

Current Issues at DAP

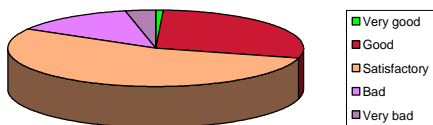
**DAP'S CUSTOMER INTERVIEWS:
PRICE-PERFORMANCE RATIO
COST REDUCTION FOR ACCREDITA-
TIONS / REACCREDITATIONS BY 5 %**

In the 1st issue of our DAP News 2003 we presented a summary of customer interviews and promised to go more into details in further issues.

A question of interest for DAP and all our costumers of course is the appraisal of the price-performance ratio and therefore the costs for the accreditation and the expected added value

The average mark of the price-performance ratio is 2.91, the worst in contrast to the average marks of 1.9 in all categories. This of course is no surprise as it is a question of the costs for the accreditation – the average mark for the competence and quality of the other categories is well below 2.0.

DAP Analysis of Costumer Satisfaction -
Evaluation of the Price-Performance Ratio



With regard to this evaluation I would like to add that it is not only us to influence the cost for the accreditation. An accreditation enjoying a national and international recognition as well as an added value has to comply with the requirements of the German Accreditation Council (DAR) and the Multilateral Agreement of the European cooperation for Accreditation (EA). That way, for the accreditation and reaccreditation, for instance, the "four-eye principle" is to be complied with, that is to say that one lead assessor has to check the requirements of the quality management system and at least one technical assessor the technical requirements. One has to make sure that the whole scope of the laboratory to be accredited is to be covered and checked by competent technical assessors.

Selecting the technical assessors one often has to take into consideration that they additionally have to cope with the requirements of the mandatory area.

To minimize the number of assigned technical assessors and therefore the costs for the accreditation, we try to select the persons out of our pool of about 50 lead assessors, 200 technical assessors and 50 technical experts who cover a scope without overlapping as wide as possible and who live as close as possible to the laboratories to be accredited in order to save travel expenses. The selection is done with the help of our database of assessors where all assessors are listed with their technical know-how and experience. Our employee Mr Käding has maintained this database. Our assessors are annually informed in training courses on the newest development in accreditation in Germany and worldwide. All these activities cost money and at long last have to be paid by the accreditation costs.

Independently of the factors mentioned above, we as DAP try to reduce costs, subject to a strict cost reduction demand, working on non-profit making principles. Travel expenses e.g. in Germany are charged with the "Railway Card" and second class. Possibilities to travel by car and flights are only used if they are more favourable not existing a transport link by railway or economizing overnight costs. The person who e.g. cares for these matters at DAP Office is Ms Carlsburg.

Despite of the rate of price increases which also had to be accepted by DAP in the last 3 years, we were able to reduce prices by the help of internal restructuring measures and intensive cost monitoring before and after the conversion to EURO:

Since 2000, depending on the number of staff members, the grading of application fees has been restructured for the accreditation and reaccreditation. Especially for small laboratories with less than 6 employees, 2 new grades were established resulting in a cost reduction of as far as 20 %.

In 2003 we introduced an aggregated rebate in case of reaccreditation for laboratories, inspection and certification bodies accredited by DAP. The result is the reduction of the application fee with the first reaccreditation by 25 % and by 50 % with the following reaccreditations.

The abolition of the summary report by the lead assessor results in a reduction of 210 € for all accredited laboratories.

TOPICS

- DAP'S CUSTOMER INTERVIEWS: PRICE-PERFORMANCE RATIO
- LIABILITY IN NON-DESTRUCTIVE TESTING
- COMAR 2 - INTERNATIONAL DATABASE FOR REFERENCE MATERIALS
- PLANNING A BAM INTER-LABORATORY COMPARISON

To reduce more costs, in the accreditation period DAP recommends using the last surveillance visit directly for the reaccreditation.

That way, (depending on the number of assessors) at least 2,500 € can be saved for a complete surveillance visit with a reduction of the accreditation period by about half a year. After the first reaccreditation, the number of surveillance visits can noticeably be reduced, i.e. the periods between two surveillance visits can be extended from 12 or 18 months to as far as 30 months. The laboratory for that has to give evidence of an impeccable fulfilment of the requirements in terms of technical expertise and quality management. The results are considered good ones if for instance the number of non-conformities of the last three assessments is low not having a negative effect on the quality of the test results nor on the efficiency of the quality management system. In addition, results of passed interlaboratory comparisons will also have positive effects. During our last re-evaluation, this chance was given to all our laboratories – the prerequisites for this real opportunity have to be guaranteed by the laboratories themselves.

In concluding agreements DAP tries to avoid double accreditations as e.g. in the environmental area resulting in a reduction of costs by the recognition of our accreditation in case of the Pressure Equipment Directive or Drinking Water Ordinance by the mandatory area. Bodies to be accredited which conduct laboratory and inspection activities will also get a cost reduction if both areas are checked simultaneously. There is another cost reduction for laboratories belonging to holding company or to a company structure with a joint quality management. Assessment and surveillance visits could be organized under the terms of the multi-site accreditation. In this case, the accreditation and reaccreditation fees can be reduced in accordance with a defined key – in proportion to the number and size of the sites – to more than 50 % of the individual figures. In addition, the number of surveillance visits reduces, as all sites have to undergo only one visit within the period of 5 years.

Last but not least, at DAP we have tried to optimize the internal procedures in the case management and in the bookkeeping getting rid of any bureaucratic ballast. For about half year, together with an external software company a new integrated electronic data based programme to link both areas has been installed. Although the introduction of the system will only be finished by the end of this year we decided, also due to the results of the survey, to pass on to our esteemed costumers the expected average **5 % cost reduction for the accreditation and reaccreditation beginning with 1st October this year.**

In the long run, we also intend to integrate you as our costumers in our data based programme offering the possibility to get direct information at any time on the status quo of your accreditation.

As one can see from the above-mentioned examples, DAP has tried to reduce the costs of the accreditation in different field in order to improve the price-performance ratio without any negative effect on the quality of the accreditation. Certainly, there is more room for improvement to find out together with you at your favour – we would be grateful for your suggestions – please direct them to

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COMAR 2 – International Database for Certified Reference Materials

The new version COMAR 2 of the international database for certified reference materials has been available since 17th March 2003.

The principal advantages for users of COMAR 2 are:

- Topicality by permanent updates
- Extended simplified search functions
- Additional information on reference materials such as certificates and reports
- Extended information on manufacturers
- Free access

Planning a BAM Interlaboratory Comparison for the analysis of PentaBDE and OctaBDE Derivatives

BAM offers a free international interlaboratory comparison for the analysis of Pentabromdiphenylether (PentaBDE) and Octabromdiphenylether (OctaBDE) derivatives of more than 0,1 %. GC/MS may serve as standard test methods. The participants should assist the validation of the proposed reference method.

Please direct your registration to:

meike.bergmann@bam.de

Application deadline: 31st September 2003

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