DAR- aktuell

Newsletter
BAM - Departmental Section S.42
Secretariat of the German Accreditation Council (DAR)

Accreditation
Certification
Testing

No. 2/97 - April 1997

The assessor - of prime importance for a successful accreditation

Which requirements shall an assessor fulfi in an accreditation system?

He must be: competent, full of integrity, independent, impartial, able to work in a team, able to think logically, aware of the state-of-the-art in his technical field and in accreditation practice as well as quality management. Does such a "Superman" actually exist?

In any case the assessor's qualification is of decisive importance for the accreditation. Depending on the assessor are: the success of the accreditation, the effectiveness of the assessment itself and considerably the comparability and therewith the mutual recognition of accreditations.

His technical competence and his behaviour in conversations have a great impact on the course and result of an assessment. He is the "bridge" between the requirements made by the accreditation body and the existing or the level to be reached by the assessed body.

Regular training and further qualification of the assessor are therefore essential demands on accreditation systems.

How is the assessor trained appropriately?

In the European and international MLAs and MoUs the qualification of the assessor is separately dealt with. Special attention is drawn to the assessor's qualification and the regular exchange of experience.

Assessors are those persons, who must ensure in practice the implementation and realisation of the harmonised rules for accreditation procedures.

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Within the German Accreditation System the issues of qualification are discussed in the DAR-Committee "Training of Assessors".

Of special interest are the assessors and their training or further qualification.

Once a year the tutors responsible for the training of the assessors - often experienced accreditors - meet at the "Tutors' exchange of experiences " organised by the DAR. This year the fourth "Tutors' exchange of experiences " took place in Berlin from 3 to 4 February 1997.

The accreditation bodies operating under the aegis of DAR delegate their tutors to the "Tutors' exchange of experiences ", which is prepared and organised in cooperation with the Austrian and Swiss accreditation systems. Furthermore every year an increasing number of participants from other foreign accreditation systems take part, especially those from Eastern European countries.

The aim of these seminars is to complete the knowledge of the tutors with updated information from the field of accreditation in Europe and abroad and to transmit to the tutors recommendation documents worked out in the DAR Committees.

All tutors are working on the basis of the joint training concept elaborated by the D-A-CH countries, the so-called "Framework Program to Train Assessors in Accreditation Procedures in the German-speaking area". The concept has been worked out, tested and harmonised in an intensive cooperation between Germany, Austria and Switzerland. It is part of the respective accreditation system.

The conformity of specific training programs with the Framework Program is a precondition and simultaneously a conclusion of the agreement on mutual recognition of training courses for assessors concluded between the mentioned countries in Bern (Switzerland) on the 24.01.1994.

As a result of this year's "Tutors' exchange of experiences" the following information have been forwarded:

- Modified training contents
- Current situation of standardisation
- News from European and international organisations
- State of national recognitions (Contracts between the mandatory and the voluntary areas)

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- News on technical questions of accreditation (Proficiency testing schemes, Interlaboratory comparisons, Measurement uncertainty, Accreditation for types of testing, Assessment of competence of non-accredited calibration laboratories)
- Main issues in national and international accreditation matters
- Use of the Internet and services offered by the DAR Secretariat

Topics to be dealt with at the next Seminar have been determined.

DAR documents related to "assessment"

A summary on the results of all Seminars held on tutors' exchange of experiences can be obtained from the DAR Secretariat.

The following documents, which can be also obtained from the DAR Secretariat, are fundamental for the German Accreditation System:

- DAR-GL3 - Working Program of the DAR
- DAR-GL5 - Working Program of the DAR-ATF
- DAR-EM11 - Qualification Criteria for Assessors within the German Accreditation System
- DAR-EM12 - Framework Program to Train Assessors in Accreditation Procedures
- DAR-EM13 - Requirements on Institutions and Tutors Training Assessors in Accreditation Related Procedures
- DAR-EM14 - DAR Proceedings for Selection and Appointment of Assessors
- DAR-EM15 - Regulation for Reporting Assessor Training Courses to the DAR Secretariat
- DAR-EM16 - Mutual Recognition of Assessor Training Courses
- DAR-P9/1/93 - Participation Certificate Issued by the DAR Secretariat

The documents mentioned above represent a part of the DAR-Handbook. They cover all basic issues regarding the qualification level of the assessors in the German Accreditation System and enable or facilitate the harmonisation between the European and international accreditation systems.

The basis for the thematic structure of the training courses is the DAR-Brochure No. 9 "Training Program for Assessors in the German-speaking area" (only available in German language). Four training blocks are offered:

- Fundamentals of Quality Management in testing, inspection and certification bodies (Block A - 2 days)
- Accreditation and assessment practice (Block B - 2 days)
- Human aspects (Block C - 1 day)
- Further qualification (Block E)

N. Bendix

News from international organisations

Conformity assessment to facilitate world trade

The conformity assessment according to harmonised technical and administrative rules, connected with international agreements on the acceptance of certificates, shall avoid multiple testing and thus accelerate commodity trade. This concept has been initiated by the EU to create a uniform European market and is - how practice shows - quite successful.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) follows the aim of facilitating trade on international scale. Consequently two paragraphs (No. 5 and 6) of the TBT-agreement (Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade) deal with conformity assessment. A Committee has been established at WTO in Geneva on February 14 1997, which shall make proposals for the organisation of an international system.

In these issues the European experiences will play an important role, but the complex system existing in Germany will not be transferable internationally without significant simplifications and cost reductions. A German proposal on these discussions is desirable as to avoid the often deplorable bureaucracy in conformity assessment on international scale. The results of the WTO Meetings will have influence on the European and therewith the German system. *H.-U. Mittmann*

IAF

At its last General Assembly (22./24.01.97) the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) - the worldwide merger between all accreditation systems for certification bodies - started to prepare the process of concluding an agreement for mutual recognition of certificates (MLA).

The respective procedures, which shall create comparable accreditation criteria and check whether the certificates issued are comparable worldwide, shall be harmonised.

Now a process of mutual evaluation starts, in which those accreditation systems take part, which already fulfill the harmonised international standards. It is important for the European accreditation systems that the signed EAC-MLA (Multilateral Agreement of the European Accreditation of Certification) is checked by IAF for its effectiveness. In case of a positive result IAF will recognise the EAC-MLA without any further evaluation of the European accreditation systems. The same procedure shall be performed with other regional groups (e. g. PAC - Pacific Accreditation Cooperation, IAAC - Interamerican Accreditation Cooperation). The final aim are worldwide harmonised requirements and resulting therefrom the worldwide recognition of certificates for quality management systems, environmental management systems and products.

M. Wloka

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Two joint Seminars of DAR, EUROLAB, EURACHEM, VMPA and BAM held in February 1997

Technical requirements for the quality management system in accreditation and uncertainty of results

Both Workshops took place on the 5 and 6 February 1997, after the "Tutors' exchange of experiences" organised by DAR (3./4.2.1997). Guests from eight European countries, also from Eastern Europe, were among the approx. hundred participants at each Seminar.
Of main interest in both Seminars, opened by the Chairmen of EUROLAB-D - Prof. Dr. H. Czichos - and DAR - Prof. Dr. H.-U. Mittmann - , were the following topics:

- Uncertainty of results
- Validation
- Traceability
- Proficiency testing
- Development of international and European standards on quality management.

The Seminar held on 6 February 1997 was intensively dedicated to the topic "Uncertainty of result".

At the Seminar held on 5 February 1997 mainly the issue was discussed, whether and to what extent the existing requirements for the technical competence in accreditation increase the laboratories' competitiveness in the economic market "testing and analysis".

It was reached consensus that the technical competence of a laboratory is the necessary basis for its competitiveness. On the other hand the accreditation requirements should be appropriate and the accreditation should be cost-effective.

The requirements on the laboratory to validate test procedures should be limited to non-standardised and in-house test methods. Interlaboratory comparisons should be supported as a means for comparability in testing on a voluntary basis at national and international scale.

At the Workshop examples were presented how to evaluate the uncertainty of results in specific testing fields. The Workshop started with the presentation of basic concepts and terms as well as the philosophy of the "Guide on the expression of Uncertainty in Measurement" (GUM), issued by ISO and other organisations in 1993.

Afterwards models for specific problem solutions and other approaches were discussed in four thematic Working Groups.

R. Schmidt

New ad hoc-Working Groups of the DAR-AZ established

The DAR-Committee "Cooperation between the mandatory and the voluntary areas" (DAR-AZ) started to formally harmonise the operations of the accreditation bodies. Therefor two new ad hoc-Working Groups have been established on a voluntary basis:

- "Harmonisation of the structuring of the accreditation bodies' Quality Manuals (QM)"
- "Elaboration of uniform checklists for assessment according to the EN 45000 standards series."

Various representatives of the accreditation bodies operating in the mandatory and voluntary areas cooperate in these ad hoc-Groups.

The aim of these ad hoc-Groups is to harmonise the procedural steps as well as documents and forms of the several accreditation bodies.

As to be able to represent the German system in a transparent and uniform way on international level, it is encouraged to elaborate a standardised strcuture as example Quality Manual for the accreditation bodies operating under the aegis of DAR. Using this the following aims shall be reached:

- Standardised structure of the Quality Manual of the accreditation bodies operating within DAR
- Reduction of the translation extent when using the QM commonly
- Uniform procedures/operation of the accreditation bodies of DAR operating in horizontal fields. The Quality Manual shall represent the lowest common level.
- Accreditation bodies not yet having a Quality Manual or being in the development stage can use the QM immediately.

A three level structuring is proposed:

1st Level: Quality Manual (QM)

2nd Level: Operational procedures

3rd Level: Forms, specimen, operation procedures

S. Stobbe

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News from standardisation

The following table gives a survey of new and future standards in the field of accreditation, certification and testing. When revising these standards, the decision of CEN/CENELEC was considered to bring the European standards in line with the international Guides, where possible.

European standards	State of revision	ISO/IEC-Guides	State of revision	Application documents
EN 45001 (1989) "General criteria for the operation of testing laboratories"	*At present*: revision together with ISO Guide 25	***ISO Guide 25 (1990)*** "General requirements for the competence of calibration and testing laboratories"	1st draft submitted	EAL-G5, EAL-G15, EAL-G16, EAL-G18, EAL-G19
EN 45002 (1989) "General criteria for the assessment of testing laboratories "				EAL-G9, EAL-G14
EN 45003 (1995) "Calibration and testing laboratory accreditation systems - General re-quirements for operation and recognition"		***ISO Guide 58 (1993)*** "Calibration and testing laboratory accreditation systems - General re-quirements for operation and recognition"		EAL-G7, EAL-G8, EAL-G9, EAL-G10, EAL-G14
EN 45004 (1995) "General criteria for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection"				EAL-G24
prEN 45010 "General requirements for assessment and accredita-tion of certification/ registration bodies"	standard to be expected in 1997	***ISO Guide 61 (1996)*** "General requirements for assessment and accredita-tion of certification / registration bodies"		EAC-G1, IAF-ISO 61
EN 45011 (1989) "General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems"	new standard (ISO Guide 65) to be expected in 1997	***ISO Guide 65 (1996)*** "General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems"		EAC-G2
EN 45012 (1989) "General requirements for bodies operating assess--ment and certification"	new standard (ISO Guide 62) to be expected in 1997	***ISO Guide 62 (1996)*** "General requirements for bodies operating assess-ment and certification / registration of quality systems"		EAC-G3, IAF-ISO 62
EN 45013 (1989) "General criteria for certi-fication bodies operating certification of personnel"				EAC-G4
EN 45014 (1989) "General criteria for suppliers' declaration of conformity"	*At present*: revision (ISO Guide 22), new standard to be expected in 1997	***ISO Guide 22 (1996)*** "General criteria for supplier's declaration of conformity"		
Multilateral Agreements for accreditation systems			being drawn up in ISO/CASCO WG 11	EAC-S4, EAC-S7, IAF-WG2, EAL-S3, EAL-P1
		ISO Guide 43 (1996) "Development and opera-tion of laboratory profi-ciency testing"		EAL-G6

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Imprint:
Editor: Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung und -prüfung (BAM), DAR Secretariat, Unter den Eichen 87 D-12205 Berlin, GERMANY (0049-30-8104-1942, Responsible for redaction: Dr. M. Wloka, BAM-S.42 (April 1997)
http://www.bam.de/dar/darhome.html **e-mail: dar@bam.de**

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