

WORKING MATERIAL 4.8 · CHAPTER 4 — THE CERTIFIER'S LENS

Recertification: Reading Three Years as One Document

Source: Francesco Dore, *The Helm and the Lens*, Volume 1b — ISO 14001:2026, subchapter 4.8

GUIDING QUESTION

Your recertification quotation arrives at almost twice the cost of your original certification audit, for the same hotel. Is it a mistake?

1 · Verification Pact

Copied from the book. The third column is for your property: what holds here, and how you know.

What is claimed	What actually holds	In our property
"Recertification costs about two thirds of what our original certification cost."	It is around two thirds of what an initial audit would take if carried out now, on updated information about the property. A hotel that has grown during the cycle is quoted against today, not against 2019.	
"Recertification is a large surveillance audit."	Surveillance examines the interval since the last visit. Recertification examines the whole period of certification, and the review of that performance is required to inform the audit while being expressly excluded from its days.	
"ISO 14001 sets the three-year cycle."	The standard contains no certificate, cycle or expiry date. That structure comes from the certification framework, not from the requirements the property is audited against.	
"We showed the auditor the new wing, so they know."	Being shown a building during a visit is not notification, and a certificate's scope is amended by a process rather than by an impression. Meanwhile the internal duty stands on its own: changes affecting the system must be planned and managed.	
"The certificate rolls over if the audit is booked."	It expires on its date. Recertification has to be completed, and findings resolved, against a deadline the property does not control — the one point in the cycle where something already held can be lost.	
"A finding closed in 2021 is finished."	Recertification reads the reports together. The same finding recurring three years later is evidence that the original action did not eliminate the cause, whatever the closure record shows.	
"Our annual management review covers this."	The review must take information on performance including trends in nonconformities, monitoring, compliance and audit results. Trends need more than one year of material, and an annual review of one year cannot produce them.	

2 · Common mistakes — a self-check

Tick each mistake you recognise in your own property. The consequence is the book's.

- ☐ **Budgeting recertification as a renewal of the last audit** — It is a fresh calculation on the present property, discounted by a third.
- ☐ **Treating a site visit as notification** — Showing an auditor a new building is not the same as telling the certification body that the organisation has changed.
- ☐ **Letting the scope statement age through a cycle of ordinary hotel changes** — It continues to be sent to clients while describing a property that no longer exists.
- ☐ **Reading each audit report once, on the day it arrives, and never again** — The information that decides a recertification lives in the sequence, not in any single report.
- ☐ **Closing findings well and never asking whether the same finding has appeared before** — A properly closed recurrence is still a recurrence.
- ☐ **Booking the recertification audit against the expiry date rather than against the expiry date minus the findings** — No margin is left for the ordinary outcome.
- ☐ **Reporting only growth** — A property that shrinks and says nothing is being audited and billed for something that no longer exists.

3 · What an auditor would ask to see

Questions drawn from the subchapter's reading of the standard and its practical application. They are questions to test your own evidence, not additional requirements.

Question	Where the evidence lives	Seen?
Has the whole cycle — internal audits, surveillance reports, reviews — been read together, and what recurs, what has changed and what has stopped?	Audit archive	
Are recurring findings grouped by cause across the years?	Finding log	
Is there a running change list for the cycle, and has the scope been checked against it?	Change list; scope statement	
Were changes notified to the certification body in writing when they happened?	Correspondence	
Did management reviews consider trends across more than one year?	Management review minutes	

4 · From the Operative Synthesis to action

Concrete actions taken from the subchapter's Operative Synthesis. Fill in the owner and the date in your property.

Action	Owner	Due date
1. Budget recertification against the property as it stands today, not against the original audit.		
2. Read the whole cycle as one document, from the records already held, well before the expiry date.		
3. List recurrence, drift, and the places where the documented property and the real one have diverged.		

What this sheet is not: ISO 14001 does not prescribe this form. It is a working aid drawn from the book; the standard and, in Chapter 4, the certification body's own rules and contract govern the real case.