

JULY 2026

IAS AccrediCom®

Inspection Agency Accreditation Program NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the July 2026 issue of the **IAS Inspection Agency Accreditation Program** newsletter.

This publication is designed to keep customers informed about topics relevant to the inspection industry and to support a better understanding of the accreditation process. In this issue, you'll find an article on expected inspector competence and core skills, an update on **Global ACI**, and information on upcoming events and conferences that support the educational and technical development of customers and stakeholders. Please send feedback or suggestions for future topics to Aherrera@iasonline.org.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Transition Period

Per ILAC Resolution GA 29.22 adopted last October during the 29th ILAC General Assembly, the transition period for the new ISO/IEC 17020:2026 standard is **three years** from its publication date of March 27, 2026. The ILAC GA resolution affects all accredited inspection bodies which must be fully transitioned to the new 2026 version by **March 27, 2029**. The accreditation to the previous ISO/IEC 17020:2012 version will no longer be valid and recognized under ILAC MRA after that date.

For details, please refer to [IAS Transition Policy for International Standard ISO/IEC 17020:2026](#) on the IAS website.



Inspectors' Competence and Core Skills Under ISO/IEC 17020

Inspection agencies rely on the competence and core skills of their inspectors to deliver high-quality services in the fields in which they operate. IAS's success is closely aligned with the success of the inspection bodies it accredits. This article summarizes the foundational skills and competencies that help strengthen inspection performance. References to ISO/IEC 17020 are included for each topic below.

Across conformity assessment activities—including inspection, certification, testing, and product certification—inspectors need a balanced combination of technical, analytical, and interpersonal skills. The following core competencies are expected in a general inspection context.

- ◆ Technical knowledge is essential. Inspectors should understand applicable standards and regulations (for example, ISO/IEC 17020 and relevant industry-specific codes), inspection methods, measurement techniques, and the tools used in the field. They should also be able to read technical drawings, specifications, and procedures, and apply risk-based thinking and conformity criteria effectively. (Clauses 6.1.1 and 6.1.6.)
- ◆ Inspectors must have strong observation skills and careful attention to detail so they can identify defects, nonconformities, and deviations, and record complete and accurate findings with consistency and precision. (Clause 6.1.8.)
- ◆ Analytical and critical-thinking skills are also important. Inspectors should be able to interpret inspection data and evidence, evaluate whether results meet defined criteria, and make objective judgments based on facts. Understanding the root causes of nonconformities can also support more effective evaluation of specific issues. (Clauses 6.1.4 and 7.4.)
- ◆ Strong communication skills are equally valuable. Inspectors should be able to write clear, concise inspection reports, explain findings to clients, operators, and stakeholders, ask effective questions during inspections, and maintain professional, neutral communication throughout the process. (Clauses 7.4 and 7.5.)
- ◆ ISO/IEC 17020 requires inspection bodies to ensure impartiality and independence and to prevent undue influence on inspection results. Inspectors therefore must act with honesty and ethical responsibility, maintain objectivity, avoid conflicts of interest, and protect confidential information. (Clause 4.1.)

- ◆ Inspectors should also have a clear understanding of the inspection scheme, scope, and applicable conformity criteria. They should recognize the distinctions among inspection, certification, and testing activities. When relevant, knowledge of decision rules and sampling principles is also beneficial. (Clauses 6.1.6 and 7.1.)
- ◆ Because inspection bodies must plan and execute inspections effectively, organizational, planning, and time-management skills are important. Prioritizing activities, meeting deadlines, and managing workloads efficiently help agencies comply with requirements, standards, and regulations while improving service delivery. (Clauses 7.1 and 7.2.)
- ◆ Inspection personnel must also be aware of health, safety, and environmental risks. They should be able to identify hazards, follow safe work practices, use appropriate personal protective equipment, and comply with site-specific rules and regulations. (Clause 6.1.6.)
- ◆ Effective documentation and record control are essential. Inspection agencies must maintain traceable, controlled records, and inspectors should have strong report-writing skills to ensure documentation is accurate and complete. Familiarity with inspection software, checklists, and digital reporting tools also supports better traceability and document control. (Clauses 7.5 and 8.4.)
- ◆ Finally, inspection bodies must define competence requirements for inspectors and support them through training, monitoring, and formal authorization. Ongoing updates on standards, regulations, and industry practices are essential to maintaining qualification. (Clause 6.1.)

Conclusion

Although ISO/IEC 17020 does not prescribe a fixed list of skills, it does require inspection bodies to define competence requirements, ensure inspectors are trained and authorized, and monitor their performance on an ongoing basis. Additional advanced skills—such as auditing capabilities for integrated roles, statistical knowledge for sampling and analysis, and sector-specific expertise in fields such as construction, medical devices, or energy—can provide further value.



APAC Annual Meeting 2026

IAS was proud to participate in the APAC 2026 Annual Meetings in Bali, hosted by the National Accreditation Body of Indonesia (KAN), alongside accreditation bodies and quality infrastructure stakeholders from across the Asia-Pacific region.

Representing International Accreditation Service (IAS), our team contributed to important discussions on how accreditation, international standards, and robust conformity assessment strengthen trust, facilitate trade, and support sustainable, resilient growth throughout the region.

The meetings provided a valuable opportunity to reconnect with industry colleagues, build new partnerships, and collaborate on practical initiatives that enhance competence, impartiality, and confidence in accreditation services worldwide.

IAS personnel were pleased to connect with fellow attendees at APAC 2026 in Bali and discuss opportunities for future collaboration.



IAS personnel Bandusoma LHD, Karthik Easwar, Patrick McCullen and Dimitrios Katsieris at the APAC 2026 Annual Meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

Inspection Services Industry Trends and News (2026)

By Greg West

The inspection services industry is entering a period of rapid transformation driven by artificial intelligence, automation, drone technology, and digital inspection ecosystems. Across sectors such as aerospace, energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, and transportation, organizations are increasingly adopting AI-powered non-destructive testing (NDT), autonomous robotic inspections, predictive maintenance systems, and cloud-based data platforms to improve safety, efficiency, and regulatory compliance. As inspection technologies evolve, accreditation of inspection agencies has become more important than ever to ensure technical competence, consistency, impartiality, and compliance with internationally recognized standards. Accredited inspection bodies help build confidence among regulators, clients, and stakeholders by demonstrating that inspection processes meet rigorous quality and performance requirements. At the same time, growing infrastructure demands, workforce shortages, and stricter quality standards are accelerating investment in advanced inspection technologies and digital workflows. This article highlights the latest news, emerging technologies, and key market trends shaping the future of inspection services in 2026, while providing direct source links for readers seeking deeper industry insights and analysis.

1 Transforming Non-Destructive Testing (NDT)

Artificial intelligence is increasingly being used to automate defect detection, improve consistency, and accelerate inspections in aerospace, automotive, energy, and manufacturing industries. AI-assisted image analysis is becoming a major competitive advantage for inspection organizations.

Sources:

- Varex Imaging — How Is Artificial Intelligence Changing NDT Inspections in 2026? <https://www.vareximaging.com/blogs/how-is-artificial-intelligence-changing-ndt-inspections-in-2026/>
- OneStopNDT — Top 9 NDT Innovators Transforming Inspection in 2025 <https://www.onestopndt.com/ndt-articles/top-ndt-innovators-transforming-inspection-technologies>

2 Drone-Based Inspection Services Continue Rapid Growth

Drone inspections are expanding across infrastructure, oil & gas, bridges, wind turbines, utilities, and confined-space inspections. Companies are moving beyond simple visual inspections toward AI-enabled predictive analytics and autonomous inspections.

Sources:

- Sky-Futures — 2026 Drone Industry Trends <https://www.pnewswire.com/news-releases/sky-futures-forecasts-2026-drone-industry-trends-ai-driven-data-autonomy-expansion-and-predictive-risk-management-302621231.html>
- Applus+ — Drone Inspection Services: From Flight and Visualization Toward Smarter Inspection <https://www.applus.com/global/en/ei/expertise/publications/drone-inspection-services%3A-from-flight-and-visualization-toward-smarter-inspection%2C-digitalization-and-informed-decision-making>

3 Autonomous Robotic Inspections Are Advancing

Researchers and industry leaders are developing fully autonomous aerial ultrasonic inspections for industrial environments. These systems reduce worker exposure to hazardous environments and improve repeatability.

Source:

- arXiv — Autonomous Aerial Non-Destructive Testing <https://arxiv.org/abs/2603.04642>

4 FAA-Accepted Autonomous Aircraft Inspection Programs

The aviation industry recently recognized the first FAA-accepted autonomous drone-assisted aircraft inspection program developed by Delta Air Lines and Mainblades.

Source:

- Airlines for America (A4A) — A4A/SAE NDT Innovation Award Honors Team for First FAA-Accepted Automatic Drone-Based Aircraft Inspection Program <https://www.airlines.org/news/a4a-sae-ndt-innovation-award-honors-team-for-first-faa-accepted-automatic-drone-based-aircraft-inspection-program/>

5 Growing Demand for Skilled Inspectors

The inspection and NDT workforce shortage remains one of the industry's largest challenges. Organizations are emphasizing competency-based training, digital literacy, AI-assisted inspections, robotics, and drone operation skills.

Source:

- NDT Jobs — NDT Market Outlook 2026 <https://ndt-jobs.com/ndt-market-outlook-2026-key-growth-sectors-and-opportunities/>

6 NDT 4.0 and Digital Inspection Ecosystems

Inspection services are becoming more data-driven through cloud-based inspection records, predictive maintenance, digital twins, and integrated asset management systems.

Inspenet. *NDT Automation in Industry 4.0: From Digital Testing to NDT 4.0*. Digital twins, cloud computing, and connected inspection ecosystems are enabling predictive maintenance and asset reliability management. <https://inspenet.com/en/articles/automated-ndt-in-the-digital-age-4-0/>

Overall Industry Direction

The inspection services industry is rapidly evolving toward AI-assisted inspection, autonomous drones and robotics, predictive maintenance, digital traceability, smarter data analytics, and higher competency expectations for inspectors. Organizations that invest early in digital inspection technologies and workforce development are likely to gain a significant competitive advantage over the next several years.



Extending Your Scope of Accreditation?

Inspection agencies often expand the scope of their accreditation to serve a broader range of customers. If you plan to extend your scope, it is important to notify IAS before assessors arrive for your regularly scheduled assessment.

IAS assessors plan their work in advance based on the fields and ranges defined in your current scope. If you intend to expand your agency's scope, additional assessment time may be needed. Early notification helps IAS accommodate the request more efficiently, reduce scheduling challenges, and avoid unnecessary costs.

IAS Documents Related to Scope Expansion

To better prepare for the accreditation process, we recommend reviewing the following documents before assessment activities begin. These resources contain the requirements that will be reviewed for compliance and evaluated during the application and assessment process and can help your agency prepare effectively.

- ISO/IEC 17020: Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection
- AC98: Accreditation Criteria for Inspection Agencies
- IAS/AA/009 Rules of Procedure for Inspection Agency Accreditation

Preparing for Accreditation

Before submitting an application for scope expansion, inspection agencies are encouraged to conduct a self-check to confirm that:

- Appropriate inspection standards or specifications have been defined
- Inspection procedures, including checklist if applicable, have been documented and approved
- The inspectors have been appropriately trained and authorized
- The required equipment is available or accessible, and methods for verifying the accuracy or function of the equipment have been established
- The inspection records required to be retained have been clearly specified
- Inspection report templates have been established to meet the contract or inspection procedures requirements
- If testing services are utilized, evidence of the testing laboratory's competency has been retained
- Where relevant, the inspection safety requirements have been specified.

Applying for Scope Expansion

Please contact the IAS program manager and provide the proposed scope for expansion. The program manager will review the submission, issue a quote for the scope expansion, and coordinate the next steps in the assessment process.



Assessor Opportunities at IAS

IAS is seeking qualified individuals to serve as assessors across its accreditation programs. Learn more about becoming an assessor below.

[IAS: About IAS - Assessor Opportunities.](#)

Global ACI: The New Organization Replacing ILAC and IAF

The **Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI)** is an international organization that brings together accreditation bodies to ensure consistent, high-quality accreditation practices across regions and globally in compliance with ISO/IEC 17011. Accreditation Bodies, such as IAS, are organized in regional groups. The Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC) is one of the regional groups that integrate the Global ACI. Accreditation bodies participate in this organization as signatories of a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) which is a key mechanism underpinning this system. This agreement formally recognizes their accreditations as equivalent. An inspection agency accredited by a signatory body is trusted across borders without the need for reevaluation. IAS customers benefit from this global recognition as it enhances confidence in the validity of their accreditation, facilitating trade and regulatory approvals. Global recognition provides assurance to regulators that accredited agencies performing inspections meet internationally benchmarked standards, reducing duplication of oversight and supporting public safety through reliable, comparable inspection standards worldwide.



Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated



Meet Mingxia Zhang – Program Manager, Inspection Agency Accreditation Program

Mingxia serves as the Program Manager for the Inspection Agency Accreditation Program at the International Accreditation Service (IAS). In this role, she is responsible for maintaining the integrity, consistency and technical excellence of IAS's inspection agency accreditation program. She oversees comprehensive assessments for both currently accredited inspection agencies and new applicants, ensuring compliance with applicable international standards and accreditation requirements. Mingxia works closely with customers and assessors, providing technical support to resolve complex questions and ensuring all needs are addressed effectively and professionally.

Mingxia has extensive experience in accreditation management through roles as a program manager and lead assessor. She has served as Vice Chair of APLAC (now part of APAC) MRA Council and Chair of APLAC Training Committee and contributed to APLAC and ILAC peer evaluations as lead peer evaluator. On behalf of ILAC, Mingxia participated in the revision of ISO/IEC 17025. In addition, Mingxia has played an active role in capacity-building initiatives and providing technical advisory services across the accreditation community.

Updates to the Accreditation Criteria

If your company is accredited by IAS, then you need to make sure that you are following the most current accreditation criteria (AC). You can see the most current versions of the accreditation criteria on the IAS website. Any updates to the criteria are identified with a vertical line by the affected section of the AC. Being informed of these changes will give you time to start implementing the new requirements before your next assessment. See the latest versions of the criteria in the link below:

AC98

Training: Introduction to ISO/IEC 17020 for Inspection Agencies

This online training course from IAS covers both the quality system and technical requirements of ISO/IEC 17020, including integrity and impartiality, management system structure, and competence requirements for inspectors. It also presents easy-to-understand approaches to continual improvement and handling customer feedback.

The course includes extensive references to international interpretation and implementation guide documents commonly used by accredited inspection bodies.

Next scheduled course

25 Aug | Introduction to ISO/IEC 17020 for Inspection Agencies | M-East, India, and South Asia

[Register](#)

[To Learn More, click here.](#)



Need to Update Your Contact Information with IAS?

Most accredited organizations eventually need to update the contact people listed in the IAS Portal. Each accredited customer has three designated contacts who receive communication from IAS: a **Technical Contact**, a **Billing Contact**, and a **Legal Contact**. Although some organizations assign the same person to more than one role, it is generally best to designate a different individual for each.

Each contact has separate login credentials. To update this information, customers must sign in to the IAS Portal and make the change directly. Keeping these details current—and ensuring that more than one person in your organization has access to the login information—can help prevent communication delays.

IAS has created a short instructional video that demonstrates how to update contact information in the IAS Portal.

[Watch the instructional video.](#)



2026 Events

The following events may be of interest to professionals working in inspection agencies:

- **International Code Council Annual Conference**
Nashville, TN | October 18–21, 2026
- **2026 API Storage Tank Conference & Expo.**
Hyatt Regency Austin, TX | October 19–22, 2026



Do You Know the Areas of Inspection Covered by ISO/IEC 17020?

ISO/IEC 17020 applies to inspection bodies of all types and sizes. From large organizations to small teams, agencies accredited to this standard play an important role in supporting safety, quality, and compliance across a wide range of industries.

IAS accredits inspection agencies operating in sectors such as agriculture, cosmetics, construction, electronics, environmental services, food, medical devices, mining, petroleum, personal protective equipment, toys, transportation, water, and many others.

If your agency is interested in expanding its scope to include new areas of inspections, contact IAS to learn more.

International Journal of Conformity Assessment—Metrology in Conformity Assessment



The recently published issue of the **International Journal of Conformity Assessment (IJCA)** focused on the Importance of Metrology in Conformity Assessment. Published by IAS, IJCA provides a high-quality medium for the dissemination of knowledge and methods associated with global conformity assessment practices and concepts.

IJCA is intended for both academics and practitioners in the conformity assessment field. The topics covered include testing, inspection, certification, and accreditation. The journal addresses a wide range of conformity assessment areas, including testing and calibration laboratories, inspection bodies, product certification bodies, management system certification bodies, and organizations offering certification of persons, among others.

IJCA welcomes contributions on any aspect of conformity assessment. Scholarly contributions from various disciplinary approaches are desirable, however, IJCA encourages novel, visionary, or pathbreaking research articles. Scholarly submissions must be relevant to the conformity assessment field, rigorous both conceptually and methodologically, and well written in a clear, concise, and logical manner. General interest and opinion articles addressing any aspect of conformity assessment are also welcome for consideration.

[Read the latest issue here.](#)

IAS on Social Media

If you haven't connected with IAS on social media, you may be missing the latest accreditation news and updates. IAS shares announcements and insights on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#). To find IAS, search for International Accreditation Service on any of these platforms.

Promote Your Accreditation

IAS customers can promote their accreditation using the official IAS Accreditation Program Symbols. These symbols may be used in advertisements, websites, brochures, exhibit booths, and other materials to highlight IAS accreditation.

To request accreditation symbols, email requestamark@iasonline.org.

Let Us Know What You Think

IAS is committed to continually improving its services and welcomes your feedback—positive or negative. Your input helps improve the support provided to customers and stakeholders. To share your comments, visit the [Contact Us](#) page on the IAS website

The International Accreditation Service (IAS) is a nonprofit accreditation body and a signatory member of Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC), and the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated ([Global ACI](#) former IAF/ILAC). IAS is a member of the [ICC Family of Solutions](#).

Need Answers? Get in Touch with IAS

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