



**SRI LANKA ACCREDITATION BOARD
for CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT**

**RULES & PROCEDURES
for ACCREDITATION *of*
INSPECTION BODIES**

ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR INSPECTION BODIES

Rules and Procedures for accreditation of inspection bodies

1. Introduction

The Sri Lanka Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment (SLAB) is the National Accreditation Authority of Sri Lanka established under Act No. 32 of 2005. The SLAB offers accreditation services to bodies that provide conformity assessment services such as testing, medical and calibration laboratories, certification bodies for systems, products and persons, inspection bodies, GHG validation/ verification bodies, good laboratory practice and proficiency testing providers.

The work procedures of the SLAB for Inspection Bodies are based on ISO/IEC 17011:2017 – Conformity assessment - Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies. Preference will be given to subject specific documents published by International Laboratory Accreditation Corporation (ILAC) and Asia Pacific Accreditation Corporation (APAC), wherever applicable. ILAC P15 provides guidelines on application of ISO/IEC 17020:2012 and it is intended to be used by SLAB for accreditation of inspection bodies. It is recommended to consider requirements and interpretations of ILAC P15 by inspection bodies seeking to manage their operations and obtaining accreditation from the SLAB in order to ensure fulfilment of the requirements for accreditation. The Governing Council of SLAB or relevant advisory committees, if required, will develop specific guidelines and advice the SLAB management in the areas for which there are no ILAC, APAC or other acceptable interpretation documents available.

1.1 Scope

This document outlines the rules and procedures to be adopted when inspection bodies (Type A, B or C) seek accreditation for their inspection activities from SLAB. Inspection activities for accreditation by SLAB are described in Appendix 1 which is updated on demand. Accreditation will be granted against the applicable International/Regional or National Standards or widely accepted standards or guidelines that are auditable or verifiable. Conformity assessment schemes/criteria for inspection are reviewed by the SLAB and determine its suitability.

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1.2 References

- Sri Lanka Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment Act No 32 of 2005
- ISO/IEC 17011:2017 - Conformity Assessment –Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
- ISO/IEC 17020:2012 – Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection
- ILAC P8:03/2019 -ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement: Supplementary requirements for the use of accreditation symbols and for claims of accreditation status by accredited conformity assessment bodies
- ILAC-P 9: 06/2014 – ILAC policy for participation in proficiency testing activities
- ILAC-P10: 01/2013 - ILAC Policy on traceability of measurement results
- ILAC –P15:06/2014 – Application of ISO/IEC 17020:2012 for the accreditation of inspection bodies
- ILAC- G 24: 2007 /OIML D 10:2007 – Guidelines for the determination of calibration intervals of measuring instruments
- ILAC G27:06/2017 - Guidance on measurements performed as part of an inspection process
- ILAC -G28: 07/2018 - Guideline for the Formulation of Scopes of Accreditation for Inspection Bodies
- AC-RG (P)-01- Policy for Governing the use of SLAB accreditation symbols
- AC-RG(P)-02 - Policy for participation in external quality assurance activities
- AC-RG(P)-04 - Policy of traceability of measurement results
- AC-RG(P)-05 - Policy on in-house calibration
- AC-RG(P)-07 - Policy on cross frontier accreditation
- IB-RG(P)-03 - Terms & conditions for maintaining accreditation of inspection bodies
- IB-RG(P)-07 - Policy on assessment of inspection bodies with multi-sites and witness assessments
- IB-GL(P)-01- Specific criteria for accreditation of vehicular emission inspection
- IB-GL(P)-02- Specific criteria for accreditation of amusement rides and devices
- NDT-GL(P)-01- Specific criteria for accreditation of inspection bodies for nondestructive testing (NDT)

1.3 Terms and definitions

- Terms and definitions given in this document and other documents of accreditation scheme for inspection bodies are based on following references.
- ISO/IEC 17000:2004 – Conformity assessment general vocabulary
- JCGM 200:2012: International vocabulary of metrology (VIM) – Basic and general concepts and associated terms (VIM 3rd edition) and available at the following browsing platforms; <https://www.bipm.org/en/publications/guides/vim.html>
- ISO and IEC terminological databases for use in standardization available at the following browsing platforms [https:// www .iso. org/ obp](https://www.iso.org/obp) and IEC Electropedia: available at [http:// www .electropedia .org](http://www.electropedia.org)

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2. Accreditation requirements

2.1 Accreditation criteria

The international standard ISO/IEC 17020 –Conformity assessment- Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection is used by the SLAB along with specific criteria developed subject-wise, as applicable and required for accreditation of inspection bodies and accreditation body’s rules and procedures explained in this document, Terms and conditions for maintaining accreditation and other General policies such as Metrological traceability, Participation in proficiency testing etc identified as reference documents in this document.

All applicant and accredited inspections bodies are advised to read this document and other related documents prior to apply for accreditation and contact SLAB for any clarification/ further information, if required.

If this document or documents referred in this document are revised, the SLAB will announced in the official website (www.slab.lk) and automatically adopt those modifications in its criteria, but will give the parties concerned a realistic period of time for the transition.

Development of accreditation criteria involve a step to obtain views of interested parties and public comments prior to publication. Therefore, applicant and accredited inspection bodies are requested to forward any written views/suggestions directly to the SLAB.

2.2 Eligibility

The applicant inspection body must comply with all the requirements of ISO/IEC 17020, standard or guideline specific to the scope/field of inspection, if available. In addition, the applicant inspection body must comply with the relevant regulations (if any), specific criteria (if any) of SLAB for the scopes covered in their inspection scheme.

Any inspection activity operated by an inspection body as a regular inspection scheme developed under contractual, mutual or regulatory arrangements for consumer protection or public safety or any other broad based objective can be accredited by SLAB.

The applicant inspection body must ensure that their inspectors are competent and involved in continual professional development activities gaining skills and competencies as well as updating themselves to meet the demands and expectations of their clients/ stakeholders.

For initial application or scope extension, inspection body must complete at least one inspection and records shall be available from each inspection given in the scope of accreditation and there shall be competent inspectors for each inspections given in the scope of accreditation.

The applicant inspection body shall have conducted at least one internal audit and one management review before the submission of application to the SLAB.

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3. Preparation for accreditation

3.1 Preparing for accreditation of inspection bodies

The management of inspection body should first decide to obtain accreditation for their inspection activity from SLAB. It is important for an inspection body to make a definite plan of action for obtaining accreditation and nominate a responsible person to coordinate all activities related to the accreditation process. The person nominated should be familiar with the inspection body's existing quality system. SLAB will coordinate matters related to accreditation process only through the authorized representative of the inspection body.

A request can be made to SLAB in person, by post, by telephone or by e-mail for relevant information on accreditation. Information regarding SLAB accreditation process, relevant documents and application form will be available freely downloadable documents from the SLAB website (www.slab.lk). The inspection body should be acquainted with the SLAB assessment procedure & methodology before submitting the application in the prescribed format.

A quality manual/ management system documents shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements specified in the ISO/IEC 17020, regulations, if any and this should be supplemented by a set of other documents such as procedures, standards, regulations, work instructions etc. to be in accordance with the particular quality system requirements.

If the inspection body itself perform testing activities, the documentation of inspection body shall address the requirements given in ISO/IEC 17025. The inspection body must ensure that the procedures described in the quality manual/ management system documents and other documents are being implemented. The inspection body needs to establish the status of its existing quality system and technical competence with regard to the requirements of SLAB for accreditation.

3.2 Scope of accreditation

The scope of the accreditation, often referred to as the 'scope', is defined as those activities for which to be covered under SLAB accreditation. Applicant inspection body shall include scope of accreditation in the relevant section of application or make reference to further document which contain same format in the application. The scope also specifies the type of inspection (Ex. Type A, B or C), field of inspection, inspection category, range of inspection, inspection method/criteria and locations/branches where the inspection body carries out its activities. During the pre- assessment process, the scope of the accreditation is discussed with the inspection body in detail, and the nature and extent of the assessment will be based on that. The details of major inspection fields are given in **Appendix 1**.

4. Accreditation process

The accreditation process consists of registration of application followed by a resource review, document and record review, pre-assessment, initial assessment, grant of accreditation, surveillance and re-assessment.

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4.1 Application and registration for accreditation

The Inspection Body shall submit application documents (IB-FM (P) -01 –Application Form, IB-FM (P)-02 –Self assessment questionnaire and quality manual / management system documentation) of the inspection body and other relevant documents to SLAB.

The application shall be accompanied with the prescribed application fee stated in the fee structure (IB-RG (P)-01). Application fee is nonrefundable. Inspection body has to take special care in fill in the scope of accreditation for which the inspection body wishes to apply. In case, the inspection body finds any clause of the standard (in part or full) not applicable to the inspection body, it shall furnish justifiable reasons.

Applications are not accepted and registered until the submission of required documents and application fee.

Applicant inspection body may withdraw its application or discontinue accreditation process before granting accreditation. In such case, applicant inspection body shall settle all due payments, if any.

For foreign applicant/ accredited inspection bodies shall follow policy on cross frontier accreditation (AC-RG (P)-07) and accreditation fees as stated in fee structure (IB-RG(P)-01).

List of documents required at the application stage is given the Questionnaire (IB-FM(P)-02).

4.2 Special cases

- **Additional accreditation**

If an inspection body that is already accredited wishes a second accreditation against any recognized and accepted standard or a scope extension to existing accreditation, the procedure is same as for a new registration. However, in such case, the assessment by the SLAB may be limited to cover the areas not covered by the existing accredited system and certain specific areas as decided by SLAB.

- **Already accredited inspection bodies activities**

In case an applicant inspection body is already accredited for the applied scope by another accreditation body with ILAC, APAC membership or ILAC/APAC MRA, the SLAB will communicate with the particular accreditation body to collect necessary information and will seek possibilities to act in collaboration with the said accreditation body when processing the accreditation application. In such circumstances, the SLAB may grant accreditation after an assessment; however any such decision will be taken at the sole discretion of SLAB.

- **Non routine cases**

In case an inspection body requests accreditation for an inspection activity where an established standard/ Guide is not available, SLAB, in consultation with the Technical advisory committee will decide on the suitability of criteria to be followed by the inspection body.

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The applicant inspection body has to submit necessary supportive documents as evidence to substantiate their claim when they seek accreditation under special cases. As result, SLAB may also require additional time for the development required competencies in the new fields and required criteria. Applicant inspection bodies will be notified if the SLAB requires such additional time for processing of new applications.

- **Inspection bodies with multi-locations**

Applicant inspection bodies operating through main office and locations shall declare in the initial application or subsequent application on its inspection activities in main office, locations and how common management system covers both main office and locations.

4.3 Acknowledgement and registration of application

SLAB on receipt of application documents and other relevant documents and the fees, shall issue an acknowledgement to the inspection body. After scrutiny of application for its completeness in all respects, a unique accreditation number shall be allocated to the particular application, which shall be used for correspondence with the inspection body thereafter.

In case of any inspection body with multiple sites controlled by a main organization, same number shall be continued unless requested by the inspection body /decided by the Technical manager.

SLAB may request for additional information/ clarification(s), if necessary from the applicant inspection body.

If, on the basis of documents and information provided by the inspection body, SLAB is of the opinion that an assessment cannot result in accreditation, the applicant inspection body shall be informed in writing giving reasons.

The SLAB’s policies, processes /and procedures are non-discriminatory and applied in a non-discriminatory way. SLAB makes its services accessible to all applicants whose application for accreditation falls within the scope of its accreditation activities as defined within its policies and rules. Access shall not be conditional upon the size of the applicant inspection body or membership of any association or group, nor shall accreditation be conditional upon the number of inspection bodies already accredited.

4.4 Appointment of authorized officer & resource review

Once the registration of application is completed with required documents, Technical manager of accreditation scheme for inspection bodies appoints one of competent Assistant Director/Deputy Director (Accreditation) as Authorized officer for the application and continuation of accreditation process.

A resource review (technical review) will be carried out by the Authorized officer in consultation with Technical manager and collect additional information from the inspection body, if required. Authorized officer may indicate in the application form the additional information to be collected if required, for the assessment.

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If relevant resources are not locally available steps will be taken to obtain resources through another accreditation body with the consent of the inspection body. If the initial assessment cannot be conducted in a timely manner, this shall be communicated to the inspection body.

Authorized officer will contact the inspection body with respect to application and further information required, if any. Authorized officer is the contact person for the applicant inspection body.

4.5 Document & record review

4.5.1 Appointment of assessor/ Team leader

The SLAB shall appoint a competent internal assessor/Team leader from the pool of assessors to carry out document and record review on the quality manual/document management system adopted by the applicant inspection body.

4.5.2 Adequacy of quality manual / management system documentation

The competent internal assessor/ Team leader of SLAB will commence the assessment process with an adequacy assessment of document and record review based on the application submitted within one month. The aim of the adequacy assessment is to determine whether the inspection body is sufficiently prepared for the accreditation process and to ascertain the compliance of the documents with the criteria specified in ISO/IEC 17020. The adequacy assessment is also meant to obtain a clear idea of the intended scope of the accreditation.

The Team leader/assessor, shall inform SLAB regarding the adequacy of the quality manual/ management system documentation with a report (IB-FM-05), indicating deficiencies (if any) in the documentation which in turn should be communicated to the applicant inspection body. Based on this feedback the inspection body shall take corrective actions and submit objective documentary evidence for corrective actions taken before not later than three months.

If the inspection body satisfies the relevant requirements at the adequacy assessment stage or after the inspection body has taken necessary corrective action based on the adequacy assessment, the assessment process will move next step of the accreditation process.

The document and record review process shall be satisfactorily completed within six months.

If, on the basis of documents and information provided by the inspection body, SLAB is of the opinion that an initial assessment cannot result in accreditation, the applicant inspection body shall be informed in writing and the documents concerned will be returned to the inspection body for necessary improvement.

If the outcome of the document and record review is not satisfactory, SLAB may decide not to proceed with the application. In such cases, results with justification shall be reported in writing to the inspection body.

4.6 Appointment of assessment team

Towards the task of on-site assessments, the Team leader shall be assisted by a team of Assessors/ technical experts who will be appointed by SLAB as appropriate with the scope of accreditation and in accordance with the criteria adopted for the selection of assessment team. The SLAB shall propose the composition of assessment team. The inspection body may lodge an objection in writing against specific team members with justifiable reason to do so. Such an objection shall be reviewed by the Technical manager to determine the validity of objections to ensure the impartiality and credibility of accreditation process. If the objection is found to be valid, a new team or a new member is nominated in place of the member (s) in question. If no replacement is available, it is possible that the visit will be postponed, or that a part of the scope will not be assessed until a suitable replacement is found.

SLAB may also nominate one of its officers to participate in the assessment, unless an officer is appointed as an assessor/observer/ staff officer during the on-site assessment to convey his/her opinions to the Team leader and to provide clarification on the international standard and SLAB specific criteria (if any) to the assessment team and keep coordination with SLAB, whenever necessary.

As MRA partner of APAC and ILAC, SLAB may select assessment of inspection bodies for peer evaluations and appoint peer evaluators as observer of assessment. In addition, assessment team may consist witnessing assessor from SLAB to evaluate the performance of SLAB assessors.

4.7 Onsite assessment plan

The SLAB contacts the inspection body to agree on the date(s) and assessment plan for the assessment. Based on this SLAB prepares the assessment schedule (IB-PL-01) and the composition of the team and send it across to the inspection body well in advance. Authorized officer of SLAB will request information on due inspections with inspectors in order to plan witnessing of inspections performed at different locations. For this purpose, Inspection body shall include possibilities of witnessing of inspections by the accreditation body assessors into contractual agreements with inspection body and its customers.

4.8 Onsite assessment

The onsite assessments will be carried out two stages namely pre-assessment and initial assessment (initial assessment is the final assessment for the grant of accreditation). During both these assessments, witness assessments at the site of the applicant inspection body's clients may be required. Although there are no strict demarcations for these two assessments, the objectives of these assessments may be expressed in the following manner. On site assessments consist of an opening and a closing meeting with assessment team members and key personnel of the inspection body. Therefore, inspection body shall arrange required facilities to conduct meetings and the assessment.

If an inspection body carries out at least one following key activities at different premises, prior to granting accreditation, all premises shall be assessed as per

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ISO/IEC17020 and other requirements as relevant as per policy on assessment of inspection bodies with multi-sites and witness assessments (IB-RG (P)-07).

- Policy formulation
- Processes and /or procedures development
- Process of initial selection of inspectors and as appropriate
- Contract review
- Planning conformity assessments
- Review and approval of conformity assessments
- Contract review separate from the head office
- Maintenance of records not kept at head office
- Maintenance of management system documentation not kept at head office
- Maintenance and calibration of specific equipment kept separate from head office

The assessment team shall commence an on-site assessment with an opening meeting at which the purpose of the assessment and criteria are clearly defined and the assessment plan and the scope for the assessment are confirmed.

During the assessment, the assessment team will assess the documentation and implementation of the management system as well as the competence of the inspection body in accordance with the ISO/IEC 17020 and specific criteria (if any) of SLAB. In doing so, the assessment team will select a representative sample in the areas within the scope of the accreditation.

This process shall be extended to witness assessment activities also. The inspection body shall demonstrate that it is competent in all the activities at all sites for which accreditation has been requested. With regard to the management system of the inspection body, the assessment team shall be able to assess at least one complete cycle of the internal audit and management review.

4.9 Pre assessment

Upon completion of document and record review, a pre assessment is conducted to gather information on following;

- a. Assess the completeness of the documentation structure of the implemented system
- b. Assess the degree of preparedness of the inspection body for the initial assessment
- c. Study the scope of accreditation so that the time frame, number of assessors required in various disciplines and visits to sites, if applicable.

Pre assessment is conducted by a Team leader/Assessment team which consists Team leader/Assessor/ Technical assessor/Technical expert. If required, on site witnessing may also be arranged at the pre assessment stage. At the end of pre assessment, assessment team complete pre assessment report and deficiencies identified during the pre-assessment

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and obtain the acknowledgement for recommendation and findings from the inspection body. Assessment team verifies the man day requirement for the initial assessment and propose and report required changes and planning of initial assessment.

Inspection body shall take necessary corrective action for the deficiencies and submit documentary evidences within two months. On request with justifiable reason, an extension of two months will be given. However, if the inspection body submits corrective actions within four to eight months and wishes to continue the application, a fresh pre-assessment shall be conducted. Any failure to submit corrective actions within eight months, application shall be discontinued and inform the decision to the applicant inspection body.

Upon the successful completion of pre assessment, inspection body shall be notified and request to prepare for initial assessment.

4.10 Initial assessment

Upon completion of pre assessment, initial assessment is conducted to

- a. Assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the documented system
- b. Inspection body's competence in performing inspection activities
- c. Finalize the scope of accreditation
- d. Take a decision on the recommendation for the grant of accreditation
- e. Decide follow up actions required to verify the effectiveness of corrective actions taken for previous nonconformities

At the end of each assessment, a closing meeting is conducted to disclose findings of the assessment. Initial assessment reports contain, assessment report, scope of accreditation, recommended authorized signatories, nonconformities and other relevant assessment records. Initial assessment report shall also provide a recommendation towards grant of accreditation or otherwise. Assessment team is not allowed to take decisions on granting accreditation.

Inspection body shall submit corrective actions within two months with satisfactory documentary evidence. However, depending on the severity of actions to be taken, CAB may take additional time up to one year from the date of Initial assessment, for taking suitable actions in agreement with SLAB. If the corrective actions cannot be submitted for all nonconformities within one year another Initial assessment shall be arranged.

If follow up assessment is recommended, it shall be conducted within six months from the date of Initial assessment and corrective actions for remaining non-conformities shall be submitted within two months. If the corrective actions cannot be submitted within one year from the date of Initial assessment, another Initial assessment shall be arranged.

Based on the corrective actions submitted the assessment team may recommend to conduct on-site verification of effective implementation of corrective actions

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4.10 Assessment techniques

The SLAB assessors use one or more combination of the following assessment techniques when conducting the assessment.

- **Document review:** assessing quality system documentation for compliance with the criteria; a document review can also involve records at the inspection body's location, such as personnel files, quality control charts, audit reports, management review reports, audit files etc.;
- **Office assessment:** an assessment at the premises of the inspection body in order to assess the implementation of the system;
- **Interviews:** evaluating the expertise of the inspection body's personnel via targeted interviews.
- **Witnessing:** observing inspections and examination carried out by the inspection body shall be witnessed as per the policy on assessment of inspection bodies with multi-sites and witness assessments (IB-RG(P)-07). The choice of inspectors and sites to be witnessed by the SLAB assessment team is done by the SLAB.

The above witness requirements are applicable unless otherwise witnessing national legal requirements, regulations, standards, or other relevant authority stipulate level of witnessing. Any such adjustments should be made explicit in scope statements by reference to the relevant law, regulation etc.

4.11 Participation in external quality assurance activities

If applicable, the inspection body shall participate in external quality assurance activities as per SLAB policy for participation in external quality assurance activities (AC-RG(P)-02).

4.12 Frequency of inspection

Inspection body shall defined and informed frequency of inspection to its clients. Frequency shall be one year for all sites unless specified in the regulations, inspection scheme or contractual arrangements.

4.13 Accreditation decision

After satisfactory closure of all non conformities, the SLAB prepares a summary of all relevant information gathered during the processing of the application, the assessment report prepared by the assessment team, additional information received from the inspection body and the consequent verification activities. The summary report is placed before the accreditation committee which is appointed by the Governing Council as per the provision of SLAB Act. The accreditation committee for inspection bodies studies the assessment reports, nonconformities and corrective actions, scope of accreditation, final report (IB-FM-46) and the recommendation given by the team and then makes its own decision on grant of accreditation.

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The decision on the approval of grant of accreditation shall be submitted to the Council through Director/CEO, SLAB for information.

The SLAB informs the inspection body in writing of the decision taken.

All decisions taken by SLAB regarding grant of accreditation shall be open to appeal by the inspection body as per appeal procedure (GN-PR(P)-09) within 30 days.

4.14 Issue of accreditation certificate and schedule

As soon as a decision is taken to grant accreditation SLAB shall prepare the following documents.

Accreditation certificate with a unique number for identification duly signed by the Director / CEO, SLAB. This certificate specifies the date on which the accreditation was granted, the standards based on which the accreditation was granted and the period of validity of the certificate.

A schedule of accreditation referring to the scope of accreditation with type of inspection and information and validity period of locations/sites covered under accreditation.

Terms and condition for maintaining accreditation (IB-RG(P)-03) is considered as the agreement between SLAB and inspection body. This contains the rights and obligations of parties; the party providing the accreditation and the party being accredited and signed by both parties. The applicant inspection body must fulfil all the financial obligations payable to SLAB, before receiving the certificate(s).

4.15 Post accreditation assessments

The SLAB accreditation certificate shall be valid for a period of 3 years unless specified by the SLAB. During the validity of accreditation, the inspection body must continuously comply with the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17020 and “Terms and condition for maintaining accreditation” (IB-RG (P)-03). In this regard SLAB shall periodically review the validity of accreditation. To this end, the SLAB carries out surveillance assessments annually and a re-assessment within three years. During the accreditation period, the scope of the accreditation may be changed.

4.16 Surveillance

The frequency of surveillance is one year from the date of granting accreditation. SLAB shall conduct annual surveillance of all accredited inspection bodies or following surveillance activities may be decided by the Technical manager based on the risks associated with the activities;

- Special on-site assessment/remote assessment
- Review of changes to inspection body’s management system
- Review of performance in proficiency testing and/or other inter-laboratory comparisons
- Conduct advanced surveillance assessment

Surveillance is aimed at examining whether the accredited inspection body is maintaining all the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17020 and SLAB specific criteria (if any).

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As planned in the assessment schedule, Authorized officer of SLAB shall in writing inform the accredited inspection body of the surveillance assessment at the beginning of the year and agree on the dates of surveillance assessment before the due date of assessment.

The inspection body during the validity of accreditation may request to extend the scope of accreditation for which they should preferably apply three months before the conduct of assessment/ surveillance. The mode of surveillance visit is similar to the initial assessment and it will cover only selected areas. The non-conformities, if any, shall be closed within two months of conduct of surveillance. The summary of the surveillance report along with other relevant information shall be submitted to the Director / CEO, SLAB to make a decision on the continuation of accreditation or otherwise. SLAB shall inform the inspection body, in writing, about the decision.

If there are remaining nonconformities with a justification by the Technical manager considering the associated risks, a letter of continuation of accreditation may be sent to the inspection body with conditions or suspend accreditation relevant to the particular nonconformity.

When a follow-up assessment is recommended and conducted, documentary evidence for corrective actions for remaining nonconformities/ new nonconformities, if any shall be sent to the SLAB within a month unless there is any issue which may be compromised with reasonable justification.

On practical situations, faced by either party with reasonable justification, the maximum time that should be allowed for advancing or delaying the annual surveillance shall only be three months from the planned surveillance assessment.

4.17 Reassessment and renewal of accreditation

As planned in the assessment schedule, Authorized officer shall in writing inform the accredited inspection body of the re-assessment at the beginning of the year.

Accredited inspection body shall apply four months before the expiry of accreditation for renewal of accreditation as per the terms and conditions for maintaining accreditation (IB-RG (P) -03). Application for renewal of accreditation is similar as initial application described above 4.1.1. Re –application shall be accompanied with the application fee as described in the fee structure.

The inspection body may request for extension of scope of accreditation, which should be explicitly mentioned in the application form.

The procedure for processing of renewal of application is similar to that of first application except that no pre-assessment is conducted and likewise, the procedure for the on-site reassessment visit is similar to that of initial assessment. If the results of reassessment visit are positive and all non-conformances are closed before the expiry of the validity of accreditation certificate, then the validity of the certificate is extended by a further period of three years without any discontinuity unless specific by the SLAB. In case of renewal, a new certificate and schedule of accreditation is issued while the

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certificate number is retained. The decision on renewal of accreditation is also taken by the accreditation committee for inspection bodies.

4.18 Supplementary/ Special assessments

The SLAB may organize supplementary/ special visits under the following circumstances:

- Repeatedly find nonconformities or many nonconformities during the surveillance/ reassessment which directly affect to the credibility of accreditation.
- Receiving complaints that are substantiated with facts or on instances where the inspection body is found to be misusing the certificate/ accreditation symbol.
- Based on public complaints, publications or information from interested parties and the government.

The Director/CEO, SLAB with the recommendation of Technical manager may decide to carry out special assessments at any time during the period of validity of accreditation. The execution of special assessments may take place with no prior notification or with very little time between notification and execution.

Special assessment may also become necessary when changes occur in accreditation criteria, organizational structure and in management/ ownership/ authorized signatories. However in these cases, the SLAB will give inspection bodies sufficient time for preparation.

All costs associated with special assessments will be charged to the inspection body.

4.19 Changes in the accreditation / Specific criteria

If there is a change in the ISO/IEC 17020 or in the accreditation criteria, SLAB shall inform the inspection body in writing indicating the transition policy with specific period for complying with new criteria. Upon receiving such information, the inspection body must confirm to SLAB's transition policy on implementation of changes. SLAB may assess the implementation of changes during surveillance and re assessments or conduct special assessment.

4.20 Changes affecting the inspection body operations

In the event of the inspection body informing SLAB about any changes affecting the inspection body's activities and operations, SLAB may organize a supplementary/ special visit. Inspection body shall communicate this with relevant documentary evidence. The final decision is communicated to the inspection body along with an amended certificate and schedule of accreditation. The costs associated with the issue of amended certificate and schedule will be charged to the inspection body.

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4.21 Reduction of the scope

During assessments by the SLAB, the accredited inspection body shall demonstrate that it complies with all accreditation criteria regarding the entire scope and that it has complied with these criteria from the date on which accreditation was granted. If an inspection body is of the opinion that parts of the scope no longer conforms to the accreditation criteria, it is expected that the inspection body will withdraw the relevant part of the scope itself. If during an assessment it becomes clear that it is necessary to withdraw accreditation for parts of the scope, the SLAB will also review the validity of the remaining accredited scope.

In order to demonstrate that an inspection body has complied with and is complying with the criteria for the complete scope of accreditation, the inspection body shall be able to provide records of the activities carried out. During SLAB assessments, these records shall demonstrate that the procedures for carrying out specific activities have been applied correctly by qualified personnel in the past year.

The concerned part of the scope shall be withdrawn if records do not demonstrate this. If this means that the entire scope is withdrawn, then the entire accreditation is withdrawn. However, the inspection body concerned can again be granted accreditation for the standard and the scope involved, under the same registration number after submission of application as scope extension and a full assessment of areas withdrawn.

4.22 Extension of scope

At any given moment, the inspection body can request an extension of the scope. To this end, a written application shall be sent to the SLAB. An assessment for extension of scope will not be initiated, if nonconformities are currently open in related parts of the scope or in the general management system of the inspection body.

The SLAB distinguishes between extension within and extension outside the scope already accredited. Extensions of the scope that fall within the framework of the same accreditation standard will be considered extension within the scope and if not, it will be considered otherwise. Requests for accreditation involving a different accreditation standard shall be treated as a new application.

Depending on the size and nature of the extension requested, the extent of the assessment needed for the extension will be determined by SLAB on a case by case basis. All costs for extension of scope will be charged to the inspection body.

4.23 Transfer of accreditation

If the ownership or name of an accredited inspection body changes, the accreditation may be transferred to the new owner or to the new name if the inspection body involved make such requests in writing. For such a transfer the following pre-conditions apply:

- The inspection body remains operating within the legal and regulatory framework of the country in which it operates;
- The policy and management system remain unchanged;
- The management and key personnel remain unchanged;

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- The former owner does not remain active in the same sphere of activity or a similar area under the old name or a related name;
- The general composition of the inspection body's personnel remains the same;
- The basic infrastructure and other facilities are not compromised.

The inspection body shall provide the SLAB with the necessary documents showing that the above conditions are met. The costs for reviewing the documents/ conducting onsite review will be charged to the inspection body.

If all requirements are met, the new inspection body retains the registration/accreditation number and receives the new accreditation documents. The surveillance and re-assessment schedule will remain unchanged.

5. Obligations

5.1 Inspection body

5.1.1 General

An inspection body shall always comply with the relevant regulations and accreditation criteria. This not only applies to accredited inspection bodies but also to inspection bodies whose accreditation has been suspended.

5.1.2 Co-operation

The inspection body shall provide the SLAB assessment teams with all the necessary support in order to carry out their work efficiently, safely and honestly, whereby:

- It shall be possible to check the compliance of the inspection body's management system within the criteria;
- It shall be possible to gain insight into the relationship between the documented system and the standard via an up-to-date review;
- It shall be possible to observe the activities at the inspection body.
- The inspection body shall provide the assessment team with the necessary safety instructions, safety equipment & personnel protective equipment;
- If requested, the inspection body shall provide access to all relevant locations, equipment, dossiers and documents;
- In case the assessment of SLAB requires the participation of clients or other related bodies of the inspection body, the inspection body shall take measures to assure this participation; in particular inspection bodies shall have enforceable arrangements with its clients holding an accredited certificate, to ensure SLAB access to witness the inspection bodies' audit team performing an audit at the inspection body's client's site.
- Assessors of SLAB shall not be put in a position where their independence and objectivity could be compromised.

5.1.3 Accreditation symbol

Accredited inspection bodies have the right to use the applicable accreditation symbol. As such, on grant of accreditation, the inspection body may use SLAB accreditation symbol on letterheads, brochures and any other material issued to its clients including the

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certificates. However, such usage shall be confined within the scope of accreditation. The inspection body shall comply with the “Policy on governing the use of the accreditation symbol” (AC-RG (P)-01).

Misuse of the accreditation symbol by accredited inspection bodies may lead to suspension or withdrawal of the accreditation. If non-accredited inspection bodies use the accreditation symbol, the SLAB can resort to legal action.

5.1.4 Reporting changes

The inspection body shall inform the SLAB immediately of every change that can have considerable impact on the activities covered by the scope. Such changes may be of following nature:

- Changes in the legal, commercial or inspection body’s organizational status;
- Changes in the sphere of activities or economic activities of the inspection body
- Change in management and in structure;
- Policy changes;
- Changes in personnel that fill key positions, such as managers and decision-makers and personnel with specific and unique expertise for the inspection body;
- Changes in location and other resources that can have a significant influence on the accredited activities carried out;
- Significant changes in working procedures.

If an inspection body expects the changes to have a temporary negative effect on the accredited activities, then the inspection body can request a voluntary suspension. In case of that the SLAB possesses the right to carry out extra assessments to ensure that the inspection body again complies with the accreditation criteria before lifting the suspension. If during a surveillance activity of SLAB, it is found that SLAB was not informed about changes may decide to extend the assessment to review the changes and their impacts.

6.1.5 Financial obligations

The Inspection Body will receive an invoice for all the accreditation activities carried out by the SLAB. The amount invoiced will depend on the number of man-days worked; the applicable fee and other costs be found in IB-RG(P)-01, IB-GL-06 & IB-RG(P)-07. An inspection body shall take prompt actions to settle the such payments. If an Inspection Body does not make payment on time, the SLAB sends a reminder. If payment still not made then, the suspension procedure will begin. If there are payments outstanding during the initial phase of the accreditation process, the SLAB has the right to halt the accreditation process until payment is done.

5.2 SLAB

5.2.1 Behavior of assessment teams

The assessment team will limit its assessment activities to an investigation of whether the inspection body complies with the applicable criteria. In doing so, assessors will make use of the relevant criteria documents, scope-related documents (including standards, descriptions of methodology, diagrams etc.) and generally accepted interpretations. Assessors may not accept any gifts, presents etc. from inspection bodies that may

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compromise their neutral role in assessments. Assessors shall follow the health and safety instructions of the inspection body being assessed.

6.2.2 Confidentiality

SLAB shall treat all the information obtained or created during the accreditation process of inspection body s/sources other than the inspection body's as strictly confidential, unless otherwise required to be disclosed under a legal or regulatory framework and unless agreed by the source.

Legally enforceable agreements are made available to safeguard the confidentiality of the information obtained in the process of accreditation at all levels of SLAB including the staff of SLAB, committees, service providers, assessors, or other bodies or individuals acting on behalf of the SLAB. Confidential information related to any inspection body shall not be disclosed, outside the SLAB without written consent of that particular inspection body, unless otherwise required by law. Any information about an inspection body obtained from other sources is not shared with that inspection body, unless agreed by the source.

6. Suspensions, withdrawals and reductions

Suspension, withdrawal and reduction of scope of accreditation arises, in the event of a inspection body persistently failing to meet the requirements of accreditation criteria, and/or violating the rules and procedures and terms and conditions agreed upon at the stage of granting accreditation. On CAB's request, the scope may also be suspended, withdrawn or reduced.

SLAB shall take decision on suspension of accreditation for a maximum of four months or withdrawal/ reduction of accreditation with immediate effect. Any failure to rectify the issues related Suspension within the given period, accreditation shall be withdrawn/reduced with immediate effect. The decision will be informed to the inspection body and published in the web site. SLAB may issue a revised certificate/schedule of accreditation.

6.1 Suspensions

During the suspension period, the inspection body may not make use of the accreditation symbol or in any other way actively refer to the accredited status. Inspection bodies may not accept any new certification requests for issuing accredited certificates. Existing certification contracts shall be respected, which means that the inspection body continues to carry out the necessary surveillance activities.

A suspension is lifted if an additional assessment shows that the reason for the suspension no longer exists. If the suspension period ends without this being the case, the SLAB implements the withdrawal procedure. In exceptional cases, the Director/CEO, SLAB may extend the period for further period of six months.

An inspection body may request a voluntary suspension from the SLAB if it is temporarily unable to comply with the accreditation criteria. In such circumstances, the inspection body is not permitted to make use of the logo or refer to the accredited status. It is not possible to

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submit a request for a voluntary suspension during the period that an SLAB assessment is being carried out.

6.2 Withdrawals and reduction

The accredited inspection body and the SLAB can withdraw/reduce the scope of accreditation. From the moment of withdrawal/reduction, the inspection body will have to refrain from using the accreditation symbol or otherwise referring to the accredited status for the full/part of scope of accreditation. In such situations the certificates issued under SLAB-accreditation shall also have to be withdrawn/re issued.

If inspection body wishes, for whatever reason, to terminate its scope of accreditation in full/part, it shall submit a request to the SLAB for voluntary withdrawal/reduction in writing. Withdrawal shall apply to the entire scope and reduction shall apply for the part of the scope. The SLAB confirms the withdrawal/reduction in writing.

When SLAB determines that a suspension of full/part of the scope of accreditation, has not been lifted within the applicable period or if evidences are found to substantiate that the inspection body brings the accreditation into grave disrepute, the SLAB will impose the withdrawal/reduction. SLAB informs the inspection body of the withdrawal/reduction in writing. After a withdrawal, the SLAB will not accept an application for accreditation from the same inspection body within a period of six months.

7. Disputes, complaints and appeals

7.1 Disputes

The SLAB defines a dispute as difference of opinion between the accredited inspection body or applicant inspection body and the SLAB with regard to:

- The interpretation of a requirement of a standard;
- The working procedure of the SLAB.

The inspection body can report the existence of such dispute to the Director/CEO, SLAB in writing. The Director/CEO, SLAB will consult with the parties involved and with the Technical Advisory Committee and takes a decision. The decision will be communicated to the parties in writing.

7.2 Complaints

The SLAB distinguishes two types of complaints:

- Complaints about the SLAB and its assessors.
- Complaints about registered or accredited inspection bodies.

In both these cases Director/CEO, SLAB or the panel appointed by him/her will investigate the complaints.

The complaints will be handled in accordance with the Procedure for Complaint handling (GN-PR(P)-08), which is available on SLAB website.

7.3 Appeals

Inspection bodies are free to make appeals against decisions taken by the SLAB such as appointment of assessors, grant of accreditation, reduction/ expansion of scopes, suspensions/ withdrawal etc. All such appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the SLAB procedure for dealing with Appeal (AC-PR(P)-09) which is available on SLAB website.

8. Publicity

SLAB shall publish the details of scope of accreditation & accreditation status of the accredited inspection bodies along with their contact addresses and suspension/withdrawal of accreditation status in SLAB web site.

SLAB posts all Rules and Procedures, Terms and Conditions, Fee Structures, Specific Criteria's and Applications and supporting documents and subsequent changes in the SLABs official website. Inspection bodies are required to implement such changes as per instructions given by the SLAB.

9. Liability

SLAB shall not be responsible for any damages, which the inspection body may suffer as a result of any action or negligence by those who are carrying out the tasks on behalf of SLAB and any failure to the grant of accreditation or abeyance / suspension / withdrawal of the accreditation, and neither shall SLAB be held responsible for any damage whatsoever, caused to any party by the acts of inspection body.

Inspection body shall have adequate provisions (Insurance coverage or reserve) to cover liabilities arisen from its operation.

Appendix 1

Major fields of inspections

1. Pressure vessels & lifting equipment
2. Tanks carrying dangerous goods
3. Electrical systems
4. Welding plants
5. LP gas cylinders and repairs
6. Non- destructive testing
7. Electro- magnetic compatibility
8. Vehicle emission inspection
9. Food and agricultural products
10. Environmental protection and pollution control
11. Building construction and maintenance
12. Amusement rides & devices