

**Contents**

1	General .....	2
2	Preliminary meeting.....	2
3	Assessment and accreditation.....	3
	3.1 General.....	3
	3.2 Formal checking of the application for accreditation and the submitted documents.....	3
	3.3 Pre-assessment.....	4
	3.4 Assessment of the documents.....	4
	3.5 Assessment of the certification body.....	4
	3.6 Assessment reports .....	6
	3.7 Accreditation recommendation.....	7
	3.8 Granting accreditation and issuing the certificate .....	7
	3.9 Costs of assessment .....	7
4	Surveillance.....	8
	4.1 General.....	8
	4.2 Procedure for the surveillance assessment.....	8
5	Reassessment / Reaccreditation .....	9
	5.1 General.....	9
	5.2 Procedure for the reaccreditation.....	10

Copyright © DAP 2006

<i>Prepared:</i>  <i>11.12.06 signed A. Hönnerscheid</i> Date / Signature:	<i>Reviewed:</i>  <i>12.12.06 signed A. Valbuena</i> Date / Signature:	<i>Approved:</i>  <i>14.12.06 signed Prof. K. Ziegler</i> Date / Signature:
---	---	--

## 1 General

This rule applies to the accreditation of certification bodies operating product certification systems according to DIN EN 45011 (ISO/IEC Guide 65), certification bodies providing audit and certification of management systems according to DIN EN ISO/IEC 17021 and certification bodies operating certification of persons according to DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024 within the framework of the activities of DAP Deutsches Akkreditierungssystem Prüfwesen GmbH (German Accreditation System for Testing Ltd – hereinafter referred to as DAP)). It applies to all kinds certification bodies falling within DAP's field of competence.

The rule comprises provisions for the assessment including the check of documents, accreditation, surveillance, extension of accreditation and reaccreditation following a reassessment.

It is the aim of the assessment of certification bodies to establish their competence to properly conduct unambiguously described certification procedures in accordance with the certification areas for which accreditation has been applied for. By carrying out regular surveillance activities it is checked whether the accredited body continues to fulfill the accreditation requirements.

Certification bodies may be accredited by DAP if they

- have submitted an application
- have concluded a contract with DAP on conducting an accreditation procedure,
- fulfill the criteria for the work of certification bodies according to DIN EN 45011 / DIN EN ISO/IEC 17021 / DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024, international guidelines of EA (European co-operation for Accreditation), of IAF (International Accreditation Forum) and DAP Rules and
- fulfill the technical criteria set up by the Sector Committee Certification Issues and Inspection Bodies (SK-ZE / IS).

**This rule is to inform applicants and accredited bodies on the DAP assessment and accreditation process.**

## 2 Preliminary meeting

At the request of the applicant, a preliminary meeting is conducted between the DAP assessor and the applicant to inform the applicant on the sequence of operations of an accreditation procedure and for settling any evident problems, which could influence the process of accreditation.

This preliminary meeting focuses on:

- settling the scope of the desired accreditation (scope of accreditation)
- information on the content, sequence and costs of accreditation
- obligations of the client after the accreditation has been granted.

Following the preliminary meeting, the certification body may submit an application for accreditation. The costs for the preliminary meeting, except for travelling to be paid in any case, are levied by the DAP Office to the inquirer and are charged against the application fee on receipt of the application for accreditation.

### **3 Assessment and accreditation**

#### **3.1 General**

The process of assessment comprises the following main steps:

- formal check of the application for accreditation and checking of the submitted documents as to correctness and completeness; assignment of the case manager and lead assessor, selection and assignment of assessors
- pre-assessment by an assigned assessor, if necessary
- assessment of documents submitted by the applicant (necessary documents for the respective type of certification body)
- on-site assessment, handing over the reports of non-conformities to the head of the certification body, formulating corrective actions by the certification body to close out the nonconformities
- performing one or more witness audit(s)
- preparing assessment reports
- accreditation recommendation by the sector committee ZE/IS or the Committee for Accreditation (AfA) as a rule after fulfillment of the corrective actions agreed upon
- preparing surveillance action and if necessary conditions fixed in time by the assessors, the sector committee or AfA
- granting accreditation by the DAP Managing Director and issuing the certificate
- invoicing the customer and publishing the accreditation.

The lead assessor chooses assessors and technical experts suitable for the respective case from the *List of Appointed Assessors* of the respective sector committees. Subsequently, the case manager informs the customer of the assessors, their fields of activity and the date for the assessment. The applicant has the right to reject the assessors. In such a case, another assessor is to be proposed to the certification body.

#### **3.2 Formal checking of the application for accreditation and the submitted documents**

The DAP Office checks the application of the certification body for accreditation as to the fulfillment of formal prerequisites for accreditation.

Applications for an accreditation outside Germany are only accepted or dealt with if they are in compliance with the rules of the community of the European or worldwide accreditation associations (EA, ILAC). DAP recommends all foreign applicants to apply for the accreditation at the respective national accreditation body.

Once the requirements are fulfilled, further action for accreditation is taken at the DAP Office. This includes, in particular:

- decision on the case manager and lead assessor
- issuing a case number and invoicing the application fee
- concluding the contract with the applicant.

### **3.3 Pre-assessment**

At the request of the certification body, a pre-assessment may be conducted at the applicant to assess the suitability for accreditation. All necessary documents should be available and considered for the pre-assessment.

The pre-assessment includes the following main aspects:

- the appraisal of the prerequisites as regards personnel and premises for accreditation
- appraisal of the management system as to its suitability
- checking of the documentation
- coordination on the scope of accreditation
- exchange of information and clarification of open questions of the accreditation process.

In coordination with the certification body, the pre-assessment is conducted by the assigned lead assessor, assessor or by the case manager in certain cases.

### **3.4 Assessment of the documents**

The lead assessor checks the underlying required documents (NU-ZE-00 / NU-ZM-00 / NU-ZP-00) to be submitted for the document review.

Already before the assessment the certification body is to be informed on serious non-conformities as a result of the document review. In case of initial accreditations, the date for the on-site assessment will only be fixed if the document review has resulted in no serious non-conformities to oppose an accreditation. The lead assessor has to confirm to the DAP Office that the quality documentation is suitable.

### **3.5 Assessment of the certification body**

The assessment team consists of the lead assessor and one assessor at least. The time for the assessment is oriented on the scope of accreditation applied for, the number of personnel working in the assessed area and the number of assigned assessors and is 12 working hours on-site at least. One-day assessments can only be performed in well-founded exceptional cases.

The lead assessor has to communicate the applicant duly on the course of the assessment using an on-site assessment plan.

The on-site assessment consists of the following steps:

- introductory discussion
- on-site assessment of the certification body, inclusive witness audit(s)
- final discussion.

The basis for the work of the assessors is provided by the requirements of the respective standards (DIN EN 45011 / DIN EN ISO/IEC 17021 / DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024).

The assessors use documents for conducting the assessment, such as checklists and forms, which have been released by the DAP Office.

During the assessment of the certification body, the processes, activities and responsibilities described in the documents are compared with their implementation in practice.

### 3.5.1 Introductory meeting

The introductory meeting should focus on:

- introducing the participants to each other
- confirming the objectives, the application scope and the accreditation criteria (underlying standard and additional technical and legislative requirements)
- operational sequence of the on-site assessment
- confirming the confidentiality
- informing on the reporting method including the classification of non-conformities
- determining the time schedule or the assessment plan
- informing on the conditions leading to the interruption of the assessment
- the news of the accreditation body.

The introductory discussion should be attended by:

- the head of the certification body
- the quality manager and the responsible employees of the certification body as well as
- the assessors.

The technical interviews follow the introductory meeting.

### 3.5.2 Assessment of the organization, the management and the certification procedures

In particular the assessors shall assess the:

- suitability of the management system
- cooperation with customers of the certification body
- competence of the staff members and the ability of the head of the certification body to conduct or manage the certification procedures properly
- suitability of the premises
- control of documents and records
- contents and structure of granted certificates
- compliance with additional requirements, e.g. EA requirements, juridical or governmental requirements (if necessary), technical notes of DAP, specific sector committee or decisions of the committee for accreditation (AfA).
- the regulation and execution of subcontracting
- the results of the performed witness audit(s)

In cases of extensive accreditation procedures, it is permissible to assess a representative selection of the applied and performed certification systems. The extent of the assessment shall be determined in a way that the assessors are able to give a reliable statement on the competence of the certification body.

The certification body has to provide inside to documents and records in order to enable the assessors to judge the above-mentioned articles.

### 3.5.3 Witness audit

According to the scope applied for, witness audits are carried out in a case-specific extent. During the witness audits the activities of the certification body are checked on-site at the customer's of the certification body.

The customers of the certification body are to be bound by contract to facilitate a witness audit by an assessor assigned by DAP.

### 3.5.4 Final discussion

Following the internal discussion in the assessor team, the final meeting with the customer is conducted. The final meeting comprises:

- the information on the overall impression (recommendation of the assessment team on the granting of accreditation after the corrective action has been implemented or, if applicable restriction of the scope applied for)
- the Information of the stated non-conformities by each assessor
- the specification of suitable corrective actions so that the customer can close out the non-conformities; confirmation by the management of the certification body and the assessors (where applicable, suitable corrective actions can be made known later (max. one week)
- Determination of a deadline for the corrective action to be implemented (in case of initial accreditations 5 months at most, otherwise 2 months after the assessment). If an accreditation had already been granted, serious non-conformities have to be closed out immediately.
- clarification of open questions and planning of the accreditation process to continue.

Within the agreed time schedule, the certification body shall hand over the documentation on conducting the corrective actions to the assessors who found the non-conformities.

The corrective actions agreed upon do not exclude conditions to be specified later.

## **3.6 Assessment reports**

Each assessor shall submit a report on the assessed scope within three weeks after the assessment. The reports of the assessors shall be passed on to the lead assessor together with other documents (filled-in check-lists, forms, possibly reports on the recognition procedure).

Two weeks after the receipt of the reports of the other assessors at the latest, the lead assessor shall submit his/her report, the reports of the assessors and all other documents needed to the case manager of the DAP head office who forwards them to the responsible sector committee/s or AfA.

After receipt at the DAP Office, a copy of the assessment reports is immediately sent to the certification body which has the right to comment on the assessment reports.

On request of the certification body, a summarizing final report will be prepared.

### **3.7 Accreditation recommendation**

The assessors shall include and justify in their reports a recommendation on the accreditation, reduction or possibly refusal suggesting conditions and surveillance action (where necessary time-phased).

The sector committee ZE/IS or in exceptional cases the AfA evaluates the reports and other required documents and issues its recommendation on accreditation to the DAP Managing Director.

As a rule, recommendations are compiled between the committee meetings, initiated by the executive member. At least two members of the relevant sector committee(s) have to submit a written statement.

The selection of the members is based upon their technical competence in the accreditation case to be recommended assuring their independence, impartiality and integrity towards the certification body to be reviewed.

From the last day of the assessment till submitting the documentation of the accreditation case to the sector committee or AfA, a period of 6 months should not be exceeded. Otherwise the status assessed is not up-to-date anymore requiring a follow-up-visit.

### **3.8 Granting accreditation and issuing the certificate**

The DAP Managing Director grants the accreditation on the basis of the recommendation received from the sector committee ZE/IS or the AfA.

As a rule, the accreditation is valid for a period of five years.

The accreditation certificate is signed by the DAP Managing Director. The certificate is usually sent to the customer by normal mail.

Upon sending the accreditation certificate at the latest, the clients have to be informed about issued conditions, the focus of the next surveillance activities and the estimated next on-site assessment.

On request, the suitable national and/or international electronic accreditation symbols and current information on its use are sent to the customer.

The DAP arranges for the publication of the granted accreditation in the Register of "Accredited Bodies" of the German Accreditation Council.

### **3.9 Costs of assessment**

The costs of the assessment are to be borne by the certification body. They are invoiced by the DAP Office and are payable in addition to the accreditation fees.

When preparing the assessment the costs are calculated by the case manager on the basis of the valid fee regulations and are communicated to the certification body in the supplement of the contract, together with the assessment date and the names of the assessors. The supplement of the contract signed by the certification body represents the basis for assigning the assessors.

Approximately one month before the on-site assessment, the certification body is charged 60% of the assessment cost. The final invoice is posted two weeks at the latest after sending the certificate to the certification body.

## **4 Surveillance**

### **4.1 General**

The surveillance of certification bodies comprises checking periodically that the requirements and capabilities to issue certificates in the scope for which DAP has recognized their competence in accordance with DIN EN 45011 / DIN EN ISO/IEC 17021 or DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024, are further on fulfilled. Surveillance therefore is an activity to proof the quality of the work performed by the accredited certification bodies. Surveillance is performed at annual intervals and can also comprise witness audits. The first surveillance assessment is performed 12 month after initial accreditation has granted at the latest.

Further surveillance activities beside on-site assessments may be performed as there are:

- obtaining additional information and statements,
- requesting documents, in particular records on appeals, complaints, disputes and records on actions taken,
- checking the rules on marks and use of marks
- checking changes of the management documentation,
- witness-audits
- checking the implementation of issued conditions.

The assessments for surveillance are scheduled by the case manager on the basis of the DAP rules and the recommendations of the sector committees ZE/IS for the entire accreditation cycle.

There is the possibility for unannounced surveillance visits.

Within the assessment for surveillance, on request of certification body the accreditation may be extended by new certification standards.

During the five-year validity of the accreditation by means of on-site assessments, the entire scope of accreditation shall be checked completely.

### **4.2 Procedure for the surveillance assessment**

The surveillance is an independent stage of the procedure of a high priority. Its sequence is similar to that of the initial accreditation with is check of documents, on-site assessment, check of the corrective action as well as preparing and checking reports.

The on-site assessment is to be focused on the following:

- closing out and implementing corrective action and / or conditions determined or issued after establishing the non-conformities in the previous assessment
- comprehensive appraisal of the effectiveness of the management system with regard to the organizational structure and certification activities
- check of the continuous information to DAP by the accredited body, once the status or the mode of operations with an impact on accreditation has changed
- internal audits and management reviews as well as initiated and conducted corrective and preventive actions
- implementation of provisions of EA and IAF

- friendliness towards customers, handling complaints and appeals, efficiency of the management system e.g. in extreme situations (peak workload, holiday time etc.)
- checking the rules on marks and use of marks
- witness-audits

During the on-site assessment in the final meeting, the certification body is informed on the results of the surveillance; the non-conformities established are handed over in writing.

The certification body shall suggest corrective action to the assessor for closing out the non-conformities. The certification body shall have closed out the non-conformities (providing evidence) within two months following the on-site assessment, at the latest. Major non-conformities have to be closed out immediately. If the nonconformities have not been closed out, the accreditation may be restricted, suspended or withdrawn.

The assessor shall make a statement on the course and results of the assessment for surveillance referring to all issues checked. In his/her report, he/she shall make and justify a recommendation on the accreditation, reduction or refusal) possibly suggesting conditions fixed in time. Witness audits are reported as well.

All reports shall be prepared and submitted according to the procedure described in chapter 3.6 . The case manager shall be immediately informed about delay of completion of the corrective actions to initiate appropriate measures.

The technical recommendations on maintaining the accreditation following surveillance and extension are issued by the sector committee ZE/IS and are analogous to the procedure described in 3.7. Only in case of new accreditation areas as well as special and problematic cases, decision is to be made whether the case is also to be submitted to the AfA.

If the implementation of the corrective actions is verified, the information on maintaining the accreditation is given to the certification body together with the date of the next estimated surveillance assessment.

The cost of the surveillance activities shall be borne by the certification body; it is invoiced by the DAP Office.

## **5 Reassessment / Reaccreditation**

### **5.1 General**

The reaccreditation requires a reassessment. In contrast to the assessment for surveillance, the scope of the reassessment corresponds more or less with the scope of an initial accreditation and has the task to check the adherence to all accreditation criteria by the accredited body and to appraise the effectiveness of the management system. In case of a reassessment, as a rule, other assessors are to be assigned as compared to the previous accreditation procedure, whereas the lead assessor may be the same as before.

The time limit between two reassessments may not exceed 5 years.

The procedure of reaccreditation is based on section 3 whereas all available facts and documents of the certification body are used and checked if they are up-to-date.

**5.2 Procedure for the reaccreditation**

The certification body files an application for reaccreditation with the DAP Office. The reassessment should take place in time before the expiry of the accreditation to have a close connection to the previous accreditation. Eight months before the accreditation expires, the DAP Office informs the certification body on the possibility of a reaccreditation.

In principle, it is possible to have an extension or reduction of the scope of accreditation during a reaccreditation.

The responsible sector committee ZE/IS, analogously to the procedure described in 3.7 issues the technical recommendation for the reaccreditation. The Managing Director grants the reaccreditation, which is valid for another five years.

The cost of reaccreditation shall be borne by the certification body; it is invoiced by the DAP Office.