

To all QMS sector IAF 28 accredited Certification Bodies

To all reconized Certificaton Bodies

Our Ref.: DC2016SPM012

Milan, 04/03/2016

**Re.: ACCREDIA Department of Certification and Inspection – Circular N° 11/2016
Market Surveillance Visit IAF sector 28 – ISO 9001 scheme**

The present circular follows the ACCREDIA circular 01/2016 (DC2016SSV001 dated 05/01/2016) as well as our quotation regarding 2016 for the maintenance of your accreditation and recognition for IAF sector 28 – ISO 9001 scheme.

According to our estimate, activities for annual maintenance, IAF sector 28 in the QMS scheme shall be conducted using the normal modality (witness assessment) if it is undertaken by the end of August. From September the activity shall be performed using the modality of a Market Surveillance Visit, in which case the duration shall be one day on-site and half a day for back office and reporting.

Some clarifications:

A Market Surveillance Visit is regulated by the informative document IAF ID 04¹.

A Market Surveillance Visit is carried out at the certified organization's location and performed by the personnel of ACCREDIA and not of the CB.

The visit takes place with the aid of a questionnaire (an example can be found attached to the document IAF ID 04) and in the presence of the organization's staff (usually the Quality Manager and a representative of the management) and of the CB (when possible with the participation of an audit team member who took part in the most recent audit).

This assessment does not coincide with a surveillance or renewal activity performed by the CB: it takes place alone with duration of one day. The organization which undergoes the Market Surveillance Visit is chosen according to a number of risk factors, such as the scope of certification, the size of the organization, the office, the audit team etc., directly by the ACCREDIA team during the office assessment at the CB's location. The ACCREDIA assessment team shall inform the CB concerning the chosen organization and it shall obtain possession from the CB of a copy of the audit reports (including the support checklist) with regard to the previous three years, recording such possession in the assessment report given to the CB.

The ACCREDIA team shall inform the ACCREDIA technical officer for the subsequent programming carried out by the ACCREDIA secretariat.

¹ http://www.iaf.nu/upFiles/IAFID42012_Market_Surveillance_of_Certified_Organizations_Word_R2.pdf

Regarding the programming of the Market Surveillance Visit, ACCREDIA shall inform the CB seven working days in advance, in compliance with the document IAF ID4 and the programming shall be sent by ACCREDIA to the CB within three working days before the Market Surveillance Visit is performed.

The contact with the audited organization is made by the CB, not by ACCREDIA.

An audit performed at the construction site is not considered a part of the activities in question.

In order to ensure a correct performance of the Market Surveillance Visit, the CB shall make sure that its client organizations have signed a clause authorizing the use of this audit methodology.

Below is an example of a clause which the CB shall require the client to sign:

In order to ensure that the evaluation modalities used by the CB conform with the reference standards, the guarantor body of the certificates issued (the Accreditation Body) may request:

- the participation of its observers at audits performed by the CB;*
- the performance of assessments at the certified organization, directly using its own personnel.*

The participation of observers at audits and/or an assessment visit conducted directly by the Accreditation Body's personnel is agreed to in advance between the CB and the organization in question.

If the organization does not agree, the validity of the certificate is suspended until such time as it agrees. Such period shall not exceed three months, following which, if agreement is not forthcoming, the certificate is annulled and withdrawn.

The assessment modalities used by the Accreditation Body are contained in regulations and/or communications or circulars available in its website.

The organization shall make available to the AB the documents which the CB has used as references during previous audits.

This clause shall be included by the CB starting from April in all new contracts and in renewals, applicable from September onwards. The clause shall be binding also with respect to other organizations, proceeding gradually, for all active contracts, in correspondence with surveillance activities. The same clause shall therefore be binding for all certified organizations starting from April 2017.

From September onwards ACCREDIA will conduct Market Surveillance Visits as a part of the normal annual surveillance (on companies which have already signed the contract containing the above contractual modifications). If it proves impossible to carry out the selected Market Surveillance Visit, it shall be done by the end of February of the following year.

Before September the normal annual surveillance shall be performed with the usual instrument for witness audits.

If a Market Surveillance Visit comes within the normal surveillance activity, the reporting time shall be half a day and not one day.

It must be remembered that one of the causes which may lead ACCREDIA to suspend accreditation is that a CB does not agree to the performance of assessments by ACCREDIA.

If, on the other hand, the organization/company does not permit the Market Surveillance Visit to be carried out (unless there are exceptional and justifiable reasons) the CB shall suspend and, if

necessary, withdraw certification without the possibility of re-issuing a certificate without the ACCREDIA mark, in accordance with ACCREDIA regulations RG-01-01 § 2.3.7 and RG-16-01 § 2.4.4. It is not permitted to issue certification out of accreditation in a sector in which the CB is accredited. In cases of suspension this may be restored only when the organization communicates permission to the CB for the performance of the audit. The maximum period of time for a suspension sanction is three months and if authorization is not granted suspension shall be withdrawn.

It is not possible to apply IAF MD 2:2007 Transfer of Accredited Certification of Management Systems in cases of suspension or withdrawal of a certificate due to refusal to permit the performance of the Market Surveillance Visit (IAF MD 2:2007 § 2.3.2).

The CB decides whether to charge its clients for the costs of this further activity as against the normal activities of the granting, maintenance and renewal of certification.

ACCREDIA can continue to use, during these months, the instrument of Market Surveillance Visits also as an unprogrammed surveillance activity, in accordance with RG-01 and RG-16.

An initial assessment will be made towards the end of the year of the instrument of Market Surveillance Visits between ACCREDIA and the CB associations in order to evaluate its use in 2017 and beyond, also in different sectors and areas.

With thanks for your collaboration.

Kind regards,

The Department Director
Dr. Emanuele Riva

