PRODUCT CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOR DRINKING WATER

1. Objective:

This procedure describes the criteria implemented by RACS as Notified Body of Emirates Authority of Standardization and Metrology (ESMA) to assure that **Drinking Water** intended for certification with ESMA are complying the relevant mandatory schemes and applicable standards.
Furthermore, this document identifies the steps taken by RACS Clients (manufacturers, traders, importers, retailers, business owners or any other client) to get their products/processes certified prior to its commercializing in UAE market, and registered by through RACS Quality Certificates Issuing Services as ESMA Notified Body by issuing certificates of conformity in accordance with ESMA Regulations.

2. Definitions:

ESMA: Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology
RACS: RACS Quality Certificates Issuing Services
Scheme: Certification system related to specified products, to which the same specified requirements, specific rules and procedures apply.
Certification: Third-party attestation related to products, processes, systems or persons.
Notified Body: a conformity assessment body designated by ESMA to conduct conformity assessment process on products and processes in accordance with related schemes/standards/regulations mandated by ESMA.
Conformity Certificate: Formal document issued by RACS as notified body under approval of ESMA stating that certification is being granted for the product/process in accordance with applicable scheme/standards as per ESMA Requirements.

3. Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of RACS as ESMA Notified Body to establish and maintain the appropriate system to satisfy both ESMA and client's requirements in accordance to the notification system mandated by ESMA.
It is the responsibility of ESMA clients and RACS clients to provide all needed requirements as per ESMA Notification system to ensure their products compliance to the applicable schemes and standards.

4. Introduction about RACS Notified Body to provide Certification:

RACS is an accredited certification body and ESMA approved notified Body under its notification system mandated by UAE Decree No. (35) Of the year 2015 and UAE Cabinet Resolution No. (36).
RACS is an authorized conformity assessment body by ESMA that it is technically competent to perform the specific tasks of certification to ESMA clients.

5. Service Type:

As per Scheme owner rules, RACS certifies Drinking Water and issues Certificate of conformity under:

Emirates Quality Mark (EQM): EQM is a mark of conformity granted to the products that can demonstrate compliance with the relevant UAE National Standards, Regional and/or International Standards and are manufactured by an organization implementing an effective Quality Management System to ensure continuous compliance. The process of achieving the license to use the Emirates Quality Mark involves a comprehensive evaluation of the product as well as the quality system used by the manufacturer in production through testing, inspection.

Issuance of certificate of conformity by RACS as ESMA's Notified Body assures the compliance of products/production process with the requirements of the approved schemes, standards and others specified in the technical regulation by Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA).

6. Scope of certified products by RACS –ESMA Notified Body:

This document cover Drinking Water with below details of Sector, scope of certified products, products categories, and applicable type of certification.

Sector (Product Group)	Scope of Certification (Scope of Products)	Product categories	Type of Certification
FOOD	**DRINKING WATER**	1. Natural Mineral Water 2. Bottled Drinking Water	1. Facility Onsite Assessment - Full Quality Assurance (EQM)

7. Mandatory Schemes and Applicable Standards:

Scheme applicable is the UAE Scheme to control water, No. 26 of the year 2013.

Please refer to the applicable standards in the scheme:

Applicable Standards:		
1	UAE.S GSO 9	Labelling of Prepackaged Foodstuffs
2	UAE.S GSO 21	Hygienic Regulations for Food Plants and Their Personnel
3	UAE.S GSO 1025	Bottled Drinking Water
4	UAE.S GSO 149	Unbottled drinking water
5	UAE.S GSO 150	Expiration Periods of Food Products
6	UAE.S GSO 168	Requirements of storage facilities for dry and canned foodstuffs
7	UAE.S GSO 839	Food Packages - Part 1: General Requirements
8	UAE.S GSO 987	Bottled natural mineral water
9	UAE.S GSO 1694	General Principles of Food Hygiene
10	UAE.S GSO 1811	Drinking Water Coolers
11	UAE.S GSO 1928	Code of hygienic practice for bottled drinking water (other than natural mineral water)
12	UAE.S GSO 2025	Motor Vehicles -Requirements in Tankers for Transportation of Drinking Water
13	UAE.S GSO 1863	Food packages – Part 2: Plastic package - General requirements
14		Emirates conformity assessment System (ECAS)
15	UAE.S GSO 60335-2-24	Household and Similar Electrical Appliances -Safety -Part2-24: Requirements for Refrigerating Appliances -Ice-Cream Appliances and Ice-Maker
16	UAE.S GSO 2071	Jug water filter for household uses
17	UAE.S GSO 384	Ice for Human Consumption

If needed, Client refers to RACS to identify applicable Scheme and Standards.
RACS Staff to refer to RACS/REC/79 Scope of Certified Products by RACS to identify Certification Applicable schemes and standards.

8. Requirements for Certification:

Requirements varies depending on the scope of certified products; Details of the documents required for certification for the scope of Drinking Water as per ESMA requirements are detailed as following:

Full Quality Assurance:

- Application form
- Valid Industry/Trade License (For Companies within UAE)
- Declaration of Conformity by the Applicant on the Product(s) for Registration using the Applicant's Official Letterhead
- Test Report from Accredited laboratory
- Controlled Copy of relevant QMS/HACCP Manual
- Brief Description of Manufacturing Process
- Plant Equipment Lay-out
- Vicinity Map of the Factory
- Fulfill the requirements of the card Label
- Quality control plan
- Evidence of Approval from other Conformity Assessment Bodies
- Distributor ownership (for Traders only)

8.1. Legal Agreements:

- Certification Agreement:
- Non-Disclosure Agreement
- General Conditions for Certification Services

8.2. Fees as detailed in RACS Schedule of Fees (RACS/REC/46).

9. Certification Procedures

9.1 Preparatory Steps:

9.1.1 **Application Form (Refer to table 9-A)** shall be submitted by applicant to RACS, submission can be done via RACS convenient communication methods (mail, emails, hard copy, website, E-System).

9.1.2 Sales and Marketing Executive/Administrative Assistant will review it to check documents availability on a primary basis.

9.1.3 A **quotation (RACS/REC/20 Certification Quotation)** will be sent to the applicant by Head of Sales and Marketing Department; containing the scope of certification and fees related to each step of the certification process.

9.1.4 Payment shall be done by the applicant.

9.2 Application Review

9.2.1 Upon acceptance of quotation by client, he is requested to sign the **General Conditions for Certification Services (RACS/Ag/10)**.

9.2.2 Application along with related supportive documents will be received by RACS Conformity Manager who shall assign one of RACS technical team members-Conformity Officer.

9.3 Application Evaluation

9.3.1 Conformity Officer shall perform conformity assessment (Evaluation) steps related to the certification scheme:

9.3.2 Evaluation outcome results:

- If the evaluation is pending for missing or invalid documents or other needed information to complete evaluation; additional supportive documents will be requested from the applicant.
- The evaluation includes Product Safety Verification through test reports provided on all safety test parameters requested by applicable scheme/standards, test reports shall be issued by 3rd party accredited laboratory sub-contracted according to the approved standards and applicable technical requirements.
- If test reports are not complying with standards; Conformity Officer requests rectification of the non-complying aspects, then based on applicant confirmation of rectification, collection of samples will be done to conduct the same laboratory tests again and for once.
- Evaluation will be repeated upon applicant re-submission of needed documents/information.
- Evaluation will be documented using an **Assessment Checklist (Refer to table 9-A).**

Onsite Factory Assessment

- Upon completion of required interventions, Conformity Officer in charge should contact the Applicant/Trader for any missing/lacking required documents to complete the process.
- The Conformity Officer in charge will also be the one to confirm the dates by completing the **Audit Schedule Form (RACS/REC/13)** of the Factory Assessment Dates/Audits as per the requirement of the standards and availability of the Conformity Officer and Auditee.
- The Conformity Officer in charge will do the **Audit Plan (RACS/REC/45)** as he confirmed the audit dates.
- Factory Assessment will commence once all the required documents have been evaluated, all necessary documents will be forwarded to the Conformity Officers who will be in charge with the Factory Assessment.
- During the Audit, the 1st Conformity Officer will be auditing Factory Compliance as per Quality Management System, while the 2nd Conformity Officer will be auditing as per the technical safety requirements of the standard for the product applied using the **Evaluation Report (RACS/REC/12)**. Additional Assessment Checklists may be required to be filled in by the Conformity Officer depending on the applicable standards of the product being certified. **(Refer to table 9-A for the list Assessment Checklists).**
- On-Site Audit to the facility where the product is being manufactured to assure the quality management system adopted in full compliance with applicable standards and technical regulations.

Once all corrective actions are fulfilled, the Conformity Officer will complete evaluation report **(RACS/REC/12)** summary in evaluation report and shall raise the final evaluation report with his recommendation to the Conformity Manager (or his delegates) for certification review step of the products/facility intended for certification, recommendation is either:

✓ Either recommending approval of certification by Issuance of Certificate of Conformity; or
✓ Recommending rejection of certification by issuing **Final Decision Letter (RACS/REC/71)**.

9.4 Certification Review

Conformity Manager or his delegates will perform certification review to verify the Conformity Officer's recommendation by checking if assessment checklist/evaluation report content is found satisfactory along with complete review for the whole application and supportive documents, and then grant the final recommendation to the Certification Decision Committee. If the review and the certification decision are completed concurrently in the Decision Committee, they shall proceed with the decision after certification review is done.

9.5 Decision of Certification: Upon submission of this information, and as per the result of documents review and completing product evaluation process,

9.5.1 Recommendation of approval of Product certification: Product evaluation shows full compliance with applicable schemes/standards:
- Certification decision will be done by Decision Committee
- Granting the issuance of Certificate of conformity, recognized by scheme owner (ESMA)
- Certified Products will be listed in RACS **Certified Products Registry (RACS/REC/30).**

9.5.2 Recommendation of rejection of Product certification: Product evaluation shows non-compliance with applicable schemes/standards, due to any reason preventing product from Certification:
- Rejection decision will be done by Decision Committee
- RACS will inform client/ESMA by an Official rejection statement (Letter of certification Status) by e-mail stating the reason of rejection **(Decision Letter-RACS/REC/71).**

This is being documented by completing the Certification Decision Record;
RACS/REC/100 Certification Decision for Onsite Audit.

Table 9-A Specific Forms

TITLE OF DOCUMENT	IDENTIFICATION
Assessment Checklist -UAE.S/GSO 1025: 2014 Bottled drinking water	WTR/REC/01
Application Form	WTR/REC/02
Assessment Checklist-UAE.S/GSO 2232: 2012 Labeling for drinking water	WTR/REC/03
Assessment Checklist- UAE.S/GSO 987:2013 Bottled natural mineral water	WTR/REC/05
Assessment Checklist- UAE.S/GSO 1694 :2007 General Principles of Food Hygiene CODEX STANDARD CAC/RCP 48-1985 UAE S. GSO 21:1984	WTR/REC/06
Assessment Checklist- UAE.S/GSO 1694 :2007 General Principles of Food Hygiene CODEX STANDARD CAC/RCP 33-1985 UAE S. GSO 21:1984	WTR/REC/07
Assessment Checklist- UAE.S GSO 384/1994 Ice for Human Consumption	WTR/REC/09

Table 9-B General Forms

TITLE OF DOCUMENT	IDENTIFICATION
Quality Master List	RACS/REC/01
Certification Agreement/RACS Quality- Client	RACS/AG/01
NDA/RACS Quality - Client/Subcontractor	RACS/AG/03
General Conditions for Certification Services	RACS/AG/10
List of Certified Products	RACS/REC/30
Schedule of Fees	RACS/REC/46
Certification Quotation	RACS/REC/20
Audit Schedule Form	RACS/REC/13
Audit Duration Plan	RACS/REC/45
Evaluation Report	RACS/REC/12
Certification Decision-Product Certification	RACS/REC/99
Certification Decision-Onsite Audit	RACS/REC/100
Final Decision Letter	RACS/REC/71

10. Uploading of Certificates in ESMA system:

As a Notified Body, it is the responsibility of RACS to transfer the information to the scheme owner by uploading the Certificate of Conformity and other relevant documents in the scheme owner's (ESMA) online portal. The steps after the Certification Decision (only when recommendation is approved) are as follows;

a) Upon receiving the approval of the Decision Committee, the file should be given back to the responsible Conformity Officer.
b) The CO shall communicate with the Accounts Department to arrange for the payment in ESMA portal.
c) When the payment is posted, the CO shall be able to retrieve the certificate no. and QR code from ESMA portal.
d) The Conformity Officer shall assign a Conformity Assistant to prepare the draft certificate. Along with this, the Conformity Officer shall provide correct and accurate information to the Conformity Assistant.
e) The draft certificate should be sent to the client for their confirmation. Once it is confirmed, final certificate shall be shared to the client.
f) The Conformity Assistant should then upload the certificate in ESMA portal including the product list that should contain the necessary information such as model no., barcode, brand name, product description, country of origin, report no., applicable standard, etc.

Important Notes:

1. New Client Registration-the same certification procedure above will apply.
2. Addition of different size with the same brand of the same certified client-new label artwork must be evaluated and an amended certificate (retaining the same date of issuance and expiry) will be issued.
3. Addition of new brand from the facility previously audited by RACS or scheme owner (ESMA) in the past six months from the date of certificate issuance-new product label will be evaluated and a new certificate will be issued.
4. Sparkling water and Still water from the same brand of the same factory and source shall be certified under the same EQM certificate. Test reports shall be provided for both sparkling and still water if they are intended to be included in registration.
5. Approval of the label-product label shall be reviewed by the Conformity Officer/Lead Auditor and shall be approved and signed by the Conformity Manager (or his delegate) or the Quality Assurance Manager.
6. In case of having more than one brand from the same factory and source, all these brands shall be registered under EQM. Client should provide at least one test report for one brand to cover all the products. In this case, the factory shall submit an official declaration stating and confirming that all brands have the same composition, source, and process flow.

Notes for clients:

- For some scopes where it is required to have a quality system available, clients seeking to be certified for any of their (Products or services or facility/process) to UAE Schemes and applicable standards through RACS are requested to implement relevant Quality System including documentation in a way to meet all requirements of this standard and all relevant specific standards depending on the nature of service (certified product and process).
- Client seeking extension or renewal of Certification scope shall as well submit the Application form specifying the extension or renewal of the Certification scope.
- Whenever applicable, additional certification requirements per certification schemes: Legal & Quality documents (such as Client Quality Manual) and supportive documents (records and checklists used by applicant), are to be attached to the Application form.

11. Renewal:

Full Quality Assurance/Onsite Assessment:
Validity of certificate is three (3) years, subject to surveillance visits every year during the certification to assure maintenance of conformity. Certificate of Conformity (CoC) should be renewed three (3) months prior expiry.

12. Process Map:

13. Market Monitoring:

RACS Will be conducting Market Surveillance campaigns in the local markets to assure continuous compliance of certified products and inform Scheme owner on immediate basis on the non-conformity products to take the appropriate action. Please refer to RACS/SOP/71 Market Monitoring Procedures.

14. Sampling Procedure: Please refer to RACS/SOP/21 Sampling Procedures.

15. Acceptance of Conformity Assessment Results: Please refer to RACS/SOP/23 Pre-Certification Procedures

16. Outsourcing of the conformity assessment activities: Please refer to RACS/SOP/06-Sub-contractors Qualifications & Competence Evaluation Criteria

17. Complaints and Appeals: Please refer to RACS/SOP/07 Complaints Handling Procedure

18. Licensing and Control of the Mark: Please refer to RACS/SOP/01 Procedure of Control the Use of RACS Quality License, Certificate and Mark of Conformity & Scheme Owner's Certificates and Mark of Conformity

19. Surveillance: Please refer to RACS/SOP/24 Post Certification Procedures.

20. **Non-conforming products:** Please refer to RACS/SOP/24 Post Certification Procedures

21. **Reporting to the scheme owner-**Please refer to RACS/SOP/39 Dissemination of Significant Information to the Scheme Owner and Other Concerned Parties.

22. **Subcontracting of the operation of the scheme**-Please refer to the relevant scheme.

23. **Marketing**-Please refer to RACS/SOP/72 Marketing Policies and Procedures.

24. **Fraudulent claim of certification-** Please refer to RACS/SOP/01 Procedure of Control the Use of RACS Quality License, Certificate and Mark of Conformity & Scheme Owner's Certificates and Mark of Conformity.

25. **References:**

- ISO/IEC 17065, Conformity Assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying Products, Processes and services.
- ISO/IEC 17021, Conformity Assessment — Requirements for bodies Providing audit and Certification of management systems.
- GAC Document: FAD- 4.0: Supplementary accreditation requirements for Product certification Bodies.
- R105: Requirements when referring to A2LA Accredited Status
- R307: General Requirements Accreditation of ISO /IEC 17065 Product Certification Bodies
- IAF Mandatory Document: Determination of Audit Time of Quality and Environmental Management System.
- ISO/IEC 17000, Conformity Assessment — Vocabulary and general principles.
- ISO/IEC 17020, Conformity Assessment— Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection.
- ISO/IEC 17025, General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.
- ISO17067, in combination with ISO Guide 28 and ISO Guide 53
- ISO/IEC 17030, Conformity Assessment — General requirements for third-party marks of conformity.
- ISO Guide 23:1982 Methods of indicating conformity with standards for third-party certification systems
- ISO Guide 27:1983 Guidelines for corrective action to be taken by a certification body in the event of misuse of its mark of conformity
- General Requirements for Notified Bodies issued by Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA).
- RACS Quality Manual RACS/QM/01
- All controlled QMS records-Please refer to RACS/REC/01-Quality Master List.
- UAE Scheme to control water, No. 26 of the year 2013

Revision History:

Date	Revision #	Description of Changes
Sep 1, 2017	00	Initial
Jan 24, 2018	01	In Clause 10 Renewal: (with Mandatory Audit Visit) removed
June 5, 2018	02	Change from Managing Director to Decision Committee in 9.4. Replaced Operations Manager to Head of Sales and Marketing. Replace Administrative Assistant to Sales and Marketing Executive/Administrative Assistant. Added RACS/Ag/10 General Conditions for Certification Services

July 31, 2018	03	Added important notes. 1. New Client Registration-the same certification procedure above will apply. 2. Addition of different size with the same brand of the same certified client-new label artwork must be evaluated and an amended certificate (retaining the same date of issuance and expiry) will be issued. 3. Addition of new brand from the facility previously audited by RACS or scheme owner (ESMA) in the past six months from the date of certificate issuance-new product label will be evaluated and a new certificate will be issued. 4. Sparkling water and Still water from the same brand of the same factory and source shall be certified under the same EQM certificate. Test reports shall be provided for both sparkling and still water if they are intended to be included in registration. 5. Approval of the label-product label shall be reviewed by the Conformity Officer/Lead Auditor and shall be approved and signed by the Conformity Manager (or his delegate or the Quality Assurance Manager. 6. In case of having more than one brand from the same factory and source, all these brands shall be registered under EQM. Client should provide at least one test report for one brand to cover all the products. In this case, the factory shall submit an official declaration stating and confirming that all brands have the same composition, source, and process flow.
August 26, 2018	RACS/PCS/12/Rev00	Change of reference number from RACS/SOP/31 to RACS/PCS/15 Added references to be inclined with ISO 17067. Changed Process Map; added reference documents. Changed the term facility certification to full quality assurance-onsite assessment. Updated the list of applicable standards based on the scheme. Added the steps for uploading certificates in ESMA portal.