



MAURITAS G8

Guidance for MAURITAS assessors and
technical experts, for certification body
accreditation

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Foreword

The MAURITIUS ACCREDITATION SERVICE (MAURITAS) is a governmental body established in 1998 to provide a national, unified service for the accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) such as calibration/testing laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies. Organizations that comply with the MAURITAS requirements are granted accreditation by MAURITAS and are entitled to use the MAURITAS Accreditation symbol.

About MAURITAS publications

MAURITAS publications are categorized as follows:

- R series Publications containing general policy and requirements related to MAURITAS accreditation.
- G series Publications providing guidance on MAURITAS requirements.
- A series Publications related to assessment procedures.
- Directories Classified listing of accredited organizations.

Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS)
4th Floor, Crescent House
Corner Deschartes and Foucault Streets
Port Louis
Mauritius
Tel: +230 208 1690
Fax: +230 210 6101
Email : mauritas@govmu.org
Website :www.mauritas.org

Guidance for MAURITAS assessors and technical experts for certification body accreditation

1. Purpose

1.1 This document gives a general guidance for the performance of assessments of certification bodies. In addition this document gives some other information of interest for MAURITAS assessors.

2. Scope and Responsibilities

2.1 It is the responsibility of certification body assessors/technical experts to follow this document for preparing and performing assessments effectively.

3. References

The following documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of the MAURITAS accreditation system. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. For undated MAURITAS references, the latest edition of the document referred to, applies. MAURITAS maintains a register, of the current valid MAURITAS accreditation documents.

- 3.1 ISO/IEC 17021, Management System Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- 3.2 ISO/IEC 17021-1, Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems -- Part 1: Requirements
- 3.3 17021-3, Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems -- Part 3: Competence requirements for auditing and certification of quality management systems
- 3.4 ISO/IEC 17065, Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
- 3.5 ISO/IEC 17024, Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons
- 3.6 ISO/IEC 27006, Information technology — Security techniques — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of information security management systems
- 3.7 ISO/TS 22003, Food safety management systems -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems
- 3.8 MAURITAS G3, MAURITAS assessments – A Guide for Certification Bodies
- 3.9 MAURITAS G7, MAURITAS fees – A guide for certification bodies.
- 3.10 MAURITAS R1, Regulations to be met by certification bodies, inspection bodies and calibration and testing laboratories.
- 3.11 MAURITAS R2, Regulations to be met by applicant and accredited CABs.
- 3.12 MAURITAS R4, Conditions for the use of MAURITAS accreditation symbol.

- 3.13 IAF MD 1, Certification of Multiple Sites Based on Sampling
- 3.14 IAF MD 2, Transfer of Accredited Certification of management systems
- 3.15 IAF MD 5, Duration of QMS and EMS Audits
- 3.16 IAF MD 7, Harmonisation of Sanctions
- 3.17 IAF MD 10, Assessment of Certification Body Management of Competence in Accordance with ISO/IEC 17021
- 3.18 IAF MD 12, Assessment of Certification Activities for Cross-Frontier Accreditation
- 3.19 IAF MD 13, Assessment of Certification Activities for Cross-Frontier Accreditation
- 3.20 IAF MD15, IAF Mandatory Document for the Collection of Data to Provide Indicators of Management System Certification Bodies' Performance
- 3.21 IAF MD16, Application of ISO/IEC 17011 for the Accreditation of Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) Certification Bodies
- 3.22 IAF MD 17, Witnessing Activities for the Accreditation of Management Systems Certification Bodies
- 3.23 IAF MD 19, IAF Mandatory Document for the Audit and Certification of a Management System operated by a Multi-Site Organization (where application of site sampling is not appropriate)
- 3.24 IAF MD 20, Generic Competence for AB Assessors: Application to ISO/IEC 17011

4. Definition

- 4.1 **Accreditation** is a third-party attestation related to a Certification Body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific audit and certification activities.
- 4.2 **Major Non-Conformities** are Non-Conformities where the credibility of the organisation's accreditation is seriously threatened or audits and certification activities are affected.
- 4.3 **Minor Non-Conformities** are Non-Conformities that are isolated and would not affect the results of the activities of the organisation.

5. IAF Documents

Applicant and accredited certification bodies should meet the requirements of the relevant standard in the applied field. IAF mandatory documents and guidelines specify how to meet the different requirements in the standard.

Certification bodies offering management systems certification should refer to the relevant IAF documents as specified below:

5.1 IAF MD 1: Certification of Multiple Sites Based on Sampling

Certification Bodies should refer to IAF MD 1 document if they make use of sampling in their audit as well as certification of multi-site organizations. However relevant standards may provide specific requirements for multiple sites or preclude the use of sampling (e.g. ISO/IEC 27006, ISO/TS 22003).

5.2 IAF MD 2: Transfer of Accredited Certification of management systems

This document provides normative criteria on the transfer of accredited management system certification between certification bodies.

5.3 IAF MD 5: Duration of QMS and EMS Audits

IAF MD5 is a mandatory document that provides guidance to certification bodies so that they are able to develop their own documented procedures for determining the amount of time required for the auditing of clients of differing sizes and complexity over a broad spectrum of activities. The purpose of this document is to have consistency of audit duration between certification bodies, as well as between similar clients of the same certification bodies.

5.4 IAF MD 7: Harmonisation of Sanctions

An applicant or an accredited certification body may be subject to suspension, withdrawal or reduction of scope according to MAURITAS procedures. The purpose of IAF MD 7 is to clarify the situations where sanctions will be applied to the certification bodies and the subsequent necessary communication which will be taken by the Accreditation Body.

Situations that lead to sanctions being applied to applicant or accredited certification bodies include, but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to resolve nonconformities in accordance with MAURITAS procedures;
- Negative outcome of a complaint investigation;
- Misuse/misrepresentation of an accreditation symbol;
- Non-payment of fees.

5.5 IAF MD 10: Assessment of Certification Body Management of Competence in Accordance with ISO/IEC 17021

The Certification Body should be able to demonstrate to MAURITAS that all personnel involved in performing certification functions have the required competence.

5.6 IAF MD 12: Assessment of Certification Activities for Cross-Frontier Accreditation

Certification Bodies that provide certification in countries outside the country in which their head office is located will have to meet the requirements of IAF MD 12 document.

5.7 IAF MD 13: Assessment of Certification Activities for Cross-Frontier Accreditation

This document provides specific knowledge requirements for Accreditation Body personnel to harmonize their application of Clause 6.2.1 of ISO/IEC 17011:2004 for the accreditation of bodies providing audit and certification of information security management systems (ISMS) to ISO/IEC 27001.

5.8 IAF MD15, IAF Mandatory Document for the Collection of Data to Provide Indicators of Management System Certification Bodies' Performance

This document provides the "indicators" which Accreditation Bodies shall require accredited Management System Certification Bodies to report to them on a periodic basis.

5.9 IAF MD16, Application of ISO/IEC 17011 for the Accreditation of Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) Certification Bodies

This document specifies normative criteria for Accreditation Bodies assessing and accrediting CABs which provide audit and certification of FSMS, in addition to the requirements contained with ISO/IEC 17011. It is also appropriate as a requirements document for the peer evaluation process for the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) among Accreditation Bodies.

5.10 IAF MD 17, Witnessing Activities for the Accreditation of Management Systems Certification Bodies

This document is mandatory for the consistent application of the relevant clauses of ISO/IEC 17011:2004. It applies to the accreditation of Management Systems Certification Bodies except for those provisions that conflict with what is established in applicable standards, other IAF documents, specifications and legislation. Sections 4 & 5 are specific to the accreditation of QMS and EMS Certification Bodies.

5.11 IAF MD 19, IAF Mandatory Document for the Audit and Certification of a Management System operated by a Multi-Site Organization (where application of site sampling is not appropriate)

This document is mandatory for Certification Bodies (CBs) of Management Systems for the consistent application of Clause(s) 8.2 and 9 of ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015, for all situations involving the audit and

certification of Management Systems operated by organizations with a network of sites where application of site sampling is not appropriate.

5.12 IAF MD 20, Generic Competence for AB Assessors: Application to ISO/IEC 17011

This document ensures the consistent and harmonized application of ISO/IEC 17011 for defining the generic competence for assessors.

6. Accreditation Process

Assessment should be performed in accordance with MAURITAS practice and in accordance with relevant international guidelines and requirement standards. The criteria in these international standards refer to assessor's conduct, report, organisation and performance of the assessment.

MAURITAS G3 provides an indication on how assessments of certification bodies are to be carried out by MAURITAS against the requirements that are applicable for each programme.

7. Working instructions

7.1 Instruction for lead assessor

For performing assessment of applicant and accredited certification bodies, the tasks for the lead assessor will consist of the following:

Prior to the assessment visit:

1. The lead assessor should review the relevant section of the organisation's documentation against **F4.10**. In case of an application:
 - If there are essential shortages which are vital for the applicant about the applicant's documentation for accreditation, a written feedback to the MAURITAS Staff should be given together with a note identifying the shortages, and which can be transmitted to the applicant.
 - If there are no essential shortages, the lead assessor should either conduct the pre-assessment or the initial assessment as mutually agreed by MAURITAS and the Certification Body.
 - Lead assessor is responsible that the other participants in the assessment team have clear instructions about what is expected to be done, including time limits. The instructions must not be in conflict with MAURITAS agreement with the current assessor/technical expert.
2. In case of applicant certification bodies, the lead assessor should review the relevant parts. The Lead assessor should compile a report taking into consideration the review of the technical assessor/expert. The Lead Assessor should then submit the document review report **F4.02**, within 3 months to the MAURITAS Staff for MAURITAS use only. Comments from the other members of the assessment team may be included in the report.
3. As a result of the document review, the lead assessor should make use of the report, **F4.02**, to prepare for the assessment exercise.
4. After consultation with the Lead Assessor, the MAURITAS staff should make a plan for the visit and necessary witnessing. MAURITAS Staff coordinates with the certification body and assessment team, in writing, regarding the assessment exercise. MAURITAS Staff sends a copy of the plan to the assessment team and the certification body.

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5. The lead assessor should give necessary guidance to its assessment team. (This may be done in an internal meeting within the assessment team before the opening meeting).

During the office assessment and witnessing:

6. The Lead assessor should assess against the requirements of the relevant accreditation criteria, **F4.08**.

The Lead assessor should witness the certification body's audit at a particular company, evaluate certification body's competence, interview certification body's personnel etc together with the technical assessor/expert. The Lead Assessor should also ensure that the certification body covers all relevant aspects. Forms **F4.03** and **F4.08** should be used to carry out witnessing and office assessment respectively.

During witnessing, the Lead Assessor should abstain from being actively engaged in the process. So as not to interfere with the certification body's personnel, questions can, to a limited extent, be asked in order to clarify things.

If the witnessing takes place at companies where there is a requirement for the use of personnel protection equipment, the assessment team should call attention to that, if protection equipment is not distributed. In such cases, if protection equipment is not provided, the assessment team should not perform the witnessing.

7. The lead assessor should carry out the opening meeting, the assessment, the witnessing, the closing meeting and reporting of non-conformities as described in this document.
8. The lead assessor should liaise and guide the other members in the assessment team.

The Lead assessor should witness the certification body performing relevant audits and record same on **F4.03** as mentioned above. Lead Assessors should, together with the technical assessor/expert, give feedback to auditors who have been witnessed when the witnessing is finished.

Unsatisfactory performance should be reported as non-conformities, **F4.05**.

The Lead assessor should verify the relevant implementation of corrective actions for non-conformities raised during the previous MAURITAS visit, **F4.05**

9. The lead assessor should evaluate the work done by the other technical assessors/experts.

After the assessment visit:

10. The lead assessor should evaluate the reports, **F4.03** and **F4.07**, from the other technical assessors/experts for requirements they covered during the assessment visit. If they are satisfactory, the lead assessor merges and sends a final report, **F4.07**, to the Head of Certification Body and Quality section within **3 weeks** from assessment date.

11. If necessary, the lead assessor should agree upon a time for verification of corrective action with the certification body and the other assessors.

Others:

The lead assessor should only assign tasks to the assessment team members for which they have been qualified to perform.

7.2 **Instruction for technical assessor/technical expert**

7.2.1 **Instruction for technical assessor/technical expert concerning ISO/IEC 17065 (product certification)**

Technical assessor/technical expert's tasks will be as follows:

Prior to the assessment visit (may be verified during the visit):

1. The technical assessor/expert should review the technical procedures, standards and CVs of key personnel in his field.
2. The technical assessor/expert should evaluate whether competence/competence requirements and technical contents of the procedures are satisfactory.
3. The technical assessor/expert should evaluate whether the product standards/the normative documents which certified products are sufficient.

During the assessment visit at the applicant:

4. The technical assessor/expert should evaluate the implementation of the technical procedures and evaluate registrations/documentation of performed certifications and surveillance/renewal of certifications.
5. The technical assessor/expert should assist the lead assessor with technical expertise during the visit at the certification body and if relevant during the witnessing of an audit at the licensee/manufacturer.
6. The technical assessor/expert should witness whether certification, testing and/or audit are performed in accordance with their written procedures.

After the assessment visit:

7. Within 2 weeks or otherwise agreed, the technical assessor/expert should prepare a report from the assessment visit taking into account the above mentioned points.
8. Within 2 weeks unless otherwise agreed, the technical assessor/expert should prepare a report from witnessing of an audit at the licensee.

Others:

The assessor/expert has an obligation to notify the lead assessor and/or MAURITAS Staff if he/she goes beyond the frames which have been agreed with regard to tasks and economy. If the body has its own testing activities, the assessment should be performed in accordance with relevant parts in the guidelines for assessment of laboratories.

7.2.2 **Instruction for technical assessor/technical expert concerning ISO/IEC 17024 (personnel certification)**

Technical assessors/technical experts' tasks will be as follows:

Prior to the assessment visit (may be verified during the visit):

1. The technical assessor/expert should review the technical procedures, standards and CV's of key personnel in his field.
2. The technical assessor/expert should evaluate whether competence/competence requirements and technical contents of the procedures are satisfactory.

3. The technical assessor/expert should evaluate whether the competence standards which certified personnel are sufficient.

During the assessment visit:

4. The technical assessor/expert should evaluate the implementation of the technical procedures and evaluate registrations/documentation of performed certifications and surveillance/renewal of certifications.
5. The technical assessor/expert should assist the lead assessor with technical expertise during the visit at the certification body and during witnessing of examination of certification candidates.
6. The technical assessor/expert should witness whether examination is performed in accordance with their written procedures and if the examination is performed in a professional way.

After the assessment visit:

7. Within 2 weeks from assessment date, unless otherwise agreed, the technical assessor/expert should prepare a report from the assessment visit taking into account the above mentioned points and submit same to the Lead Assessor.
8. Within 2 weeks from date of witnessing, unless otherwise agreed, the technical assessor/expert should prepare a short report from the witnessing of the examination and submit same to the Lead Assessor.

Others:

The technical assessor/expert has an obligation to notify the lead assessor and/or MAURITAS Staff if he/she goes beyond the frames which have been agreed with regard to tasks and economy.

7.2.3 Instruction for technical assessor/technical expert concerning ISO/IEC 17021(certification of Quality Management Systems, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point systems, Food Security Management Systems, Environmental Management Systems and Information Security Management Systems).

For performing assessment of applicant and accredited certification bodies, the tasks for the technical assessor/expert will consist of the following:

Prior to the assessment visit:

The technical assessor/expert should review the relevant section of the organisation's documentation against **F4.11** and submit same to the Lead Assessor for generation of document review report **F4.02**.

During the office assessment and witnessing:

1. The technical assessor should assess against the requirements of the relevant accreditation criteria **F4.09**.
2. The technical assessor/expert should witness the certification body's audit at a particular company, evaluate certification body's competence within a technical area, interview certification body's personnel with technical competence etc. The technical assessor/expert should also ensure that the certification body covers all relevant aspects. Forms **F4.03** and **F4.09** should be used to carry out witnessing and office assessment respectively.
3. During witnessing, the technical assessor/expert should abstain from being actively engaged in the process. So as not to interfere with the certification body's personnel, questions can, to a limited extent, be asked in order to clarify things.

If the witnessing takes place at companies where there is a requirement for the use of personnel protection equipment, the assessment team should call attention to that, if protection equipment is not distributed. In such cases, if protection equipment is not provided, the assessment team should not perform the witnessing.

4. The technical assessor/expert should witness the certification body performing relevant audits and record same on **F4.03** as mentioned above. Technical Assessors/experts should, together with the Lead Assessor, give feedback to auditors who have been witnessed when the witnessing is finished.

Unsatisfactory performance should be reported as non-conformities, **F4.05**.

5. The technical assessor should verify the relevant implementation of corrective actions for non-conformities raised during the previous MAURITAS visit, **F4.05**

The technical assessor should liaise with the Lead Assessor on progress of the assessment.

6. The Technical assessor should review the relevant section of the organisation's documentation. Technical assessor/expert is used in assessment of systems certification, in connection with witnessing of a certification body's audit at a particular company, evaluation of a certification body's competence within a technical area, assistance by interviewing of a certification body's personnel with technical competence etc. For example, by witnessing of certification bodies for environmental management systems it will be relevant to include technical assessor /expert with environmental competence.
7. After a witnessing of a certification body's audit at a company, a report, **F4.03**, should be prepared by the technical assessor/expert and same should be submitted to the Lead Assessor within **2 weeks** after the witnessing, unless otherwise agreed.

8 Non-conformity report

Non-conformities are classified into two categories depending on the degree of seriousness: **Major** and **Minor** non-conformities.

Non-conformity report form, **F4.05**, should be used to describe the categories of the non-conformities. Follow up and verification are carried out on the agreed corrective actions during the next visit.

The non-conformity report should contain only factual observations related to lack of compliance within a specific clause in the applicant's own procedures or with respect to MAURITAS regulations or the requirement of the accreditation standard. The assessor should avoid making tendentious or emotive statements in the report or using it as opportunity to lecture the organisation on how to manage its affairs. It should be the responsibility of the lead assessor assisted by the assessment team to discuss and agree on all identified non-conformities prior to the closing meeting.

All relevant columns in the non-conformity report form should be filled in.

The time limit for the organisation to send its proposed corrective actions for all non-conformities is **1 month for initial assessment** and **2 weeks for surveillance visits, re-assessment or extension visits**. Assessor/technical expert must, within **1 week** from date of receipt of proposed corrective action, forward to MAURITAS a recommendation about closing of each non-conformity.

The time limit for the organisation to send its implemented corrective actions for all non-conformities is within **3 months for initial assessment** and **2 months for surveillance visits, re-assessment or extension visits**. The

Lead Assessor may convene the Technical technical assessors/experts where necessary for a meeting to review the technical non-conformities and the corrective actions and ask for feedback on the corrective actions.

The assessment team may close the non-conformities based on the following judgement:

- based on satisfactory descriptions of corrective actions and objective evidence;
- after a visit to verify the implementation of the corrective action;

All non-conformities have to be verified at the next visit.

The assessment team must, within **2 weeks** from date of receipt of corrective action, forward to MAURITAS a recommendation about closing of each non-conformity. Alternatively, they must give feedback in writing to MAURITAS about non-conformities where corrective actions are not acceptable.

In case of recommendation for suspension, MAURITAS procedures for suspension will be followed.

9 General attributes of assessors/experts

During an assessment visit or witnessing, different problems may show up. It should always remain the duty of the individual assessor/expert to weigh all the evidence available before making a judgment on a particular situation in an organisation. Assessors should always bear in mind the need for tact and objectivity. It is important to be aware that to be assessed may be a great mental stress for the auditees.

Assessors/experts should act in a prejudice manner and be able to accept new solutions on old problems as long as the existing requirements are satisfactory met.

10. Assessor Monitoring

At least once every three years, MAURITAS should carry out monitoring of each assessor, **F1.10**. This monitoring should be performed during a visit to the certification body and should be recorded. The appraisal should be performed by the Director of MAURITAS or any relevant senior staff designated by him.

Every three years, all active assessors will be requested formally by MAURITAS to confirm, or otherwise, that their originally identified competencies are still valid. This may be done through the use of an updated CV. Assessors will of course be expected to inform MAURITAS of any changes in the interim.

11. Invoicing

For local assessors and experts which are hired as private persons by MAURITAS, they should be remunerated at a rate fixed by MAURITAS.

In cases where no suitably qualified assessor can be identified in Mauritius, it may be appropriate to consider using an assessor who is already qualified and trained by another accreditation body.

In both cases, **MAURITAS G7** will be followed.

12. Impartiality

MAURITAS assessors/experts are obliged to inform MAURITAS if they or their employers have performed any service during the last three years for a client being assessed.

In the same way, they are obliged to inform MAURITAS of other situations which possibly can affect the evaluation of a current client.

13. Confidentiality

MAURITAS assessors and experts are obliged to be strictly observant of the rules of the Official's Secrets Acts and MAURITAS rules for confidentiality. Information about MAURITAS customers which is acquired through the task as MAURITAS assessor should not be revealed to a third party. Documentation received from MAURITAS or MAURITAS customer or documentation prepared by the assessor himself should be protected against access from a third party. Confidential documents must not be sent by telefax if not agreed by the affected party. Confidential documentation cannot be thrown, but must be destroyed or returned to those it may concern.

MAURITAS policy is also not to reveal information about applicant's identity outside MAURITAS.

14. Distribution of documents

MAURITAS management system includes all documents necessary for performance of accreditation activities. MAURITAS is keeping their assessors and experts updated with all relevant documents which are necessary for performance of MAURITAS tasks.

Information about changes will normally be done by use of e-mail, or sending copies of documents by mail, if necessary or from website of MAURITAS (www.mauritas.org).

Assessors and experts have the obligation to take care of the distributed documents and keep themselves updated.

15. Related Forms:

- Agenda Opening Meeting, F1.01
- Declaration of confidentiality for assessors/technical experts, F1.02
- Agenda Closing Meeting, F1.04
- Resource Review Form, F1.09
- Assessor monitoring checklist, F1.10
- Application - Accreditation of certification body for management systems certification, F4.01
- Non-Conformity Report, F4.05
- Lead assessor's report from assessment of certification bodies for management systems, F4.07
- Self-Assessment/Document Review of ISO 17021-1:2015 Management Requirements F4.10
- Self-Assessment/Document Review of ISO 17021-1:2015 Technical Requirements F4.11