



## IAF Liaison Report to OIML

October 2007

### 1. Revised IAF Strategic Plan to enhance credibility of Accreditation

Following the Auckland General Assembly in 2005, the IAF Executive Committee decided to convene a special meeting to take an overview on what IAF has achieved and to develop a new perspective on where IAF should position itself to meet the challenges likely to be faced over the next three years. This task became the development of the IAF Strategic Plan which has required significant time allocation at three Executive meetings held during 2006.

The IAF Executive has re-evaluated its existing Strategic Directions based on the feedback received at the 2005 IAF Open Forum concerning the content and meaning of management system certification for ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.

The proposed new Strategic Plan was presented to the IAF Members at the General Assembly in Cancun, Mexico in November 2006 where it was approved unanimously. The IAF strategy concerning the certification of products and persons has not changed, and the IAF Charter remains valid for the overall activities of IAF including its commitment to support for developing economies.

The new IAF Strategic Plan covers the following Strategic Objectives:

**# 1. IAF to establish mechanisms for obtaining input from end-users about how well accredited certification is meeting their expectations in order to influence IAF in ways to continually improve outcomes.**

**# 2. IAF to be seen as the organization which can respond to market feedback and promote changes to the assessment processes as needed, e.g. outcome focused.**

**# 3. IAF to demonstrate it is an organization which is committed to improving confidence that organizations with accredited certification consistently provide the outcomes required by management systems standards being used for accredited certification.**

**# 4. IAF to enforce the consistent application of its defined requirements by its members on all levels to provide uniform and effective application of international standards to achieve equivalent accreditation and certification outcomes for stakeholders.**

**# 5. To effectively communicate with stakeholders what IAF is doing to continually improve the effectiveness, and enhance the benefits of accredited certification.**

Strategic Initiatives based on the proposed objectives are:

1. *Establish an End-User Advisory Group integrated into the structure of IAF.*
2. *Collect information from stakeholders related to the expected outcomes of accredited management system certification for ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.*

*Note: There may be a gap between the expectations of customers of organizations with a certified management system, as identified in Strategic Initiative 1, and what can realistically be delivered by accredited certification based on the relevant standard.*
3. *Collaborate with ISO and ILAC through the IAF-ILAC-ISO JWG to develop an effective process for periodically surveying end-users of accredited certification.*
4. *Review and revise, as needed, the process for managing IAF liaisons to industry to improve the exchange of information that will contribute to increased end-user satisfaction with accredited certification.*
5. *Identify, document, and widely communicate concise statements of the outcomes required by the management system standards ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.*
6. *Develop or revise IAF application guidance, as needed, to establish appropriate means by which accreditation bodies and certification bodies can increase confidence that an organization with IAF accredited certification of its management system is consistently achieving required outcomes.*
7. *Review of the governance of IAF to be sure that expectations and obligations of all members (AB MOU members, MLA signatories, liaison members, etc) and the regions (EA, PAC, IAAC, SADCA, etc) are clearly stated and understood (e.g. accountability).*
8. *Continue to improve the IAF MLA peer evaluation process (e.g. including consideration of observers from stakeholders in the peer team, conducting specific surveys, etc).*
12. *Compilation and as far as possible coordination of presentations to international associations with an interest in accredited certification.*
13. *Continue to promote the benefits of the MLA to promote trade, especially to governments (e.g. to collect success stories).*

Each strategic initiative has been allocated to a specified committee or group and target dates for completion have been established. Monitoring of progress with the strategic initiatives is a standing item on the agenda of each IAF Executive Committee meeting.

## **2. IAF End-User Advisory Committee - proposed Terms of Reference**

As identified in the above IAF Strategic Plan, Strategic Objective #1 commits IAF to establishing mechanisms for obtaining input from end-users about how well accredited certification is meeting their expectations, in order to influence IAF in ways to continually improve outcomes.

To support this Objective, Strategic Initiative 1 requires the establishment of an End-User Group integrated into the structure of IAF. The IAF Executive has proposed that this requirement be met by the formation of an End-User Advisory Committee, which would be a permanent IAF Committee, similar to the IAF Technical Committee, the MLA Committee, the Development Support Committee and the Communications and Marketing Committee.

The draft Terms of Reference for the proposed End User Committee TOR were approved by a ballot of IAF members following circulation for a 60 day comment period. The finalization of these Terms of Reference will result in an amendment to IAF PL 5:2006 IAF Structure. A copy of the Terms of Reference are attached to this report for information. (Refer to Annex 1)

## **3. Industry Days**

In March this year IAF held its first ever Industry Day which was convened to enable users of third party certification to discuss with IAF their problems and their successes. This unprecedented forum debated whether improvements were necessary to make the accredited certification system more relevant to the changing needs and expectations of industry. Hosted by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) and IAF, the forum heard presentations from a range of sectors covering aerospace, automotive, chemicals, information technology, medical devices, telecommunications and petroleum. It was generally acknowledged by most participants that user expectations had changed since the advent of certification some twenty years ago, and rather than just assessing the compliance of the client's management system there was now a recognition of the need to consider its effectiveness, as "output does matter".

To coincide with meetings of the IAF Executive, the Joint IAF-ILAC Committee for Closer Cooperation and the MLA Management Committee, the China National Accreditation Service (CNAS) and IAF hosted the second Industry Day in early June in Beijing. Opened by the Minister of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ), this forum was strongly supported by both the Government of the Peoples' Republic of China, industry representatives and the Certification Bodies. Attendees received presentations on the effectiveness and expectations of quality and environmental management systems in the electrical appliance, automotive and computer manufacturing industries.

Planning is currently underway for a third Industry Day which is expected to be held in Madrid in March next year. Further to the approval of the new End-user Advisory Committee referred to above, it is intended that participants at the Industry Day forums will be invited to become members with the aim of helping IAF to better develop future accreditation criteria to meet the expected outcomes of industry and customers.

#### **4. Cross Frontier Accreditation (CFA)**

Each year the IAF MLA (Multilateral Recognition Arrangement) MC (Management Committee) monitors the implementation of CFA. This is carried out by means of a survey which is sent to all MLA signatories for completion by the beginning of May. In the last survey new items covered included each MLA Signatory being asked to provide a list of all Foreign Critical Locations of the CBs accredited by the Accreditation Body (AB). As a result of the information received in this survey, the IAF General Assembly approved two resolutions requiring that all Foreign Critical Locations (FCLs) included in accreditation scopes for ISO 9001 QMS, ISO 14001 EMS and product certification on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2006 will be required to be initially assessed on-site at least once by an IAF MLA AB Member no later than the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2007.

#### **5. IAF Guidance vs Application Criteria**

The IAF General Assembly at the November 2006 meeting in Cancun, Mexico, considered the development of IAF Guidance Documents which are one of IAF's main deliverables. In some instances ABs have been criticised that they are not consistent, but members felt that some requirements of the ISO/IEC standards are not always sufficiently clear to ensure this. The General Assembly confirmed by resolution, that the application of IAF Guidance was mandatory for all IAF ABs and this was aimed at improving consistency. The Executive has been considering the use of the term "Application Criteria" to avoid any potential confusion. It is understood that ILAC has had a similar mechanism available for a number of years.

#### **6. New IAF Members and MLA Signatories**

Since the IAF 19<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in 2005, membership applications had been received from the Hellenic Accreditation System of Greece (ESYD), the Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC), the Portuguese Institute for Accreditation (IPAC) and the Dubai Accreditation Centre (DAC). As a result of successful ballots for all applicants, these new AB Members were welcomed at the Signing Ceremony held during the 2006 IAF-ILAC Annual Meetings in Cancun, Mexico. Since then an application for IAF membership from the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK) has been approved. IAF now has 51 AB Member Bodies.

An important milestone was also reached during these Annual Meetings with the IAF MLA Group approving the admission of the Inter-American Accreditation Co-operation (IAAC) to the IAF MLA for QMS. The Chairman of the MLA Committee, Xiao Jianhua, on behalf of all MLA signatories, congratulated IAAC on this very significant achievement.

At the same ceremony Standards Malaysia was accepted for membership in the IAF MLA for EMS via its PAC MLA membership, and ESYD (Greece), IPAC (Portugal) and SA (Slovenia) were accepted for membership in the IAF MLAs for QMS, EMS and Product, resulting from their EA MLA membership.

## **7. ISO/IEC 17021**

In September 2006, ISO/IEC 17021 was published and ISO/IEC Guides 62 and 66 were withdrawn. The IAF Technical Committee (TC) had been considering the need for a transition to the new standard for some time and it had been agreed in principle that this would be period of two years. This proposal was endorsed by the IAF General Assembly in Cancun. The IAF TC has decided not to initiate the preparation of new guidance on the main body of ISO/IEC 17021. Instead it has been agreed to encourage implementation of the new standard and to decide if there is a need for guidance after having first gained experience with its use. It has been proposed that the annexes to IAF GD 2 and GD 6 (the IAF Guidance Documents for the application of ISO Guides 62 and 66) would be reviewed and republished as stand-alone IAF Application Requirements, as necessary. A Transition Plan offering informative guidance on the implementation of ISO/IEC 17021 was prepared and published as IAF GD 8:2007. The Plan endorses a 2 year transition period which concludes on 15 September 2008.

## **8. Next Meetings**

IAF will next meet in Sydney, Australia, for its 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting, between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 2007. This meeting will be held in association with ILAC and will be hosted by JAS-ANZ on behalf of IAF and NATA on behalf of ILAC..

For further information about IAF please go to the IAF web site at <<http://www.iaf.nu>>, or contact the Secretariat at email <[secretary@iaf.nu](mailto:secretary@iaf.nu)>.

Prepared by the IAF Secretary – September 2007

## Annex 1

### Proposed amendments to IAF PL 5:2005 Structure of IAF

#### 2.9 The End-User Advisory Committee

This Committee aims to represent the voice of end users of accredited certification. End users are those agents in the market who need to be confident in the information given by accredited certification documents for their decisions. Examples of end users are :

- Customers of certified companies
- Purchasers of certified products
- Scheme owners representing purchasing companies
- Authorities
- Users of personnel with accredited certification.

##### 2.9.1 Membership

Each Industry and User Association Member of IAF representing end-users of accredited certification is entitled to nominate one representative to be a member of the End-User Advisory Committee. The Chairman of the End-User Advisory Committee is appointed by the Board.

##### 2.9.2 Quorum

The presence, in person or by proxy, at a meeting of a majority of the Member representatives of the End-User Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum for a meeting.

##### 2.9.3 Voting

The End-User Advisory Committee shall seek to make all decisions by consensus. If a vote is necessary the votes of the majority of Member Representatives present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall determine the decision. Note that each member is entitled to one vote

#### 2.9.4 Terms of reference

1. To represent the interests of end-users of accredited certification.
2. To achieve consensus amongst members of the End-User Advisory Committee as to the needs and expectations of end-users of accredited certification and to communicate this to all IAF members.
3. To assist IAF in determining how well the needs and expectations of end-users of accredited certification are being fulfilled.
4. To become informed and knowledgeable of IAF's organization, structure, operations, and activities; and in particular to be informed of the Executive Committee, the MLA Committee and the Technical Committee activities in aiming to ensure accredited certification is fulfilling the expectations of end-users.
5. To provide advice and assistance to IAF for the development and implementation of strategies to ensure accredited certification is fulfilling end-user expectations, and to continually improve the value and effectiveness of accredited certification.

#### 2.9.5 Subordinate groups of the End-User Advisory Committee

The End-User Advisory Committee may establish subordinate committees as deemed necessary, subject to endorsement by the IAF members at a General Assembly. It shall then oversee their work.