Policy on Determination of Sampling and Timeframes for Assessment of Key Locations for Management System, Product and Personnel Certification Body Accreditation Programs

1. General

1.1. This policy is used for estimating the time and sampling methodology required for assessing key locations where one or more key activities are conducted by the applicant or accredited Certification Bodies (CB) for the various disciplines and scopes where accreditation is sought or is being maintained.

1.2. IAS scopes of accreditation will be described as disciplines, sectors, subsectors, categories and subcategories. Refer to the relevant accreditation criteria for program specific information.

2. Methodology

2.1. The premise(s) is/are selected based on a representative range of different sites available under the applicant or accredited organization. For applicant organizations, a review of information from the submitted application for accreditation is used to quantify the number of premises having key activities and the type of activities undertaken. For accredited organizations, the sites will be listed as key locations on the accreditation certificate available on the IAS website. Sufficient time should be provided for the applicant or accredited organization to prepare for the assessment.

2.2. At a minimum, one-third of the number of the CB’s premises should be selected for each assessment.

2.3. The remaining number of premises must be assessed during the period of validity of the certificate or within the two-year IAS reassessment accreditation cycle.

2.4. For the purpose of estimating timelines and the sampling methodologies, the following information should be requested and considered prior to selecting a key location/premise:

- Results of previous internal audits and management reviews covering all key locations;
- Records of complaints;
- Number of client audits conducted at each key location;
- The CB’s risk-based selection rationale;
• Changes since the last assessment by IAS;
• Maturity of the management system and knowledge of the CB;
• Environmental issues and associated impacts for environmental management systems (EMS);
• Language, access to premise location, and regulatory requirements pertaining to each sector, subsector, category or subcategory.

3. Sampling Size

3.1. The following calculation is based on the examples provided in the IAF MD1 document available on www.iaf.nu (IAF MD 1:2007, Certification of Multiple Sites Based on Sampling).

For premises with low to medium or medium to high risk activity with less than 50 employees at each site, the minimum number of sites to be visited per audit is:

• **Initial assessment:** size of the sample is recommended to be the square root of the number of premises: \( y = \sqrt{x} \), rounded to the upper whole number.
• **Surveillance assessment (conducted 12 months after initial assessment):** size of the sample is recommended to be the ‘Total number of premises’ minus ‘number of premise(s) completed at initial assessment’, then square root of the remaining number of remote sites with 0.6 as a coefficient \( y = 0.6 \sqrt{x} \), rounded to the upper whole number.
• **Reassessment:** size of the sample is recommended to be the same as for an initial assessment.

*Note: Nevertheless, where the management system has proved to be effective over a period of three years, the size of the sample could be reduced by a factor 0.8, i.e.: \( y = 0.8 \sqrt{x} \), rounded to the upper whole number.*

3.2. The main office shall be audited during every initial assessment and reassessment.

3.3. The size or frequency of the sample should be re-calculated where the CB’s premises have a change in risk factors such as:

• Size and number of employees at each premise(s);
• Variations in working practices and activities;
• Significant changes and associated risk impacts;
• Increased number of complaints;
• Restructuring or reorganization of a multi-national CB.

4. Documentation

In the case of a CB main office and premises, all documentation must be available for review at the main office where the accreditation decision is made.