Schedule for Implementation of ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 for Accreditation of Management System Certification Bodies

ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 ‘Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Part 2: Competence requirements for auditing and certification of environmental management systems’ was published on 1 December 2016. This standard was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 207 and the ISO Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO). ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 cancels and replaces ISO/IEC TS 17021-2: 2012, which has been technically revised.

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) at its 30th General Assembly passed a resolution (2016-14) endorsing a 2-year transition period for the next revision of ISO/IEC 17021-2. As the date of publication of ISO/IEC 17021-2 was 1 December 2016, the deadline for environmental management system (EMS) certification bodies to conform to ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 will be 1 December 2018. For details, please refer to IAF website at http://www.iaf.nu/upFiles/NewDelhiGAResolutionsFinal.pdf

1. Management system certification bodies applying for initial accreditation of EMS certification

Application for accreditation
Starting from 1 March 2017, HKAS Executive will accept applications for accreditation of EMS certification to ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016. HKAS Executive recommends that new applications for accreditation should be to these accreditation standards. Applications for accreditation of EMS certification to ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC TS 17021-2: 2012 will only be accepted on or before 1 April 2017.

Between 1 March 2017 and 28 February 2018, non-fulfilment of requirements against ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC TS 17021-2: 2012 will be raised as ‘Nonconformities (NCs)’. Obvious nonconformities against the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 will be raised as ‘Recommendations’*. Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC TS 17021-2: 2012 will be granted when the applicant certification body has rectified all critical and significant NCs to the satisfaction of HKAS Executive and has committed to rectify all minor NCs prior to the next reassessment.

To ensure a smooth transition to ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016, all new environmental management system certification bodies accredited to ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC TS 17021-2: 2012 shall prepare a transition plan detailing the changes to their management system and the time frame for implementation of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016. The transition plan shall be submitted to HKAS Executive within one month from the date of obtaining accreditation.

If accreditation cannot be granted to an applicant certification body within one year after the date of receipt of the application, HKAS Executive will suspend processing the application. HKAS Executive will resume processing of the application subject to payment of the second application fee and the confirmation by the applicant that it has implemented all the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016.
All non-fulfilment of requirements against ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 will be raised as NCs. The applicant certification body shall provide a plan for resolving all NCs identified in the assessment to HKAS Executive within one month of the assessment. Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 will be granted when the applicant certification body has rectified all critical and significant NCs to the satisfaction of HKAS Executive and has committed to rectify all minor NCs prior to the next reassessment.

2. Accredited management system certification bodies for EMS certification

To ensure a smooth transition to ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016, an accredited certification body shall prepare a transition plan detailing the changes to its management system and the time frame for implementation of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016. The transition plan shall be submitted to HKAS Executive by 1 May 2017. The transition shall normally be completed before 1 June 2018.

From 1 March 2017 onwards, all reassessments, assessments for extension of scope of accreditation and surveillance visits will be based on the requirements of either ISO/IEC TS 17021-2: 2012 or ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016. HKAS Executive will agree with the accredited certification body on the accreditation standards to be used prior to conducting the reassessment, assessment for extension or surveillance visit. For assessment based on ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016, certification bodies are required to submit HKAS Executive the ISO/IEC 17021-2 Checklist (available from HKAS Executive) together with associated documentation for review prior to on-site assessment. Obvious nonconformities against the new requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 found in an assessment based on ISO/IEC TS 17021-2: 2012 will be raised as ‘Recommendations’*.

If an accredited certification body wishes to be assessed to ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 earlier than the scheduled reassessment or surveillance visit, it may request HKAS Executive to carry out a specially arranged surveillance visit but it shall have to bear the cost of such visit.


Note: * Addressing the ‘Recommendations’ raised does not imply conformity with ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016. Conformity of the accredited certification body to ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016 will be assessed when the certification body has confirmed full implementation of the new requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-2: 2016.

HKAS Executive
1 March 2017