IAF Mandatory Document

IAF MANDATORY DOCUMENT FOR THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) FOR AUDITING/ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

Issue 2

(IAF MD 4:2018)

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 their accredited CABs are required to comply with appropriate international standards and IAF mandatory 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 document(s) 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.

IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes

0.   INTRODUCTION

0.1   As information and communication technology (ICT) becomes more sophisticated, it is important to be able to use ICT to optimize audit/assessment effectiveness and efficiency, and to support and maintain the integrity of the audit/assessment process.

0.2   ICT is the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, and others. The use of ICT may be appropriate for auditing/assessment both locally and remotely.

0.3   Examples of the use of ICT during audits/assessments may include but are not limited to:

- Meetings; by means of teleconference facilities, including audio, video and data sharing

- Audit/assessment of documents and records by means of remote access, either synchronously (in real time) or asynchronously (when applicable)

- Recording of information and evidence by means of still video, video or audio recordings

- Providing visual/audio access to remote or potentially hazardous locations

0.4   The objectives for the effective application of ICT for audit/assessment purposes are:

i)   To provide a methodology for the use of ICT that is sufficiently flexible and non-prescriptive in nature to optimize the conventional audit/assessment process

ii)   To ensure that adequate controls are in place to avoid abuses that could compromise the integrity of the audit/assessment process

iii)   To support the principles of safety and sustainability

Measures shall also be taken to ensure that security and confidentiality is maintained throughout audit/assessment activities.

0.5   Other schemes, normative documents and conformity assessment standards may impose limitations on the use of ICT for audit/assessment and may take precedence over this document.

1.   SCOPE

This mandatory document provides for the consistent application in auditing/assessment, for the use of information and communication technology as part of the methodology. The scope of this document is for the auditing /assessment of management systems, persons, and product and is applicable to conformity assessment bodies and accreditation bodies. The use of ICT is not mandatory and may be used for other types of conformity assessment activities, but if used as part of the audit/assessment methodology, it is mandatory to conform to this document.

2.   NORMATIVE REFERENCES

For the purposes of this document, the normative references given below apply, depending upon the conformity assessment activity. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies. Limited to:

- IAF MD 5 - [Determination of Audit Time of Quality and Environmental Management Systems](#)

- ISO/IEC 17011 - Conformity assessment – Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

- ISO/IEC 17021-1 - Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirements

- ISO/IEC 17065 - Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services

- ISO/IEC 17024 - Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons

This MD may also be considered for use with other conformity assessment standards, such as:

- ISO 14065 - Greenhouse gases – Requirements for greenhouse gas validation and verification bodies for use in accreditation or other forms of recognition

- ISO/IEC 17020 - Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection

- ISO/IEC 17025 - General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories

Additionally, guidance on auditing/assessment using ICT can be obtained from:

- ISO/IEC 17020 - Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection

- ISO/IEC 17025 - General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories

- ISO/IAF Auditing Practices Group - "Electronic documented information systems" www.iso.org/tc176/ISO9001AuditingPracticesGroup

- IAF ID 12 - Principles on Remote Assessment

- ISO 19011 - Guidelines for auditing management systems

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Virtual Site

Virtual location where a client organization performs work or provides a service using an on-line environment allowing persons irrespective of physical locations to execute processes.

Note 1: A virtual site cannot be considered where the processes must be executed in a physical environment, e.g., warehousing, manufacturing, physical testing laboratories, installation or repairs to physical products.

Note 2: A virtual site (e.g. company intranet) is considered a single site for the calculation of audit/assessment time.

4. REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Security and Confidentiality

4.1.1 The security and confidentiality of electronic or electronically-transmitted information is particularly important when using ICT for audit/assessment purposes.

4.1.2 The use of ICT for audit/assessment purposes shall be mutually agreed upon by the body being audited/assessed and the body performing the audit/assessment

in accordance with information security and data protection measures and regulations before ICT is used for audit/assessment purposes.

4.1.3   In the case of non-fulfilment of these measures or non-agreement of information security and data protection measures, the body performing the audit/assessment activities shall use other methods to conduct the audit/assessment.

4.1.4   When no agreement is reached for the use of ICT for audit/assessment, other methods shall be used to fulfil audit/assessment objectives.

4.2   Process Requirements

4.2.1   The body shall identify and document the risks and opportunities that may impact audit/assessment effectiveness for each use of ICT under the same conditions, including the selection of the technologies, and how they are managed.

4.2.2   When ICT is proposed for the audit/assessment activities, the application review shall include a check that the client and the audit/assessment body have the necessary infrastructure to support the use of the ICT proposed.

4.2.3   Considering the risks and opportunities identified in 4.2.1, the audit/assessment plan shall identify how ICT will be utilized and the extent to which ICT will be used for audit/assessment purposes to optimize audit/assessment effectiveness and efficiency while maintaining the integrity of the audit/assessment process.

4.2.4   When using ICT, auditors/assessors and other involved persons (e.g. drone pilots, technical experts) shall have the competency and ability to understand and utilize the information and communication technologies employed to achieve the desired results of audit(s)/assessment(s). The auditor/assessor shall also be aware of the risks and opportunities of the information and communication technologies used and the impacts that they may have on the validity and objectivity of the information gathered.

4.2.5 If ICT is used for audit/assessment purposes, it contributes to the total audit/assessment time as additional planning may be necessary which may impact audit/assessment duration.

Note: When determining audit/assessment time and duration, please refer to the Normative References for additional requirements which may impact the application of ICT. The impact upon audit/assessment duration using ICT is not limited by this MD.

4.2.6   Audit/assessment reports and related records shall indicate the extent to which ICT has been used in carrying out audit/assessment and the effectiveness of ICT in achieving the audit/assessment objectives.

4.2.7 If virtual sites are included within the scope, the certification/accreditation documentation shall note that virtual sites are included and the activities performed at the virtual sites shall be identified.

End of IAF Mandatory Document for the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes

Further Information:

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