

1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 ASI procedure for accreditation of CABs from an enquiry for information and application through to the issue of an ASI accreditation certificate. The procedure incorporates also surveillance and re-accreditation assessments.

2 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 All terms and definitions are provided in the ASI Vocabulary (ASI-PRO-20-105).

3 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

3.1	Standards and Policies	ISO 17011:2004 ISO 19011:2002
3.2	Policies, Procedures, Guidelines	ASI-QM-20-100-Quality Manual v4.0 ASI-PRO-20-106-Sampling v2.0 ASI-PRO-20-105-Surveillance v2.0 ASI-PRO-20-104-Complaints v2.0 ASI-PRO-20-103-Appeals v2.0 ASI-PRO-10-102-Staff & subcontractors v2.0 ASI-PRO-20-102-Extension, Reduction, Suspension, Termination v2.1 ASI-GUI-20-106-Nonconformities (NCs) v2.0 ASI-PRO-10-101-System Improvement v1.0
3.3	Checklists, Templates, etc.	Accreditation Committee Terms of Reference Accreditation Agreement Lead assessor contract Local expert contract Accreditation Recommendation Form Accreditation Report Assessment Reports Public Summary Report Application Form Application Packs Assessment checklist for document review

		Document Review Report Assessment Schedule and Itinerary Assessment Budget Application Information Declaration of Conflict of Interest Confidentiality agreement Documentation Checklists Enquiries Directory Fee Schedule Summary Introductory Response email Template Invoice Template Suspension Report
--	--	---

4 ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

4.1 The processes for accreditation shall follow the procedure set out below.

5 ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 The requirements for accreditation are defined in the relevant ASI-CAB accreditation agreement and in the normative documents of a particular certification scheme.
- 5.2 ASI shall inform the CABs of any changes to the accreditation requirements at least three months prior to implementation.
- 5.3 ASI should inform the CABs of any changes to its accreditation procedures.
- 5.4 Where implementation dates are set by ASI, they shall be set with regard to the time required by CABs and / or certified parties to make changes to their own management systems, if relevant.
- 5.5 CABs shall comply with changed requirements within the timeframes indicated by ASI and/or the certification scheme owner. When international ISO standards change, ASI will adopt IAF guidance on timing for compliance, or alternate guidance provided by the certification scheme.
- 5.6 Conformity with changed requirements will be verified at the first scheduled assessment after the implementation date specified by ASI.

6 ENQUIRY AND APPLICATION

- 6.1 CABs requesting general information on accreditation requirements for a specific certification scheme shall contact ASI by post or by e-mail (info@accreditation-services.com).
- 6.2 The designated APO may send relevant application information as required.
- 6.3 CABs interested in pursuing accreditation shall contact ASI to request an Accreditation Application Pack for the relevant certification scheme.

- 6.4 An Accreditation Application Pack shall contain the following information:
- 6.4.1 The application information with instructions on how to apply for accreditation, including a request to pay the Accreditation Application Fee at time of submitting the Application Form;
 - 6.4.2 The current version of the relevant Accreditation Procedures;
 - 6.4.3 The current version of the ASI Complaint and Appeal Procedures;
 - 6.4.4 The Application Form relevant to the certification scheme;
 - 6.4.5 The ASI Fee Schedule relevant to the certification scheme;
 - 6.4.6 All other documents relevant to the certification scheme and scope for which accreditation is being applied for.
- 6.5 The designated APO shall send the Accreditation Application Pack within two weeks of receiving the CAB's request.
- 6.6 A fee may be raised for the Accreditation Application Pack on a scheme by scheme basis.

7 APPLICATION REVIEW AND APPROVAL

- 7.1 ASI Application Form shall be completed in English. Other relevant application documents shall also be sent in English.
- 7.2 When an Application Form and other relevant application documents are received, the designated APO shall send an invoice for the corresponding accreditation application fee.
- 7.3 The APO shall review the Application Form to ensure that all data fields have been adequately completed and for accuracy of information.
- 7.4 The APO shall ensure that the accreditation application fee has been paid.
- 7.5 If the application is incomplete or payment has not been received, the CAB shall be contacted.
- 7.6 Once the application is complete and payment has been made, the APO shall create a CAB File on ASI server in which all subsequent records pertaining to the client shall be filed.
- 7.7 The APO shall refer the CAB to the relevant APM appointed by the ASI Director.
- 7.8 The APM shall review the application and shall verify that:
- 7.8.1 The applicant CAB is established as a legal entity and professional CAB;
 - 7.8.2 The applicant CAB is within the scope of ASI requirements and within the scope of each certification scheme for which application is made. If this requires further information, it shall be obtained from the CAB. Changes to the application scope can be proposed if necessary;

- 7.8.3 No impediments to achieving accreditation have been identified by the APM in the information provided on the application form.
- 7.9 If the application does not meet the above ASI requirements, the APM shall report to the ASI Director recommending rejection of the application.
- 7.10 The ASI Director shall review and approve the recommendation before the CAB is notified.
- 7.11 In order to proceed with the application, the applicant CAB may choose to address the issues raised or decide to withdraw its application.
- 7.12 ASI will not reimburse application fees if an application is withdrawn.
- 7.13 If the application is in compliance with the above ASI requirements, the application shall be presented to the ASI Director for approval and signature.
- 7.14 The designated APO shall inform the CAB that they have been accepted as an applicant and shall send a copy of the CAB Accreditation Agreement with a request for signature.
- 7.15 The applicant CAB shall print two copies of the contract, sign both copies and return them to the designated APO.
- 7.16 The ASI Executive Director shall sign both copies of the CAB Accreditation Agreement. One signed copy shall be returned to the CAB.
- 7.17 A CAB can only be formally recognised as an applicant once the CAB Accreditation Agreement has been signed by both parties.
- 7.18 Once the CAB Accreditation Agreement has been signed by both parties, the ASI makes the name and contact details of the applicant CAB publicly available.
- 7.19 The CAB Accreditation Agreement shall be filed on the ASI server.
- 7.20 If allowed under the certification scheme requirements, the APM shall confirm that the CAB may make claims of applicant status and seek non accredited clients as covered in specific certification scheme guidance documents.
- 7.21 For re-assessment, ASI uses the term “re-accreditation”. Re-accreditation requires the CAB to apply as indicated above, and to go through a new accreditation process as indicated in the sections below. Exceptions in order to streamline the process can only be granted by the ASI Director.

8 DOCUMENT REVIEW

- 8.1 The ASI APM shall review the documented procedures and other documents submitted by the CAB or organise for another ASI lead assessor to be appointed to perform the document review.
- 8.2 The ASI lead assessor shall verify that:
 - 8.2.1 The Documentation Checklist has been fully completed
 - 8.2.2 Documented procedures and other documents have been provided in English
 - 8.2.3 That all documents listed in the Documentation Checklist have been provided
- 8.3 If there is any missing document, the ASI lead assessor shall advise the applicant of the missing documented procedures or other documents, and shall request the CAB to send the missing documents or procedures.
- 8.4 If after six months no response has been received from the CAB, the ASI lead assessor shall send a reminder with a one month timeline. If the missing documents or procedures are not received by the ASI within one month, ASI will consider that the CAB has decided to withdraw its application.
- 8.5 ASI will not reimburse application fees if an application is withdrawn.
- 8.6 Once all relevant documented procedures and other documents have been submitted, the ASI lead assessor shall perform a document review to ensure that:
 - 8.6.1 Conformity has been demonstrated for all accreditation requirements of the relevant certification scheme;
 - 8.6.2 Key sites have been clearly identified.
- 8.7 Key sites are sites where one or more of the following activities occur:
 - 8.7.1 Signing of contracts with clients,
 - 8.7.2 Planning of conformity audits, or
 - 8.7.3 Approval or review of reports immediately prior to decision making.
- 8.8 The ASI lead assessor shall report evidence of conformity or nonconformity.
- 8.9 The completed relevant ASI checklists, together with ASI lead assessor's key findings and conclusions will be compiled as the ASI Document Review Report.
- 8.10 The ASI Document Review Report shall be sent to the CAB together with:
 - 8.10.1 A request to correct all identified nonconformities;
 - 8.10.2 A request to present amended documentation to demonstrate conformity;

- 8.10.3 A clear recommendation on the conditions to fulfil, if any, to move to the next stage of the accreditation process.
- 8.11 ASI may perform a thorough or partial document review at any time in the accreditation cycle. Following a document review, ASI shall issue appropriate NCs using the ASI NC Form if nonconformities are identified.
- 8.12 When during the accreditation cycle a CAB notifies ASI of any significant changes, then the ASI APM shall:
 - 8.12.1 Review the proposed changes or appoint an ASI lead assessor to review the proposed changes;
 - 8.12.2 The ASI lead assessor shall review the documentation provided for conformity with relevant requirements, and shall inform the CAB of any nonconformity identified using the ASI NC Form.

9 APPOINTMENT OF ASI ASSESSMENT TEAMS

- 9.1 The APM shall ensure that for each ASI assessment a qualified assessment team, as per ASI procedures for Staff and Assessors, is appointed so that all aspects of the scope of the assessment can be covered.
- 9.2 A check on actual or potential conflicts of interest shall take place, specifically:
 - 9.2.1 A declaration of actual or potential conflicts of interest shall be made by ASI assessors prior to accepting an appointment by completing a Declaration of Conflict of Interest Form;
 - 9.2.2 All Declaration of Conflict of Interest Forms shall be filled on ASI Server;
 - 9.2.2 The ASI Director shall review the Declaration of Conflict of Interest Form if any conflict is disclosed and shall either appoint a new assessor or specify the measures to be taken to address the declared conflict of interest;
 - 9.2.3 Notification shall be sent to the CAB by the APM, listing the members of the ASI assessment team and inviting objection on grounds of conflict of interest;
 - 9.2.4 Should objection be received from the CAB, the APM shall review the objection, and may propose changes to the composition of assessment team or refer back to the ASI Director.
 - 9.2.5 All ASI assessors are required to comply with conflict of interest requirements and the Code of Conduct set out in the ASI Quality System Manual.
- 9.3 The APM may clarify with the ASI lead assessor the scope and type of assessment to be performed.
- 9.4 The ASI lead assessor is responsible for briefing team members as required.

10 PRE-ASSESSMENTS

- 10.1 ASI should consider any CAB applicant's request for a pre-assessment, and may at its sole discretion accept or decline such a request.
- 10.2 Pre-assessments shall only be performed in conformity with ISO 17011 section 7.5.1.
- 10.3 ASI lead assessors shall limit pre-assessments to the identification of deficiencies in:
 - 10.3.1 The implementation of the documented procedures of the applicant CAB; and/or
 - 10.3.2 The competencies of the applicant CAB.
- 10.4 ASI lead assessor and ASI assessment team shall not provide any advice on corrective or preventive action to address any accreditation requirement, neither shall they advise on how other CABs have demonstrated conformity.
- 10.5 ASI shall provide the applicant CAB with a report outlining the ASI findings in terms of deficiencies identified. No NC shall be raised following a pre-assessment.

11 ASSESSMENT PLANNING – INITIAL ASSESSMENTS

- 11.1 For accreditation, the APM shall only agree with the CAB and organise an initial office assessment once the document review has been completed. Exceptions can only be granted by the ASI Director.
- 11.2 The ASI lead assessor, in consultation with other team members if required, shall prepare a budget and a provisional assessment plan if relevant.
- 11.3 The provisional assessment plan and budget shall be sent to the CAB by the APM or designated APO.
- 11.4 Initial assessment shall take place at the main accredited office (office legally responsible for any certification decision and where decision making on the issue of certificates takes place) and at all key sites where one or more of the following activities occur:
 - 11.4.1 Signing of contracts with clients,
 - 11.4.2 Planning of conformity audits, or
 - 11.4.3 Approval or review of reports immediately prior to decision making.
- 11.5 All key sites should be identified during the document review. However, if key sites are only identified during a main assessment, additional assessment activity shall be planned by the ASI lead assessor or APM so that all key sites can be included in the scope of the assessment. The applicant CAB shall be informed of such changes and justification for such changes shall be kept in the CAB File.

- 11.7 Assessments shall be planned as needed to allow for evaluation of the CAB competence for the proposed scope of accreditation.

12 ASSESSMENTS

- 12.1 All ASI assessment activities shall follow the processes set out below.
- 12.2 For accreditation, the APM shall only agree with the CAB and organise a witness assessment in the field once the initial office assessment has been completed and no major nonconformity is pending. Exceptions can only be granted by the ASI Director.
- 12.3 ASI lead assessors shall follow the guidance on auditing provided by ISO 19011 and ASI Guidance on Witnessing when assessing performance of a CAB's audit team in the field, and should ensure that all ASI assessors in an ASI assessment team follow this guidance.
- 12.4 Checklists specific to each certification scheme may be used by ASI assessment teams.
- 12.5 ASI assessors shall complete audit notes including specific notes on the evidence reviewed. Photos can be taken, with prior agreement from the CAB, if relevant or necessary to maintain accurate records.
- 12.6 The ASI lead assessor shall allocate sufficient time to hold a meeting to review and present the ASI assessment's findings to the CAB audit team.
- 12.7 Nonconformities and observations shall be raised in conformity with ASI Guidance for Nonconformities (NCs).
- 12.8 If the assessment team finds an area where policy of either ASI or the certification scheme is unclear or has not been communicated, they shall write to the relevant person within the organisation concerned asking for the policy to be clarified. The Assessment Report shall discuss the findings and note that clarification of policy has been sought.
- 12.9 At the closing meeting the lead assessor shall ensure that (ISO 19011 6.5.7):
- 12.9.1 Nonconformities are reviewed with the CAB's audit team to obtain acknowledgement that the assessment evidence is accurate, and that the nonconformities identified are understood. Every attempt should be made to resolve any diverging opinions concerning the assessment evidence and/or findings, and unresolved points should be recorded.
 - 12.9.2 The CAB is informed that if it still disagrees with the nonconformity and categorisation of the CAR, the assessment report will be forwarded to the ASI for review with a clear identification of the issues and disagreements raised by the CAB. If the CAB does not agree with the final ASI report, the CAB may appeal following ASI Appeal Procedure.

- 12.9.3 The CAB is informed that as the ASI assessment team is not the final decision maker, further nonconformities maybe identified and may be raised during ASI review process, and/or grading of NCs may be reviewed.
- 12.10 When assessment activities are spread over time, the ASI lead assessor may decide, if justified, to combine one or more assessment activities into one assessment report.

13 ASSESSMENT REPORTS

- 13.1 An Assessment Report shall be drafted by the ASI lead assessor and shall be sent to the CAB by the ASI lead assessor or APM after each assessment.
- 13.2 ASI Assessment Reports shall contain a clear conclusion and recommendation for the Accreditation Committee or decision maker. The recommendation shall be factual, clear and unambiguous.
- 13.3 Assessment Reports shall be drafted with inputs from all assessment team members as appropriate.
- 13.4 The ASI lead assessor or APM shall ensure that a qualified ASI assessor performs a peer review of the draft Assessment Report prior to sending it to the CAB for comments.
- 13.5 Draft Assessment Reports shall be completed and forwarded to CABs within 60 days of the assessment. If this is not possible due to an assessor's absence or for other reasonable causes, then the CAB shall be informed of the delay and advised of a new date when they may expect the draft Assessment Report.
- 13.6 The ASI lead assessor or APM shall invite the CAB to comment and point out any error of fact that may be contained in the draft Assessment Report within 30 days of receipt.
- 13.7 If no comment is received from the CAB within 30 days, the Assessment Report shall be finalised by the ASI lead assessor.
- 13.8 When the CAB provides comments on the draft Assessment Report, the ASI lead assessor shall take the comments into account, respond to the comments when finalising the report.
- 13.9 When ASI needs to publish a Public Summary Report, then it shall be placed on the ASI website within 30 days of the finalisation of the report. In preparing public summary reports confidential information of third parties shall be protected if necessary.

Note: ASI publication of Assessment Reports to the ASI website varies on a scheme by scheme basis.

- 13.10 For initial accreditation decisions, the ASI report submitted to the Accreditation Committee shall contain:
- 13.10.1 Copies of relevant Document Review and Assessment Reports, and relevant Checklists;
 - 13.10.2. Clear conclusions on the performance of the CAB to give confidence in its competence as determined through conformity with the accreditation requirements.
 - 13.10.3. A clear recommendation from the ASI lead assessor on whether accreditation should be granted, with all the nonconformities which have been identified, and any condition that may be recommended.
 - 13.10.4. Conditions may include:
 - a. Restrictions on geographic scope of activity;
 - b. Limits on numbers or types of certificates that may be issued;
 - c. Requirements to submit certification reports for review prior to making certification decisions;
 - d. Requirements for more witnessing of auditors as new CAB audit activities are undertaken;
 - e. Limitations on audit of group schemes.
- 13.11 For re-accreditation decisions, the ASI report submitted to the Accreditation Committee shall contain ASI findings following the re-assessment process and all relevant Assessment Reports.
- 13.12 For initial accreditation and re-accreditation, the ASI report shall be sent to the CAB for comments and finalised as indicated in the above sections for Assessment Reports.
- 13.13 For initial accreditation and re-accreditation decisions, the APM or designated APO shall forward the ASI report to all members of the accreditation committee in conformity with the ASI Terms of Reference for the Accreditation Committee.

14 VERIFICATION OF CAB CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTIVE ACTION

- 14.1 CABs may be required to provide details of their planned corrective and preventive actions to address the nonconformities identified by the ASI assessment team at the discretion of the ASI lead assessor. If such plan is requested, the ASI lead assessor shall ensure that feedback is provided to the CAB on the acceptability of proposed corrective actions. If proposed corrective actions are found to be insufficient, the ASI lead assessor shall request further information.
- 14.2 ASI Guidance on Nonconformities (NCs) shall be followed for all nonconformities and observations raised by ASI assessment teams.

15 DECISION-MAKING AND GRANTING ACCREDITATION

- 15.1 ASI should not rely upon the results of accreditations issued by other accreditation bodies. ASI assessment teams may take into account the

results of independent assessments of CAB conformity against ISO 65 but shall not be bound by the findings of other accreditation bodies.

- 15.2 ASI assessment team should only take into account the findings of another accreditation body if it can satisfy itself that these findings ensure compliance with ISO 65 and that no major nonconformity could be identified during the ASI assessment.
- 15.3 Accreditation decision making process shall follow the procedure established in the Terms of Reference for the ASI Accreditation Committee and in conformity with the relevant Accreditation Agreement.
- 15.4 The Chair of the ASI Accreditation Committee shall use the ASI Accreditation Committee Decision Form to communicate the recommendation of the Committee to the ASI.
- 15.4 When receiving the Accreditation Committee Decision Form, the ASI Director shall review the recommendation of the ASI Accreditation Committee and sign the decision form.
- 16.5 If the ASI Accreditation Committee recommends accreditation, the ASI Director shall communicate a positive accreditation decision to the CAB and ensure that it is made publicly available.
- 15.6 If the ASI Accreditation Committee does not recommend accreditation, the ASI Director shall communicate a negative accreditation decision to the CAB, providing appropriate justification and an indication of all the nonconformities that prevented accreditation and need to be addressed. The ASI Director shall also inform the CAB of its right to appeal as per ASI Appeal Procedure.
- 15.7 Following granting of accreditation, the designated APO shall produce a controlled accreditation certificate and have the certificate signed by the ASI Director. This accreditation certificate shall be forwarded to the CAB and a copy kept on records

16 SURVEILLANCE

- 16.1 ASI surveillance activities shall be performed in conformity with ASI Guidance for Surveillance.

17 CLAIMS OF APPLICANT / ACCREDITED CAB

- 17.1 After receiving written confirmation from their assigned APM that they may do so, the CAB can make claims regarding its formal status as an applicant CAB for a specific accreditation scope until the applicant is formally accredited or until the application is terminated. Applicant CABs shall follow requirements set out in ASI and the certification scheme documents which specify the claims can or cannot be made.
- 17.2 If the certification scheme requirements allow for this option, ASI shall advise the CAB in writing of the number of clients it may accept for unaccredited

assessments, and any further conditions that the CAB may be required to meet.

- 17.3 If the certification scheme requirements allow for this option, an applicant CAB may enter into certification contracts with clients, providing the scope of certification is within the accreditation scope applied for and approved.
- 17.4 ASI shall take suitable measures to address any misleading references by a CAB regarding its accreditation status or a misleading use of the ASI and / or certification scheme trademarks.

----- End of Document -----

© 2009 Accreditation Services International GmbH

This work is copyright to ASI. It may be reproduced or copied for fair use by those seeking accreditation, or those wishing to learn more about accreditation, but may not be used by others without the written permission of ASI.