Assessment and Surveillance of Production

An important part of the process leading to the issue of an Agrément Certificate or other BBA Certificate is the initial and ongoing assessment of the production and the quality controls exercised over the manufacture of the products.

The BBA Quality Plan – how it works

The first stage of this process is to capture information about the production at each manufacturing location. The applicant will be sent a template for a BBA Quality Plan for completion by the manufacturer. This document sets out the product specification, quality processes, resources, activities and records relevant to the product under consideration.

The headings under which information is required include:

- Purchasing data, and receiving inspection and testing
- Product identification and traceability
- Method of production and process control
- In-process inspection and testing
- Final inspection and testing
- Calibration
- Packaging
- Labelling
- Use of the BBA symbol
- Training
- Complaints

This Draft Quality Plan (DQP) will be checked by the Project Manager for compliance with the BBA requirements, before being passed to one of our Technical Assessors as a Proposed Quality Plan (PQP). For more detail on completion of the DQP, please see DataSheet No 32: Completion of a Quality Plan.

Initial assessment

The BBA Technical Assessor will arrange an initial visit to the production location. The Technical Assessor will interview staff, review records and witness tests and production activities, to establish whether the PQP adequately describes the production process, and whether the management system controls meet the minimum requirements. The assessor will complete a report on the observations made, and will agree with the contacts at the production location any issues that require further action. They will be asked to confirm when the action has been completed, and provide evidence.

Continued overleaf →

Ongoing surveillance
On satisfactory completion of the assessment of the production process, a final version of the document, called an Agreed Quality Plan (AQP), will be signed by representatives of both the manufacturer and the BBA, and this AQP is used as the basis of ongoing surveillance of production.

After the Certificate has been issued, a BBA representative will arrange to revisit the production location on a regular basis for the duration of the Certificate's validity. The frequency of surveillance is normally twice per year, although some schemes may deviate from this. The ongoing surveillance visits ensure that agreed actions have been taken, and that the requirements of the Quality Plan are being maintained. Refusal or delay of surveillance visits could impact the validity of the Certificate.

Production or product changes
Any intended changes to the product or production as described in the AQP must be notified to the BBA in advance of the change being made, by the Certificate holder or the manufacturer as appropriate. The BBA will consider the proposed change on a case-by-case basis, and will advise on any required actions. Failure to report changes before implementation could jeopardise the validity of the Certificate.

Initial assessment and ongoing surveillance at other locations
In some cases, inspections will be required at other locations, such as office locations, warehouse or assembly locations, or installation sites. Your BBA Project Manager will be able to advise you on likely assessment locations.

Confidentiality
All information from the production site provided to, or gathered by, the BBA is confidential and will not be divulged to unauthorised third parties without the approval of the manufacturer. The BBA is aware that the manufacturer is not necessarily the Applicant or Certificate holder. All certification correspondence will be addressed to the applicant or Certificate holder, while all confidential production site correspondence will be addressed to the contacts nominated in the Quality Plan.

Management systems
To undertake the assessment and surveillance of production, the BBA uses the principles and terminology given in the ISO 9000 series of standards, but tailored to the scope and requirements of the product and supplier under assessment. The requirements are summarised in DataSheet No 25: BBA Quality System Criteria for Manufacturers.

The assessment and surveillance of production does not include a general quality audit against ISO 9001, but the BBA is accredited for management systems certification to ISO 9001 (Quality), ISO 14001 (Environmental) and OHSAS 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety). Should you wish to save money by combining your production surveillance with management systems certification, please contact our Client Services team at clientservices@bbacerts.co.uk, T: 01923 665300.

See also:
DataSheet No 25: BBA Quality System Criteria for Manufacturers.
DataSheet No 32: Completion of a Quality Plan.

