



INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS  
CONSULTANCY ORGANIZATION

# ICCO Consultancy Management Standards (CMS)

QUALITY AUDIT PREPARATION -  
GUIDELINES FOR PR AND COMMUNICATIONS  
AGENCIES

[WWW.ICCOPR.COM](http://WWW.ICCOPR.COM)

## INTRODUCTION

At the International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO), quality standards are key to our industry, as what we and all of our constituents do is about trust. In order for the industry to differentiate among agencies that employ quality management systems, we have introduced a Consultancy Management Standard (CMS). CMS combines elements of ISO and the 'Investors in People' people management standard with criteria specific to public relations consultancies. The standard was first developed by PRCA in the UK in 1997 and has since grown to become adopted internationally. It is regularly updated by ICCO according to the needs of the PR industry as well as based on client expectations.

The standard is mandatory in numerous ICCO member countries, and in 2021, a new Quality and Standards Group was established to include CMS in ICCO's **drive towards improving professional standards globally**.

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The ICCO CMS certification is relevant for any organisation that carries out public relations activities professionally - agencies as well as communications/PR departments of companies or institutions. Its presence certifies a commitment to work that is morally and ethically just, for outstanding organisations that pursue high quality content while also maintaining procedural excellence.

Thus, the ICCO CMS certification's presence is a useful differentiator for customers, suppliers and business partners. It also assists new employees in their orientation, providing them a clear definition of both procedures and culture at PR organisations having received the designation.

Last but not least, for PR enterprises the ICCO CMS certification helps to ensure quality and efficiency in recurring tasks and frees up resources for further development, helping identify problems more quickly, thus more effectively managing risks.

The ICCO CMS certification standard has been customised for PR and Communications agencies, but can also be tailored to suit the needs of enterprise and other types of institutions.

## VALUATION

In order to obtain the ICCO CMS certification, PR and Communications agencies undergo an objective and standardised certification process. The certification body and the auditing organisation (composed of agency experts) assess the maturity and level of implementation of the firm's quality management system as part of a comprehensive systems audit.

As part of an audit, a firm's existing quality management system is evaluated in terms of its consistency, while its results must also be based upon the information and evidence collected. In assessing where the organisation stands in view of the ideal, attention is paid to whether standards are being implemented

in practice and whether they appear to be suitable for achieving the set goals in their current form. The term audit can thus be interpreted as an “assessment”, wherein the auditor acts as an expert, providing support in solving problems or, if necessary, in improving operational processes.

In order to be awarded the ICCO CMS certification, every aspect covered in those standards must be addressed in a way that is appropriate for the company in question. Individual discussions are therefore dedicated to each specific topic which is investigated. Compliance assessment is carried out in the form of a comprehensive audit report, which is prepared following the audit. Covering all of those aspects, the report contains suggestions for improvement and serves up information to help optimise the quality management system.

The certificate, which is issued by the certification body after the successful completion of an audit, is valid for two years, after which it can be renewed.

**About the Consultancy Management Standard (CMS):**

<https://iccopr.com/member-areadocuments/consultancy-management-standard-2/>

**About ICCO:**

<https://iccopr.com/>

## QUALITY CRITERIA FOR CONTENT-RELATED WORK

### 1. Target achievement for clients

How does the agency ensure that the focus is always on achieving the client's objectives when advising, designing and realising projects, while also adhering to ethical guidelines?

Are goals and strategies developed jointly or in consultation with the client?

Are measurable goals formulated?

Are actions completed on schedule, within budget, and in compliance with the specifications?

### 2. Quality of content

How does the agency ensure that appropriate communication tools and instruments are used to achieve information-rich and dialogue-oriented communication? Moreover, are the communication tools state-of-the-art? Is creativity encouraged? Are the measures geared towards sustainable impact?

How does the agency ensure that the work is carried out by the appropriate, adequately-trained employees, possessing comprehensive PR expertise, personal integrity, adequate knowledge of tools and areas of application, a sense of responsibility and trustworthiness?

How does the agency ensure that both its resources and that of the client are handled responsibly, in consideration of aspects such as efficiency, appropriateness of means, meaningful relationship between purpose and means, and employee resources?

How does the agency ensure that work is carried out in a socially responsible manner, considering responsible handling of partial publicity, creation of a balance of interests, compliance with all legal framework conditions, and truthfulness?

### 3. Rejection of unethical fees

Does the agency implement the ICCO's voluntary self-imposed restrictions whereby it waives fees due in connection with public sector transactions that would depend on the amount of the purchase or sale price achieved (i.e. are not linked to the actual amount of work performed/time spent on the job by PR consultants)?

# QUALITY MANAGEMENT ACCORDING TO CONSULTANCY MANAGEMENT STANDARD (CMS IV)

## 1. Leadership and communication

Agencies must demonstrate that they are well organised and that responsibilities are clearly defined at all levels and communicated throughout the organisation.

<p><b>1.1.</b></p> <p><b>Have the management structure and responsibilities been defined and made known to the team?</b></p>	<p>All management responsibilities should be defined and communicated throughout the agency via organisational charts, management structure diagrams, job and task descriptions as well as project and customer reports.</p> <p>The management structure should be communicated to illustrate the proper division of responsibilities between the various members of the management team.</p> <p>Individual employees should have clearly defined roles and the appropriate level of authority to be able to influence business decisions. In addition, they should know exactly what the company expects of them and what they need to do.</p>
<p><b>1.2 Does the agency's management have basic leadership skills?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Are relevant behavioural competencies included in the job descriptions of managers?</b></li> <li>• <b>Do managerial reviews and personal development plans relate to these competencies?</b></li> </ul> <p>Relevant behavioural competencies include leadership, organisation, communication, teamwork, technical know-how, management and decision-making.</p>
<p><b>1.3.</b></p> <p><b>Is there a system in place to ensure effective communication with internal and external stakeholders?</b></p>	<p>First, the agency should identify all stakeholders. It should also determine the topics to be communicated and when that takes place. Stakeholders typically include shareholders, media, neighbours, public authorities, agency partners and consultants, trade unions, professional associations and educational institutions.</p> <p>An external communication policy or process flow for communication should include the points listed above together with a corresponding assigning of prioritisation for each.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a communication strategy that defines how information is shared with internal and external stakeholders?</li> <li>• Does the strategy define prioritisation for the disclosure of information?</li> <li>• Can the agency prove that the communication strategy for internal and external communication is being adhered to?</li> </ul>

## 2. Corporate planning

Agencies must demonstrate that their business plan is a realistic and long-term programme based on a clear forecast of the market, which outlines its potential and, accordingly, the course of action that the agency will follow.

<p><b>2.1.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have a business plan?</b></p>	<p>The agency must submit a business plan that clearly states its short- and long-term goals. The plan should act as a "driving force" for further development. Typically drawn up annually, it is developed in alignment with the agency's forecasts, values and long-term measures for improvement (see 1.6.).</p> <p>An effective business plan typically contains the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A summary of market trends, including new and existing market opportunities;</li> <li>• Portrait of the agency's financial situation;</li> <li>• Financial targets (e.g. forecasted fee income, profitability, profit, overheads, cash flow, etc.);</li> <li>• Business objectives for customer/market, personnel and innovation/organisation &amp; infrastructure areas;</li> <li>• All important developmental initiatives;</li> <li>• Identification of future areas for investment (training, recruitment, IT, etc.).</li> </ul> <p>The business plan should be reviewed and approved by the agency owners.</p>
<p><b>2.2.</b></p> <p><b>Are the business plans' goals clear and unambiguous?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goals of the business and its financing must be defined according to SMART criteria:</li> <li>• Specific</li> <li>• Measurable</li> <li>• Achievable</li> <li>• Realistic</li> <li>• Timely</li> </ul>

The agency must demonstrate that the plan is being used systematically by management to run the organisation. The plan must be communicated throughout the agency and reviewed on a regular basis.

<p><b>2.3.</b></p> <p><b>Is the business plan being communicated at all levels within the agency?</b></p>	<p>It may not seem appropriate to communicate the entire business plan to all employees, but the most important goals having been publicised throughout the agency must be verified. Whether or not target agreements have been made with all managers should be checked based on meeting minutes.</p>
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<p><b>2.4.</b></p> <p><b>Has the agency's performance been evaluated in light of the plan's objectives?</b></p>	<p>It is important that the agency's performance be monitored and assessed according to the targets set out in the business plan. Any discrepancies between the services provided and those specified in the plan should be reviewed. If necessary, corrective action should be taken, i.e. the targets must be adjusted or the measures and timeframe changed in order to achieve the original targets.</p> <p>On a monthly basis, the agency's actual financial status must be compared to the financial goals outlined in the business plan. These meetings must be documented.</p>
<p><b>2.5.</b></p> <p><b>Should the business plan be updated?</b></p>	<p>The business plan may need to be amended in the event of external influences (e.g. changes in the market situation), or due to internal factors (such as the trajectory of the business, staff turnover, etc.). To ensure this takes place, management should undertake regular reviews, the frequency of which should be determined by the agency.</p> <p>However, how often reviews occur should be in alignment with the length of the business plan. An annual plan, for example, should be reviewed quarterly or at least every six months. Long-term goals (taking place within a 3-5 year interval) require an annual review.</p> <p>Meeting minutes should be taken to verify that management reviews are taking place on a continuous basis, and should be included in management reviews.</p>

### 3. Corporate development

The Consultancy Management Standard stipulates that agencies must have a programme for continuous development of the business, working towards the achievement of long-term goals.

<p><b>3.1.</b></p> <p><b>Has the agency defined and communicated a clear vision and core values that include the mission of the business and long-term goals?</b></p>	<p>The vision and core values of an agency are usually summarised in the form of a mission statement, which also includes the overarching goals of the organisation. The mission statement should also be linked to the agency's long-term goals.</p> <p>Ideally, employees should be involved in the formulation of the agency's mission statement, which is signed off on by senior management. These statements should be supplemented by strategies and procedures that are geared towards the active, long-term development of the agency and be aligned with the business plan. It must be evident how the mission statement and business objectives have been communicated internally and how employees have contributed to this.</p> <p>Examples of such evidence are a system of internal communication, strategy days or workshops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the agency formulated key values within, or in addition to, its vision?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2.</b></p> <p><b>Is there a formalised process for the management of larger development projects?</b></p>	<p>This includes major investment projects such as IT or capital investments, the development of new markets and the introduction of new services. The project system must align with the business plan and incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept roll-out;</li> <li>• Defined responsibilities;</li> <li>• Process flows;</li> <li>• Authorisation levels and procedures;</li> <li>• Milestones and results to be achieved;</li> <li>• Final review; and</li> <li>• Implementation plan.</li> </ul>



<p><b>3.3.</b></p> <p><b>Is there a system for collecting, analysing and making use of key information to enhance management control and increase efficiency?</b></p>	<p>Management should identify all key data and establish a system to ensure that crucial information is communicated throughout the agency, i.e. from top to bottom and vice versa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The business’s most crucial data include:</li> <li>• Actions to improve business processes;</li> <li>• Business plan review;</li> <li>• Accounting, profit and loss account;</li> <li>• Implementation assessment of projects or campaigns;</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction evaluation;</li> <li>• Performance in the provision of services;</li> <li>• Personnel recruitment, development and fluctuation.</li> </ul> <p>The system should clearly show which meetings have been held and describe their focus, frequency, agenda and participants. It should ensure that the information is satisfactory, provided in a timely manner, and passed on to the pertinent employees.</p>
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#### 4. Financial system

An agency must demonstrate that its financial management systems are adequate for managing the agency effectively from an operational standpoint. While not intended as a comprehensive financial audit, such systems aim to ensure that basic control mechanisms for the agency’s financial management are in place and functioning.

<p><b>4.1.</b></p> <p><b>Is the agency conducting proper accounting measures, on a monthly basis?</b></p>	<p>The agency should compile key financial management information, including, for example, the following: profit and loss statements, balance sheets, sales forecasts and other key figures/indicators and reports on financial status that are prepared for management.</p> <p>The agency should also provide verification of reports that characterise the firm’s financial standing (see section 3.3) as well as all evaluations of key areas of consulting activity, such as overservicing.</p> <p>- Are monthly accounts prepared?</p>
<p><b>4.2.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have a standardised and effective procedure for calculating fees for client work?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a standard procedure for calculating fees for agency bids?</li> <li>• Are all customer offers prepared or signed off by senior employees?</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.3.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have a standardised and effective procedure for controlling client invoicing?</b></p>	<p>The agency should demonstrate that it effectively manages outstanding accounts, including credit ratings, records of allowances for bad debts or lists of existing debtors/creditors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a standard procedure for creating customer invoices?</li> <li>• Is there a standard procedure for credit control?</li> </ul>

<p><b>4.4.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have effective systems in place to manage timesheet records and report on client utilisation and over/underprovision?</b></p>	<p>The agency should demonstrate that it has systems and processes in place to ensure adequate control of the following aspects: price negotiations, timesheet records, billing and service levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a resource management system that assigns work to employees on a weekly/monthly basis?</li> <li>• Is the work designated for clients according to an agreed fee level?</li> <li>• Is the actual time for each customer recorded regularly?</li> <li>• Is information on overuse and underuse provided on a monthly basis?</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.5</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have an effective equity management system?</b></p>	<p>The agency should demonstrate that it has systems in place for capital management, including cash flow control, investment decisions, equity management and currency controls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a standard procedure for controlling all running costs?</li> <li>• Is there a standard operating method for controlling capital expenditure?</li> </ul>

## 5. Realisation of projects or campaigns

An agency must demonstrate to the assessors that it has appropriate systems in place to plan, implement and evaluate projects effectively.

<p><b>5.1.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have an effective system for recording customer demands?</b></p>	<p>The agency should have a system in place to record customer demands - regardless of whether it is an inquiry from an existing customer or a new company. Client requirements are understood to mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer objectives;</li> <li>• Key success factors (those most important for project success);</li> <li>• Key performance indicators and evaluation tools agreed with customers;</li> <li>• Milestones and project deliverables;</li> <li>• Authorisation and customer approval process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5.2.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have an effective planning system in place to fulfil client demands?</b></p>	<p>The agency must demonstrate that it takes the following measures in its planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary research before project kick-off;</li> <li>• Creation of a project plan;</li> <li>• Availability and allocation of appropriate resources: time, personnel, budget;</li> <li>• Development of a strategy;</li> <li>• Staff skills' assessment;</li> <li>• Communication processes: Coordination, status reporting, client meetings.</li> </ul>

<p><b>5.3.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency cultivate an effective flow of information?</b></p>	<p>The agency should have effective systems in place for access to critical information, covering electronic and manual storage, handling, backup, retrieval, disposal and commercial security.</p> <p>Such vital information includes correspondence, photographs, logos, drafts, plans, complaints, reports or invoices.</p> <p>These files must be appropriately secured to protect them from unauthorised access, and backups of them must be accessible in the event of loss.</p>
<p><b>5.4.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency ensure that supplier services are consistent?</b></p>	<p>The agency must demonstrate that its suppliers undergo selection-, approval- and monitoring processes to ensure sufficient and reliable services. An effective verification system should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process for evaluation, approval and review;</li> <li>• List of approved suppliers;</li> <li>• Monitoring of the services provided;</li> <li>• Proof of long-term partnerships with preferred suppliers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5.5.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency monitor the progress of projects and take appropriate actions as needed?</b></p>	<p>The agency should demonstrate that it regularly monitors the progress of projects to ensure effective implementation of the project plan in order to fulfil client demands and maintain or enhance the agency's reputation.</p> <p>The agency should work with the client to determine an appropriate form of evaluation based on key performance and success indicators, milestones, objectives to be achieved and project outcomes (see 5.1).</p> <p>If performance falls short of expectations, appropriate remedial action should be taken. Significant failures should be comprehensively investigated to identify their underlying causes and action taken to prevent recurrence.</p> <p>Evidence of properly functioning project monitoring includes: project status reports, minutes of internal meetings, and records of meetings with clients.</p> <p>The agency should demonstrate that it regularly reviews its project management throughout the agency. This can be evidenced by reports or minutes of client meetings (e.g. debriefings), which should provide the following: insight into project management, identification of trends, evaluating performance levels and any corrective measures taken.</p>

## 6. Customer satisfaction

A CMS-certified agency must provide evidence that client satisfaction is continuously and consistently measured. The agency recognises that in order to improve its professional capabilities, client feedback on the services provided must be thoroughly reviewed, with the results used toward enhancing the quality of client service.

<p><b>6.1.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have a system for measuring customer satisfaction?</b></p>	<p>The agency should have a system for measuring customer satisfaction, applicable to all customers. This system should be appropriate to the size of the agency and the complexity of its client relationships.</p> <p><b>Such systems usually include some of the following measures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings for evaluation and assessment;</li> <li>• Regular informal meetings/lunches;</li> <li>• Formal annual or semi-annual reviews;</li> <li>• Customer feedback surveys/questionnaires;</li> <li>• Complaint systems;</li> </ul> <p><b>Reviews by other client advisors within the agency.</b></p> <p>The system should disclose the frequency of reviews and the resources used and define the key performance indicators considered to determine customer satisfaction.</p> <p>The agency must document the results of the assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the system indicate how often checks are carried out?</li> <li>• Does the system contain KPIs that the agency must achieve?</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.2.</b></p> <p><b>Are effective measures taken to counteract low customer satisfaction?</b></p>	<p>The agency must prove that customer satisfaction is determined based on established benchmarks and that appropriate measures are taken subsequently to meet those. The results must be communicated throughout the agency and specific measures must be agreed with those in charge.</p> <p>It is important that the survey results are reported back to the customer, and individual feedback may be appropriate in some cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are measures taken if customer satisfaction targets are not met?</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.3.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency perform peer-to-peer comparisons of customer satisfaction appraisals?</b></p>	<p>The agency should regularly review client satisfaction at management level. This should include an analysis of satisfaction levels across all clients and the various consultant teams.</p> <p>It should also ascertain how effectively the system measures customer satisfaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does management review customer satisfaction throughout the agency, at least every six months?</li> </ul>

## 7. New business

A CMS-certified agency must have an effective system for new business development, including the handling of enquiries and acquisition processes, in order to achieve its goals.

<p><b>7.1.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have a strategy for new business development in order to realise the goals which have been set?</b></p>	<p>The new business strategy must be developed on the basis of the objectives set out in the agency’s business plan.</p> <p>The strategy includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing plans;</li> <li>• Outlined responsibilities;</li> <li>• Research and case studies, e.g. analysing business opportunities in the market or specific segments; and</li> </ul> <p>Performance monitoring.</p> <p>The strategy may also include a plan organised into segments, necessitated by the market segments targeted requiring different development strategies, i.e. if an agency has determined that it would like to work in a new segment or offer specialised services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a verified business development strategy?</li> <li>• Is it derived from the business plan’s objectives?</li> <li>• Does the business development strategy include details on how new customer contacts will be prospected?</li> <li>• How are additional orders generated from existing customers?</li> <li>• Are there clearly defined responsibilities and objectives for the entire agency, or analysis of market- or industry opportunities and performance monitoring for the acquisition of new business?</li> </ul>
<p><b>7.2.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have an effective system for dealing with enquiries and presentation preparation for new business?</b></p>	<p>The agency must demonstrate an effective process for handling and processing enquiries, concepts, presentations, tenders, contracts and deals. An effective system includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting, handling, tracking and finalising all requests and concepts;</li> <li>• Analysis of won and lost assignments and their presentations; and</li> <li>• Constructs for future customer relationships, including database management and a regular review of presentations not resulting in a win, and lost potential customers.</li> </ul>

## 8. Personnel management

A CMS-certified agency must have a clearly defined and generally understandable system for the evaluation, training and personal development of all employees. The use of programmes such as “Investors in People” has a positive impact on an agency’s rating. Aspects such as empowerment, recognition and teamwork come to the fore at the organisation, as does social commitment.

<p><b>8.1.</b></p> <p><b>Are the recruitment processes appropriate for the positions’ requirements?</b></p>	<p>The agency should prove that the recruitment activities being implemented suit the requirements for filling its open positions. These include job descriptions, role profiles, competency analyses, skills tests, agency values and training plans.</p> <p>The selection procedures may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Review of qualifications;</li> <li>· Specific professional experience;</li> <li>· Creation of psychometric/personality profiles;</li> <li>· PR skills’ evaluation;</li> <li>· Structured job interviews.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8.2.</b></p> <p><b>Is there a general induction process for new employees in the first week of employment and an exit interview for employees who leave the agency?</b></p>	<p>The content of the induction varies depending on the new employee’s position and may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Information about the agency and letters of recommendation;</li> <li>· The team and human resources;</li> <li>· High priority customers;</li> <li>· Internal systems and processes, incl. a customer support system;</li> <li>· Criteria and methods for planning projects or campaigns, research and evaluations;</li> <li>· Health and safety;</li> <li>· Pension payments and financial benefits; and</li> <li>· Professional codes of conduct.</li> </ul> <p>When an employee leaves the agency, an exit interview must be conducted.</p>

<p><b>8.3.</b></p> <p><b>Does the agency have a formal evaluation system and does this engender measures that promote employee retention?</b></p>	<p>The agency must demonstrate that it has a formal appraisal system that measures the development of each employee in relation to their personal objectives (business and personal development).</p> <p>The agency itself determines the frequency of this assessment, but must provide evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· implementation of the performance appraisal;</li> <li>· review of follow-up measures; and</li> <li>· the assessment results being incorporated into the remuneration system in order to retain (key) employees in the agency.</li> </ul> <p>· Does the appraisal system include written feedback to employees?</p> <p>· Is the system documented?</p> <p>· Have personal goals been set for each employee?</p> <p>· Are the follow-up measures for the assessments reviewed?</p> <p>· Do the assessments feed into the recognition and reward system?</p>
<p><b>8.4.</b></p> <p><b>Have the plans for the personal development of employees been developed on the basis of a training needs' assessment and implemented accordingly?</b></p>	<p>The agency should demonstrate that plans for the personal development of individual employees are consistent with the results of the organisation's training needs' analysis. Effective personal development plans contain objectives based on the SMART principle (i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound). Via training certificates, the agency should be able to prove that internal and external training have been carried out.</p> <p>The agency should verify that the training is carried out in accordance with individual employee training plans, evidenced by the training records. The effectiveness of the training courses carried out is confirmed in an assessor's follow-up discussions with employees.</p>
<p><b>8.5 Are employees' personal development plans and training standardised across the agency?</b></p>	<p>Are the training courses organised in line with individual employee development?</p>

## 9. Ethics and sustainability

A CMS-certified agency must employ ethics and sustainability guidelines.

<p><b>9.1.</b> <b>Does the agency follow ethical guidelines?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What measures has the agency taken to enable its employees to take action against unethical behaviour by its associates?</li> <li>• How do managers prohibit unethical business practices (such as unpaid internships, structural salary differences between women and men, etc.)?</li> <li>• Does the agency have an ethics policy that applies to technology use (including digital marketing, artificial intelligence and automation)?</li> <li>• How does the agency ensure that all employees, customers and suppliers are aware of relevant international codes of ethics?</li> <li>• What measures does the agency take to ensure that employees are adequately trained? How is their knowledge monitored?</li> <li>• How does the agency deal with repeated breaches of its own and the PR industry's code of ethics? Are procedures and consequences defined?</li> </ul>
<p><b>9.2.</b> <b>How is diversity and inclusion addressed/embraced at the agency?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What measures does the organisation take to promote an inclusive culture within the company and throughout the supply chain?</li> </ul>
<p><b>9.3 Does the agency have a sustainability strategy?</b> <b>What goals has the agency set for itself in the area of sustainability, and how does it realise them?</b></p>	<p>The agency should showcase the activities and programmes it promotes in terms of sustainability. Sustainability is defined as the creation of long-term value through responsible behaviour with special consideration for environmental, social and governance (ESG) aspects. How these activities and programmes are communicated and how they are applied in day-to-day work should be communicated explicitly. (See also ICCO Sustainability Communications Charter).</p> <p>Examples of best practice include the conservation of raw materials such as energy, electricity, water and paper, use of environmentally friendly technologies and materials, the targeted disposal of tools, office materials and electronic waste, flex-time working arrangements for employees, internships for students, exchange programmes, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does your company regularly update the calculation of its ecological footprint?</li> <li>• How does the business measure its greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 1 and 2)?</li> <li>• Does the firm have programmes and policies in place to reduce the environmental footprint of travel/commuting?</li> <li>• Does your company monitor, record or report its energy consumption?</li> </ul>



## ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

### 1. Information

How does the agency ensure that all customers, suppliers and employees are aware of the ICCO Code of Ethics?

### 2. Training and regular checks

What measures does the agency take to adequately train employees and monitor their know-how?

### 3. Commitment

How does the agency ensure that employees do not violate the Code of Ethics?

Has the agency regulated whom employees should contact if they become aware of violations?

How does the agency make suppliers and business partners aware of the Code of Ethics?

How does the agency hold its suppliers and business partners - who are relevant to the PR agency/ department's core areas of activity - accountable? For example, does the agency have a system in place for suppliers and partners in compliance with the ICCO's Code of Ethics to become "preferred partners"?

How does the agency deal with repeated breaches of the Code of Ethics? Are procedures and consequences defined?