer.

The problem-solving team and the Fresh Eyes Reviewer shall possess sufficient competencies including:

- Knowledge of the IATF 16949 scheme and the requirements of the Rules for achieving and maintaining IATF recognition.
- Knowledge of the CB's Quality Management System.
- Knowledge and skills relating to Problem-solving Tools and Techniques.
- Knowledge and skills for applying the requirements defined in this manual.



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The team shall have the authority to implement the system and process improvements necessary to prevent a recurrence of the problem.

Note: Those personnel managing inputs into the IATF AMP system shall have sufficient understanding of its functionalities.

- c. The details of each member of the problem-solving process including those of the Fresh Eyes Reviewer shall be entered in the IATF AMP system under the section “Problem-solving Team”. These details shall include, as a minimum, the name, position (job title/rank), location (country/region from where they operate) and their role in the problem-solving process (e.g. Team Leader, Team Member, Fresh Eyes Reviewer, Expert etc).



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2.0 PROBLEM-SOLVING – STANDARD METHOD

Applicability:

The standard method for problem-solving shall be the default option for a CB and may be applied for both minor and major nonconformities.

When applying the standard method for problem-solving for minor or major nonconformities, the CB's response shall comply with the timing requirements of the Rules for achieving and maintaining IATF recognition (see section 2.4.3) and the IATF AMP system. When the timing requirements cannot be met, under exceptional and justified circumstances, the CB shall apply for an extension of timing through the IATF AMP system and get formal approval from the relevant IATF Oversight office.

Problem investigation:

a. The CB shall use the response items below to investigate the reported non-conformity:

	Response item	Yes	No	Supporting evidence/information
1	The CB has an established process that addresses the situation reported in the nonconformity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	The CB has an established process to ensure that personnel, including those involved in this situation, have the required knowledge and skills and are competent in the process related to the nonconformity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	In the previous 12 months, the CB did not observe similar situations in its:	(Answers for 3a to 3e shall be a NO if the CB observed similar situations in the previous 12 months.)		
3a	Internal system audits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3b	Internal witness audits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3c	IATF office assessments/witness audits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3d	Veto reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3e	Other IATF monitoring activities (e.g. special nonconformities, complaints from stakeholders)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	The CB confirms that no other internal processes are impacted due to the nonconformity (e.g. Sales, IATF Database Management etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	The CB confirms that the scale of the impact is limited to the sampled/observed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



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	case and/or auditor concerned and does not affect other regions, other clients and/or other auditors.			
6	The CB confirms that other stakeholders are not adversely impacted (e.g. IATF OEM members, clients etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Other details that support the CB's investigation of the problem and its magnitude (e.g. details of the circumstances surrounding a nonconformity or objective evidence including answers to questions like who, where, when, how many, how often etc. and details of the investigation of each piece of objective evidence if there are multiple objective evidence reported under one nonconformity).			

Notes:

- The CB response shall not be limited to a YES or NO answer. Objective evidence or a detailed explanation is expected for all the above response items irrespective of a YES or NO answer. Related attachments shall be submitted as necessary to support the explanations.
 - Objective evidence or the detailed explanation shall represent the CB's global operations (namely, all regions, all auditors and all clients), unless the CB can clearly demonstrate that the issue is just relating to a specific region or country.
 - The level of detail required relating to the above response items shall depend upon the complexity, classification and risks associated with the nonconformity.
- b. The responses to each item above, shall be entered in the Problem Investigation section of the IATF AMP system and mapped to the relevant item numbers (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 3a....7).
- c. All attachments to support the investigation shall be clearly mapped to the related response item and uploaded in the IATF AMP system.
- d. If any one or more of response items 1-6 is/are answered as NO, the CB shall follow this standard method for problem-solving. If all answers are YES and are supported by evidence or explanations, refer to the simplified method for problem-solving defined in the next section of this manual.
- e. The CB shall confirm the following prior to submission of its problem investigation response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
- The problem-solving team includes personnel who adequately represent the reported issue – both locally and globally.
 - The problem-solving team details have been entered fully in the IATF AMP system.



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- Response item 1-6 have all been answered as either YES or NO.
- The necessary supporting evidence or other detailed explanations are provided to support a YES or NO answer.
- The supporting data demonstrates that all CB regional offices, auditors and clients have been considered.
- The magnitude of the problem (including the scope and scale) and the associated risks have been appropriately evaluated.
- Other details to support the investigation are provided, where applicable.
- If documents are attached separately as evidence, they have been numbered and mapped to the relevant response item.
- In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.

Problem Statement:

- a. If the CB response is NO to any one or more of the response items in the problem investigation and this is confirmed through objective evidence, the problem statement shall reflect accordingly what step / element / part failed in the process or system.
- b. The problem statement shall be short, simple and concise and precisely indicate the nature of the failure with the process or system which is clearly linked to the problem investigation.
- c. The problem statement shall be entered in the "problem statement" section in the IATF AMP system.
- d. The problem statement shall not be a repeat of the nonconformity statement or the reported objective evidence. Unlike the nonconformity statement which is often phrased in a generic manner, the problem statement shall refer specifically to the CB's management system-related terms and definitions.
- e. The problem statement shall be drafted in such a way that it becomes the basis/starting point for the root cause analysis.
- f. There may be multiple problem statements and this can lead to multiple paths of root cause analysis.
- g. The CB shall confirm the following regarding the problem statement, prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - The problem statement is short, simple and concise.
 - The problem statement is clearly linked to the investigation outcome.
 - The problem statement is not a repeat of the nonconformity statement or the objective evidence.
 - The problem statement clearly reflects a process or system failure with the CB.



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- The problem statement is drafted in such a way that it can be used as the basis/starting point for root cause analysis.
- Multiple problem statements are defined when the investigation identifies multiple process/system failures.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.

Correction:

- a. If it is established through the investigation that the failure is associated with processes or systems within the CB, a correction may or may not be possible depending on the nature of the reported nonconformity and objective evidence.
- b. If multiple items of objective evidence are reported within a nonconformity, the CB shall evaluate each of them carefully and initiate a correction for all those cases where it applies.
- c. The CB shall document the justification where a correction was not initiated, in the Correction/Containment section of the IATF AMP system.
- d. The correction, when initiated, shall correspond with the investigated magnitude of the problem, including actions where necessary to correct the outcome of a failure (e.g. conducting a special audit at client site, additional audit time in the next audit etc.).
- e. Use the past verb tense (e.g. "changed" or "conducted") to show the actions were implemented.
- f. Include the date when the action was implemented and who is/was responsible for its implementation.
- g. Under exceptional circumstances, if actions are not yet implemented, use the future verb tense instead of past tense (e.g. "will be changed" or "will be conducted") and include a justification for the delay, a target date and person responsible for implementation.
- h. The details of the correction shall be entered in the Correction/Containment section of the IATF AMP system and be clearly identified by the title "Correction".
- i. Supporting evidence of implementation of the correction shall be submitted together with the CB's response.
- j. The CB shall confirm the following regarding correction prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - A correction action corresponding to the investigated magnitude of the problem is defined.
 - A correction is done for each piece of objective evidence reported, if applicable.
 - Actions to be completed in the future are supported with a justification for the delay and reasonable target dates and responsibilities.
 - The correction action is clearly identified by a title in the correction/containment section of the IATF AMP system.



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- Evidence of implementation is provided.
- Evidence is appropriately organised and linked to the responses.
- In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.
- A justification is documented when correction is not defined.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.

Containment:

- Since it is confirmed through investigation that the issue is associated with processes and systems, the CB shall initiate containment action without undue delay after issuance of a minor or major nonconformity.
- The scale and degree of containment shall be based on the risks associated with the reported nonconformity and the information available from the investigation.
- For containment, the CB shall determine the action(s) including the scope, the length of time they are expected to be in place until the permanent corrective actions are implemented and verified, the start and end date and who is/was responsible for implementation. The scope of containment shall also cover in-progress certification activities/procedures as applicable.
- The details of the containment activity shall be entered in the Correction/Containment section of the IATF AMP system and be clearly identified by the title "Containment".
- The CB shall confirm the following regarding containment, prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - The containment statements are supported with evidence.
 - The containment activity has considered the potential risks associated with the nonconformity.
 - The containment clarifies the scope of the activities and their temporary and regional application (e.g. if they are implemented at a global, regional or local level).
 - The containment action is clearly identified by a title in the correction/containment section of the IATF AMP system.
 - Responsibilities, the justification for any delay and timelines are set for those containment actions which are planned but not yet completed.
 - Evidence of containment activities is appropriately organised and linked to the responses.
 - In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective



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confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.

Root Cause Analysis:

- a. Since it is confirmed through investigation that the problem is associated with processes and systems, the CB shall apply a structured root cause analysis approach.
- b. The CB shall demonstrate the methodology that it employed to ascertain the underlying causes of the nonconformity.
- c. At all times, the problem statement shall be the basis for such root cause analysis. For multiple problem statements, the CB shall document multiple root cause analyses.
- d. 5-Why analysis is the recommended methodology to be used for root cause analysis. However, other documented methodologies may be used by the CB.
- e. The root cause analysis process shall lead to the identification of systemic cause(s) associated with the relevant CB process(es).
- f. The details of the root cause analysis shall be entered in the root cause analysis section of the IATF AMP system.
- g. Where relevant, the CB shall consider in its root cause analysis the cause(s) for detection and/or prevention control failure.
- h. The root cause(s) identified shall be the basis for defining corrective actions.
- i. Multiple causes may be documented where such a situation exists.
- j. The CB shall confirm the following regarding root cause identification prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - The root cause identification is not a repeat of the problem investigation.
 - The root cause identification has used the problem statement as its basis.
 - Where multiple problem statements are documented, root cause analysis is performed on each of those statements.
 - The root cause analysis is performed using a structured methodology.
 - The root cause identification has adequately ascertained the systemic causes associated with the CB's process(es).
 - The root cause identification is not a one-line explanation of what failed; rather, it is a detailed account of the situation and process steps leading to the identification of the underlying cause(s).
 - Multiple causes are considered where necessary.
 - The cause(s) thus defined are adequate to define the systemic corrective actions.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.



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Corrective Actions:

- a. Since it is confirmed through investigation that the issue is associated with the processes and systems within the CB, corrective actions shall be systemic i.e. aimed at permanent system and/or process changes.
- b. The corrective actions documented by the CB shall demonstrate a clear linkage to the established root cause(s).
- c. Multiple root causes identified shall have corresponding corrective actions clearly identified in the CB response.
- d. Such corrective actions shall be deployed across the CB's regional offices, auditors and clients as necessary.
- e. Appropriate objective evidence shall be submitted to support the defined actions.
- f. Under exceptional circumstances, if actions are not yet implemented, use the future verb tense instead of past tense (e.g. will be changed or will be conducted) and include a justification for the delay, target dates and person responsible for implementation.
- g. The details of the corrective actions shall be entered in the corrective action section of the IATF AMP system
- h. The CB shall confirm the following regarding corrective actions, prior to submission of its response to the IATF Oversight office:
 - The corrective action is not a correction/containment.
 - The corrective actions initiated or proposed are linked to the identified root cause.
 - The corrective actions are systemic in nature leading to permanent system or process improvements.
 - Multiple causes identified have been addressed through more than one corrective action and are appropriately linked to bring clarity to the reader.
 - All relevant supporting evidence is attached and appropriately linked to the corrective action response(s). No attachments are missing.
 - In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.
 - The corrective actions have been deployed across the CB's other regional offices, auditors and clients where necessary.
 - If the corrective actions are limited to any training, monitoring, mentoring etc. , an evaluation specific to such actions is undertaken to confirm implementation (for example, conducting a test after training).
 - Where necessary, the CB's senior management involvement is ensured in the implementation of the corrective actions.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.



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Verification of effectiveness of Corrective Actions (CB Verification Actions):

- a. Verification of the effectiveness of the corrective actions may be undertaken through one or more of the following ways: Internal witness audits, supervisory monitoring and confirmation, review of audit documents, sample checks, process performance indicators and their trends, other statistical methods etc.
- b. The CB's verification activity shall include a wider sample representing various CB regional offices, clients and auditors to confirm that the actions have been effectively deployed.
- c. The CB shall make every effort to complete the verification actions fully within 90 days from the date of issuance of the nonconformity report. If that cannot be accomplished owing to exceptional situations, the CB shall:
 - Provide justification for the delay.
 - Submit a verification action plan with a defined timeframe and responsibilities for implementation, including the details of any verification actions that were already completed.
 - The timeframe in the action plan shall not in any case exceed 180 days from the date of issuance of the nonconformity report.
- d. If the CB chooses to submit a verification action plan, the implementation of such plans may be verified by the relevant IATF Oversight office during office assessments or future witness audits.
- e. The details of verification actions implemented or planned shall be entered in the verification of effectiveness section of the IATF AMP system together with appropriate evidences as attachments.
- f. The CB shall confirm the following regarding verification of the effectiveness of the corrective actions prior to submission of its response to the IATF Oversight office:
 - The method for verifying effectiveness is capable of confirming if the corrective actions have been effectively put in place.
 - Appropriate evidence has been submitted to support the actions.
 - The evidence is appropriately organised and linked to the responses.
 - In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.
 - A specific timeframe and, where relevant, responsibilities are defined for the implementation of the proposed actions.
 - Monitoring of the process improvements is implemented, and results are reported to management to ensure their robust implementation.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.



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3.0 PROBLEM-SOLVING – SIMPLIFIED METHOD

Applicability:

A simplified method for problem-solving may be applied under exceptional circumstances, when a CB can demonstrate, with sufficient supporting information, that:

- the reported problem was a single lapse or isolated incident and
- it involves only the case that was assessed and/or the auditor or individual who was witnessed and
- the reported problem occurred within a well-established system/process that has adequate resources and trained personnel.

A simplified method for problem-solving may be applied for both minor and major nonconformities.

When applying a simplified method for problem-solving for minor or major nonconformities, the timing of the CB's response shall comply with the requirements of the Rules for achieving and maintaining IATF recognition (see section 2.4.3) and the IATF AMP system. When the timing requirements cannot be met, under exceptional and justified circumstances, the CB shall apply for an extension of timing through the IATF AMP system and get a formal approval from the relevant IATF Oversight office.

The CB shall be responsible for its decision to choose the simplified method for problem-solving and the associated risks.

Problem investigation:

a. The CB shall use the response items below to investigate the reported non-conformity:

	Response item	Yes	No	Supporting evidence/information
1	The CB has an established process that addresses the situation reported in the nonconformity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	The CB has an established process to ensure that personnel, including those involved in this situation are competent in the process related to the nonconformity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	In the previous 12 months, the CB did not observe similar situations in its:	(Answers for 3a to 3e shall be a NO if the CB observed similar situations in the previous 12 months.)		
3a	Internal system audits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3b	Internal witness audits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3c	IATF office assessments/witness audits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3d	Veto reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3e	Other IATF monitoring activities (e.g. special	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



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	nonconformities, complaints from stakeholders)			
4	The CB confirms that no other internal processes are impacted due to the nonconformity (e.g. Sales, IATF Database Management etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	The CB confirms that the scale of the impact is limited to the sampled/observed case and/or auditor concerned and does not affect other regions, other clients and/or other auditors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	The CB confirms that other stakeholders are not adversely impacted (e.g. IATF OEM members, clients etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Other details that support the CB's investigation of the problem and its magnitude (e.g. details of the circumstances surrounding a nonconformity or objective evidence including answers to questions like who, where, when, how many, how often etc. and details of the investigation of each piece of objective evidence if there are multiple objective evidence reported under one nonconformity).			

Notes:

- The CB response shall not be limited to a YES or NO answer. Objective evidence or a detailed explanation is expected for all the above response items irrespective of a YES or NO answer. Related attachments shall be submitted as necessary to support the explanations.
 - Objective evidence or the detailed explanation shall represent the CB's global operations (namely, all regions, all auditors and all clients), unless the CB can clearly demonstrate that the issue is just relating to a specific region or country.
 - The level of detail required relating to the above response items shall depend upon the complexity, classification and risks associated with the nonconformity.
- b. The responses to each item above, shall be entered in the Problem Investigation section of the IATF AMP system and mapped to the relevant item numbers (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 3a....7).
- c. All attachments to support the investigation shall be clearly mapped to the related response item and uploaded in the IATF AMP system.



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- d. If all the response items 1-6 are answered YES and are sufficiently supported with relevant objective evidence or detailed explanations, the CB may be eligible to apply the simplified method for problem-solving with clear justification.
- e. The CB shall confirm the following prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - The problem-solving team includes personnel who adequately represent the reported issue – both locally and globally.
 - The problem-solving team details have been entered fully in the IATF AMP system.
 - Response items 1-6 have been answered as either YES or NO.
 - If the simplified method for problem-solving was chosen, response items 1-6 were answered yes.
 - The necessary supporting evidence or other detailed explanations are provided to support a YES or NO answer.
 - The supporting data demonstrates that all CB regional offices, auditors and clients have been considered.
 - The magnitude of the problem (including the scope and scale) and the associated risks have been appropriately evaluated.
 - Other details to support the investigation are provided, where applicable.
 - If documents are attached separately as evidence, they have been numbered and mapped to the relevant response item.
 - In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.

Problem Statement:

- a. If the CB response is YES to items 1-6 in the investigation and is supported with adequate objective evidence, the problem statement shall reflect the single lapse and/or the "individual" failure of the auditor or an individual accordingly.
- b. The problem statement shall be short, simple and concise, precisely indicate the nature of the failure with the auditor or an individual and shall be entered in the "problem statement" section in the IATF AMP system.
- c. The problem statement shall not be a repeat of the nonconformity statement nor of the reported objective evidence.
- d. The problem statement shall be drafted in such a way that it becomes the basis/starting point for root cause analysis and can lead to multiple paths of root cause analysis.
- e. The CB shall confirm the following regarding the problem statement, prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - The problem statement is short, simple and concise.



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- The problem statement is clearly linked to the investigation outcome (i.e. linked to the failure associated with the individual).
- The problem statement is not a repeat of the nonconformity statement nor of the objective evidence.
- The problem statement is drafted in such a way that it can be used as a starting point for root cause analysis.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.

Correction:

- a. It is mandatory to take short-term action (correction) with regard to an individual and/or problem of an isolated nature, including where necessary, actions to correct the outcome of a failure (e.g. conducting a special audit at client site, additional audit time in the next audit etc.).
- b. There shall be at least one action per item of objective evidence defined in the objective evidence section of the nonconformity.
- c. The action(s) shall correspond with the magnitude/extent of the problem as per the problem investigation.
- d. Use the past verb tense (e.g. "changed" or "conducted") to show that the actions were implemented.
- e. Include the date when the action was implemented and who is/was responsible for implementation.
- f. Under exceptional circumstances, if the actions are not yet implemented, use the future verb tense instead of past tense (e.g. "will be changed" or "will be conducted") and include a justification for the delay, a target date and person responsible for implementation.
- g. The details of the correction shall be entered in the Correction/Containment section of the IATF AMP system and be clearly identified by the title "Correction".
- h. Supporting evidence for implementation of the correction shall be submitted together with the CB's response.
- i. The CB shall confirm the following regarding any corrections, prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - Evidence of the correction(s) done.
 - A correction is done for each item of objective evidence reported.
 - Actions to be completed in the future are supported with a justification for the delay, reasonable target dates and clearly defined responsibilities.
 - Details of the correction(s) implemented are clearly identified by a title in the correction/containment section of the IATF AMP system.
 - Evidence of implementation of the actions is provided.



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- The evidence is appropriately organised and linked to the responses.
- In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.

Containment:

- a. Since it is confirmed through investigation that this is a single lapse or isolated occurrence, a containment action may not be necessary, but it is good practice for the CB to consider this.
- b. If containment action is not carried out, state clearly that it is not done in the correction/containment section of the IATF AMP system.
- c. If a CB chooses to define containment, the CB shall determine the action(s) including the scope, the length of time they are expected to be in place until the permanent corrective actions are implemented and verified, the start and end date and who is/was responsible for implementation. The scope of containment shall also cover in-progress certification activities/procedures as applicable.
- d. The details of the containment shall be entered in the Correction/Containment section of the IATF AMP system and be clearly identified by the title "Containment".
- e. The CB shall confirm the following regarding containment prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - Containment statements are supported with evidence.
 - Containment clarifies if the actions are implemented at a global, regional or local level.
 - Responsibilities, justification for any delay and timelines are set for those containment actions which are planned but not yet completed.
 - Containment is clearly identified by a title in the correction/containment section of the IATF AMP system.
 - Evidence of implementation of containment actions is provided.
 - The evidence is appropriately organised and linked to the responses.
 - In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.



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Root Cause Analysis:

- a. Since it is confirmed through investigation that this is a single lapse or an isolated occurrence, a structured root cause analysis approach is not mandated.
- b. However, the CB shall demonstrate that a detailed review was undertaken to ascertain any plausible causes (e.g. contributing factors/unusual conditions/situations/scenarios) for an individual/the observed case not complying with the CB's processes, using the problem statement as the basis for the review.
- c. The cause(s) thus ascertained shall be documented and should lead to process improvements/or other actions that are intended to make the process more robust in the future.
- d. The details of the cause analysis shall be entered in the root cause analysis section of the IATF AMP system.
- e. The CB shall confirm the following regarding cause identification prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - The cause identification is not a repeat of the investigation.
 - The cause identification has used the problem statement as its basis.
 - The cause identification has adequately ascertained the reason(s) for an individual or a situation not complying with its processes.
 - The cause identification is not a one-line explanation of what failed, but rather it is a detailed account of the situation and process steps leading to the identification of the underlying cause(s).
 - Multiple causes are considered where necessary.
 - The cause(s) thus determined are adequate for defining improvement actions.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.

Corrective Actions:

- a. Since it is confirmed through investigation that this is a single lapse or an isolated occurrence, the scope of the systemic corrective actions may be limited.
- b. Based on the cause identification, it may be acceptable in such cases to carry out system-related improvement actions such as training, monitoring, mentoring etc. of the concerned individual, regional or global personnel supported by an evaluation, or to optimize the process to make it more robust against the identified causes.
- c. Such actions may be deployed across the CB's regional offices, auditors and clients as necessary to prevent a recurrence of the problem with other individuals.
- d. Appropriate objective evidence shall be submitted to support the implemented actions.



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- e. Under exceptional circumstances, if actions are not yet implemented, use the future verb tense instead of past tense (e.g. will be changed or will be conducted) and include a justification for the delay, target dates and person(s) responsible for implementation.
- f. The details of the improvement/corrective actions shall be entered in the corrective action section of the IATF AMP system.
- g. The CB shall confirm the following regarding corrective actions prior to submission of its response to the relevant IATF Oversight office:
 - The improvement action is not correction/containment.
 - The actions initiated or proposed are linked to the identified cause(s).
 - If the action taken was training, monitoring, mentoring etc. , an evaluation specific to such actions is undertaken to confirm implementation (for example, conducting a test after training).
 - Multiple causes identified have been addressed through more than one action and are appropriately linked to bring clarity to the reader.
 - All relevant supporting evidence is attached and appropriately linked to the action response(s). No attachments are missing.
 - In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.
 - If the CB decides to deploy improvement actions across its regional offices, auditors and clients as good practice, confirm that such a deployment has taken place.
 - Where necessary, the CB's senior management involvement is ensured in the implementation of the corrective actions.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.

Verification of effectiveness of Corrective Actions (CB Verification Actions):

- a. Verification of the effectiveness of the corrective actions may be undertaken through one or more of the following ways: Internal witness audits, supervisory monitoring and confirmation, review of audit documents, sample checks, process performance indicators and their trends, other statistical methods etc.
- b. The CB shall make every effort to complete the verification actions fully within 90 days from the date of issuance of the nonconformity report. If that cannot be accomplished owing to exceptional situations, the CB shall:
 - Provide justification for the delay.
 - Submit a verification action plan with a defined timeframe and responsibilities for implementation, including the details of any verification actions that were already completed.
 - The timeframe in the action plan shall not in any case exceed 180 days from the date of issuance of the nonconformity report.



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- c. If the CB chooses to submit a verification action plan, the implementation of such plans may be verified by the relevant IATF Oversight office during office assessments or future witness audits.
- d. The details of verification actions implemented or planned shall be entered in the verification of effectiveness section of the IATF AMP system together with appropriate evidences as attachments.
- e. The CB shall confirm the following regarding the verification of the effectiveness of the improvement actions prior to submission of its response to the IATF Oversight office:
 - The method defined for verifying effectiveness is capable of confirming if the improvement actions have been effectively put in place.
 - Appropriate evidence has been submitted to support the actions.
 - The evidence is appropriately organised and linked to the responses.
 - In order to facilitate easy understanding of the responses, the contents relevant to the specific problem are always highlighted in the file attachments when such attachments also include contents that are not related to the problem.
 - The specific timeframe and, where relevant, responsibilities are defined for the proposed actions.
 - Monitoring of the process improvements is carried out and results reported to management to ensure robust implementation.

Note: Unless waived by the relevant IATF Oversight office, the expectation is that the above items are confirmed by the Fresh Eyes Reviewer prior to submission of the CB's response in the IATF AMP system. CBs shall develop the necessary methods (e.g. check lists) for ensuring effective confirmation and evidence of such confirmation shall be uploaded in the IATF AMP system as an attachment.



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4.0 CB RESPONSE REJECTION AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION

The CB shall strive to ensure that all responses for problem-solving, irrespective of standard or simplified method, are completed and accepted first time by the relevant IATF Oversight office Response Reviewer (RSR) and shall comply with the timing requirements of the Rules for achieving and maintaining IATF recognition (see section 2.4.3). When submissions are rejected or clarifications are requested, the CB shall respond to the issues raised by the RSR within a maximum of ten (10) days.

Rejection of a CB's application of simplified method for problem-solving

A thorough problem investigation is the key to effective problem-solving. It is also essential to support the CB's assertion of a single lapse/occurrence and to get the application of the simplified method to problem-solving accepted by the RSR.

For minor nonconformities, if the CB's simplified method for problem-solving application is questionable and is therefore rejected by the RSR, the CB shall:

- a. Follow the standard method for problem-solving and submit revised responses and
- b. Ensure that an acceptable and comprehensive response applying the standard method is submitted in due course and on time.

Note: A "request for clarification" by the RSR is not a "rejection" and would allow the CB to rework the simplified problem-solving application and re-submit it.

In order to comply with timing requirements, it is recommended that the CB submits its response well before the nonconformity due dates to ensure that a rework of the response is still possible in time, especially if the simplified method is rejected by the RSR.

The relevant IATF Oversight office shall only permit an extension of the submission timing in exceptional and justifiable cases.

Note: For major nonconformities, the appropriateness of the CB's application to use the simplified method for problem-solving shall be reviewed by the RSR at the twenty (20) days response stage.