PROGRESS REPORT OF the OIC-StatCom TCE on ACCREDITATION and CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICAL PROFESSIONALS in OIC MEMBER STATES

(OStat Program)

1. Introduction

The Central Informatics Organisation (CIO) in Bahrain had proposed to initiate a program on the "Accreditation of Statistical Professionals" specific to the OIC Member Countries in the First Session of the OIC-StatCom that was held in 2011, by considering the fact that it would be one of the useful tools for statistical capacity development through improving the statistical competencies of the statisticians working in the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and other relevant government institutions. Based on this proposal, the OIC-StatCom Working Group on the Development of a Certification and Accreditation Programme for Statistical Professionals was established in accordance with the Resolutions of the First Session of the OIC-StatCom in 2011. This working group has developed conceptual and methodological background of this proposed accreditation program in its first year of action. Within this context, the entire procedures specific to the accreditation/certification process including development of the accreditation criteria and the measurement of these accreditation/certification criteria have been drafted and approved by the Second Session of the OIC-StatCom in 2012.

Furthermore, delegates agreed on the establishment of a task team under the auspices of SESRIC to undertake necessary activities for the execution of the Basic Level Accreditation at the initial stage to identify the challenges to be faced and way out for ensuring effective implementation of the full Programme.

2. Objective of the Programme

The main objective of the OStat Program is to certify the expertise and knowledge under an official context for the professional conduct of statistical work of Official Statistics Professionals. The program further aims to recognize those who have achieved an acceptable level of professional competence in the understanding

and application of statistical methods and are bound by code of ethics, principles and good practices of Official Statistics.

The primary target audience of the Program includes currently employed statistical professionals in the NSOs and relevant government institutions in the OIC Member Countries. Through the accreditation/certification process, the target audience will be able to demonstrate their qualifications, knowledge and skills in the areas of professional statistics and be recognized formally and internationally for it. It is assumed that it will be an external source of motivation to improve the competencies of the statisticians working for official statistics. It will also assure the users of official statistics that the minimum competency required to work in national statistical office is maintained to the highest standards in the OIC countries.

3. Activities Realised during the period of 2012-2013

In the Second Session of the OIC-StatCom delegates had recommended to submit this Certification and Accreditation Programme to the forthcoming Twenty-eight Session of the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) in order to create awareness about the program at the higher level bodies of OIC. Delegates of the Lead Country Bahrain participated in the Session and at the end of the deliberations requesting IDB and SESRIC to support the proposed accreditation and certification program was included in the Resolution number eighty-nine as follows:

"Welcomes the initiative of the Certification and Accreditation Programme for Professionals of Official Statistics developed by the OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom), and requested the IDB and SESRIC to contribute technically and financially to the effective implementation of this important programme for the benefit of the National Statistical Institutions of the Member Countries

Following the 28th Session of the COMCEC, the Task Force Meeting on the Implementation of Accreditation Program for Statistical Professionals in OIC Member States (OStat) Programme was held on 12 October 2012 at the SESRIC Headquarters in Ankara, Turkey. The major aim of the meeting was to gather the basic stakeholders including the CIO of Bahrain, IDB and SESRIC to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the relevant organisations and other vital issues to be considered during the operationalization of proposed programme.

During the meeting the following issues discussed in order to identify future actions to be followed;

a) How ISO 17024, an international standard for organisations wishing international recognition for the certification of the competence of individuals

and describing general requirements for bodies operating certification of persons, can be applied to the Programme,

b) What will be the possible funding opportunities to allocate required budget for operationalization of proposed programme by considering the outcomes of the OIC-StatCom WG3 and to the extent of the Second Session of the OIC-StatCom decisions. At the end of the deliberations detail cost items of the full-implementation phase were identified (See Annex 1).

c) What will be the necessary actions to be taken to make OSTAT acceptable both at OIC and international level.

In addition to these issues, based on the recommendations have arisen during the Second Session of the OIC-StatCom certification levels of the proposed programme revised as for two levels; Basic and Advanced levels. Furthermore training component for each level of accreditation was included in order to increase participation in the programme.

4. Activities to be Implemented

According to the requirements of such a certification programme two committees will be established to undertake the necessary activities for the implementation:

- Program General Secretariat (PGS)
- The Examination Committee. (EC)

The Program General Secretariat (PGS) will serve as the administrative body and coordinator of the program and, the Examination Committee (EC) will evaluate the applications and prepare the necessary exams.

As it was stated above the proposed Certification Program includes two different levels of certification according to the knowledge and experience of the currently employed statistical professionals in the NSOs and relevant government institutions in the following categories; Basic and Advanced Levels, for which application requirements vary in each level. Within this context all procedural details necessary for the implementation of the OStat Program will be prepared according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17024, which describes general requirements for bodies operating certification of persons (see Annex 2). This international standard serves as the basis for the recognition of the certification bodies for persons and the certification schemes under which persons are certified in order to facilitate their acceptance at the national, regional and international levels.

The processes under the OStat Program will include;

(a) application and registration,
(b) official curriculum and examination preparation,
(c) organization of short-term trainings for those who are willing to participate
(d) examination testing, and
(e) post examination and results.

The procedural details of these processes will be prepared to make sure the certification activities are undertaken impartially as it is stated in the ISO/IEC 17024. Hence the Start-up Phase will cover preparation of all necessary documentation required for the establishment of the Program General Secretariat and Examination Committees along the lines of the ISO 17024 requirements as well as statistical professional standards or code of practices corresponding to Basic and Advanced Level Certifications. This phase is also secure compilation of subject matter curriculum and study resources and will provide immediate access to them for the relative candidates.

It is envisaged that, the full implementation of the OStat Program approved by the OIC-StatCom, will take five-year, including start-up and pilot phases for each level of certification. The OStat program will be initially implemented only for Basic Level Certification which will also be the Pilot Phase, to review the procedural details according to the requirements of actual implementation. Advanced Level implementation will follow the Basic Level with a gap of a year, in order to be able to review procedural details accordingly. In other words, full implementation of the proposed programme will take five-year including the start-up phase.

Following the recommendations of the Third Session of OIC-StatCom the Start-Up Phase of the establishment of the OStat Programme will be initiated which includes necessary documentation to be accredited the Program General Secretariat from the International Accreditation Forum, preparation necessary documentations for application and registration etc.

4.1. Implementation of the Short-term Trainings

According to the Final Activity Report of the respective OIC-StatCom Working Group, the OStat Program will evaluate the applicants based on their portfolios and, following the evaluation of the submitted portfolios written exams will be executed in line with the requirements of the each level of Certification. In addition to above indicated evaluation phases, short-term trainings will be organized for each level of certification in order to enhance the applicability of the Program at OIC level. These trainings will be made available to the applicants beforehand for those who are interested in attending to learn exact needs of the each level of certification. It is assumed that, these short term trainings to be organised in line with the requirements

of the each level of the certification will help to increase awareness about as well as participation in the Program.

4.2. Cost Requirements

The estimated cost items for the implementation of the OStat Programme included;

a) the expenditures of start-up phase: e.g. preparation of related procedures related to establishment of the Program General Secretariat and Examination Committee in line with the ISO/IEC 17024, which is the international standard describing general requirements for bodies operating certification of persons,

b) other current expenditures of the implementation like honorarium of Examination Committee members, establishment of examination centers as well as implementation of short-term trainings in line with the requirements of each accreditation level for those applicants who are willing to participate in.

The details of the cost items of the OStat Program for full-implementation are presented in the Annex 1.

Annex 1: Estimated Cost for full- implementation of the Ostat Program, including start-up phase

Annex 2: IAF Guidance on the Application of ISO/IEC 17024:2003; Conformity Assesment-General requirements for Bodies operating Certification of Persons: IAF GD 24:2009

Annex 1.

A. Estimated Cost for the Full Implementation of the OStat Programme Including the Start-Up Phase

In identification of the cost of the full-implementation   the following assumptions were made:

1. The full implementation of the Programme will take five years including start-up and pilot implementation phases.

2. Total estimated annual current expenditures of the Program General Secretariat (PGS) excludes building rent and investments on office facilities like computer, fax machine, etc., as the Program General Secretariat will run under the auspices of SESRIC.

3. 1000 applications will be evaluated by the Examination Committe (EC) in the first five years of the Ostat Programme implementation.

4. Income from application fees has been ignored in this initial five-year implementation (full-implementation) phase.

5. In the start-up phase, all necessary documentation required for the establishment of the Programe General Secretariat and Examination Committee will be prepared under the guidance of a consultation company along the lines of the ISO/IEC 17024 requirements. Therefore, cost of the start-up phase covers the purchase of service only. The cost of purchase of service is based on the investigations of the CIO of Bahrain.

6. The Start-Up Phase also covers preparation of the statistical professional standards corresponding to Basic and Advanced Level Certification including preparation of subject matter curriculum and study resources.

7. Rate of honorarium for the members of the Examination Committee (EC) will be 100 USD/applicant. Depending on the level and subject of the certification, more than one EC may be established.

8. Examination Committee members will be gathered once a year to evaluate exam results or perform online interviewing with the candidates for each level of certification. After their evaluations, the list of competent applicants to be certified will be submitted for the approval of the OIC-StatCom.

9. Examination Execution Cost item covers preparation of exam questions under the guidance of the Examination Committee and no cost has been foreseen for the execution of the exams through the independent institutions in the respective countries.

10. DSA to be paid to lecturers will be 500 USD/day, including travel days and each trainings will take 5 days and be delivered by maximum three trainers.

11. Short-term trainings will be organised in line with the requirements of each certification level and the PGS will provide support only for 10 participants who are interested in participating in the respective training course for each trainings.

12. Total cost for the full implementation of OStat Programme which will take five years and including the short-term training component has been estimated as 2 729 850 USD.

B. Annual current expenditure items

Conditions considered in determining the cost of each years

    a) Number of applications to be evaluated

    b) Number of exams and short-term trainings to be executed

Cost items	Number	Unit
1. Honorarium for 7 Examination Committe Members	Number of applications to be evaluated	100 USD/applicant
2. Transportation and travel expenses	Number of meeting in a year	Travel expenses of committe members
3. Examination execution (preparation of the exam questions and execution of written exams via internet through authorised institutions in the countries)	Number of exam in a year	40 000 USD/per exam
4. Staff dedicated to run the related tasks of certification process (2 experts and 1 secretary)	3 staffs	3 000 USD/staff/month
5. Communication expenses (tel, fax and internet)	12 months	1 000 USD/month
6. Implementation of short-term trainings	Number of trainings in a year	Per training
6.1. Preparation of the training curricula and organisation of the face to face training	*3 trainers per training*	*Cost of 3 trainees per training*
6.2. Travel expenses of supported participants	*10 participants per training*	*Travel cost of the participants per training (per-diem and air ticket)*
6.2. Preparation of the training materials	*25 trainees per training*	*75 USD/participant*
		TOTAL1
See above Notes 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11		

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

IAF Guidance Document

IAF Guidance
on the Application of ISO/IEC 17024:2003

Conformity assessment - General Requirements for Bodies operating Certification of Persons

Issue 2, Version 2

(IAF GD 24:2009)

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.

CONTENTS

Introduction to IAF Guidance

ISO/IEC 17024:2003 is an International Standard which sets out criteria for bodies operating certification of persons. If such bodies are to be accredited in a worldwide harmonised manner as complying with ISO/IEC 17024, guidance to the Standard is necessary. This document provides guidance to certification bodies seeking accreditation and to enable accreditation bodies to harmonise their application of the standards against which they are bound to assess certification bodies. This is an important step towards mutual recognition of accreditation.

This document does not include the text of ISO/IEC 17024. Users must purchase that document from the appropriate Standards organization. For convenience, the headings from ISO/IEC 17024 are first printed in **bold**. Guidance, where it is offered, is identified with the letter "G" and the first two digits of the Standard clause, (except for clause 1 and 3), with the third digit indicating consecutive numbers for each clause respectively. Under clause 4.2 there are 5 sub-headings to make the reading more convenient. The requirements against which conformity is determined are found in ISO/IEC 17024. This IAF Guidance does not create further requirements.

This Guidance will form the basis of mutual recognition arrangements between accreditation bodies, and is considered necessary for the consistent application of ISO/IEC 17024. Members of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA), and applicants for membership in that Arrangement, will assess each others' implementation of ISO/IEC 17024, and all of this Guidance is expected to be adopted by accreditation bodies as part of their general rules of operation.

The term "shall" is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions which, reflecting the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024, are mandatory. The term "should" is used to indicate guidance which, although not mandatory, is provided by IAF as a recognised means of meeting the requirements. Certification bodies whose systems do not follow the IAF Guidance in any respect will only be eligible for accreditation if they can demonstrate to the accreditation body that their solutions meet the relevant clause of ISO/IEC 17024 in an equivalent way.

A certification body may seek guidance from the accreditation body on any matter, which may affect its accreditation. The accreditation body should respond with further guidance or a decision.

GUIDANCE ON THE APPLICATION OF
ISO/IEC 17024:2003

1   Scope

<u>IAF Guidance to clause 1</u> (G.1.1)

G.1.1   The scope of accreditation of a certification body will be expressed in terms of type of certification, e.g. welders, auditors, safety professionals, etc and, if applicable, levels within the scheme and categories of persons, and the applied competence standards or normative documents. Limitations may apply, e.g. restriction to certain physical locations of the certification body or restriction to certain sectors in which the specific services are to be offered.

2   Normative references

<u>IAF Guidance to clause 2</u>

No guidance provided.

3   Terms and definitions

<u>IAF Guidance to clause 3</u> (G.3.1)

G 3.1   The following definitions apply to the IAF Guidance in this document:

G 3.1.1   Accredited certificate**:** A certificate issued by a certification body in accordance with the conditions of its accreditation and bearing an accreditation mark or statement.

G 3.1**.**2   Fair/Fairness – Equal opportunity for success is provided to each and every candidate.

G 3.1**.**3   Valid/Validity – The assessment process/examination measures what it is intended to measure (the knowledge areas, skills, required physical or mental attributes required for competent performance).

G 3.1**.**4   Reliable/Reliability – The assessment process/examination measures consistently.

4   Requirements for certification bodies

4.1   Certification body

<u>IAF Guidance to clause 4.1</u> (G.4.1.1 to G.4.1.2)

G.4.1.1   If there is any exception to the application of policies and/or procedures, it should be justified and documented.

G.4.1.2   The certification body should be able to demonstrate to the accreditation body that it has evaluated applicable regulatory and statutory compliance and that action has been taken in cases of non-compliance with relevant regulations and statutory requirements.

4.2   Organizational structure

<u>IAF Guidance to clause 4.2</u> (G.4.2.1 to G.4.2.31)

<u>Organizational arrangements</u>

G.4.2.1   Accreditation shall only be granted to a body which is a legal entity as referenced in clause 4.2.1 d) of ISO/IEC 17024, and will be confined to declared scopes, activities and locations. If the certification activities are carried out by a legal entity which is part of a larger organization, the links with other parts of the larger organization shall be clearly defined and should demonstrate that no conflict of interest exists as defined in guidance G.4.2.6 to G.4.2.8. Relevant information on activities performed by the other parts of the larger organization shall be given by the certification body to the accreditation body and shall be maintained up-to-date.

G.4.2.2   Demonstration that a certification body is a legal entity, as required under clause 4.2.1 d) of ISO/IEC 17024 means that if an applicant certification body is not itself a legal entity but is part of a larger legal entity, accreditation shall only be granted to the entire legal entity. In such a situation, the structure of the entire legal entity may be subject to audit by the accreditation body in order to pursue specific audit trails and/or review records relating to the certification body. The part of the legal entity that forms the actual certification body may trade under a distinctive name which together with the name of the legal entity should also appear on the accreditation certificate.

G.4.2.3   For the purposes of clause 4.2.1 d) of ISO/IEC 17024, certification bodies which are part of government, or are government departments, will be deemed to be legal entities on the basis of their governmental status. Such bodies'status and structure shall be formally documented and the bodies shall comply with all the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024.

G.4.2.4   Clause 4.2.2 of ISO/IEC 17024 provides that the certification body should not allow commercial or other considerations to influence the confidentiality, objectivity or impartiality of the certification process. Conformity with this clause is particularly relevant when the financial resources to set up a certification body have been provided by a particular interest that predominates in the shareholding and/or the board of directors.

G 4.2.5   The requirement for financial resources referred to in clause 4.2.4 a) of ISO/IEC 17024 requires the certification body to demonstrate that it has a reasonable expectation of being able to continue to provide the accredited service in accordance with its contractual obligations. Certification bodies are responsible for providing the accreditation body with sufficient evidence to demonstrate viability, e.g. management reports or minutes, annual reports, financial audit reports, or financial plans. Accreditation bodies should not attempt any direct audit of the financial accounts of certification bodies.

G.4.2.6   A related body is one which is linked to the certification body by common ownership in whole or part and has common members of the board of directors, contractual arrangements, common names, common staff, informal understanding or other means such that the related body has a vested interest in any certification decision or has a potential ability to influence the process.

G.4.2.7   Although there is no specific restriction on the services or activities that a related body may provide, the certification body should analyze and document their relationship to determine the possibilities for any known conflicts of interest with provision of certification. The certification body should identify those bodies and their activities that could, if not subject to appropriate controls, affect confidentiality, objectivity or impartiality.

G.4.2.8   Certification bodies shall demonstrate how they manage their certification business and any other activities so as to eliminate actual conflict of interest and minimize any identified risk to impartiality. The demonstration shall cover all potential sources of conflict of interest, whether they arise from within the certification body or from the activities of related bodies. Accreditation bodies will expect certification bodies to open these processes for audit. This may include, to the extent practicable and justified, pursuit of audit trails, to review records of both the certification body and its related body for the activity under consideration. In considering the extent of such audit trails, account should be taken of the certification body's history of impartial certification. If evidence of failure to maintain impartiality is found, there may be a need to extend the audit trail back into related bodies to provide assurance that control over potential conflicts of interest has been re-established.

Structure

G.4.2.9   Clause 4.2.2 of ISO/IEC 17024, requires that the documented structure of the certification body has built into it provision for the participation of all the significantly concerned parties in the different sectors in which it operates, including the consideration of public interest. This should normally be through some kind of committee.

This structure shall be formally established at the highest level within the organization either in the documentation that establishes the certification body's legal status or by some other means that prevents it being changed in a manner that compromises the safeguarding of impartiality. Any change in this structure should take into account advice from the committee, or equivalent, referred to in clause 4.2.2 of ISO/IEC 17024.

G.4.2.10 Application of clause 4.2.2 of ISO/IEC 17024 requires judgement on whether all parties significantly concerned in the system are able to participate. What is essential is that all identifiable major interests should be given the opportunity to participate, and that a balance of interests, where no single interest predominates, is achieved. For practical reasons there may be a need to restrict the number of members.

G.4.2.11 On request of the committee or equivalent referred to in clause 4.2.2 of ISO/IEC 17024, the management responsible for the various functions described in clause 4.2.1 c) of ISO/IEC 17024 should provide to that committee or equivalent all the necessary information, including the reasons for all significant decisions, actions, and the selection of persons responsible for particular activities, in respect of certification, to enable the certification body to ensure proper and impartial certification. If the advice of this committee or equivalent is not respected in these matters by the management, the committee or equivalent shall take appropriate measures, which may include informing the accreditation body.

G.4.2.12 If the decision to issue, withhold or withdraw certification in accordance with clause 4.2.1.c) 3) of ISO/IEC 17024 is taken by a committee comprising, among others, representatives with a vested interest in the person subject for decision, the operational procedures of the certification body should ensure that these representatives declare a conflict of interest and do not participate in the certification decision.

G.4.2.13 Clause 4.2.1 b) of ISO/IEC 17024 requires the certification body to be responsible for certification decisions. Any appeal procedure (clause 4.2.6) should therefore be within the control of the certification body, but any appeal panel or committee shall be independent in their recommendations except as required by international or national law.

G.4.2.14   The committee or equivalent referred to in clause 4.2.2 of ISO/IEC 17024, may also be the scheme committee provided it has the required technical competence to also act as a scheme committee for one or more schemes as appropriate.

G.4.2.15   A common scheme committee for certification schemes could be established for certification schemes that are international or national or schemes that are used by more than one certification body in its country or region. The certification body should have procedures and resources to demonstrate that it is actively involved in the activities of any relevant common scheme committee in its country or region.

Impartiality/independence

G.4.2.16   Impartiality and independence of the certification body should be established at all levels including:

- structure of the organization;
- policies and procedures;
- evaluation;
- decisions and appeals on certification.

G.4.2.17   The certification body shall not engage in activities that could compromise its impartiality.

G.4.2.18   A certification body should not certify a person it employs unless no appropriate accredited third party exists in its own country or is available in practice to undertake the certification. Where such cases could arise, a certification body shall demonstrate to the accreditation body the procedures it has adopted in order to maintain independence and impartiality in such circumstances. These could include:

- maintaining the same standards of evaluation and confidentiality towards all candidates;
- the use of independent examiners;
- independent monitoring of the certification process.

G.4.2.19   The requirements of clause 4.2.5 and clause 5.1.2 of ISO/IEC 17024 mean that personnel should not be allowed to conduct an evaluation as part of the certification process if they have been involved in related training activities associated with the evaluation of the candidate in question, within the last two years.

G.4.2.20   The certification body shall require examiners to declare any information that may reveal a conflict of interest regarding the impartiality of the candidate's examination. The certification body has the responsibility to identify and evaluate such situations and to assign responsibilities and tasks so as to ensure that impartiality is not compromised.

G.4.2.21   The responsible management, staff and/or personnel mentioned in clause 4.2.7 of ISO/IEC 17024 need not be exclusively engaged by the certification body, but their other employment shall not be such as to compromise their impartiality.

G.4.2.22   The term "personnel" can include individual persons who work for the certification body on a contract basis, or other external resources. The certification body shall be in a position to manage, control and be responsible for the performance of all its resources and maintain comprehensive records controlling the suitability of all the staff it uses in particular areas, whether they are employees, employed on contract or provided by external bodies.

G.4.2.23   The certification body should be responsible for ensuring that neither related bodies, nor sub-contractors, nor external examiners operate in breach of the undertakings that they have given. It should also be responsible for implementing appropriate corrective action in the event that such a breach is identified.

Training

G.4.2.24   The certification body should require all evaluation subcontractors or external examiners to give assurances regarding the marketing and provision of any activities under clause 4.2.4 c) of ISO/IEC 17024 equivalent to those required by guidance G.4.2.25 and G.4.2.26.

G.4.2.25   Information regarding education and training may be provided in literature by the certification body if they are used as pre-requisites for being eligible for certification or part of an examination preparation booklet. All known education and training pre-requisites related to the certification scheme should be listed and publicly available. However, nothing should be said or indicated by a certification body that would suggest that certification would be simpler, easier or less expensive if any specified education/training services were used.

G.4.2.26   Where the certification body provides certification and education/training services, it shall ensure that no impression is given that the use of both services would bring any advantage to the applicant, so that the certification process remains, and is seen to remain, impartial.

G.4.2.27 The certification body is allowed to explain its findings and/or clarify the requirements of the normative documents but shall not give prescriptive advice or training as part of an evaluation. This does not preclude normal exchange of information with the applicant or candidate and other interested parties.

Appeals and complaints

G.4.2.28 The policies and procedures referred to in 4.2.6 of ISO/IEC 17024 should ensure that all appeals and complaints are dealt with in a constructive and timely manner. Where operation of such procedures has not resulted in the acceptable resolution of the matter, or where the proposed procedure is unacceptable to the complainant or other parties involved, the certification body's procedures shall provide for an appeals process. The appeals procedure should include provision for the following:

- the opportunity for the appellant to formally present its case;

- provision of an independent element or other means to ensure the impartiality of the appeals process;

- provision to the appellant of a written statement of the appeal findings including the reasons for the decisions reached;

- clear definition of the time limit for the appeal process.

The certification body shall ensure that all interested parties are made aware, as and when appropriate, of the existence of the appeals process and the procedures to be followed.

G.4.2.29 Personnel, including those acting in a managerial capacity, should not be allowed to decide on any appeal or complaint if they have been involved in the certification process for that applicant or candidate, or in training or education activities towards the applicant or candidate within the last two years, or had any previous involvement in any activities leading to the appeal or complaint in question.

G.4.2.30 Appeals and complaints represent a source of information as to possible nonconformity. On receipt of a complaint the certification body shall establish, and, where appropriate, take action on the cause of any nonconformity found.

G.4.2.31 The certification body should use such investigations to perform correction and/or corrective action, which should include measures for:

- minimizing the consequences of any nonconformity;

- restoring conformity with certification requirements as quickly as practicable;

- preventing recurrence of the nonconformity;

- assessing the effectiveness of the correction or corrective measures adopted.

4.3   Development and maintenance of a certification scheme

IAF Guidance to clause 4.3 (G.4.3.1 to G.4.3.6)

G.4.3.1   Successful completion of an approved training course means that if the certification body approves a training course as part of the certification scheme requirements, it should require the training provider to ensure that those who successfully complete the course will have met the learning objectives relevant to the knowledge and skills prescribed in the certification scheme.

G.4.3.2   Pre-requisites, eligibility and other requirements shall be documented and indicate that they are based on data and/or expert opinion related to the certification scheme to ensure that they are fair and equitable.

G.4.3.3   A systematic process should be utilized by the scheme committee to determine the competence of certified persons. Evidence should be provided that criteria are consistent with professionally accepted standards and practices and legal requirements. Where national or international standards for the development of valid and reliable examinations are available for competence assessment, they should be considered.

G.4.3.4   Validation is a process that collects objective evidence through mechanisms such as interviews with experts, surveys of the populations determined by the certification body and /or generally accepted normative documents which support the content of the scheme.

G.4.3.5   Policies and procedures are needed for periodic review and amendments to the scheme(s), implementing the changes, and for notification of stakeholders.

G.4.3.6   Records of periodic evaluation of the examinations should be retained to ensure equity, validity and reliability.

G.4.3.7   The CB should demonstrate with objective evidence how the scheme committee was able to confirm the following:

- The competence requirements established are consistent with (satisfied/meets) the stakeholders' needs consistent with declared scope(s) of certification.

- The scheme (which includes examination, examination process, recertification, etc) evaluates the candidate's competencies appropriate to the specific competence criteria for the scheme.

4.4   Management system

<u>IAF Guidance to clause 4.4</u>

No guidance provided.

4.5   Subcontracting

<u>IAF Guidance to clause 4.5</u> (G.4.5.1 to G.4.5.3)

G.4.5.1   A certification body may issue certificates on the basis of subcontracted work (e.g. administration, examination development or examination delivery) carried out by another body, provided that the arrangement with the subcontracted body requires it to comply with all relevant requirements of ISO/IEC 17024.

The documented agreement should contain, as a minimum, the following:

- a detailed description of the services and outcomes;

- the control measures required to deliver the service, and maintain impartiality, confidentiality and integrity;

- the internal monitoring requirements to be undertaken by the subcontractor;

- the assessment processes to be carried out by the certification body or other appropriate agencies;

- the names of any personnel authorized by the certification body to fulfil responsibilities specified in the documented agreement, e.g. examiners;

- the name(s) and signatures of the representatives approving the agreement.

Records should be available regarding assessment and monitoring activities that have been conducted to ensure that the subcontractor meets all relevant requirements.

G.4.5.2   Where joint assessment of a subcontractor is undertaken by two or more certification bodies, each certification body shall satisfy itself that the whole of the assessment has been satisfactorily undertaken.

G.4.5.3   In the event that examinations are subcontracted to a training provider, special care should be taken regarding separation of training and examination as part of the certification process (clause 4.2.5 ISO/IEC 17024).

4.6   Records

IAF Guidance to clause 4.6 (G.4.6.1 to G.4.6.2)

G.4.6.1 As a means to confirm the status of a certified person, the certification body should maintain the following minimum information and respond to enquiries relative to the status of certified persons without restriction or discrimination:

- effective date of certification and date of expiry;

- name and certification number of the certified person;

- scope of certification including the normative documents to which the person is certified.

G.4.6.2 Records should be:

- maintained in such a manner that ensures retrievability;

- stored in a manner that prevents damage and deterioration;

- uniquely identified.

4.7   Confidentiality

IAF Guidance to clause 4.7 (G.4.7.1 to G.4.7.2)

G.4.7.1   The requirement regarding confidentiality includes anyone who might gain access to information within the certification body. Subcontracted personnel shall also be required to maintain all such information confidential, particularly from fellow employees and from their other employers.

G.4.7.2   Policies and procedures and/or regulatory requirements for the maintenance and release of information shall be maintained.

4.8   Security

IAF Guidance to clause 4.8 (G.4.8.1 to G.4.8.3)

G.4.8.1   The certification body should determine measures necessary to ensure security throughout the certification system, including arrangements for the transport and handling of examination material.

G.4.8.2   Security measures may include:

- secure storage of the examination bank;

- protection of electronic data.

G.4.8.3   The certification body should exercise special care if it subcontracts examinations to training providers as it has inherent risk of compromising impartiality and/or security. Special care may include e.g. procedures for separation between examination materials and training materials.

5   Requirements for persons employed or contracted by a certification body

5.1   General

IAF Guidance to clause 5.1 (G.5.1.1 to G.5.1.3)

G.5.1.1   A certification body shall have personnel competent to:

- review applications;

- authorize and select examiners;

- prepare, administer, monitor, grade and evaluate examinations;

- assess subcontractors, e.g. examination centres;

- handle nonconformities, appeals and complaints;

- decide on certification;

- implement and maintain a management system.

G.5.1.2   The management of the certification body shall have the resources and procedures to determine whether its individuals are competent for the tasks they are required to perform within the scope of certification in which they are operating. The competence of individuals may be established by verified background experience, specific training or briefing. The certification body should be able to communicate effectively with all those whose services it uses.

G.5.1.3   The certification body should have a program to ensure that its personnel have the information to perform their assigned duties and responsibilities. A system should be established that identifies and documents the training needs of personnel and how those training needs are met.

5.2   Requirements for examiners

IAF Guidance to clause 5.2 (G.5.2.1 to 5.2.3)

G.5.2.1   The extent of fluency in written and spoken language required of the examiner may vary. The certification body should have a process to pre-determine the language competence for achieving the desired evaluation outcome.

G.5.2.2   The certification body should assess and monitor the conduct and performance of examiners. Such assessment and monitoring should include witnessing the activities of the examiners during all relevant parts of the certification process.

G.5.2.3   Personnel who monitor and support the conduct of examinations (proctors, monitors, invigilators), as distinct from the examiner, shall meet criteria as defined by the certification body.

6   Certification process

6.1   Application

IAF Guidance to clause 6.1 (G.6.1.1)

G.6.1.1   The detailed description of the certification process may include:

- competence requirements for certified persons;

- pre-qualification criteria where applicable;

- application requirements;

- type and nature of the examination(s) and evaluation process;

- conditions for granting, maintaining, renewing, expanding and reducing certification;

- conditions for suspending or withdrawing certification.

6.2   Evaluation

IAF Guidance to clause 6.2 (G.6.2.1 to 6.2.2)

G.6.2.1   Policies and procedures for determining reasonable accommodations (e.g. assistance with reading, extended length of time for examination, large print examination questions) shall be documented and available to all interested parties and meet any governmental requirements. The certification body should ensure that it is able to provide examination of individuals with special needs unless the applicant's disability would prohibit certification under the scheme for the certified person.

G.6.2.2   Reports regarding the performance of candidates should be sufficiently detailed to provide guidance to the candidate preparing for future examinations, taking into account G.4.2.27.

6.3   Decision on certification

IAF Guidance to clause 6.3 (G.6.3.1 to 6.3.7)

G.6.3.1   The information gathered during the certification process should be sufficient:

- for the certification body to be able to make an informed decision on certification;

- for traceability to be available in the event, for example, of an appeal or a complaint;

- to ensure continued conformity with certification requirements.

G.6.3.2   Any information on which a decision is based which comes from any source other than the evaluation process should be made known to the candidate along with information on the evaluation process. The candidate should be given the opportunity to comment on it.

G.6.3.3   The person(s), who decides on granting/withdrawing a certificate within the certification body, shall have a level of knowledge and experience sufficient to evaluate the information obtained from the certification process.

G.6.3.4   Certification shall not be granted until all requirements for certification are fulfilled and verified by the certification body. Completions and/or corrections and their resolution done during the evaluation should be documented by the certification body.

G.6.3.5   In cases where the certification body takes into account work previously performed by another body, it shall have all relevant reports and records to demonstrate conformity with the requirements established by the certification body and in ISO/IEC 17024.

G.6.3.6   For a certificate to be recognised as meeting IAF's requirements for conformity assessment, it shall be issued by a certification body in accordance with the scope and conditions of its accreditation, and unambiguously identify the accreditation body and the issuing certification body.

G.6.3.7   Where a certification body holds more than one accreditation covering the scope of the certification, the accredited certificate shall identify at least one of the accreditation bodies.

6.4   Surveillance

IAF Guidance to clause 6.4 (G.6.4.1 to 6.4.4)

G.6.4.1   Surveillance is the periodic monitoring, between the periods of certification, of a certified person's performance to ensure continued compliance with the certification scheme.

G.6.4.2   In accordance with the certification scheme, surveillance by the certification body may include but is not limited to:

- on site assessment;

- information from regulatory authorities;

- professional development with an examination component;

- complaints and information from interested parties;

- structured interviews;

- legal actions taken in regard to the certified person;

- confirmation of continuing satisfactory work and work experience record;

- examination;

- checks on physical capability.

G.6.4.3   Certification bodies should have procedures specifying the circumstances and conditions in which certificates will be withdrawn if competence is not confirmed during surveillance.

G.6.4.4   The methods and frequency established for surveillance should be determined by the scheme committee and shall be appropriate to the purpose of surveillance (see G.6.4.1).

6.5   Recertification

<u>IAF Guidance to clause 6.5</u> (G.6.5.1 to 6.5.3)

G.6.5.1   Re-certification is a process of confirming conformity with current certification requirements. The scheme committee of the certification body should establish the rationale for the re-certification period. The rationale may be based on the consideration of:

- the maturity of the industry and associated risks in which the scheme is delivered;

- changing body of knowledge;

- survey data;

- requirements of stakeholders;

- expert opinions;

- regulatory requirements.

G.6.5.2   In accordance with the certification scheme, re-certification by the certification body may include but is not limited to:

- on site assessment;

- professional development with an examination component;

- structured interviews;

- confirmation of continuing satisfactory work and work experience record;

- examination;

- checks on physical capability.

G.6.5.3   The methods and frequency established for re-certification should be determined by the scheme committee, taking into account any applicable normative criteria, and shall be appropriate to the purpose of re-certification (see G.6.5.1). Where initial examination of competence includes a practical element, the re-certification process should also include a practical examination administered by the certification body.

6.6   Use of certificates and logos/marks

IAF Guidance to clause 6.6 (G.6.6.1 to 6.6.5)

G.6.6.1   The certification body should avoid using the same mark to indicate different conformity assessment systems, and should avoid confusion between the meaning of its marks if there is more than one. This does not exclude the use of the same corporate logo in different marks for different systems of conformity.

G.6.6.2   The certification body should have documented procedures for the use of its mark, and for the procedures it is to follow in case of misuse, including false claims as to certification and false use of its marks.

G.6.6.3   If a certification body incorrectly claims accredited status for certificates issued before appropriate accreditation has been granted, the accreditation body shall require it subsequently to withdraw them.

G.6.6.4   A certification body should have procedures to ensure that its certified persons do not use its mark in a way that may be likely to confuse employers or other parties.

G.6.6.5   Where the certification body makes use of a mark, which it has been assigned by another body, e.g. the owner of the mark, its agreement with that body shall ensure conformity with the intent of all sections of this clause.

End of IAF Guidance on the Application of ISO/IEC 17024:2003

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>

Secretariat -

John Owen,

IAF Corporate Secretary,

Telephone +612 9481 7343

email <secretary1@iaf.nu>