„Quality guideline for suppliers“ of the ATOMA-MULTIPOND Group

1. Introduction

The tougher requirements for the quality of delivered products (zero-error target), as well as commercial considerations (fault prevention instead of detection, reworking or scrapping) are creating the need to implement preventative quality assurance measures.
This guideline is demanding that our suppliers suitable implement measures, in particular an effective quality assurance system, in order to guarantee faultless consignments in accordance with the specifications in the purchase contract. It also sets out, in binding terms, the procedure for sample submission and release, as well as the supplier assessment for series deliveries.

2. Quality assurance system (QS system)

To ensure our quality requirements are met, we expect our suppliers to have an appropriate, documented QS system, which encompasses all areas.
The QS system must be organized so as to guarantee effective monitoring of all quality-related activities.
This means in particular:
- description of the company-specific QS system,
- planning and defining of the requisite manufacturing and inspection processes
- (process and work instructions),
- inspection equipment monitoring,
- ensuring controlled manufacturing conditions,
- deployment of personnel suitable and trained for the
- activities concerned,
- identification for clear assignment and traceability (where required),
- application of suitable quality control and monitoring processes,
- continuous recording of all quality-relevant data/features (where required).

The effect of the QS system must be such that all our contractually agreed requirements and expectations are fulfilled.

3. Initial sample (for cast parts, …)

Initial samples are parts that are produced entirely using the same tools and devices and according to the same processes applied for the subsequent series delivery.
The purpose of initial samples is to ensure that the supplier can meet the agreed specifications with respect to material, dimensional and functional features in a series delivery.
No series deliveries can be made before the initial sample is released.
Initial samples are generally required:
- For new products
- For the use of new/modified tools and/or manufacturing equipment.

In case of process modifications, change of production facilities or change in the supply sources of "critical" upstream products, the supplier must inform us before the first delivery, in order to agree whether the initial sample inspection has to be repeated. If such an inspection is not expressly stipulated, the supplier is nevertheless obliged for quality assurance reasons to perform the inspections required for this purpose.
The initial sample inspection involves inspecting all the quality features / specifications agreed between us and the supplier. The results are documented in the initial sample inspection report.
A release of the initial sample does not absolve the supplier from the responsibility for quality of its products. All initial samples must be visibly and clearly identified for the purpose of clear assignment to the initial sample inspection report. This also includes any requisite packaging.

4. Series delivery

In principle, series deliveries may be made only after we have issued a written release for the products concerned (e.g. initial sample inspection). If initial samples or re-inspection of already sampled, or "rejected" parts are not specified, the supplier must complete all the requisite and corresponding QS inspections on its own authority.
If part features are not subject to the statistical process control, the supplier must take random samples on a regular basis. Inspection scope and frequency depend on the controllability of the process.
If parts from faulty units could already have been delivered to us, our purchasing/goods inwards department must be informed immediately.
Moreover, the supplier is under an obligation to inform us if:
- manufacturing processes are modified
- a production facility/facilities other than those examined is/are to carry out the manufacturing process
- product features could change, e.g. due to changes to the supply sources.

5. Supplier assessment

Supplier assessments are supposed to make an essential and useful contribution to the partnership between ourselves and our suppliers.
The quality assessment system therefore serves:
- to make an objective assessment about the quality performance of the supplier,
- to identify weaknesses and initiate corrective measures,
- to support the purchase decision.

The quality assessment system consists in assessing supplier performances. The key figures are determined by objectively assessing incoming goods in terms of compliance with the agreed quality features and specifications.
Quality capability levels:
A = quality capable
(85 to 100 points) = supplier with a very high quality level
B = conditionally quality capable
(70 to 84 points) = supplier meets the requirements with reservations. Quality standards should be met prior to the product range being expanded.
C = not quality capable
(70 points and lower) = supplier exhibits significant weaknesses in the supplies. The supplier should be re-classified following implementation of the corrective measures.

6. Responsibilities

All quality-relevant requirements and expectations for the production and supply of the ordered products are specified by us.
This is usually done by provisioning complete technical documentation for realization of the product according to stipulated specifications at optimal costs. The technical documentation is part of the order documentation. The supplier is responsible for provisioning the means suitable for the production and supply procedures, including: personnel, manufacturing and quality assurance facilities.
The supplier is responsible for organized and effective quality assurance. This includes in particular:
Establishing and developing an appropriate QS system, controlled manufacturing processes and effective quality inspections. The supplier is responsible for supplying the products we order in line with requirements.

7. Documentation

For the purpose of continuous traceability, the supplier must document all quality-assurance measures. For example:

- process instructions
- inspection schedules
- inspection equipment monitoring

These pertinent documents must be reviewed, approved and monitored by personnel/departments authorized to do so.

At the same time, it must be ensured:

- that the applicable documents are available wherever quality-relevant activities are carried out
- documents that are no longer applicable are immediately rendered invalid or shredded.