Achieving Superior Performance based on Quality Management

BLS International's quality management approach is founded on Six Sigma practices. It is a standardised lifecycle process based on industry best practices in planning, control and quality assurance. Our Quality Management System (QMS) begins with diplomatic mission's requirements; we develop a specific approach based on Local Post standards as well as regional norms and business practices acquired as a part of our presence across the globe.

The process of service quality is ensured by placing a Quality Control (QC) officer in every VAC who report to a Regional Quality Manager assigned for each region. To ensure consistency in customer service provided to each applicant, we adhere to the following guidelines

Training

BLS VSC personnel need to know how to do their job effectively in order to ensure success. BLS ensures consistency and improved personnel performance by providing extensive training and manuals for every position at the VSC. Supporting the regional live-training sessions with a training manual saves BLS time in the long run and helps advance customer service levels. Training management personnel help BLS communicate induct new employees into the system to ensure high quality service and customer satisfaction. Trained personnel with clarity concerning their job responsibilities are more confident and productive. They also understand the standards and results expected of them.

Personnel

BLS builds staff levels at VSCs with local hires, beginning with VSC managers. BLS personnel focus on customer service knowing that the technical components on which the visa processing services are based require little or no local technical expertise. Our staffing philosophy for global operations pursues a polycentric staffing approach, where local (host country) managers are hired first to fill key positions. Hiring host country managers and staff contributes to a successful VSC by virtually eliminating the need to assimilate staff in order to operate in a VSC. It also:

- Encourages cultural empathy and flexibility, increasing the centre's ability to adapt and prosper within the local culture and working environment.

- Increases the centre's productivity by establishing situational comfort for both personnel and applicants.
- Using local managers proves helpful in hiring new personnel, as they can efficiently be made aware of the service responsibilities, role and expectations of the position before they are hired.

IT Support

The BLS global Help Desk provides a critical lifeline to help keep our applicant centres, computers, live scans, software, voice systems and related information technology. BLS also realises that, to achieve consistent service levels, training, personnel and IT can only provide the building blocks of a consistent service plan. Key components to providing service levels that meets the applicant's service expectations need to be addressed as well. BLS addresses applicant expectations by:

- Increasing our ability to accurately forecast applicant volume, both online and at the VSC, and total applicant handling times based on historical trends.
- Using a proven method (and software) to calculate the centre personnel required to handle applicant volume variances

Comprehensive Quality Control

We will build our quality control approach on the QMS, ensuring we deliver products and services based on the concerned diplomatic mission's requirements that exceed customer expectations. The QMS emphasises the importance of clear and repeatable processes and continuous process improvement. We achieve effective quality control using the following methodology:

- **Stabilise Processes:** Review and identify processes in use at the site level and implement a QMS to document, maintain, standardise, and update the processes and associated training materials.
- **Develop Performance and Quality Measures:** Identify metrics, develop a metrics capture system and establish an system to report the metrics.
- **Measure Performance and Quality:** Capture and report our performance using established metrics and systems.
- **Analyse Performance:** Analyse our performance; identify areas for corrective action, preventative action, or quality improvement; and determine a solution to resolve performance issues or take advantage of positive trends.

- **Improve Performance:** Implement solutions identified through analysis and continue to identify other areas for improvement.

For shortcomings identified at a diplomatic mission, we implement client recommendations; for any current shortcoming, we use corrective action and employ preventative action for any potential shortcoming identified before delivery. This standardised process provides full accountability and tracking of any issue presented to us, allowing us to improve our processes

Continuous Improvement

We use lessons learned through internal and external identification as central to exceeding customer expectations. Continuous improvement allows for increased efficiency, leading to better execution of services and increased cost savings over the life of the contract. We will use Six Sigma events to identify and eliminate inefficiencies.

Process	Description
Service Level Training	Training emphasising the required service levels
Quality Tools Training	Training related to every chart, device, software, strategy, or technique that supports quality management efforts
Best Practice Sharing	The capture, dissemination, and sharing of a work method, process, or initiative to improve organisational effectiveness, service delivery, and employee satisfaction
Coaching and Counselling	Part of the day-to-day interaction between a supervisor and an employee that facilitates feedback to the employee–both positive as well as that correcting performance issues
Peer Reviews	Having others monitor development of materials to ensure relevant content is included and proper processes are followed
The Process followed After launch	
Corrective Action Process	Our standard corrective action processes are set in place
Direct Observation	Observing behaviour or events first-hand to suggest and improve processes

Periodic Inspection	Regular inspections at a set frequency
Customer Satisfaction Surveys	Measure how our services meet and exceed customer expectation
Complaints Management	Analyse and respond to customer complaints to stop reoccurrence
Internal Audits	A systematic methodology for analysing processes and procedures with the goal of highlighting problems and recommending solutions
Management Reviews	A periodic meeting of management to assess the status and effectiveness of processes and systems
Mystery Audits	Measures the quality of the service delivered to customers by anonymously observing customer service provided

What we do

Audit Requirements

We have built our audit requirements on the ISO 9001:2015 principles. This helps us meet statutory and regulatory requirements of the client government. By adopting an approach that starts out to implement a more efficient working practice and focus on the organisation's business objectives, we achieve a system that helps and supports our staff and clients and improves customer satisfaction.

As a standard auditing function, the BLS software provides full comprehensive logging of actions and events that occur in the system. BLS records operator activities and access to the system, performs full transaction audit logging and provides application subsystem component service level audit logging. Complete auditing reports are available for collected fees. Details for each transaction are logged and available for review. Each piece of data (biometric, demographic, supporting documentation) is linked with the applicant's Reference Number so

that it may be tracked and audited accordingly. All logs of computer security relevant events are traceable to specific individuals, including system administrators.

The staff's ability to access reporting information is tied to each user's security profile set by the system administrator. All auditing reports are customized to collect the unique information required by client.

Requirement	Process	Solution, Risk & Mitigation
Record Keeping	All invoices raised to the diplomatic mission and payment received are documented and stored during the tenure of the contract and 5 years post closure of contract. This includes all supporting documents available in all countries of presence and backed up in BLS HQ for ease of access for the mission	The risk of damage to records is mitigated by daily backups (digital & physical) within the software and at the VSCs and BLS HQ
Tracking Applications	As required by the diplomatic mission, all details of applications (date, time, visa type, delivery date and supporting documents submitted) are stored digitally by BLS software	The risk of damage to records is mitigated by daily backups (digital & physical) within the BLS software and at the VSCs
Financial tracking	All details in relation to visa fees, online service fees and service charges are stored digitally by BLS. A hard copy of the Financial Report including all such details is kept with the daily reconciliation of the payment to the mission	The risk of damage to records is mitigated by daily backups (digital & physical) within the BLS software and at the VSCs
Document tracking	The BLS staff keep track and record details of all documents that are to be returned to the applicant, which would take into consideration the number of documents that have been received by the applicant by his preferred choice of return	The risk of damage to records is mitigated by daily backups (digital & physical) within the BLS software and at the VSCs

Record Keeping	All records required for audit by the mission from time to time would be stored safely at each VAC, in separate shelves for each year's records. The backup of all digital records is kept both at the VAC and the Regional HQ.	The risk of damage to records is mitigated by daily backups (digital & physical) within the BLS software and at the VSCs
Access to Audit Records	The details and records stored digitally at each VSC facilitate mission representatives in audit of such records and documents. We would provide all support to conduct audits.	The risk of damage to records is mitigated by daily backups (digital & physical) within the BLS software and at the VSCs
Audit Rights for Compliance with Requirement	The client has access to all audit and historical records, in order to examine compliance with the performance standards	The risk of damage to records is mitigated by daily backups (digital & physical) within the BLS software and at the VSCs
Audit Rights for Investigation	All records and details required by the mission for audits would be available at the VSC. BLS implements the required audit checks to mitigate all potential risk of frauds and errors by operational staff	Access controls lower the risk of fraud. The risk of damage to records is mitigated by daily backups

		(digital & physical) within the BLS software and at the VSCs
Statutory Obligations	The mission is given complete access to audit records to meet all statutory obligations. BLS facilitates the fulfilment of all statutory obligations	The risk of damage to records is mitigated by daily backups (digital & physical) within the BLS software and at the VSCs
Corrective Actions	All inputs received from the mission in terms of non-fulfilment of any of the obligations are immediately complied to. Data for the records (physical/digital) is immediately rectified	Our team immediately actions changes to all digital and physical records and confirm to the mission adherence to the same. The risk of loss/damage to the records would be mitigated by ensuring proper back up of all policies, standard, service requirements and agreements

		The risk of damage to records (digital & physical) is mitigated by daily backups (digital & physical) within the BLS software
Audit of Fee Collection	BLS ensures there is a proper check on all collection or transfer of visa application fees and service charges. In case of an error, BLS remits the amount equivalent to the amount of overcharge (plus interest at the rate applicable to disputed payments under the Terms and Conditions) with the next invoice	

BLS's Quality Team is responsible for implementing policies and procedures aimed at ensuring the quality of delivered systems, monitoring service/system quality, implementing corrective action plans, and promoting continuous process improvement.

SLA	Process	Solution	Risk & Mitigation
Critical SLA – 1 (Opening Hours)	This SLA will be monitored by capturing # of days in a month where the VSC opened on time on time / # of working days in the month. This would be monitored by the manager of each VSC and a weekly/monthly report would be sent to the Embassy with regular reviews	Details would be updated on to our IT system that will help capture and generate the required reports as needed	Political situations/natural calamities are a risk coupled with uncontrollable situations that may result the VSC not opening as per schedule. The embassy would be informed in advance and approval taken before making any decisions
Critical SLA – 2 (Fee Handling)	There would be a fee handling report that would contain the # of applications received/ the amount transferred which would correspond to the sum of service fees received for the week, totalling to a month. This SLA would be monitored by the manager of each VSC and a weekly/monthly report would be sent out to the embassy with regular reviews	Our software will have a mechanism to track and trace all amount collected and amount to be collected for each visa category	Error in collecting the fees would be mitigated to by our software which will ensure that next stage movement in the systems will happen when correct fee is collected

Critical SLA – 3 (Down Time)	The # of committed working hours of up time / # of hours the communication links were down, will be measured here, this would be maintained by the IT department in conjunction with the embassy. This would be monitored by the manager of each VSC and a weekly/monthly report would be sent out to the embassy with regular reviews	A backup link in high risk zones and an IT help desk which would coordinate with local ISPs and IT Teams	On downtime that is beyond the control of BLS, the Embassy would be immediately informed and updated on the status and the resolution time expected
Critical SLA – 4 (Identification)	Applicants will be identified correctly against their passport at all counters. This would be measured by taking into consideration the total # of applicants who completed an application / # of applicants who were not. This would be monitored by the manager of each VSC and a weekly/monthly report would be sent out to the embassy with regular reviews	The solution would be a manual one of verifying the passport with the applicant. The embassy's assistance would be required here to confirm errors	In case an applicant does not match the passport and details provided, the matter will be immediately escalated to the embassy
Critical SLA – 6 (Error Application)	This would be measured by the VSC by capturing the # of applications sent to the mission / the # of errors found by the mission. The QC officer based at the VSC would ensure a 100% check of all application sent to the mission. This would be	Technical solution is currently not possible as the sorting and categorization is a manual process.	Manual error while sorting the applications is a risk and to mitigate this we would ensure 100% quality check

	monitored by the manager of each VSC and a weekly/monthly report would be sent out to the Embassy with regular reviews		on all applications during labelling and colour coding

Service Levels and Reporting Requirements

BLS ensures that all Service Level Agreement (SLA) critical and non-critical requirements are adhered to and exceeded. We deploy a QC Officer in all our VSCs and our Quality Team assists in achieving the targets set by the mission.

Here are some sample processes we will follow to ensure that all **critical SLAs** are measured, recorded and reviewed to enhance service to applicants as well as the mission.

Complaint Management Process

The centre has a specifically designated VAC manager to deal with any complaint. His/her name and contact details will be displayed on the notice board to enable applicants to register their complaint with him. He/she will be required to present these complaints, if any, on a daily basis, to the centre in-charge.

BLS uses a point based module to receive feedback from applicants about procedure, services and facilities at the VAC. The applicants will be provided a specially formulated questionnaire at the point of entry in the VAC. Online applicants can download the questionnaire from the website. These will be reviewed on a daily basis and corrective measures taken, if required, instantaneously.

There is a locked complaint/suggestion box placed prominently in the public waiting area of the centre seeking complaints/suggestions, if any, which will be opened by the centre in-charge on weekly basis; this frequency can be increased/ decreased based on the experience of Visa Centre.

Application Satisfaction Survey

In order to monitor client satisfaction, we undertake regular client satisfaction reviews which allow us to capture information about our service, and identify ways in which to ensure continuous service improvement. As a minimum, we recommend at least an annual satisfaction survey. We agree on the survey audience and the method of surveying with the mission beforehand.

ISO Certification

BLS International and all its application centres adhere to the ISO 9001 2008 quality management system.

BLS International Services Limited is one of the largest providers of Government to Citizen (G-to-C) services, based out of India. Deploying state-of-the-art technology, proficient personnel and benchmarked processes, the organisation enables client governments to significantly enhance the delivery of their citizen services. The fact that, in a little over a decade, BLS has exponentially scaled up its operations to serve eight client governments across 47 nations speaks volumes for the superior quality and effectiveness of its solutions.