



**Certified Once  
Accepted Everywhere**

# Why use an accredited certification body?

Third party management systems certification is a frequently specified requirement to operate in the global market place. It can demonstrate compliance to a standard, a code of practice or regulatory requirements. It can also deliver internal business improvement.



## Why use an accredited certification body?

Selecting the right organisation to carry out your certification can be fraught with unknowns. Choosing a certification body that has been accredited by an accreditation body that is a signatory to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) has proved that it complies with best practice. It is competent to deliver a consistently reliable and impartial service which meets the appropriate, internationally-recognised standard.

### What should I consider when selecting a Certification Body?

When selecting an organisation to certify your management system, there are a number of factors to consider:

- **Qualifications, training and ongoing competence monitoring of staff**
- **Technically competent people that have the relevant experience and sector expertise.**
- **The certification is recognised by procurers in domestic and overseas markets.**
- **The certification independently and impartially verifies compliance to a standard**

Accreditation is the independent evaluation of certification bodies against the standard ISO/IEC 17021: *(Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems)* to ensure their impartiality, competence and consistency. The standard sets out the principles and requirements for the competence, consistency and impartiality of bodies providing audit and certification of management systems services.

In many countries, accreditation is not mandatory. It should be noted that the fact that a certification body is not accredited does not, by itself, mean that it is not a reputable organization. However, many certification bodies choose to seek accreditation in order to be able to demonstrate an independent confirmation of their competence and independence.



# What are the benefits of using an accredited certification body?



There are many reasons why you should use the services of an accredited certification body:

- de-risk your procurement by taking the guesswork out of choosing a certification body by giving you confidence that you will get the service that closely meets your requirements;
- win new business particularly since the use of accredited conformity assessment services is increasingly a stipulation of specifiers in both the public and private sector;
- gain access to overseas markets since certificates issued by bodies that are accredited by an IAF MLA signatory are recognised and accepted throughout the world;
- help to identify best practice since the certification body is required to have appropriate knowledge of your business sector;
- control costs with the help of knowledge transfer since accredited certification bodies can be a good source of impartial advice;
- offer market differentiation and leadership by showing to others credible evidence of good practice;
- demonstrate due diligence in the event of legal action;
- reduce paperwork and increase efficiency by reducing the necessity to re-audit your business.



## Areas of management systems certification



While Quality Management System certification (to ISO 9001) accounts for a large proportion of work undertaken by certification bodies, there are other equally important areas of work, namely:

- Information Security Management Systems certification (ISO/IEC 27001)
- Environmental Management Systems certification (ISO14001)
- IT Service Management Systems certification (ISO 20000)
- Food Safety Management Systems certification (ISO 22000)
- Supply Chain Security Management Systems certification (ISO 28000)



## How do I find an Accredited Certification Body?

To find out if your country has an accreditation body, visit the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) website at [www.iaf.nu](http://www.iaf.nu) and use the IAF MLA signatories list to identify an accreditation body in your country or region.

Accreditation bodies in most countries publish lists or directories of the certification bodies they have accredited, which often include contact details and scope.

Accreditation is the independent evaluation of certification bodies against recognised standards to ensure their impartiality, competence and consistency.

The purpose of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA), is to ensure mutual recognition of accredited certification between signatories to the MLA, and subsequently acceptance of accredited certification in many markets based on one accreditation.

Accreditation and the IAF MLA help regulators meet their own legislated responsibilities by providing a globally recognised system to accept accredited certification.





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## More information about IAF and accreditation

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) is a global association of Accreditation Bodies, Certification Body Associations and other organisations involved in conformity assessment activities in a variety of fields including management systems, products and personnel.

IAF Members work together on a worldwide basis to achieve common trade facilitation objectives by developing the principles and practices for the conduct of conformity assessment that will deliver the confidence needed for market acceptance.

IAF promotes the worldwide acceptance, of certificates of conformity issued by certification bodies accredited by an IAF MLA signatory and seeks to add value for all stakeholders through its activities and programs.

*For more information contact:*

**IAF Secretariat**

Elva Nilsen  
28 Chemin Old Chelsea  
Box 1811  
Chelsea, Quebec  
CANADA J9B 1A0

Phone: +1 (613) 454 8159

Email: [iaf@iaf.nu](mailto:iaf@iaf.nu)  
[www.iaf.nu](http://www.iaf.nu)

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