Paper for World Quality Day 2020

"The future of assessment and certification - near and a little further."

While preparing to celebrate World Quality Day and my work for the manifestation, which will hold for the 29th time in Belgrade in November, I thought and prepared a presentation and paper on the future of management system certification. This short excerpt indicates the main topics I want to share with colleagues and participants in this manifestation.

The first question I consider is whether certifications will survive? I have felt the current position and shared that this activity has stagnated globally in recent years. The results may be due to the growing number of assessment bodies and general competition, which leads to lower quality of assessment procedures and certification results. Or loss of client interest in certification because of moving from the basic principles of the concept of third-party assessment as created to support freedom of movement, goods, knowledge, and capital. It is undoubtedly necessary to consider that the standards preparation and the procedure of organizing certification at the world level have many weaknesses and are very sluggish and slow.

Is the certification as it is today able to remain in tomorrow's world? The ones close after Corona, and those a little further, including the orders of 20 years or so and the strict application of Industry 4.0 world level, is the second issue. I do not think so. Today, certification as a business covers a tiny part of the world economy. According to ISO data for 2019, the number of certified entities is slightly below 2 million, and the number of businesses worldwide is about 115 million. How to change these figures?
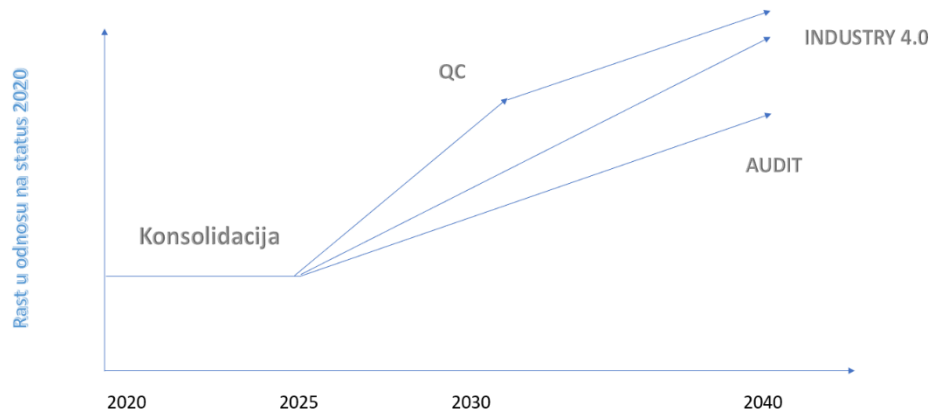
Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total	46571	70364	127348	162700	223298	271846	343641	407674	510349	561766	497919	660132	773843
Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2019
Total	896905	951486	980322	1063751	1076525	1009845	1017279	1022877	1036321	1034180	1105937	1055028	1217972

Another question is whether the bearers of world development in the group sense of IT, food, health, environmental protection, and Industry 4.0 businesses will wait for the restructuring of the certification industry and organization at the world level. Again, I do not think it's an enormous challenge. If this does not happen, it will be challenging to stop forming new "private" assessment schemes and include numerous scientific and professional institutions in certification activities.

I also presented some of my graphic predictions for the next 20 years, with the statement that the next five years of certification will stagnate and consolidate and invest in their development to create conditions for monitoring the development of the bearers of the development of the future

world. Suppose this business uses this period to strengthen and apply modern technologies, significantly increase the quality of services and competence of assessors. In that case, they will continue further development in monitoring and following what will happen in the world in the coming decades.

Naredih 20 godina

In the end, I paid attention to remote audits as one of the directions of developing the certification processes, with the opinion that it is undoubtedly one of the leading approaches and bearers of the development of certification work. Indeed, on a completely different basis with the first experiences, it is mostly used as a replacement for desk analyses and assessing the management system's documentation.

Veoma bliska budućnost svih provera

If I were now the director or manager of the development of a certification body, I think we should divide our thoughts and actions into two cycles:

Short-term:

What during the Pandemic? What will happen in the next 2-3 years? What in the next 5 years?

Long-term:

What will be in 10 to 15 years?What in 20 years?

Here are some global primary goals and activities shortly.

IAF, ISO, and accreditation bodies should very quickly:

· to come up with new rules for new areas and assessment schemes, and first to work out all those new standards that have come out in the meantime and for which there are no developed schemes. However, it is very illogical to wait for them for a very long time. It is an essential element of accelerating certification activities development and preventing numerous non-accredited certifications and "private" schemes.

· Work on further strengthening and developing supply chain schemes

· Finding the solution for certification schemas of integrated management systems with the application of ISO 9004 (or others related) would undoubtedly be necessary for a large number of organizations

· More flexible attitude and recommendations about the duration of the evaluation, but also more rigorous control of compliance, bearing in mind the remote checks and checks of supply chains and changes in attitudes about the subject and scope of evaluation, especially in outsourcing arrangements

· Preventing the policy of "soft assessment" that has spread around the world

· Permission and incorporation into rules and unscheduled visits when there is a need to maintain the success of the system

· ISO and IAF groups working on auditing should try to prepare rules with more details, then conversion into rules as a mandatory part of accreditations and certification. Those rules are used very little in real certification practice. A sample, on 21.09.2020, a new IAF document APG Auditing Digital Processes published, explaining the requirement of ISO 9001 on change control 8.5.6 assessment proposes a review of change records with dates and authorization, which is too in general. It is difficult for auditors to be a useful guide for this point, with such a broad wording.

· Tightening the issue of assessors' competence with an emphasis on competence for basic business-related knowledge. It is illogical that most accreditation and certification bodies use EA selection of codes with two digits to assign competencies. You can have an EA 3 coded auditor

for wine technologies who evaluate breweries and vice versa. ISO 17021-1 has left too much leeway for assessor training, and perhaps the mandatory application of the ISO 17021-X competency series would be necessary.

· Around the competence of assessors, training programs must adapt very quickly to new ways of working and technologies, and communication and monitoring skills of new technologies are crucial.

· The IAF and ISO need to pay much more attention to remote audits and quickly prepare more detailed recommendations than just short and general sentences explanations. Therefore, it would be useful to form particular expert multi-expert groups that can follow all the trends and demands of the ever-faster development that lies ahead.

Certification bodies should start now:

· serious pushes of remote assessments, but with severe preparations and ensuring technical conditions and development of schemes, and above all with the adequate training of assessors

· prevention of "soft grading assessment" and providing increased in-house supervision over the work of assessors,

· strengthening the provision of competence in basic business knowledge for their assessors through various types of mandatory training

· formation of development teams for the new schemes and following activities for new technologies, as crucial elements of further development. If not, it will lead to the situation that scientific research and development organizations, faculties, and various professional associations impose themselves as carriers of some new "private type" schemes.

· plan future strategies on developing new schemes and new markets rather than snatching customers from others with lower prices or less demanding appraisals or rapid certification. It is necessary to seriously monitor the trends and development directions of the market areas that follow and find common denominators of development with clients from those areas.

I expect that future certifications will be of higher quality, which should be enabled by modern technologies. But that's not all. Highly qualified assessors will always be needed to interpret BIG DATA, artificial intelligence, report and interact with other people in critical areas of decision-making, and provide security for the new data-generating technologies that underlie certification.

Significant changes are coming, and they offer a vast opportunity for the certification business and profession to become more relevant and reliable than they have ever been.