Schedule for Implementation of ISO 17034:2016 for Accreditation of Reference Material Producer

The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) passed a resolution at its General Assembly in November 2016 endorsing a 3-year transition period for the implementation of ISO 17034:2016 'General requirements for the competence of reference materials producers' on accreditation of reference material producer (RMP). As the date of publication of ISO 17034:2016 was 1 November 2016, the deadline for RMPs to conform to ISO 17034:2016 will be 31 October 2019. All accreditations to ISO Guide 34:2009 will become invalid after that date. Requirements of ISO 17034:2016 and related HOKLAS policy are now published in HOKLAS 022:2017.

1. RMP applying for initial accreditation

Application for accreditation

Starting from 3 April 2017, HKAS Executive will accept applications for accreditation to ISO 17034:2016. HKAS Executive recommends that new applications for accreditation should be based on this accreditation standard. Applications for accreditation to ISO Guide 34:2009 (HOKLAS 022:2015) will only be accepted on or before 1 May 2017.

Applications based on ISO Guide 34:2009

Between 3 April 2017 and 1 May 2018, nonconformities against the requirements of ISO Guide 34:2009 will be raised as 'Nonconformities (NCs)'. Obvious nonconformities against the requirements of ISO 17034:2016 will be raised as 'Recommendations'*. Accreditation to ISO Guide 34:2009 will be granted when the applicant RMP 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 17034:2016, all new RMPs accredited to ISO Guide 34:2009 shall prepare a transition plan detailing the changes to their management system and the time frame for implementation of the requirements of ISO 17034:2016. The transition plan shall be submitted to HKAS Executive within one month from the date of obtaining accreditation. The transition to ISO 17034:2016, including undergoing another assessment for compliance with the new standard by HKAS, shall normally be completed before 1 May 2019. The transition plan shall describe all the processes that lead to the completion of transition before 1 May 2019.

If accreditation cannot be granted to an applicant RMP within one year after the date of receipt of the application, HKAS Executive will suspend processing the application. The applicant RMP shall implement all the requirements of ISO 17034:2016 and submit an application fee before HKAS Executive resumes the accreditation process.

Applications based on ISO 17034:2016

All nonconformities against the requirements of ISO 17034:2016 will be raised as NCs. The applicant RMP shall provide a plan for resolving all NCs identified in the assessment to HKAS Executive within one month after the assessment. Accreditation to ISO 17034:2016 will be granted when the applicant RMP 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 RMP

To ensure a smooth transition to ISO 17034:2016, an accredited RMP shall prepare a transition plan detailing the changes to its management system and the time frame for implementation of the requirements of ISO 17034:2016. The transition plan shall be submitted to HKAS Executive by 1 May 2017. The transition to ISO 17034:2016, including undergoing an assessment for compliance with the new standard by HKAS, shall normally be completed before 1 May 2019. The transition plan shall describe all the processes that lead to the completion of transition before 1 May 2019.

From 3 April 2017 onwards, all reassessments, assessments for extension of scope of accreditation and surveillance visits of RMPs will be based on the requirements of either ISO Guide 34:2009 or ISO 17034:2016. HKAS Executive will agree with the accredited RMP on the accreditation standard to be used prior to conducting the reassessment, assessment for extension or surveillance visit. Obvious nonconformities against the new requirements of ISO 17034:2016 found in an assessment based on ISO Guide 34:2009 will be raised as 'Recommendations'*. If an accredited RMP wishes to be assessed to ISO 17034:2016 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.

3. Issue of Certificate of Accreditation referring to ISO 17034:2016

A Certificate of Accreditation referring to ISO 17034:2016 will be issued free of charge to an accredited RMP when conformity with ISO 17034:2016 has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of HKAS Executive.

Note: * Addressing the 'Recommendations' raised does not imply conformity with ISO 17034:2016. Conformity of the accredited RMP to ISO 17034:2016 will be assessed when the RMP has confirmed full implementation of the new requirements of ISO 17034:2016.

HKAS Executive
March 2017