



Heads Up

Issue: 176

Date: 2010/04/26

To: ANAB-Accredited and Applicant CBs and Accreditation Assessors

From: Randy Dougherty, Vice President ANAB

Re: Payment of Commissions or Finder's Fees to Consultants by Accredited Certification Bodies

In Heads Up 96, ANAB announced that its application of ISO/IEC 17021, clause 5.2.7, would be that if a CB pays a commission or finder's fee to a consultant for referral of the consultant's client to the CB, the CB cannot certify that organization for at least two years.

In Heads Up 96 ANAB also stated that if another method were considered accepted and agreed by appropriate bodies internationally and communicated to all stakeholders, ANAB would also accept this method.

In October 2009, several discussion papers submitted to the IAF Technical Committee related to this subject. The issue was referred to the IAF TC Working Group on the Credibility of Management Systems Certification. In March 2010, based on a recommendation of the Working Group, the IAF TC decided the following:

Consensus of the IAF TC is that there are alternative methods to the 2 year option to manage impartiality in the case of payment of commission/finder's fee to consultants. The WG on CMSC was assigned the task to further develop the methods based on the principle of transparency.

The Working Group met after the IAF TC meeting and decided on the following 10-step method:

A CAB has to demonstrate the following:

1. Transparency - all documentation relevant to this relationship are recorded and available on request to AB. The client and relevant CAB personnel are aware of this relationship and/or payment of commission/finder's fee and that the CAB does not provide special treatment.
2. Management of the CAB has signed the relevant declaration of impartiality that includes reference to such relationships and their management.
3. Risk assessment conducted for the specific relationship between the involved parties. Special attention given to the threats arising from relationships of the parties/individuals involved.
4. Impartiality committee reviews the effectiveness of management of risk due to such relationships.
5. A process is established to ensure there is no special treatment of clients

during the certification process.

6. Instances of pressure or influence from management, consultant or client are reported and mitigated.
7. Additional witnessing of the audits may need to be conducted by the CAB.
8. Closer scrutiny of audit output and certification / recertification decisions.
9. Monitoring of such relationships through internal audit.
10. An AB may need additional time to assess the management of such relationships and may also need to conduct additional witness audits.

ANAB accepts this method as an acceptable alternative to the two-year rule based on the consensus of the IAF TC Working Group on CMSC and based on the assumption that it will be confirmed by the IAF Technical Committee at its next meeting in October 2010.