IAF Mandatory Document

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

Issue 2

(IAF MD 2:2017)

The International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) facilitates trade and supports regulators by operating a worldwide mutual recognition arrangement among Accreditation Bodies (ABs) in order that the results issued by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) accredited by IAF members are accepted globally.

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

ABs that are signatories to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) are evaluated regularly by an appointed team of peers to provide confidence in the operation of their accreditation programs. The structure and scope of the IAF MLA is detailed in IAF PR 4 – Structure of IAF MLA and Endorsed Normative Documents.

The IAF MLA is structured in five levels: Level 1 specifies mandatory criteria that apply to all ABs, ISO/IEC 17011. The combination of a Level 2 activity(ies) and the corresponding Level 3 normative documents is called the main scope of the MLA, and the combination of Level 4 (if applicable) and Level 5 relevant normative documents is called a sub-scope of the MLA.

- The main scope of the MLA includes activities e.g. product certification and associated mandatory documents e.g. ISO/IEC 17065. The attestations made by CABs at the main scope level are considered to be equally reliable.

- The sub scope of the MLA includes conformity assessment requirements e.g. ISO 9001 and scheme specific requirements, where applicable, e.g. ISO TS 22003. The attestations made by CABs at the sub scope level are considered to be equivalent.

The IAF MLA delivers the confidence needed for market acceptance of conformity assessment outcomes. An attestation issued, within the scope of the IAF MLA, by a body that is accredited by an IAF MLA signatory AB can be recognized worldwide, thereby facilitating international trade.

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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 9.1.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015. All clauses of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 continue to apply and this document does not supersede any of the requirements in that standard.

0   INTRODUCTION

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 or Regional MLA signatory.

The objective of this document is to assure the maintenance of the integrity of accredited management system certification issued by one certification body if subsequently transferred to another such body.

This document provides minimum criteria for the transfer of accredited 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.

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　Eligibility of a Certification for Transfer

2.1.1　Only certification which is covered by an accreditation of an IAF or Regional MLA signatory at level 3 and where applicable level 4 and 5 shall be eligible for transfer. Organizations holding certification that is not covered by such accreditations shall be treated as new clients.

2.1.2　Only valid accredited certification shall be transferred. Certification which is known to be suspended shall not be accepted for transfer.

2.1.3　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 transfer shall be completed within 6 months or on expiration of the certification whichever is sooner. In such cases, the accepting certification body shall inform the accreditation body, under whose accreditation it intends to issue the certification, prior to the transfer.

2.2　Pre-Transfer Review

2.2.1　The accepting certification body shall have a process for obtaining sufficient information in order to take a decision on certification and inform the transferring client of the process. This information shall as a minimum include arrangements regarding the certification cycle.

2.2.2　The accepting certification body shall carry out a review of the certification of the transferring client. This review shall be conducted by means of a documentation review and where identified as needed by this review, for example there are outstanding major nonconformities, shall include a pre-transfer visit to the transferring client to confirm the validity of the certification.

Note: The pre-transfer visit is not an audit.

2.2.3　The accepting certification body shall determine the competence criteria for personnel involved in pre-transfer review. The review may be conducted by one or more persons. The individual or group conducting the pre-transfer visit shall have the same competence that is required for an audit team appropriate for the scope of certification being reviewed.

2.2.4 The review shall cover the following aspects as a minimum and the review and its findings shall be fully documented:

     (i)   confirmation that the client's certification falls within the accredited scope of the issuing and accepting certification body;

     (ii)   confirmation that the issuing certification body's accredited scope falls within its accreditation body's MLA scope;

     (iii)   the reasons for seeking a transfer;

     (iv)   that the site or sites wishing to transfer certification hold a valid accredited certification;

     (v)   the initial certification or most recent recertification audit reports, and the latest surveillance report; the status of all outstanding nonconformities that may arise from them and any other available, relevant documentation regarding the certification process. If these audit reports are not made available or if the surveillance audit or recertification audit has not been completed as required by the issuing certification body's audit programme, then the organisation shall be treated as a new client;

     (vi)   complaints received and action taken;

     (vii)   considerations relevant to establishing an audit plan and an audit programme. The audit programme established by the issuing certification body should be reviewed if available. See Clause 2.3.4 of this document; and

     (viii)   any current engagement by the transferring client with regulatory bodies relevant to the scope of the certification in respect of legal compliance.

2.3   Transfer of Certification

2.3.1 In accordance with clause 9.5.2 of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, the accepting certification body shall not issue certification to the transferring client until:

     (i)   it has verified the implementation of corrections and corrective actions in respect of all outstanding major nonconformities; and

     (ii)   it has accepted the transferring client's plans for correction and corrective action for all outstanding minor nonconformities.

2.3.2   Where the pre-transfer review (document review and/or pre-transfer visit) identifies issues that prevent the completion of transfer, the accepting certification body shall treat the transferring client as a new client.

The justification for this action shall be explained to the transferring client and shall be documented by the accepting certification body and the records maintained.

2.3.3   The normal certification decision making process in accordance with clause 9.5 of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 shall be followed including that the personnel making the certification decision be different from those carrying out the pre-transfer review.

2.3.4   If no problems are identified by the pre-transfer review, the certification cycle shall be based on the previous certification cycle and the accepting certification body shall establish the audit programme for the remainder of the certification cycle.

NOTE: The accepting certification body can quote the organization's initial certification date on the certification documents with the indication that the organization was certified by a different certification body before a certain date.

Where the accepting certification body has had to treat the client as a new client as a result of the pre-transfer review, the certification cycle shall begin with the certification decision.

2.3.5   The accepting certification body shall take the decision on certification before any surveillance or recertification audits are initiated.

2.4   Cooperation Between the Issuing and Accepting Certification Bodies

2.4.1   The cooperation between the issuing and accepting certification bodies is essential for the effective process for transfer and the integrity of certification. When requested, the issuing certification body shall provide to the accepting certification body all the documents and information required by this document. Where it has not been possible to communicate with the issuing certification body, the accepting certification body shall record the reasons and make every effort to obtain necessary information from other sources.

2.4.2   The transferring client shall authorise that the issuing certification body provides the information sought by the accepting certification body. The issuing certification body shall not suspend or withdraw the organization's certification following the notification that the organization is transferring to the accepting certification body if the client continues to satisfy the requirements of certification.

2.4.3   The accepting certification body and/or the transferring client shall contact the accreditation body which accredits the issuing certification body where the issuing certification body

    (i)   has not provided the requested information to the accepting certification body, or

    (ii) suspends or withdraws the transferring client's certification without cause

2.4.4   The accreditation body shall have a process for addressing the situation, including the suspension or withdrawal of the accreditation, where the issuing certification body does not cooperate with the accepting certification body or suspends or withdraws the transferring client's certification without cause.

2.4.5   Once the accepting CB has issued the certification it shall inform the issuing CB.

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 the IAF website: http://www.iaf.nu

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