



**INSTITUTE FOR ACCREDITATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

Procedure for assessment of inspection bodies

PR 05-10

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1.PURPOSE

Based on the Article 23 from the IARM Statute, the IARM Director issues this internal procedure in order to define the scope and specific assessment methods of inspection bodies. It is aimed for the IARM's employees and assessors involved in the procedure for accreditation of the inspection bodies.

2.PRESENTATION METHOD OF THE ACCREDITATION SCOPE FOR THE INSPECTION BODIES

Inspection consists in verifying conformity of the object of inspection with specific requirements, or based on professional judgement – with general requirements..

The inspection activity (method/procedure) shall be defined as a comprehensive process resulting in determination of conformity assessment as a final goal. Thus individual parts of this activity cannot represent independent units of the scope of accredited activity (e.g. sampling).

Products, process, service or installation and/or their design shall be regarded as a object of inspection (a process is a set of interrelated or interacting activities which transform inputs into outputs and a product is the result of a process - ISO 9000) .

2.1 Inspection field

The inspection field is classified according to the object of inspection and it can be divided into groups, subgroups and subsubgroups. Normally, one line of scope being defined in the Application for accreditation and Annex of Certificate represents an inspection field.

Classification covers only fields where the IARM has established procedures for accreditation. If an inspection body applies for accreditation for which the IARM has not performed classification of inspection activities, then in the application the inspection body shall define the inspection field independently. The IARM shall identify the new field (PR 04-02) and shall precisely define them in the accreditation procedure. The already defined field shall be added to the list of fields (List of accreditation fields) (R 15).

Should the inspection body in performing their inspection activity conduct other type of conformity assessment (testing or calibration), this should be recorded in their internal procedures/directives/instructions defining inspection methods.

In the accreditation scope the inspection activity only shall be noted, not the other types of conformity assessment, nor their features either (measurement uncertainty).

2.2 Inspection type

For a regulated field the instructions defined in the regulation are followed (first, periodic, inspection in emergency, technical inspection...).

In a non-regulated field, in case the type is not defined for a regulated field, it is required to present an adequate description of the type arising from the aim, method or requirement for inspection as for instance inspection of functionality, quality control etc.

2.3 Inspection methods

Inspection methods and procedures may be defined in internal documents, standards, legislation. Should standards be stated, the year of issuance shall be noted.

2.4 Legislation referred to by the inspection methods

Laws and bylaws are stated which regulate the inspection field and other parameters in the inspection (personnel, equipment, infrastructure, legal status).

3.ASSESSMENT OF INSPECTION BODIES

3.1 Personnel competences

The assessor checks inspectors' competences through the following:

- review of records from the monitoring when performing inspection, review of plan and records from external and internal trainings and training of newly employed inspectors;
- interviewing inspectors and other personnel involved in the inspection activities;
- witnessing while carrying out inspection.

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 arising from theoretical and practical trainings) shall be examined which provide evidence of how the auditee has gained the necessary practical experience in performing inspections.

3.2 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.

In cases when the inspection body carries out inspections by using methods in which the requirements (criteria) for conformity assessment are updated (contracted between the inspector and the client), the assessor will assess the inspection body's competences through a check up on compliance of the inspection method for conformity assessment with the contracted requirements.

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.

In the course of witnessing the inspection performances, safety requirements shall be reviewed as well, regarding usage of personal protective equipment, adequate protection of the location and the subject of inspection, following the client's safety instructions, defining responsibility concerning safety of the person while preparing the inspection equipment etc. The assessors are also obligated to follow the safety rules in working conditions.

If the inspection activity comprise a documentation review as well, issued by other organizations/bodies significantly impacting the decision/result of inspection, then it shall be checked whether the stated was issued by relevant institutions.

3.3 Measurement equipment of the inspection body

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 in the document 'Rulebook on Measurement Traceability' (R 11).

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, it should notify IARM to ensure adequate assessment team to evaluate the adequacy of the internal calibration procedure.

3.4 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 executive director 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.

3.5 Scope of accredited activities

When examining the scope, the assessor team shall check:

- whether the accredited activity is properly defined in compliance with the inspection definition;
- whether the scope of accredited activities on each key location was clearly determined.

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 programme; whether the latest versions of inspection procedures are used and whether the inspection field, the type and methods comply.

3.6 Reports on inspection

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

3.7 Assessment results

The assessment team shall determine whether:

- - 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 bylaws;
- 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.