

Notes from UKAS QMSAC meeting 4 December 2007 – Arthur Hill deputising for Arthur Dransfield on behalf of INTELLECT

Items requiring Intellect decision

Nothing to report.

Reports of progress

The meeting was chaired by Kevin Thomas (Director, Quality Policy, MOD).

The meeting looked at the minutes and actions of the previous meeting which were agreed as a true record.

No progress has been made so far in getting the chairmen of QMSAC and EMSAC (Environmental Management System Advisory Committee) to get together to discuss areas of common interest and overlaps. It is hoped that a meeting can be facilitated early in the New Year.

MOD have offered to share information packs relating to what a CB auditor should know when auditing a MOD supplier with ABCB and IIOC. Completion of the action is pending MOD confirming that the current packs are up to date.

MOD wish to witness UKAS carrying out an Accreditation audit on a CB. It was agreed that Kevin Thomas will observe UKAS carrying out an HQ audit of SGS early in the New Year. A provisional date of 15 January 2008 has been set for a working party meeting to discuss the guidance to CBs on the number of auditor days needed for certification audits. It looks like LRQA would not be available on 15 January, the meeting is therefore likely to get rescheduled. UKAS are keen for wide involvement, so the date is like to be flexible. In discussing how this guidance could be fed into the CBs, a significant obstacle became apparent. UKAS cannot unilaterally issue mandays guidance, it would have to become part of the formal Accreditation standards (probably ISO 17021). This would require the active sponsorship of the IAF. It was thought unlikely that this could be achieved rapidly, if at all. MOD then stated that they may need to consider sponsoring a Sector Scheme in order to get what they considered essential, but they would do this very reluctantly.

There was discussion of the effects of Non-accredited certificates on the reputation of the industry. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence of the operation of companies such as QMS, however both the ABCB and IIOC had failed to provide any concrete data. The action was continued for them to supply such evidence.

MOD are looking at auditor competence and have done some work to define competency standards for MOD auditors. It was agreed that this work would be fed into UKAS for them to use in discussions regarding the development of ISO 17021, part 2. There seems to be a significant difference in the interpretation of auditor competence requirements internationally. UKAS take the view that CBs must ensure that their auditors can DEMONSTRATE their up to date technical ability, apparently some CBs are content on the basis of education and past experience. IIOC have cried foul and don't want UKAS setting higher barriers than other Accreditation Bodies since they want a level playing field. The minutes from the last IAF meeting reaffirm that the requirements of ISO 17021 apply (ie it is up to CBs to determine their auditors competence). (This difference in interpretation may explain in some part why ISO 9001 is not perceived as being effective.)

IAF have produced a new initiative by defining expected outcomes from the application of management systems standards, specifically ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. The ISO 9001 outcomes are just what you would expect, but it is still helpful to see them clearly spelled out as goals.

The draft ISO/DIS 9001 produced by ISO/TC 176/SC2 was briefly discussed. The view of the meeting was that this is a missed opportunity since nothing has materially changed from the 2000 version. Even worse, the next realistic date for a truly revised version will now be 2012, or even 2015.

The forward programme of work for QMSAC was discussed and for each work item, an owner and a target date were agreed. Some of the draft work item descriptions were marginally changed due to the IIOC representative being slightly unhappy with the original wording.

Future Themes for meetings were proposed to be: Sector Schemes; Auditor competence and; auditor mandays guidance.

Items of potential Intellect interest

Ongoing MOD programme of working with 3rd Party certification companies to plan the audits of Defence contractors.

Ongoing QMSAC work programme.

IAF definition of Expected Outcomes from ISO 9001 certification.

Remote possibility of a MOD Sector Scheme being created.

UKAS workshop (early 2008) to develop guidance to CBs for auditor Mandays table needed in quotations for ISO 9001 certification.

Date of the next meeting.

2nd week in April 2008