



Heads Up

Issue: 20

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To: ANSI-RAB NAP Accredited Certification Bodies and Accreditation Auditors

From: Randy Dougherty, Director of Registrar Accreditation

Re: Increasing the Value of Registration by Increasing the Value of Accreditation

Consistent with the stated objective of a Heads Up to focus on a single subject, this issue of Heads Up is one of several Heads Up or advisories that collectively will contribute to value added accreditation, which in turn will contribute to value added registration.

In Berlin, the certification body (CB) members of the IAF Technical Committee charged Roger Brockway, the chair of the Technical Committee, with developing a "road map" to show how IAF will move accreditation from where it was then (September 2002) to where it is hoped to go.

Where IAF was in September 2002 is an Multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MLA) by which a registration certificate accredited by an MLA signatory accreditation body (AB) is considered equivalent to a registration certificate accredited by any other MLA signatory AB.

Where it is hoped that IAF will go is to provide global accreditation to CBs by the national accreditation bodies (NABs) cooperating as a network.

Specific steps being taken include:

1. IAF's new guidance on cross-rrontier accreditation. This was developed primarily to address the concern that there has been inadequate oversight by a national AB of the activities of its accredited CBs when those activities are in other countries. However, the solution to this concern, as established in the new IAF guidance, also creates an expectation that NABs cooperate to provide effective accreditation and oversight. (Note: ANSI-RAB NAP Advisory 16, which was also developed to address this issue, will be reviewed and revised to accommodate this new IAF guidance.)
2. IAF's new Procedure for Exchange of Documentation among IAF MLA ABs facilitates one AB using the assessment results of another AB for its accreditation activities. (Note: The ANSI-RAB NAP for years has had procedures for the review and possible acceptance of audit reports of other ABs)
3. IAF's new guidance on CB competence for QMS changes from an imposed set of descriptive requirements specified in the ISO 10011 series to the expectation that a CB

use the guidance in ISO 19011 to develop a process, that ensures competency of all personnel to fulfill what is expected of them. The new guidance also includes the expectation that a CB determine the competencies needed for auditing each specific client. While some of these new expectations have been part of IAF guidance for EMS audits, this new IAF guidance for QMS audits builds on that experience and incorporates the new ISO 19011. This new IAF guidance for QMS CB will also make it necessary for ABs to change how they audit CBs.

4. The future new IAF guidance on witness audit reports, which is intended to standardize the content of witness audit reports, will further facilitate one AB accepting the results of another AB. At this point in time, as the leader of this IAF project, I anticipate an output that will “rationalize” the office audit and witness audit, as specific processes and tools that will be used with other processes and tools, to provide more effective oversight of CBs. This has the promise to lead to increased harmonization of processes among ABs, which will contribute to increase cooperation.
5. The future new guidance on scopes is intended to harmonize the scopes that require witness audits.
6. On 2003/09/20, JAB and the ANSI-RAB NAP signed a Multilateral Cooperative Accreditation Arrangement. This new arrangement provides the framework for true, cooperative accreditation of mutual client CBs, with planned and coordinated oversight and true sharing of results. This will result in better oversight, better service, and reduced costs for all parties. It has the additional benefit of allowing both JAB and the ANSI-RAB NAP to immediately implement the new IAF guidance on cross-rrontier accreditation. The arrangement has also been written to facilitate other ABs joining with JAB and the NAP.
7. The ANSI-RAB NAP is revising how it plans office and witness audits. As a separate Heads Up, you will be sent the new guidance for executive audit team leaders (EATLs), and will also be sent a new form to be completed by each CB prior to each annual office audit. The bottom line is that each audit, and therefore audit time, will be customized for each CB based on its scope of operations and performance.
8. The theme of the most recent annual training of ANSI-RAB NAP auditors was “lead by example.” We explored how to provide more value added accreditation audits, including more effective audit planning, providing better examples of what a good audit plan looks like. We also explored how to write better NCRs and do a better job of reviewing correction and corrective action to ensure true improvement by CBs. And we also discussed how to write better audit reports that may provide useful information of value to CB management. Our measure of this will be CB management actually making time to read the reports. This led to our forming a team of auditors to develop new guidance on conducting witness audits. It is being chaired by Karen Wagener, accreditation auditor. We also agreed to pilot a new proposal for witness audits, which is a process to include CB audit management in the closing meeting of witnessed audits. Ron Wilmes, accreditation auditor, has taken the lead for this and has completed the first pilot.

All of these initiatives and new related initiatives will be coordinated by a new Joint Working Group on Value Added Accreditation. It is comprised of members of the QMS and EMS Councils, including the CB representatives to each Council. I have been elected to serve as the leader of this JWG on VAA. One of the challenges we face is identifying how accreditation can have a positive impact on the value of registration. As one of its first direct initiatives, it is taking over the QMS Council project for Recognition of Performance

Excellence (ROPE) to identify key measurables of CB performance that constitute performance excellence. Expected results of this project, when successful, will be a means of benchmarking CBs. We envision a way that allows each CB to see how it stacks up while keeping the identity of CB confidential to that CB. We also envision a means for reducing the level of specific oversight activities (for example, audits) of high performing CBs, and increasing the level of oversight for low performers.

In closing this issue of Heads Up, I encourage anyone to call and talk with me directly about any of these initiatives. I also encourage anyone truly interested in making a positive contribution, to consider becoming a member of the JWG on Value Added Accreditation.