IAF INFORMATIVE DOCUMENT

INFORMATION ON THE TRANSITION OF
ISO/IEC 17024:2003
TO ISO/IEC 17024:2012

Issue 1

(IAF ID6: 2014)

The International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) details criteria for the accreditation of bodies that provide conformity assessment services, and such accreditation facilitates trade and reduces demands for multiple conformity assessment activities.

Accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring that accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) are competent to carry out the work they undertake within their scope of accreditation. Accreditation Bodies (ABs) that are members of IAF and the CABs they accredit are required to comply with appropriate international standards and the applicable IAF application documents for the consistent application of those standards.

ABs that are signatories to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) are evaluated regularly by an appointed team of peers to provide confidence in the operation of their accreditation programs. The structure and scope of the IAF MLA is detailed in IAF PR 4 - Structure of IAF MLA and Endorsed Normative Documents.

The IAF MLA is structured in five levels: Level 1 specifies mandatory criteria that apply to all ABs, ISO/IEC 17011. The combination of a Level 2 activity(ies) and the corresponding Level 3 normative document(s) is called the main scope of the MLA, and the combination of Level 4 (if applicable) and Level 5 relevant normative documents is called a sub-scope of the MLA.

- The main scope of the MLA includes activities e.g. product certification and associated mandatory documents e.g. ISO/IEC 17065. The attestations made by CABs at the main scope level are considered to be equally reliable.
- The sub-scope of the MLA includes conformity assessment requirements e.g. ISO 9001 and scheme specific requirements, where applicable, e.g. ISO TS 22003. The attestations made by CABs at the sub scope level are considered to be equivalent.

The IAF MLA delivers the confidence needed for market acceptance of conformity assessment outcomes. An attestation issued, within the scope of the IAF MLA, by a body that is accredited by an IAF MLA signatory AB can be recognized worldwide, thereby facilitating international trade.

Introduction to IAF Informative Documents

This IAF Informative Document reflects the consensus of IAF members on this subject and is intended to support the consistent application of requirements. However, being a document for information purposes only, IAF Accreditation Body Members, and the Conformity Assessment Bodies they accredit, are not under any obligation to use or comply with anything in this document.

INFORMATION ON THE TRANSITION FROM ISO/IEC 17024:2003 TO ISO/IEC 17024:2012

1. Publication

The new ISO/IEC 17024 was published on July 1, 2012. It incorporates new requirements for bodies operating certification of persons. Many of the requirements from IAF Guidance Document GD 24:2009 have been included in the new ISO/IEC 17024:2012.

Resolution 2012-10 was passed by the IAF General Assembly in Rio de Janeiro in October 2012 endorsing a three (3) year transition period to ISO/IEC 17024:2012.

2. Accreditation Bodies

Accreditation Bodies will need time to prepare for the transition to ISO/IEC 17024:2012. In particular, Accreditation Bodies should ensure that those assessors undertaking assessments to the new standard have the necessary knowledge and skills regarding the new requirements of ISO/IEC 17024:2012 and the implications of those requirements on the operations of the certification bodies, and have the necessary knowledge and skills and have been formally approved to undertake the assessments.

3. Certification Bodies

Accreditation Bodies should make it clear to Certification Bodies that apply for accreditation following the publication of ISO/IEC 17024:2012, if they are to comply with this version immediately or to the previous 2003 version. Accreditation Bodies shall define a time limit after which application to ISO/IEC 17024:2003 cannot be received and shall be transferred to ISO/IEC 17024:2012 application. They should advise a date beyond which they cannot issue accreditation to ISO/IEC 17024:2003. These published time frames should be congruent with the three (3) year transition period as indicated in the IAF Resolution 2012-10.

3.1. Certification Bodies with Prior Accreditation

Certification Bodies accredited at the time of publication will be in conformance with ISO/IEC 17024:2003. Transition to ISO/IEC 17024:2012 may require translations, changes to procedures, training and other arrangements, which will take time. In particular, time will be required for Conformity Assessment Bodies to integrate new requirements, adapt organisation processes, schemes and the management system towards the new standard.

3.2 Preparation Time

Certification Bodies should analyse and understand the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024:2012 and commence identification of new requirements in the standard without delay. Certification Bodies are expected to make a transition plan to determine both the required changes and the time frame required to execute them in order to conform to the standard. Certification Bodies are suggested to submit their transition plan to their Accreditation Body for review.

3.3 Transition and Implementation

Wherever possible, and where there are no significant obstacles, a Certification Body should implement those parts of ISO/IEC 17024:2012 that it can without delay.

Assessment by an Accreditation Body should cover a Certification Body's plans for effectively managing its transition. The examination of these plans should enable the Accreditation Body to identify those points of the standard, which have been interpreted differently or implemented insufficiently by Certification Bodies. The examination of these transition plans should also enable the Accreditation Body and Certification Body to agree upon an end date for the transition process, which shall not go beyond 01 July 2015 (three (3) years from publication).

Certain changes resulting from ISO/IEC 17024:2012 will be easier to complete than others. More complex, time consuming and potentially costly changes could include the update of certification schemes, security requirements, and the assessment and/or examination process to comply with ISO/IEC 17024:2012. In recognition of the need to limit the disruption to a Certification Body's clients, i.e. certified persons, certain changes may not be avoided but will be needed to be carried out during the accreditation assessment cycles at the time of contract renewal or certificate re-issue.

4. Visits by Accreditation Bodies

Additional visits by Accreditation Bodies to assess solely against ISO/IEC 17024:2012 are not normally required. The implementation should be verified during normally scheduled re-accreditation or surveillance assessments. However, additional assessments may be necessary for a Certification Body requesting accreditation within an accelerated time frame before another normally scheduled accreditation assessment is due. Additional assessments may also be necessary to verify implementation of any corrective actions agreed to meet the new standard.

5. Nonconformities

Accreditation Bodies should make it clear to Certification Bodies that where an assessment is conducted against ISO/IEC 17024:2012, any nonconformities identified should be dealt with according to the rules of an Accreditation Body and shall be cleared before the end of transition, and before accreditation to ISO/IEC 17024:2012 can be granted.

6. End of Transition and Accreditation Certificate Issue

On 01 July 2015, three (3) years after publication of the new standard, all accredited Certification Bodies are expected to be in full compliance with ISO/IEC 17024:2012 and will have new accreditation certificates issued. No accreditation against ISO/IEC 17024:2003 is supposed to be valid after the end of the transition period.

7. New Personal Certification Schemes

Applicants for new personal certification schemes that are part of a certification for persons should be encouraged to apply under the new ISO/IEC 17024:2012; however, what is also important is that a new applicant that is accredited against the 2003 version shall complete transition by 01 July 2015.

End of IAF Informative Document: Information on the Transition of ISO/IEC 17024:2003 to ISO/IEC 17024:2012.

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

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