

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.



IAF Guidance Document

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IAF Transition Plan for Accredited EMS Certification from ISO 14001:1996 to ISO 14001:2004

Issue 1

(IAF GD 4:2004)

Accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring them that accredited bodies are competent to carry out the work they undertake within their scope of accreditation. Accreditation bodies which are members of the International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) are required to operate at the highest standard and to require the bodies they accredit to comply with appropriate international standards and IAF Guidance to the application of those standards.

Accreditations granted by accreditation body members of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA), based on regular surveillance to assure the equivalence of their accreditation programs, allows companies and persons with an accredited conformity assessment certificate in one part of the world to have that certificate recognized everywhere else in the world.

Therefore certificates in the fields of management systems, products, services, persons and other similar programs of conformity assessment issued by bodies accredited by members of the IAF MLA are relied upon in international trade.

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IAF Transition Plan for Accredited EMS Certification from ISO 14001:1996 to ISO 14001:2004

1. Preparation time (up to 6 months after the publication of the new standard)

When the Certification/Registration Bodies (CRBs) agree with the existing and new client organizations on whether ISO 14001:1996 or ISO 14001:2004 is to be used as the audit criteria, the standard being used shall be identified in the audit plan for initial audit, surveillance or reassessment. If ISO 14001:2004 is to be used, the CRBs shall ensure that procedures for assessment and certification to the new EMS standard are in place.

2. Implementation date (from 6 months after the publication of the new standard)

From six months after the publication of the new standard, all audit plans prepared for existing and new client organizations should include ISO 14001:2004 as the audit criteria.

3. Extra visits by the CRBs

Additional visits by CRBs to assess solely against revisions to the standard are not required.

4. Nonconformities (during a further 12 months after the implementation date defined in clause 2)

For existing organizations that are certified/registered to ISO 14001:1996, nonconformities against changes made in the new EMS standard may be raised. These nonconformities will not adversely affect certification until the end of the transition period.

5. Certificates

The EMS standard indicated on any certificate shall be consistent with the standard identified on the audit plan. For existing organizations it is expected that EMS certificates will be renewed based on the outcome of the periodic visit in applying the new standard. This renewal should not change the previous certification cycle unless a complete reassessment audit takes place. All existing certificates shall be renewed as conforming to the new EMS standard before the end of transition (see clause 6).

6. End of transition (18 months after publication of the new standard)

Eighteen months after publication of the new standard, any existing accredited certificates issued to ISO 14001:1996 will no longer be valid. Outstanding nonconformities to the new standard will become active and will affect certification/registration.

7. Accreditation body assessment

Accreditation body assessment visits will cover the CRB plans for effectively managing the transition.

End of IAF Transition Plan for Accredited EMS Certification from ISO 14001:1996 to ISO 14001:2004.

Further Information

For further Information on this document or other IAF documents, contact any member of IAF or the IAF Secretariat.

For contact details of members of IAF see - IAF Web Site - <<http://www.iaf.nu>>

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