



D05-02d3

ASSESSMENT OF INSPECTION BODIES

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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Annex to D05-02 is to lay down the scope and methods of assessment applying specifically to inspection bodies.

2 FOCUSES IN ASSESSMENT OF INSPECTION BODIES

2.1 Personnel competencies

The assessor shall check the competencies of inspectors by:

- reviewing the records of supervising the performance of inspections, reviewing the plan and the records of external and internal training as well as training of newly employed inspectors...;
- interviewing inspectors and other personnel involved in inspection activities;
- witnessing the performance of inspections.

Witnessing the performance of accredited activity is the most important element of assessing personnel competencies, in particular when the inspector's professional judgement has a key influence on the result of the inspection. Witnessing of the performance shall typically be conducted in such a way as to include in witnessing, whenever possible, those inspection items that feature in inspection body's regular work plan. When this is not possible, the inspection may be carried out separately for that purpose on a suitable (e.g. already inspected) item of inspection.

When accreditation is one of the prerequisites for obtaining authorisation by a national authority, and the auditee has not been able to perform inspections for clients, the records (e.g. reports or other records of the inspections performed) shall be examined which provide evidence of how the auditee has gained the necessary practical experience in performing inspections.

2.2 Conformity assessment methods/procedures

The inspection body may use standard or non-standard methods in its inspection procedures.

When using non-standard methods, the assessor team shall assess whether these methods have been validated – i.e., whether their fitness for the given purpose has been established and whether they have been documented in sufficient detail.

When the inspection body conducts inspections using methods in which the requirements (criteria) for assessment of conformity are currently updated (agreed between the inspector and the client), the assessor shall also assess the inspection body's competence for checking the compliance of the conformity assessment inspection methods with the agreed requirements.

In inspection procedures, where the inspector's professional judgement is also used to decide on the result of the inspection, it has to be assessed whether the criteria of professional judgement have

been documented in sufficient detail. Professional judgement shall include, among other, an estimation of the long-term stability of the item of inspection.

During witnessing the performance of inspections it shall be always necessary to consider the observance of safety requirements such as the use of personal protection equipment, appropriate protection of the site and subject of inspection, observance of the client's safety instructions, definition of responsibility regarding safety with the person preparing equipment to be inspected, etc. The assessors themselves shall also be obliged to observe the rules of safety at work.

2.3 Inspection body's measuring equipment

The inspection body shall provide for traceability of measurements carried out during the inspection procedure, when these have significant influence on the result of the inspection, i.e., the determination of conformity. The decision as to what extent the measurand affects the result of the inspection shall be made by the assessor team. The acceptability of demonstrated traceability shall be formulated on the basis of SA document "Acceptable traceability" (OA 02).

The inspection body need not necessarily always be the owner of the measuring and other equipment it uses. However, it shall bear exclusive responsibility for proper performance and calibration status of the measuring equipment it uses. When the inspection body does not have the equipment under constant control, it shall carry out, prior to using such equipment, procedures to check its adequateness. When several organisational units use the same equipment within the same organisation, the equipment shall be considered to be under control if these units hold accreditation.

When the inspection body applies internal calibrations to ensure traceability, the assessor team shall assess their adequacy against the rules laid down in SA document "Control of equipment" (OA 12).

2.4 Independence, impartiality

Inspection bodies shall also be checked during initial assessment, re-assessment or surveillance for providing independence and impartiality.

In assessing compliance with the requirements for type A independence, the wider organisational structure needs to be assessed, which shall include all such relations within and outside the organisation that could in any way affect the provision of type A independence. The checking shall also include how the CEO of the legal entity provides for maintaining the policy related to type A independence rating.

In inspection bodies who maintain type C independence, any involvement of inspectors in other activities related to the inspection item shall be assessed.

When it is explicitly provided by a statutory provision that a person performing inspection can also perform other activities in relation with the item of inspection, this person's independence and impartiality shall be assessed in detail, also in relation with the performance of other, also non-accredited, activities.

2.5 Scope of accredited activity

When examining the scope, the assessor team shall check:

- that the accredited activity is correctly defined in line with the definition of inspection (e.g. sampling, which does not include inspection, cannot be the stand-alone accredited activity of an inspection body);
- that it is clear at which key locations and within what scope the accredited activity is performed. When the inspection body performs its accredited activity at different key locations, the assessor shall find out, on the basis of objective evidence and interviews, whether all the locations operate in conformity with the provisions of the same management system, e.g., whether they are all included in internal audit and management review programmes;
- correct marking and indication of reference document versions, and that the inspection procedures are performed in line with these documents and in the full scope, as indicated;
- that reference to parameters such as type of inspection, scope, field work, and the like, is in line with the actual capacities of the inspection body.

2.6 Inspection reports

Each assessment of an inspection body shall include examination of a suitable sample of inspection reports or inspection certificates.

The methods of reporting are defined in detail in SA document OA 08 “Accredited bodies’ reporting”.

2.7 Assessment result

shall include the finding that:

- the inspectors are competent for carrying out inspections;
- the inspectors have at their disposal all the documents necessary for effective performance of inspection procedures;
- the inspectors fully and correctly follow only the valid procedures, without taking unauthorised shortcuts or making personal interpretations;
- all findings and results are being recorded during the inspection itself
- the records provide for the repeatability of the operation (clearly defined item of inspection, procedure or inspection method...);
- all findings which require immediate action are communicated in the prescribed way;
- inspection reports and certificates comply with the requirements of the relevant standards and the provisions of the relevant (by-)laws;
- the equipment used is appropriate for the performance of inspections;
- trust in the results of measurements which are of crucial importance to the final decision of the inspection is ensured through specified measurement uncertainty of the method used.

3 SCOPE OF ASSESSMENT OF AN INSPECTION BODY

Compliance with all accreditation requirements shall be examined comprehensively during initial assessment and re-assessment.

The scope of surveillances (first, second, third surveillance) shall ensure that each surveillance determines that the client complies with accreditation requirements on an ongoing basis. For a comprehensive examination, a part of the management system elements (approximately one third) shall be selected, so that all the elements are comprised in three successive surveillances.

All the accredited activities shall be assessed at least once per assessment period (three successive surveillances and one re-assessment), including the locations at which the key activities are performed.

3.1 Items of inspection

All items of inspection shall be assessed comprehensively in initial assessment. Normally, one line of the scope provided in Annex to IB's Accreditation Certificate shall represent one item of inspection. Comprehensive assessment shall be made by examining the key elements of inspection, i.e. witnessing of performance, competencies of personnel, adequateness of facilities and equipment, suitability of work instructions, contents of records, reporting...

When in the scope within one item of inspection, division is made into several sub-fields (e.g. division in terms of operating medium, manufacturer, etc.), the sample requiring most rigorous inspection shall be chosen for initial assessment (e.g. inspection of pressure vessel for cooling media in the field of inspection of pressure vessels), or the one being the most representative of the group.

When the inspection body conducts inspection of different items of inspection using related or the same procedure, the same equipment, personnel, etc. (e.g. cylinders for breathing apparatus or fire extinguisher cylinders), it is considered to be sufficient when only one of the items of inspection out of a group with related inspection characteristics is observed at initial assessment.

The Sector Manager in cooperation with the assessor team shall decide, in preparing the Inspection Witnessing Plan, when different items of inspection shall be treated as a group with related characteristics, as laid down in D05-01. The practice used with other inspection bodies shall be taken into account in order to ensure equal treatment of clients. This decision shall be explained in the Inspection Witnessing Plan.

Within the framework of one assessment period (three successive surveillances and one re-assessment), the sampling of items of inspection shall be carried out in such a way as to assess all items or related groups of items of inspection at least once.

3.2 Personnel

In initial assessment, all, or at least the key inspectors shall be observed (e.g. those who are holders of knowledge in the relevant technical field, who conduct internal supervision, trainings ...).

Later on, during each assessment period (three successive surveillances and one re-assessment), all the inspectors shall be observed, when possible. When this is not practicable, the assessor team shall

make a selection of inspectors according to criteria such as number and frequency of inspections carried out, experience and competence, results of past witnessing, results of internal control of inspector's work, inspections whose results are particularly important in terms of use, and the like..

3.3 Key locations

When the key activities of the inspection body are performed at different locations, they shall all be visited at initial assessment, while later on, only a selected sample shall be visited, so that each location is visited at least once during one assessment period (three successive surveillances and one re-assessment).

The location at which at least one of the activities, such as formulating the inspection body's policy, developing inspection procedures, selecting inspectors, reviewing contracts, planning inspections, reviewing and approving reports and certificates, or any other activities that may affect the result of the inspection, are carried out, shall be considered as the location at which the key activities of the inspection body are performed.

3.4 Types of inspections

Initial assessment shall involve assessment of competence for conducting all types of inspections or at least the most complex ones in terms of implementation (e.g. introductory inspection). All types of inspections shall be assessed through sampling within one assessment period (three successive surveillances and one re-assessment).

The monitoring of different types of inspections shall only be carried out in cases when the conformity assessment procedures differ significantly between individual types of inspections.

3.5 Other parameters of inspection, which are usually indicated under Notes to the Annex to Accreditation Certificate

When limit values of inspection procedure are stated in the scope of inspection (e.g. pipeline diameter, vessel capacity, accuracy class, operational pressure), particular attention shall be paid to the limit values by including the critical limit areas (such as best accuracy class, maximum vessel capacity) into assessment as early as the initial assessment.

When changing the scope of accreditation or when changes occur in the composition of personnel, such changes shall in all cases be included into the scope of assessment in the manner as provided for initial assessment.

4 RECORDS OF THE ASSESSOR TEAM

Each assessor or expert shall make records of assessment into the checklist (OB05-34), so that the scope and method of assessment of individual elements of the system are presented against the requirements of SIST EN ISO/IEC 17020 (e.g. examined system documents, records, equipment, facilities, personnel...), general findings and reference to the nonconformities found, and any special comments.



Each assessor team member shall also enter into the checklist the data on the vertical assessments carried out, while the technical assessor or expert shall also enter data on the witnessed inspection methods.

When the inspection body is also performing – within the scope of inspection – the activity of testing or calibration, it shall be shown in the records that the activity has also been assessed against all relevant requirements of SIST EN ISO/IEC 17025, which includes assuring the quality of the results.

When the inspection body took part in an interlaboratory comparison, the form OB05-18 shall constitute an obligatory annex to the technical assessor's or expert's checklist, into which the inspection body shall enter the data on its participation in interlaboratory comparisons during the period since the previous assessment.

5 CHANGES

The principles of assessing the safety aspects of conducting inspection were defined.

6 TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

N/A.

7 CONTROL OF THE DOCUMENT

A valid document shall be located in i4 (SA Information System). A copy on paper format shall be accessible at the SA Head Office.

Printouts and copies of the document shall have informative nature and shall not be considered as controlled copies. The validity of these documents should be checked in i4.