IAS
INTERNATIONAL
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ACCREDITATION CRITERIA FOR PRODUCT CERTIFICATION AGENCIES

AC370

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PREFACE

The attached accreditation criteria have been issued to provide all interested parties with guidelines on implementing performance features of the applicable standards referenced herein. The criteria were developed and adopted following public hearings conducted by the International Accreditation Service, Inc. (IAS), Accreditation Committee and are effective on the date shown above. All accreditations issued or reissued on or after the effective date must comply with these criteria. If the criteria are an updated version from a previous edition, solid vertical lines (|) in the outer margin within the criteria indicate a technical change or addition from the previous edition. Deletion indicators (→) are provided in the outer margins where a paragraph or item has been deleted if the deletion resulted from a technical change. These criteria may be further revised as the need dictates.

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ACCREDITATION CRITERIA FOR PRODUCT CERTIFICATION AGENCIES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Scope**: These criteria set forth the requirements for obtaining and maintaining International Accreditation Service, Inc. (IAS), Product Certification Agency accreditation. These criteria supplement the IAS Rules of Procedure for Product Certification Agency Accreditation.

1.2 **Normative and Reference Documents**: Publications listed below refer to current editions (unless otherwise stated).

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

1.2.2 ISO/IEC Standard 17067, Conformity assessment – Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes.

1.2.3 ISO/IEC Standard 17020, Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection.

1.2.4 ISO/IEC Standard 17021-1, Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing auditing and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements.

1.2.5 ISO/IEC Standard 17025, General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.

1.2.6 ISO/IEC Standard 17000, Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles.

1.2.7 ISO/IEC Standard 17011, Conformity assessment – Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.

1.2.8 IAF MD 4: IAD Mandatory Document for the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes.

1.2.9 IAF MD 7: Mandatory Document for the Harmonization of Sanctions and Dealing with Fraudulent Behaviour

1.2.10 IAF MD 12: Accreditation Assessment of Conformity Assessment Bodies with Activities in Multiple Countries.

1.2.11 IAF MD 25: Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes

1.2.12 IAF ML 2: General Principles on the Use of the IAF MLA Mark.

1.2.13 APAC TEC4-001 Guidance on Description of Scope of Accreditation – Product Ver 1.0 (20190101)

1.2.14 APAC TEC4-002 Guidance on Application of ISO-IEC 17065 Organic Certification Ver 1.0 (20190101)

2 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Applicable definitions of ISO/IEC Standard 17000 series apply.

2.2 Pilot project: A certification project processed by the Certification Agency to provide objective evidence of their ability to meet requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 and this accreditation criteria.

3 ELIGIBILITY

Accreditation services are available to a third-party certification agency that:

3.1 Certifies products, processes or services,

3.2 Operates, or maintains a subcontract agreement with a testing laboratory and inspection agency, which meet the requirements of ISO/IEC Standard 17065, Sections 6.2.2, External resources (outsourcing),

3.3 If the certification agency requires accreditation prior to issuing a certification, the certification agency shall show compliance to ISO/IEC 17065 by means of a pilot project during the assessment.

4 REQUIRED BASIC INFORMATION

4.1 Certification agencies shall demonstrate compliance with the following requirements:

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

4.1.2 IAS Rules of Procedure for Product Certification Agency Accreditation,

4.1.3 Scheme requirements under which the certification is granted.

4.2 Certification programs for processes and services shall have requirements for determining continued compliance, which include assessment of the management system and the actual process or service, at least once per year.

5 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (AS APPLICABLE)

5.1 When the certification system used as the basis for a certification activity requires surveillance at the point of manufacturing or assembly, the certification agency shall have requirements for every manufacturing or assembly plant producing certified products be visited to perform surveillance activities for certified products. In the absence of a generally recognized minimum surveillance frequency, the certification agency shall require that each manufacturing or assembly location authorized to produce the certified product be subject to at least one surveillance activity each calendar year.

Note:

1. Regardless of the surveillance techniques used, the content of the surveillance and what is reviewed during the surveillance will be the same. Surveillance techniques, include, but are not limited to:

   - Announced (planned) onsite audits
   - Remote audits
   - Unannounced visits
   - A combination of the above

2. It is recommended that onsite surveillance be performed as the primary technique. Use of remote surveillance should be clearly justified.

3. As a minimum, items to consider during surveillance:

   - Material traceability
   - Inspection and quality control test and measurement equipment calibration
   - Manufacturer's management system, where required by the scheme
   - Assessment of production process

5.2 Inspection agencies and testing laboratories used as part of the certification process shall meet one of the following criteria:

5.2.1 Accreditation by IAS, or by another signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA); or

5.2.2 Comply with applicable requirements of ISO/IEC 17020 and/or ISO/IEC 17025, determined through assessment of the inspection agency and/or testing laboratory by qualified certification agency personnel.

5.2.2.1 In addition to the requirements given in ISO/IEC 17020 and/or ISO/IEC 17025, evidence of compliance shall include the qualifications of certification agency personnel conducting the evaluation, and a system for determining continued compliance which includes periodic assessments, review of reports, and corrective action reports.

5.2.2.2 Product certification agencies shall have procedures and retain records related to monitoring the performance of testing and inspection agencies, and of compliance of reports to all requirements of the certification scheme.

5.3 Product certification agencies shall comply with regulatory requirements of Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) or other regulatory entities, including specific compliance requirements for qualification, licensing, etc., of personnel and operation of product certification body.

5.4 **Witnessing Inspection Activities**: When the certification scheme used as the basis for a certification activity requires the onsite evaluation of the production process or management system, IAS will periodically witness actual onsite inspections by each accredited certification agency. The selection of location and scope for witness activity shall be made by IAS, in consultation with the certification agency, based on various factors – risk, complexity, personnel changes, technology utilized, etc. Where possible, the full scope of accreditation will be reviewed over a full accreditation cycle.

5.5 **Witness Testing**: All witness testing activities conducted at a manufacturer's facility shall be witnessed by technically competent certification agency staff who are trained not only in the test being witnessed, but in the appropriate sections of ISO/IEC Standard 17025. If the certification scheme to which the product is to be certified contains specific requirements or limitations pertaining to witness testing, the requirements of the certification scheme shall also apply. Appropriate measures shall be taken for long-term testing or sample collection, where constant witnessing is not feasible, to ensure tampering of the sample or testing equipment does not take place.

5.6 **Use of Manufacturer's Data**: If the certification scheme to which the product is to be certified contains specific requirements or limitations pertaining to the use of manufacturer's data, the requirements of the certification scheme shall also apply.

If a certification agency plans to use test data generated and submitted by a manufacturer who is not part of witness testing, the certification agency shall have a program in place to ensure validity and independence of the test data. The certification agency shall consider one or more of the following for such a program, and shall have justification for those it chooses not to utilize:

5.6.1 Auditing, including unannounced random visits to the manufacturer's laboratory, to ensure applicable requirements of ISO/IEC Standard 17025 are satisfied;

5.6.2 Performing random duplicate analyses;

5.6.3 Having the manufacturer's laboratory participate in proficiency testing programs, where available, for applicable test method;

5.6.4 Technical review of the raw test data rather than acceptance of just the result.

5.7 **Conformity Assessment Schemes**

5.7.1 All conformity assessment schemes shall comply with IAF MD25 unless exempt. Exempt schemes are:

5.7.1.1 Schemes included or invoked by legislation/regulation, and/or

5.7.1.2 Developed by national, regional or international standardization bodies.

5.7.2 Annex A lists a few of the schemes that are accepted by IAS. These are considered third-party schemes. Annex A may be revised periodically as an editorial revision to these criteria.

5.8 Non-Accredited Product Certification where the CAB is accredited for the same scope (IAF Resolution 2018-13):

Resolution 2018-13 states: Non-Accredited Product Certification where the CAB is accredited for the same scope - The General Assembly acting on the recommendation of the Technical Committee resolved that IAF Accreditation Body members shall have legally enforceable arrangements with their accredited CABs for product certification that prevents the CAB from issuing non-accredited product certification in scopes for which they are accredited.

Note: If there is an exception to the above, the CAB must justify the exception to IAS, and if accepted by IAS, the certification is still considered accredited.

6 LINKS TO ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

6.1 Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation – http://www.apac-accreditation.org

6.2 IAS – www.iasonline.org

6.3 International Accreditation Forum – www.iaf.nu

6.4 International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation – www.ilac.org

Annex A

Product Certification Schemes

A.1   CARB ATCM – https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/compwood-publications

A.2   EPA Energy Star – https://www.energystar.gov/

A.3   EPA Formaldehyde – https://www.epa.gov/formaldehyde

A.4   EPA WaterSense – https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/

A.5   GLOBALG.A.P. – https://www.globalgap.org/uk_en/

A.6   BRC Global Standards (BRCGS) – https://www.brcgs.com/

A.7   International Featured Standards (IFS) – https://www.ifs-certification.com/index.php/en/

A.8   PEFC, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification – https://www.pefc.org/standards-implementation/standards-and-guides