### Why are we being audited?

AWE runs a 3-year audit programme for its QC1 and QC2 suppliers. Either there has been a request to add your organisation to the AWE approved suppliers list (ASL) at one of these levels, there has been a request to increase your organisation’s QC grade from QC3 or 4 to a higher level, or as an existing QC1 or QC2 supplier on the AWE ASL the 3-year renewal period is now due.

### What will the audit consist of?

The audit is intended to gauge an organisation’s compliance against AQAP 2110, ISO 9001, CFSI, ISO 14001 and contract requirements and any subsequent risk that may exist.

### How long will the audit take?

Generally, if your organisation holds ISO 9001 or AS9100 certification issued by UKAS or another IAF member, it will take 1 auditor two days. However, this does depend upon the level of services your organisation provides to AWE and if you have returned answers to the question set along with the key processes requested. If the services include design, manufacture, software and AWE require environmental management to be audited, this will be 3 days.

If your organisation is not yet on the AWE ASL and either does not hold ISO 9001 or AS9100 certification, or the certification is not issued by UKAS or another IAF member, this will increase to the equivalent of 6 days, i.e. 2 auditors for 3 days.

### How often are these audits?

AWE QC1 and QC2 suppliers can expect an audit every 3 years.

### Who needs to be involved in the audit?

We generally expect the Quality Manager, or person responsible for the Management System to be the primary host. Other auditees will depend upon the services provided, but normally include engineering, software, production, inspection, environmental, audit and supply chain leads. If we have indicated it will be a full QMS audit, then in addition to the above, we also require members of Senior Management to be interviewed.

### How many auditors can I expect to host?

Generally, there will be only 1 auditor; exceptions to this will be if there are multiple locations to be audited, the audit includes ISO 14001, or your organisation does not hold ISO 9001 or AS9100 certification issued by UKAS or an IAF member and we have indicated that we will be carrying out a Full QMS Audit. This will be discussed at the planning stage and prior to any audit taking place.

### What will the auditor be looking at?

The auditor is gauging the organisation’s compliance with AQAP 2110, ISO 9001, CFSI, ISO 14001 and contract requirements and any subsequent risk that may exist. The focus will be on the associated processes including any mandatory documented information.

### How should I prepare for the audit?

In our experience, the audits are most likely to be successful and completed in the shortest possible time if the organisation returns:

- The completed question set sent out by AWE, at least 2 weeks prior to audit commencement
- The list of key processes and procedures requested, at least 2 weeks prior to audit commencement
If the auditor raises any issues during the audit, how long will I have to address them?

This depends upon the type of finding:

- In the first instance, the organisation is required to submit an Action Plan within 15 working days of receipt of the Audit Report.
- For a major non-conformity, it may require 48-hour containment to prevent non-conforming product being released from the organisation. The corrective action due completion date will be discussed during the closing meeting.
- For a minor non-conformity, the normal time-frame for closure is 3 months; if this needs to differ from this, it will be discussed during the closing meeting.
- If an opportunity for improvement (OFI) is raised, normally these are optional and will not be given a target completion date. If agreement has been reached to not raise a non-conformity but action is expected to address the OFI, it will be discussed during the closing meeting.

Will there be a follow-up visit after the audit?

In most cases, any non-conformities raised can be closed by the auditor remotely, after receipt of suitable evidence. In a minority of cases, dependent upon the non-conformity, the auditor may require to be physically present at a location to witness a process or product. Where possible this will be discussed during the closing meeting; if it becomes apparent after the audit and on receipt of the organisation’s Action Plan, it will be discussed then.

We have been informed that we are a QC1 or QC2 supplier, what does this mean?

AWE QC Grading is based upon ‘consequence of failure.’ This means that the product or service to be provided, if it were to subsequently fail, has the potential to pose a significant risk to AWE. The QC Grades for systems, structures and components (SSC) range from QC1 to QC4; QC1 being the highest risk and QC4 the lowest.

In order to mitigate risk, one of the activities AWE carries out, is to audit its QC1 & QC2 suppliers every 3 years against the quality and contractual requirements. AWE/MAN.Q/01/4917, MS 400 ‘Quality Grading’ refers.

What is AQAP 2110 and AQAP 2210?

AQAP 2110 ‘Quality Assurance Requirements for Design, Development and Production’ and AQAP 2210 ‘Supplementary Software Quality Assurance Requirements to AQAP 2110’ are NATO documents AWE contracts its QC1 and QC2 suppliers to comply with.

AQAP 2110 includes all the content of ISO 9001 plus additional requirements. AQAP 2210 is applicable to all suppliers providing AWE with QC1 and QC2 software.

What is CFSI?

CFSI stands for Counterfeit, Fraudulent and Suspect Items. AWE expects their suppliers to take a proactive approach to the detection and prevention of CFSI entering AWE systems, structures and components (SSC). These items may be forgeries, imitations of something more valuable or whose provenance cannot be proven by certification. Defence Standard 05-135 ‘Avoidance of Counterfeit Materiel’ refers.