

AC 5.0 Assessment Team Selection and Logistical Arrangements

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to explain the process for selecting the assessment team, which will undertake an accreditation assessment for GAC's clients the conformity assessment bodies (CABs). It is GAC's responsibility to ensure that each assessment team has the requisite expertise as whole to make a full assessment. The essential requirement is that the assessment team, as a group, has the professional experience to properly assess all major elements of the work of the CAB. The appointed team shall have sufficient understanding to make a reliable assessment of the competence of the conformity assessment body to operate within its scope of accreditation.

2. Scope: This procedure applies to all assessment activities undertaken by the GAC.

3. Responsibilities:

The Accreditation Services Manager (ASM) and/or Division Managers (DMs) are responsible for the selection and approval of personnel involved in the accreditation process (assessment personnel i.e., assessors/experts, file managers, members for accreditation decision committee), if needed the ASM/DMs can consult with assessors (e.g., a team leader) or FMs or other DMs for assistance when making selection of personnel to be involved in the accreditation process.

4. Procedure:

An appointed assessment team normally consists of a team leader and a suitable number of assessor(s)/expert(s) (expert including where applicable Islamic affairs expert e.g., for halal scheme) who are authorized for the relevant accreditation scheme and for the scope of accreditation.

After the selection & approval of the assessment team and ADC members, the file manager informs the CAB about their nominations as well as informs those personnel that are selected/approved and ensures their contractual obligation, in case of no objection by the CAB the assessment team and or ADC proceeds with the steps of the accreditation process as relevant to their assigned roles.

When accreditation decision process is carried out by the internal personnel of GAC such as by ASM, deputies, DMs or FMs (internal ADC), the tab-1 of the AC 4.2 in such cases is not required to be filled for appointment acceptance by the CAB, this is where GAC is fully aware of its personnel being full time employed.

In normal routine, the nomination of the approved assessment team and the independent accreditation decision committee (ADC) are recorded in AC 4.2 tab-1 whereas FM assignment can be found in AC 4.2 within the tab for FM notes. For new applications, the FM assignment can also be made in the resource review section.

FM assignment of the files might change over the period and from time to time, due to workload management or reshuffling of duties.

In some cases when specific circumstances are encountered e.g., joint assessment where assessment documents of the other AB are to be utilized thus far if required individual assessment documents such as AC 6.1 assessment plan and AC 5.1 team approval can also be used or AC 4.2 itself can be customized for such use, the team nominations indicated in the assessment plan AC 6.1 also reflects the team acceptance by the CAB, in case of any further objection (in line with Cl.5 of this procedure), the plan will be updated.

In selection of the personnel to be involved in the accreditation process, GAC ensures that they are:

- Adequately qualified/authorized for specific accreditation schemes and scopes for which GAC maintains a professional database. ADC members are also selected from this database since normally these are also assessors/experts, *however*, ensuring they have appropriate knowledge and understanding of the

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accreditation/assessment scope as well as are independent from the assessment conducted. It is not an explicit requirement that the ADC member has to be an authorized assessor/expert only to be part of ADC.

- Not in conflict with the conformity assessment body (this further ensured when a contract is signed by the personnel engaged in an assignment e.g., ADM 17.1 Assessor/expert contract for specific services or QM 12.1 confidentiality & impartiality declaration.

Important notes:

1. For testing/medical labs, when assessment team does not possess metrological skills, GAC can appoints a metrologist or specialist among this team to ensure relevant examination of metrological aspects and uncertainty calculations,
2. When testing/medical lab is performing in-house calibrations, suitable technical assessors/experts (depending on calibration fields) can be integrated in the assessment team to make relevant appraisal of calibration activities to make sure that the delivered results are as reliable as other accredited external providers,
3. If the applicant testing/medical/calibration lab or, in some cases inspection body, is using calibration services provided by non-accredited calibration lab or an NMI without registered CMCs in BIPM KCBD (See Technical Note TN 2.0), GAC shall be informed before the assessment (e.g., data provided by the CABs in AC 4.2 tab-2). This situation shall be evaluated first by studying the related evidences during the document review step, and then a competent technical assessor(s) is (are) appointed to confirm the compliance during the assessment.

The number of members for each assessment team depends on the scope and complexity of the work to be assessed. For example, large laboratories, perhaps focused on a narrow range of activities, only need a team of the team leader and a single technical assessor/expert. On the other hand, a small facility, with a wide range of activities, may require a larger team – also refer to AC 11.0 procedure on assessment technique that provides more details.

Testing/Medical/Calibration Laboratories:

For assessment of laboratories, the team selected will have relevant scientific qualifications and practical experience in similar activities to those of the applicant. In the case of team for calibration assessments, appropriate consideration is given to the assessor's knowledge of measurement uncertainty and the laboratory's least uncertainties of measurement.

Inspection Bodies: For inspection bodies, key inspection activities include:

- Policy formulation;
- Process and/or procedure development;
- Process of initial selection of inspectors and, as appropriate;
- Contract review;
- Planning conformity assessments;
- Review and approval of conformity assessments.

Product Certification Bodies & Halal Certification Bodies:

For assessment of these certification bodies, the assessment team to include sound technical expertise across the major product sectors being included in the scope of accreditation.

In these certification field, key activities include:

- Policy formulation and approval;
- Process and/or procedure development and approval;
- Initial/ assessment of competence, and approval of technical personnel and subcontractors;
- Control of the monitoring process of competence of personnel and subcontractors and its outcomes;

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- Contract review including technical review of applications and determining the technical requirements for certification activity in new technical areas or areas of limited sporadic activity;
- Decision on certification including technical review of evaluation tasks.

In determining the need to conduct, and for the duration of assessment activities, the assessment team should also consider the:

- Effectiveness of planning conformity assessments;
- Availability of records, documents and information that can be reviewed electronically, by web conference or otherwise during the visit;
- Availability of appropriate staff for interview by teleconference, videoconference, or otherwise during the visit;
- Liaison with market operators and schemes to avoid duplication of work and ensure efficient utilization of competence available.
- Outcome of the previous assessment, previous assessment experience and level of confidence.

Management system certification bodies:

For assessment of management system certification bodies, less specific technical depth is required than for laboratories. It is usual to have a team comprising a team leader together with a technical expert/assessor (being an individual with experience in the relevant industry or activity) but not uncommon for the Team leader to work alone, especially for surveillance assessments.

In the management system certification field, key activities include:

- Policy formulation;
- Process and/or procedure development;
- Initial approval of auditing personnel, or control of their training;
- On-going monitoring of auditing personnel;
- Application review;
- Assignment of auditing personnel;
- Control of surveillance or recertification audits;
- Final report reviews or certification decision or approval.

GAC provides assessment team an access to CAB documents including previous assessment deliverables (via email, link, workspace etc.), the Team leader may also provide the team with appropriate written or verbal briefing on any other issues to be addressed during the assessment.

Prior to the assessment, the team may meet, even electronically, to discuss arrangements for the assessment and to ensure that any special demonstrations or practical work to be observed, will be available.

5. Assessor/ADC member rejection:

Applicants or accredited CABs have certain rights with respect to team selection and may object to a particular individual (for Assessment Team and/or Accreditation Decision Committee members). However, GAC cannot permit an unlimited number of such objections. A maximum of two objections is permitted but in forming the team, the File Manager must be cognizant of potential conflicts of interest and other likely sources of dissent over team selection.

5.1. Reasons of rejection:

The following categories of reasons may lead to the rejection of the appointed assessor(s) or ADC member(s):

a. Conflict of interest between the applicant/accredited CAB and the assessor/ADC member:

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- The assessor/ADC member was an employee of the CAB during the last two years,
- The assessor/ADC member had delivered a specific consultancy service (internal audit included) for the CAB or one of its direct competitors, during the last two years (Inter-company and non-tailored trainings are not considered as consultancy),
- The employer of the assessor/expert /ADC member and the CAB are in **direct** and **current** commercial competition (e.g., participation in the same tenders),
- A dispute between the two parties treated in justice.

b. Behavior of the assessor:

This reason is acceptable if the assessor was appointed before for the CAB and GAC has received a formal dissatisfaction from the CAB further to one of the previous assessments conducted by the same assessor, concerning his/her behavior.

Reasoning for rejection of assessor/expert or ADC nominations as given in 5.1a & b are also acceptable to GAC when such conflict of interest arisen with client of the CAB.

→ Examples of unacceptable reasons:

- The employer of the assessor is in commercial competition with the CAB for activities on which the assessor is not involved,
- Reserves expressed by the CAB about the technical skills (over/under qualified), the gender, the religion or the nationality.

5.2. Treatment of the rejection:

After formally receiving the rejection from the CAB, the File Manager informs the ASM and they evaluate the credibility of the rejection request on the basis of the reasons given above.

GAC shall reply promptly to the CAB, on the reception of the rejection request.

If GAC accepts the rejection request, it shall appoint a new assessor/expert/ADC member and ask again the approval of the CAB. The CAB has the right to reject once again the new appointment and the same procedure is still applicable. If the CAB doesn't agree the refusal of its rejection request, the request will be handled as complaint, according to the procedure QM 4.0 "Complaints".

6. GAC requirements for assessor logistic aspects:

With the aim to guarantee suitable conditions and to timely carry out the on-site assessment by its assigned team, GAC sets the following requirements to be ensured by the applicant or the accredited facility when preparing the logistics of visit. GAC can make the logistical arrangements or partly, this shall incur charging the CAB 10% extra towards the amount paid for such logistic arrangement made by GAC. However, GAC reserves the right to refuse to do so as GAC may not be in position at all times in making such arrangements.

Hosting:

- a. Hotel booking should be at 4* class including breakfast and dinner, (half board). Lunch meal should be provided to the assessment team during the assessment.
- b. The assessment team should be gathered at the same hotel if they are assessing the same location,
- c. The hotel check-in should be one day before the assessment. The check-out should be the day after,

Travel and trips:

- a. Air tickets should be flexible and refundable,

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Flights spending more than 6 hours should be booked in Business class, (in some cases e.g., when the cost is significantly proportional to the cost of assessment itself GAC can decide to accept CAB's request for economy or premium economy or one of the flights being in business class).

- b. Provide the necessary help for Visa modalities, if required,
- c. The CAB should ensure the team transportation (departure and arrival) from the airport to the hotel, and to CAB premises on assessment days (pick/drop),
- d. During assessment, if some witnessing activities need external trips; the CAB must provide suitable transportation for the assessment team.
- e. Any costs incurred by the GAC assessment team (e.g., visa costs) shall be invoiced to the CAB for reimbursement.

7. Associated forms and documents

- ADM 17.1 Assessor/expert contract for specific services
- AC 4.2 Nonconformity Sheet and Assessment report
- AC 11.0 Assessment technique
- AC 10.0 Accreditation Decision
- QM 9.0 Selection, qualification, monitoring and training of personnel
- QM 12.1 Confidentiality Declaration
- IAF MD-20 Generic Competence for AB Assessors