IQAS-043

Supplementary Criteria for Inspection Bodies

AMENDMENT SHEET

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Contents

1.0 Scope

This document defines the requirements that an Inspection Body (IB) shall meet if it is to be recognized by IQAS as competent and reliable in providing inspection services.

2.0 Accreditation Criteria

IBs seeking accreditation for Inspection in specific technical areas shall comply with the requirements as specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 17020:2026 "Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection" and other requirements as specified in this document.

The standard ISO/IEC 17020:2026 can be obtained online from ISO website 'www.iso.org' or its equivalent Indian adopted standard can be procured from the Bureau of Indian Standards.

3.0 Guidance Documents for Inspection Bodies

The relevant ILAC and APAC requirements and guidance documents have been adopted by IQAS as applicable to the IBs as part of its criteria to be read with the criteria as above.

IQAS has adopted the ILAC Policy Document "ILAC P15: Application of ISO/IEC 17020:2026 for the Accreditation of the Inspection Bodies". Applicant and accredited inspection bodies shall also comply with this document. This document provides application notes to inspection bodies to comply with the corresponding clauses of ISO/IEC 17020 and is used for assessment of inspection bodies in a harmonized manner by the accreditation bodies world over. This document forms the basis of mutual recognition arrangements between accreditation bodies, and is considered necessary for the consistent application of ISO/IEC 17020. This document can be freely downloaded from ILAC website 'www.ilac.org' or by directly accessing the link given below:

http://ilac.org/publications-and-resources/ilac-policy-series/

In addition, IQAS has elaborated some of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17020, based on ILAC/APAC application documents, which need to be complied with by all applicant and accredited IBs.

4.0 Scope of Accreditation

IQAS categorizes the scope of accreditation based on the broad 'IAF Classification of Scope Sectors' as indicative scope. The inspection body, while applying for accreditation to IQAS specify its detailed scope including the type of inspection, range, stage/category of inspection and title, number and year of publication of the standards / regulations / methods / procedures applicable (refer IQAS-042). The scope of accreditation after assessment shall be issued by IQAS to reflect the demonstrated technical competence of the IB. Refer IQAS format 'IB Scope of accreditation' with format IQAS-FF -30 which addresses the requirements of ILAC G:28 – Guidance for formulation of scopes of Accreditation Bodies for Inspection Bodies.

5.0 Policy on Metrological Traceability and Calibration

Metrological Traceability is the property of a measurement result whereby the result can be related to stated references, usually national or international standards, through a documented unbroken chain of comparisons (i.e., calibrations), each having stated measurement uncertainties. The purpose of requiring traceability is to ensure that measurements are accurate representations of the specific quantity subject to measurement, where measurement results form the basis of inspection results.

ILAC Document - ILAC P10 "ILAC Policy on Metrological Traceability of Measurement Results" available on ILAC website 'www.ilac.org' forms the basis of IQAS Policy on Measurement Traceability. Traceability of measurement results is a fundamental topic for equivalence as well as harmonization of measurement results provided by conformity assessment bodies including inspection bodies and to ensure confidence amongst accreditation bodies to maintain international Mutual Recognition Arrangements.

IQAS Policy on Measurement Traceability applicable to all IQAS applicant/accredited Inspection Bodies is as follows:

i. Inspection Bodies shall be able to demonstrate the calibration of equipment which have significant influence on results (critical equipment), whether owned by itself or others, used in inspection are traceable to the International System of Units (SI units) in accordance with the requirements specified in ISO/IEC 17025. Rationale to classify the equipment into a Critical category should be documented and maintained. When using external calibration services, traceability of measurement shall be assured by the use of calibration services from laboratories that can demonstrate competence, measurement capability and traceability.

ii. IQAS accepts as evidence of metrological traceability to national and international standards of measurements those calibrations performed by:

   a. National Metrology Institutes such as NPL-India or other CIPM (International Committee for Weights and Measures) MRA Signatories;
   b. Calibration laboratories accredited by accreditation bodies under ILAC / APAC MRA
   c. An NMI not covered under CIPM MRA but services are suitable for intended use.
   d. Calibration laboratories demonstrating compliance to ISO/IEC 17025, as assessed by the inspection body, if need be;

   Note: Option of c or d should only be chosen if option a and b is not available.

iii. When in-house calibration of equipment is accepted, the inspection body shall ensure that the calibration has been performed in accordance with the relevant criteria for metrological traceability in ISO/IEC 17025, which states that traceability of measurement shall be assured by the use of calibration services from laboratories that can demonstrate competence, measurement capability and traceability. In such cases the inspection body has the responsibility for ensuring and demonstrating that calibrations are performed by using a valid calibration method, by competent person(s). Records shall also be maintained for all conditions related to performing calibration such as traceability of master equipment as per (ii) above, records of environmental conditions, unique ID, accuracy and measurement range etc.

iv. Where traceability as stated above is not technically possible or reasonable or available, the inspection body and the client and other interested parties may agree to using Certified Reference Materials. Following CRMs with metrological traceability are acceptable:

a. CRMs produced by NMI like NPL, India
b. CRMs produced by Reference Material Producers accredited by any other ILAC/APAC MRA signatory
c. The certified values of CRM are covered in JCTLM database.

In case CRM are not available, a reference material may be used after ensuring that it is for intended use and is produced following all the practices as per requirement of Reference Material Producer. IB shall maintain adequate records for same.

Note: For metrological traceability requirements of ILAC P 10: ILAC Policy on Metrological Traceability of Measurement Results have to be adhered.

v. Where inspection body opts to verify compliance of an external/in-house calibration laboratory to ISO/IEC 17025 instead of using a calibration laboratory accredited as per ISO/IEC 17025, then it shall have a documented procedure to assess an external/in-house calibration laboratory to the applicable requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 (as described in iii above) and shall demonstrate to have assessed the external/in-house calibration laboratory by an assessor trained in ISO/IEC 17025 and relevant calibrations and the IB’s procedures, and shall maintain detailed records of assessing compliance of the external calibration laboratory to ISO/IEC 17025.

vi. IB should maintain the calibration interval as per requirements of ILAC G 24 - Guidelines for determination of Calibration intervals of measuring instruments with adequate justification.

vii. IQAS has also adopted the ILAC guidance documents ILAC G 27: Guidance on measurements performed as part of an inspection process.

viii. Applicant and accredited inspection bodies shall comply with the guidance given in this document. This document can be freely downloaded from ILAC website or by directly accessing the link given below:

https://ilac.org/publications-and-resources/ilac-guidance-series/

ix. Where equipment is subjected to in-service checks between regular re-calibrations, the nature of such checks, the frequency and acceptance criteria shall be defined.

6.0 Policy on use of Testing Laboratories as part of Inspection

IQAS Policy on use of laboratories for testing by the Inspection Bodies is as follows:

i. When as a part of inspection, for confirming product compliance to relevant standard, tests are required to be carried out in a laboratory, the inspection personnel may draw sample(s) and send it to their own laboratory or an independent external laboratory. Inspection bodies shall ensure that the laboratories to which samples are sent for testing are ISO/IEC 17025 for the scope of tests being undertaken. Inspection bodies shall not use testing laboratories recommended or decided by its clients unless they are accredited to ISO/IEC 17025.

ii. When as a part of inspection, the IB is required to review test reports for the purpose of assessing conformity to specified requirements/criteria, the testing shall have been carried out in laboratories complying with ISO/IEC 17025 as established by the inspection body or accredited to ISO/IEC 17025. The tests for which results are to be reviewed shall either be covered under accreditation in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025 or the compliance of the laboratory performing the tests shall have been verified by the IB for compliance to applicable requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 for the tests under consideration.

iii. When as a part of inspection, the inspection personnel witness testing at client’s or vendor’s laboratory at the site, the IBs shall ensure that these laboratories demonstrate compliance to relevant requirements as specified in Clauses 6.1, 6.2 and 7.1 of ISO/IEC 17020:2026. The IBs shall ensure that client’s or vendor’s personnel performing such tests are competent and use standard / validated test methods. The inspection body shall also ensure that the inspection personnel conducting the test witness shall also be knowledgeable about the above requirements to be able to assess the same.

7.0 Policy on Subcontracting

IQAS shall not grant accreditation to inspection bodies for the scope for which it does not have the competence, resources etc. and for which it intends to subcontract entire inspection activity on permanent basis.

When an inspection body subcontracts inspection activities for allowable reasons as given in ISO/IEC 17020:2026 other than on a permanent basis, it should select a subcontractor inspection body which meets at least the same independence criteria (Type A or Non-A) as itself and accredited to ISO/IEC 17020.The inspection body shall also ensure that the scope of the subcontractor's accreditation covers the activities to be sub-contracted.

Assigning inspection work to branch offices within the organization structure of the main office and operating under the same quality system is not considered as subcontracting. However, operation of these branch offices shall be assessed by IQAS, if they are to be included in the scope of accreditation. The inspection body shall also be required to demonstrate that it can exercise effective supervision over the inspections performed by these branch offices.

8.0 Inspection Standards

The Inspection body will be responsible to demonstrate that inspections are carried out in accordance with internationally / nationally acceptable standards. Customer or the inspection body developed standards, if used, shall be appropriate, fully documented and validated and should be clearly specified in the inspection contract. A reference of same may be provided in the scope statement.

9.0 Time for Inspections undertaken by the Inspection Body

The IB shall have in place a system to ensure that required time is spent by the inspection personnel for carrying out inspections and for monitoring the time spent on inspections. Timelines prescribed by regulatory bodies shall be strictly complied. The documented system shall be assessed for adequacy by the IQAS assessment team as part of documentation review and if required, during the onsite assessment as part of implementation verification.

10.0 Policy on use of IQAS Accreditation Mark

IQAS strongly encourages its accredited inspection bodies to use IQAS Accreditation Mark along with ILAC MRA Mark on their inspection reports/certificates to promote accreditation granted to their inspection services. It is each IB's responsibility to ensure that it describes its IQAS Accreditation Status in a manner that does not imply that accreditation is held in areas that are outside the scope of accreditation, for its other activities and branch offices facilities that are not included in the accreditation or for products or services that IQAS accreditation does not cover.

ILAC Document "ILAC P8: ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement) - Supplementary Requirements and Guidelines for the Use of Accreditation Symbols and for Claims of Accreditation Status by Accredited Laboratories and Inspection Bodies" available on ILAC website 'www.ilac.org' forms the basis of IQAS Policy on Use of IQAS Accreditation Mark by Inspection Bodies. The detailed conditions on use of IQAS Accreditation Mark are prescribed in IQAS 007.

While the use of "IQAS Accreditation Mark" on inspection reports / certificates is not mandatory, only inspection reports/certificates bearing the "IQAS Accreditation Mark" (or that otherwise make reference to accredited status by a specific, recognized accreditation body) can benefit from the acceptance established through mutual recognition agreements/arrangements amongst accreditation bodies globally.

Inspection reports/certificates issued by IQAS accredited inspection bodies for the scope and locations covered under IQAS accreditation, irrespective of whether IQAS Accreditation Mark is used or not on such reports/certificates issued, shall be deemed to be covered under accreditation and shall be subject to assessment during routine

IQAS Surveillances and/or Reassessments of accredited inspection bodies.

IQAS Fee based on % of inspection contract value as announced annually in the IQAS Fee Structure shall be applicable on all inspection reports/certificates issued by IQAS accredited inspection bodies for the scope and locations covered under IQAS accreditation, with or without IQAS Accreditation Mark. It is the responsibility and obligation of IQAS accredited inspection bodies to declare quarterly (every 3 months) the number of such reports/certificates issued or inspection contracts signed / executed and related information, correctly to IQAS.