Stage 1: Is the System Ready to Be Audited?

GUIDING QUESTION *Before you agree a date for the first stage of certification, ask three questions. Has the hotel's own internal audit covered the whole scope at least once? Has top management held a management review and recorded its decisions? Have the controls been running long enough to leave records? If any answer is no, the date was chosen by a calendar, not by the system.*

Property: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

How to use this sheet: work through the five parts with the people who own the process. The text in the left-hand columns comes from the book; the empty columns are for what is true in your property.

1. Verification Pact: what is commonly believed, what actually holds, and your property

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	In our property
«Stage 1 tells us what is missing, so we can fix it.»	Stage 1 decides whether stage 2 makes sense. The certifier records gaps but cannot advise on remedies.	
«Internal audit and management review can follow stage 1.»	They must be done before certification, and stage 1 checks whether they are.	
«If the documents are complete, the hotel is ready.»	Readiness needs the system operating, with records, not only written.	
«The date is fixed; the certifier will adapt.»	The certifier can postpone stage 2. It cannot certify a system that is not ready.	
«Excluding difficult areas from the scope simplifies certification.»	Unjustified exclusions are questioned and weaken what the certificate says.	

2. What the standard requires, and what demonstrates it

From Table 4.3.a. The third column of the book (what is method, not requirement) is left out here: write what your property actually holds as evidence.

What is required	What demonstrates it at stage 1	In our property
Scope defined and justified	A scope statement with reasons for any exclusion and the interfaces managed	
Risk assessment of this hotel	Risks that name the hotel's own departments, systems and suppliers	
Statement of controls with justifications	Each control decided, with reasons, approved by management and linked to risks	
Controls operating	Records of controls running for some months	
Internal audit done	An audit covering the whole scope, with findings and actions	
Management review held	Minutes with the required inputs and recorded decisions	

3. The instrument: Table 4.3.b, Readiness before stage 1

The instrument of this subchapter. Completed by somebody who did not build the system, before the date of stage 1 is confirmed.

Item	What ready looks like	Cairo in October	Cairo in March
Scope	Defined; exclusions justified; interfaces managed	Spa and events excluded without reason	Spa and events included
Risk assessment	Describes this hotel's departments, systems and suppliers	Template for a hotel without spa or conference centre	Rebuilt with each head of department
Statement of controls	Each control decided, justified, linked to risks, approved	Version 0.3; all ninety-three marked implemented	Version 1.2; eighty-four applicable, with reasons

Item	What ready looks like	Cairo in October	Cairo in March
Controls operating	Records covering at least three months (this book's benchmark)	Six weeks at most	Five months
Objectives	Set, measured, reported	Written, not measured	Four objectives with monthly figures
Internal audit	Whole scope audited; findings acted on	Not done; planned after stage 1	Done in January; fourteen findings, eleven closed
Management review	Held with required inputs; decisions recorded	Not held	Held in February; six decisions recorded

The rows above are the book's; the empty rows are for lines your property needs to add.

4. Common mistakes: self-check

Common mistake	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)	Where we see it
Setting the certification date before the system exists.		
Treating stage 1 as a free diagnosis of what is missing.		
Scheduling internal audit and management review after stage 1.		
Marking every control applicable and implemented without justification.		
Excluding sensitive departments from the scope without reason.		
Allowing too short an interval between stage 1 and stage 2.		
Postponing stage 1 indefinitely in pursuit of a flawless system.		

5. Action plan

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
Set the stage 1 date from readiness, and explain it to the owner early.			
Have every document confirmed by the head of the department it describes.			
Decide the statement of controls one control at a time, with reasons and links to risks.			
Justify every exclusion from the scope and manage the interfaces.			
Complete one full cycle, internal audit and management review included, before stage 1.			
Run a readiness check with somebody who did not build the system.			
Agree an interval between stages that can absorb stage 1 findings.			
Aim for a system that has run, not one with nothing left to improve.			

Step from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline

In brief

Stage 1 asks whether the management system has completed its first cycle. The hotel goes to it when the scope is justified, the risks are its own, the statement of controls has been decided control by control, the controls have left records, and an internal audit and a management review have been done. It checks its own readiness with somebody independent before the certifier arrives, agrees an interval that can absorb findings, and uses stage 1 to help the auditor plan a stage 2 that will see the hotel as it works.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 5b: The Lens, subchapter 4.3. This sheet does not reproduce the text of the standard; work with your own copy of ISO/IEC 27001:2022 from an authorised source.