

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.



IAF Mandatory Document

IAF Mandatory Document for the Transfer of Accredited Certification of Management Systems

Issue 1

(IAF MD 2:2007)

The International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) operates programs for the accreditation of bodies that provide conformity assessment services. Such accreditation facilitates trade and reduces demand for multiple certification.

Accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring them that accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) are competent to carry out the work they undertake within their scope of accreditation. Accreditation Bodies (ABs) which are members of IAF and their accredited CABs are required to comply with appropriate international standards and IAF mandatory documents for the consistent application of those standards.

AB members of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) conduct regular evaluations of each other to assure the equivalence of their accreditation programs. The IAF MLAs operate at two levels:

- A MLA for the accreditation of CABs to standards including ISO/IEC 17020 for inspection bodies, ISO/IEC 17021 for management systems certification bodies, ISO/IEC 17024 for personnel certification bodies and ISO/IEC Guide 65 for product certification bodies, is considered a framework MLA. A framework MLA provides confidence that accredited CABs are equally reliable in the performance of conformity assessment activities.
- A MLA for the accreditation of CABs that also includes the specific conformity assessment standard or scheme as a scope of accreditation provides confidence in the equivalence of certification.

An IAF MLA delivers the confidence needed for market acceptance of certification. An organization or person with certification to a specific standard or scheme that is accredited by an IAF MLA signatory AB can be recognized worldwide thereby facilitating international trade.

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Name for Enquiries: John Owen, IAF Corporate Secretary

Contact: Phone: +612 9481 7343;

Email: secretary1@iaf.nu

Introduction to IAF Mandatory Documents

The term “should” is used in this document to indicate recognised means of meeting the requirements of the standard. A Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) can meet these in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated to an Accreditation Body (AB). The term “shall” is used in this document to indicate those provisions which, reflecting the requirements of the relevant standard, are mandatory.

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This document is mandatory for the consistent application of Clause 9.1.1. of ISO/IEC 17021:2006 and is based upon guidance previously provided in IAF GD2: 2005 Annex 4 and IAF GD6:2006 Annex 2. All clauses of ISO/IEC 17021:2006 continue to apply and this document does not supersede any of the requirements in that standard. This mandatory document is not exclusively for Quality Management Systems (QMS) and Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and may be used for other management systems.

0. INTRODUCTION

- 0.1. This document provides normative criteria on the transfer of accredited management system certification between certification bodies. The criteria may also be applicable in the case of acquisitions of certification bodies accredited by an IAF MLA signatory.
- 0.2. The objective of this document is to assure the maintenance of the integrity of accredited management system certifications issued by one certification body if subsequently transferred to another such body.
- 0.3. The document provides minimum criteria for the transfer of certification. Certification bodies may implement procedures or actions which are more stringent than those contained herein provided that a client organization's freedom to choose a certification body is not unduly or unfairly constrained.

1. DEFINITION

1.1. Transfer of Certification

The transfer of certification is defined as the recognition of an existing and valid management system certification, granted by one accredited certification body, (hereinafter referred to as the “issuing certification body”), by another accredited certification body, (hereinafter referred to as the “accepting certification body”) for the purpose of issuing its own certification.

Note: Multiple certification, (concurrent certification by more than one certification body), does not fall under the definition above, and is not encouraged by IAF.

2. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

2.1. Accreditation

2.1.1. Only certifications which are covered by an accreditation of an IAF MLA signatory shall be eligible for transfer. Organizations holding certifications that are not covered by such accreditations shall be treated as new clients.

2.2. Pre-Transfer Review

2.2.1 A competent person from the accepting certification body shall carry out a review of the certification of the prospective client. This review shall be conducted by means of a documentation review and should, normally, include a visit to the prospective client. Reasons for not conducting a visit shall be fully justified and documented and a visit shall be conducted if no contact can be made with the issuing certification body. The review should cover the following aspects and its findings shall be fully documented:

- (i) confirmation that the client's certified activities fall within the accredited scope of the accepting certification body;
- (ii) the reasons for seeking a transfer;
- (iii) that the site or sites wishing to transfer certification hold an accredited certification that is valid in terms of authenticity, duration and scope of activities covered by the management system certification. If practical, the validity of certification and the status of outstanding nonconformities should be verified with the issuing certification body unless it has ceased trading. Where it has not been possible to communicate with the issuing certification body, the accepting certification body shall record the reasons;
- (iv). A consideration of the last certification or recertification audit reports, subsequent surveillance reports and any outstanding nonconformities that may arise from them. This consideration shall also include any other available, relevant documentation regarding the certification process i.e. handwritten notes, checklists. If the last certification, recertification or subsequent surveillance audit reports are not made available or if the surveillance audit is overdue then the organisation shall be treated as a new client;
- (v) complaints received and action taken;
- (vi) the stage in the current certification cycle. See Clause 2.3.4 of this document; and
- (vii) any current engagement by the organisation with regulatory bodies in respect of legal compliance.

2.3. Certification

- 2.3.1 Normally, only valid accredited certification should be transferred. In cases where certification has been granted by a certification body which has ceased trading or whose accreditation has expired, been suspended or withdrawn, the accepting certification body may consider such a certification for transfer at its discretion. In such cases, before it proceeds with the transfer, the accepting certification body shall obtain agreement from the accreditation body, whose mark it intends to place on the certificate. In the case of acquisitions the acquiring certification body should, where practical, fulfil the contractual obligations of the acquired certification body.
- 2.3.2. Certification which is known to have been suspended or under threat of suspension shall not be accepted for transfer. If the accepting certification body has not been able to verify the status of the certification with the issuing certification body, the organisation shall be required to confirm that the certificate is not suspended or under threat of suspension.
- 2.3.3. Outstanding nonconformities should be closed out, if practical, with the issuing certification body, before transfer. Otherwise they shall be closed out by the accepting certification body.
- 2.3.4. If no further outstanding or potential problems are identified by the pre-transfer review a certification may be issued following the normal decision making process. The programme of ongoing surveillance should be based on the previous certification regime unless the accepting certification body has conducted an initial or recertification audit as a result of the review.
- 2.3.5 Where doubt continues to exist, after the pre-transfer review, as to the adequacy of a current or previously held certification, the accepting certification body shall, depending upon the extent of doubt, either:
- treat the applicant as a new client
 - or
 - conduct an audit concentrating on identified problem areas.

The decision as to the action required will depend upon the nature and extent of any problems found and shall be explained to the organization and the justification for the decision shall be documented and the records maintained by the certification body.

End of IAF Mandatory Document for the Transfer of Accredited Certification of Management Systems.

Further Information

For further Information on this document or other IAF documents, contact any member of IAF or the IAF Secretariat.

For contact details of members of IAF see - IAF Web Site - <<http://www.iaf.nu>>

Secretariat -

John Owen,

IAF Corporate Secretary,

Telephone +612 9481 7343

email <secretary1@iaf.nu>