

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>SECTIONS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. TERMS AND DESCRIPTIONS	2
3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS	3
4. REPORTING TO NBE	3-4
5. CONDUCTING CERTIFICATION BODY ASSESSMENTS	4-6

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This guidance sets out the rules and standards to be followed for the license of accreditation bodies.

A accreditation body that applies for license shall submit information on its operations and personnel employed by it as well as its organizational chart to NBE.

To ensure that a Accreditation Body is objective, it is required to assess the structure established by it, assess its competence, review its accreditation scheme and applicable normative documents, assess the management system of its head office (including other locations, if any), assess the accreditation granting operations when applicable as well as witness assessment.

The purpose of assessment is to verify whether the Accreditation Body has a system that complies with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 and applicable guidance documents.

The information provided by the accreditation body to the assessors and case officers of NBE shall be strictly kept confidential and shall not be disclosed to third parties before, during and after the assessment.

The license process of a accreditation body is carried out in accordance with the requirements of this document.

Additionally, the requirements set out in the applicable NBE guidelines/documents relating to license for approval and in the applicable i-NAF/IAF/ILAC documents shall also be satisfied in addition to this Guideline.

## **2. TERMS AND DESCRIPTIONS**

### **License:**

Accreditation permit issued for NSO-NAP Series Standards (e.g., NSO-NAP 7 Vegan-Vegetarian Certification Accreditation).

### **Natural Accreditation Body (NAB):**

The Body that accredits Certification Bodies/Testing Laboratories in accordance with NSO-NAP Series Standard(s).

### **Certification Bodies:**

Certificate or test report issuing body.

### **3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

3.1 In order to serve as an Natural Accreditation Body (NAB) for the NBE NSO-NAP Series Standards License Program, an NAB shall agree in writing to the following requirements:

- a) Entering into a License Agreement (FR-0-12) with NBE to grant NSO-NAP Series Standards Accreditations.
- b) Comply at all times with the NBE and/or i-NAF conditions, criteria and publications for recognition of accreditation bodies for the NBE NSO-NAP Series Standards License Program.
- c) Operate its accreditation program in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011, "Conformity assessment: General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies."
- d) Maintain its status as a signatory to the International Natural Accreditation Forum and International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and/or International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Mutual Recognition Arrangement/Multi-Lateral Arrangement (MRA/MLA). Inform NBE, in writing, within 30 days of any change in signatory status in the i-NAF/IAF/ILAC MRA/MLA.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *Natural Accreditation Bodies (NABs) that do not have an i-NAF membership must be a member of i-NAF before the cycle period expires.*

- e) Within the NAB's assessor training program, include training on the current requirements described in the NBE NSO-NAP Series Standards License Requirements. Assessors must be trained prior to performing assessments and continue to be provided new and refresher courses. As per ISO/IEC 17011, training should be conducted as needed to ensure the NAB maintains a sufficient number of competent personnel given the work performed.

### **4. REPORTING TO NBE**

- 4.1 Submit an electronic copy of the quality management system documentation required in Section 5 of ISO/IEC 17011.
- 4.2 Participate in meetings with NBE as necessary as part of continual improvement efforts in the enhanced license programs. During these meetings, the NAB will be expected to brief NBE staff on the status of the program, common deficiencies, and issues related to accreditation of organizations. NBE and the NAB will jointly determine whether the meeting should take place by telephone or in-person.

- 4.3 Report to NBE within 30 days of any major changes that affect the NAB's:
- a) Legal, commercial, organizational, or ownership status;
  - b) Organization and management, e.g., key managerial staff;
  - c) Policies or procedures, where appropriate;
  - d) Location;
  - e) Personnel, facilities, working environment or other resources, where significant;
  - f) Other such matters that may affect the NAB's capability, scope of recognized activities, or compliance with the NSO-NAP Series Standard(s) requirements and relevant technical documents.
- 4.4 Forward any questions related to NSO-NAP Series Standard(s) Accredited Certification Bodies procedures to NBE for resolution, and abide by the decisions of NBE relative to the resolution of those questions.
- 4.5 Upon request, provide NBE with electronic copies of NSO-NAP Series Standard(s) Accredited Certification Bodies information including:
- a) Accreditation effective date;
  - b) Accreditation expiration date (if applicable);
  - c) NSO-NAP Series Standard(s)-relevant accredited scopes.
- 4.6 Notify NBE immediately in writing, and update the NAB's website to document any action that adversely affects the accreditation status of an NBE-recognized accredited certification body.
- 4.7 Upon request, provide NBE with copies of certification body accreditation assessment documentation related to NSO-NAP Series Standard(s) accreditation, including corrective action plans, and documentation of resolution of deficiencies. Certification Bodies' consent to this is a condition of their recognition by NBE.

## **5. CONDUCTING CERTIFICATION BODIES ASSESSMENTS**

- 5.1 Assess certification bodies operations for compliance with NBE NSO-NAP Series Standard Certification License Requirements.

- a) Upon a satisfactory outcome, attest to the technical competence of certification bodies to perform criteria required for Licensed Certification Body qualification as outlined in the License of NSO-NAP Series Standard(s) Certification Bodies Requirements(G-0-01). This should include ensuring that the list of specific NSO-Standard(s) for which the Certification Body has been accredited is included within the certification bodies' scope of accreditation.
- b) Notify NBE of any observed related NSO-NAP Series Standard Certification interpretations that require clarification.
- c) Assess documentation demonstrating the impartiality and freedom of certification body management and personnel from any undue internal or external commercial, financial or other pressures and influences that may adversely affect the quality of their work, as required by ISO/IEC 17065 and/or ISO/IEC 17021-1/ISO/IEC 17025.

NOTE: It is NBE's expectation that NABs will systematically monitor the impartiality of certification bodies on an ongoing basis. Document review, consistent with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 and/or ISO/IEC 17021-1 and/or ISO/IEC 17025, shall include but may not be limited to the following:

- i) organization chart showing that the responsibilities, authorities, and interrelationships of all personnel who manage, perform or verify certification/testing are free from influence that may adversely affect the quality of their work;
- ii) dates of internal audits, audit findings, and any corrective actions taken;
- iii) any customer complaints and corrective action taken;
- iv) original certification/testing records containing sufficient information for repeatability, including the names of staff who participated;
- v) evidence that certification employees participate in and regularly pass ethics and compliance audits; and,
- vi) evidence that mechanisms for reporting and responding to attempts to exert undue influence on certification/test results are in place.

- 5.2 Conduct complete on-site assessments of each certification body/laboratory per the i-NAF MLA and/or IAF-MLA/ILAC-MRA (See, Clause 3-IMPORTANT NOTE) and ISO/IEC 17011 requirements.
- 5.3 Verify that all assessment findings are resolved and corrective actions have been implemented before granting accreditation to a certification body/testing laboratory.

- 5.4 Allow NBE, at its discretion, to witness any assessments performed for compliance with the requirements of the verification certification/testing program. NBE agrees to jointly determine with the NAB when such witnessing will occur so as not to disrupt the NAB's assessment schedule, and to operate solely as an observer and not participate in any way with the assessment activities of the NAB and/or its assessors.
- 5.5 Publish and maintain on the NAB's website an up-to-date directory identifying all NBE recognized certification body/laboratories the NAB has accredited. At a minimum, this directory must include the following information:
- a) Certification Body/Laboratory name, address, and phone number;
  - b) Certification Body/Laboratory point of contact;
  - c) Accreditation effective date;
  - d) Accreditation expiration date (as applicable); and,
  - e) Scope of accreditation.
- 5.6 Maintain documentation relevant to the accreditation for at least five years.
- 5.7 Assume the responsibility of the Certification Body/Laboratory accreditation decision itself; the NAB cannot delegate fully or partially the accreditation decision to another organization.