Joint IAF-ISO Communiqué

Migration to ISO 17021:2006 and end of accreditation to ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996 and ISO/IEC Guide 66:1999

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF), in consultation with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), have set the date for implementation of ISO/IEC 17021 as 15 September 2008.

ISO/IEC 17021 contains principles and requirements for competence and impartiality of the audit and certification of management systems of all types, including quality management systems (QMS) and environmental management systems (EMS) and for the bodies providing these activities.

ISO/IEC 17021:2006 supersedes and replaces ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996 and ISO/IEC Guide 66:1996. It is also written to apply to management systems of all types whereas ISO/IEC Guide 62 was for QMS Certification Bodies (CBs) only, and ISO/IEC Guide 66 was for EMS CBs only. Examples of new types of management systems for which ISO/IEC 17021 will also apply include ISO/IEC 27001 for information security management systems and ISO 22000 for food safety systems. ISO/IEC 17021 also incorporates most relevant and applicable IAF guidance. ISO/IEC 17021 also provides the option for a CB to have a quality management system based on ISO 9001:2000 and to have conformance verified by accreditation bodies.

In setting this transition period of 2 years from the publication date of ISO/IEC 17021, IAF and ISO have taken into account the following matters:

- Transition to ISO/IEC 17021 may require translations, changes to procedures, contracts, committees and other arrangements which will take time; and
- The identification by Certification Bodies of differences and the preparation of a transition plan to determine both the changes to their own QMS and the time frame required to execute them.

The IAF Transition Plan for ISO/IEC 17021 Accreditation from ISO/IEC Guide 62 and ISO/OIEC Guide 66, is currently being circulated for the approval of IAF Members.