Association of British Certification Bodies

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**Minutes of the ABCB Management Committee Meeting
held on 3 September 2015 at BSI, Kitemark Court, Davy Avenue,
Knowlhill, Milton Keynes, MK5 8PP**

Members present:

Ms Carolyn Hariris	AFNOR UK – Acting Chair
Mr Frank Lee	BSI
Mr Matt Gantley	NQA
Mr Wayne Thomas	SIRA
Dr Jeremy Hodge	BASEC

In attendance:

Mr Trevor Nash	Chief Executive
Ms Karen Green	BSI
Mr Kevin Belson	UKAS
Mr Nigel Overton	UKAS

1.0 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies. Carolyn Harris agreed to chair the meeting and welcomed Kevin Belson and Nigel Overton to the meeting.

2.0 Minutes of last meeting held on 4 June 2015

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3.0 Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4.0 Meetings

4.1 UKAS PAC

The revised customer agreement is almost ready for issue. Final advice is being taken on the level of liabilities required.

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The UKAS approach for the ISO 9001:2015 transition is supported by the majority of other accreditation bodies. The UKAS programme for early adopters is progressing against the guidelines agreed as is the training programme for UKAS staff. Eight certification bodies are on the programme with the first accreditations expected by mid-October.

MoD noted the efforts made by UKAS to restore confidence in the process and expressed disappointment that the IAF has not supported the UKAS approach.

There was concern that procurers, particularly in the USA, will write the new standard into contracts before UK companies are able to comply and that the failure to reach agreement has not reflected well on the international accreditation community.

The new Government is committed to finding savings of £10bn from deregulatory measures and there will be statutory monitoring against this target with the Secretary of State being required to report annually to Parliament.

UKAS is working hard to build good relationships with the new Government, building on the successes of recent years. The continuity of many in the Ministerial teams is helpful in this respect as is the renewed emphasis on deregulation and public sector efficiency.

BSI reported on the results of a recent study into the economic benefits of standards which concludes that standards add £8.2bn to the economy each year. Sectoral results vary with food and drink showing the biggest added value. The report confirms that there are clear business benefits from using standards.

Paul Stennett commented although not specifically stated, there is clear read-across to accreditation and he would consider whether more work could be done to link the results to accreditation.

The reorganisation is proceeding to plan. All posts have been advertised and the allocation of staff to posts has been completed. Staff will be taking up their new posts from 1 August. From September, customers will see a handover to new Assessment Managers with about half having new AMs.

Mike Pearson reported that he is still working to raise awareness of accreditation amongst the small business community. An article has been published in the FSB magazine, First Voice. He noted that the working group set up to discuss this subject has not met for some time and would welcome the revival of this group.

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| 4.2 | EACC | 6/7 October 2015 |

The meeting will be held in Lisbon and will be the last chaired by the current Chairman. Kevin Belson will be taking over as Chairman after this meeting. The draft agenda is out but no papers are yet available. There will be a discussion session on ISO/IEC 17021:2105 focussing on the following two questions:

What are the implications of the changes to impartiality requirements, especially with regard to the removal of the specific requirement for an impartiality committee:

- what changes and alternatives might be implemented by certification bodies;
- what do national accreditation bodies need to do differently to assess them?

Consider clauses 9.6.3.2.4 and 9.6.3.2.5. Please offer a practical interpretation of these clauses in terms of decision dates and information on certificates:

- can a certification body take a recertification decision after the expiry date of the certification ?

There will be the usual session on frequently asked questions, but the questions are not yet available. The EA Executive Committee is still refusing to make the answers to these questions publicly available on the EA website. Kevin Belson stated that if EA continues with this policy, UKAS will look at the possibility of publishing them on the UKAS website. He also noted that the questions relating to ISO/IEC 17021 will need to be reviewed in the light of the revised standard.

| 4.3 | IAF | 28 Oct – 6 Nov 2015 |

EA is strengthening its position in IAF. Emanuele Riva (ACCREDIA - Italy) has been elected as IAF Vice Chair and Norman Brunner (AA - Austria) has been elected as Chair of the MLA Committee. Both take over these roles following the next round of meetings.

IAF is continuing with developing a business case for establishing a global database of management systems certificates. At this stage a principles document is being drafted and it is expected this will be on the General Assembly agenda.

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There will then need to be a ballot to agree the principles which will either be at the GA or following it, depending on the level of comments. Essential elements are:

o   It must be self funding but not a means of making money for IAF;
o   It will be mandatory for AB's to provide details of accredited CB's, but voluntary for CB's and their clients;
o   There must be controls to prevent data mining;
o   It should address as many languages as possible;
o   It will include all MS standards and schemes accredited by IAF member accreditation bodies irrespective of whether they are MLA signatories.

Jeremy Hodge had concerns about the effectiveness of this type of database based on experience of the European product database which is ineffective. He also questioned the justification for this database. Trevor Nash replied that the concept arose from a report by a consultant who had conducted a UNIDO sponsored survey of management systems certification in Asia and had found it difficult to verify the status of some certificates. Whether there is sufficient market demand, however, is another question. Carolyn Harris expressed concerns over the costs and that language is a major problem, especially if the initial problem arose in Asia.

The Conformity Assessment Bodies Advisory Committee (CABAC) has sent a communiqué to the IAF Executive Committee regarding a number of areas that it feels warrant the greatest attention. These are:

•   Inconsistency between accreditation bodies;
•   Greater active participation of members in meetings;
•   Strengthening the peer evaluation process:
•   Engagement with as wide an audience as possible on the proposed database of MS certificates.

This has been received positively by the Executive Committee and the Chair, Vice Chair and Vice Chair elect will attend the CABAC meeting in Milan.

4.4   EA General Assembly   25/26 Nov 2015

No information on the meeting is available. The main area of contention is the statement in EA-INF/04 regarding recognition of certificates issued to organisations in the EU by CB's in the EU under a non-EU accreditation.

For CABs established in EU: Regulation (EC) 765/2008 requires that, where a conformity assessment body requests accreditation, it shall do so with the national accreditation body of the Member State in which it is established (or with the national accreditation body to

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which it had recourse under the conditions of Article 7(1)). Hence <LOCAL AB> cannot make any statement on reports/certificates issued by a conformity assessment body established in the European Union under accreditations different from the above mentioned National Accreditation Bodies for activities to be carried out in the EU, or for attestations issued for the EU market as in these cases the relevant provisions of EU legislation have not been fully complied with.

Trevor Nash reported that he had asked the Chair of the EA Horizontal Harmonisation Committee what this actually means and has not received a clear answer. The conclusion given was that when asked the question about the recognition of such certificates an EU accreditation body remains silent.

The issue has been raised with IAF by IAAR (the American association of management systems certification bodies) and is likely to be raised at the IAF (and possibly ILAC) GA. The question is whether this stance complies with the obligations of IAF (and ILAC) MLA signatories to recognise each others accredited certificates. At the previous GA there was the suggestion that if EA proceeded with this approach it could result in the suspension of EA (and its members) from the IAF MLA.

Randy Dougherty's initial view is that it is not a problem as accreditation bodies must comply with local legislation. However, there is an argument that whilst the Regulation requires an EU based certification body seeking accreditation to do so from its national accreditation body there is nothing to prevent the certification body also seeking accreditation from a non-EU accreditation body nor that they shall only issue EU based accredited certificates in the EU. Therefore, the statement that the EU legislation not been fully complied with can be questioned. To use the HHC Chair's words, the Regulation is silent on the subject.

In reality the recognition of certificates is unlikely to be a major issue but the suspension of EA from the IAF MLA would have a significant impact on EU based certification bodies.

5.0   EFAC   22 Sept

Trevor Nash reported that it appeared there would be a reasonable attendance at this meeting. The financial situation of EFAC is satisfactory but members attending meetings to represent EFAC fund themselves except for the registration fee. There is an outstanding issue regarding the Greek association who have not paid any fees for three years. There have been attempts to reach some sort of compromise arrangement with them but these have been unsuccessful. It is likely that a decision to formally suspend them from membership will be taken at the meeting.

Trevor Nash raised the question of ABCB's continued participation in EFAC which is reviewed each year. Frank Lee emphasised that maintaining the

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link to EA is important as many decisions that affect members are taken in EA.

Jeremy Hodge commented that in many areas organisation are moving away from joining national associations to joining European associations and wondered whether merging ABCB and EFAC could be a way forward for the future. It was noted that there are only two significant national interests which are UKAS and MoD. Trevor Nash agreed to raise this at the forthcoming meeting.

Action: Trevor Nash

6.0 Chief Executive's report

6.1 Management accounts – July 2015

Trevor Nash presented the July management accounts. Most basic subscription have been paid and those outstanding are being chased. There is a potential issue with one Member who has still not paid their 2014/2015 turnover related subscription. This is also being chased and Trevor Nash agreed to provide an update at the next meeting.

Action: Trevor Nash

Expenditure is under control but it was noted that there is little expenditure on subscriptions to date. The IAF and subscriptions will be due on 1 January. However, the EFAC subscription will be offset against a number of items of expenditure for which ABCB has paid on behalf of EFAC.

Trevor Nash requested a replacement PC as the current one is now six years old and becoming inefficient. This was agreed.

7.0 Any other business

There were no items of other business.

8.0 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday 7 December at NQA, Warwick House, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU5 5ZX, commencing at 10.30.

9.0 UKAS

Keith Goddard of British Assessment Bureau and Max Linnemann of the National Measurement Office joined the meeting fro this item.

9.1 UKAS update

Kevin Belson reported that transitions are the major issue for UKAS at present. The ISO/IEC 17024 and ISO/IEC 17065 transitions were both

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successfully completed on time and that UKAS is learning from these in planning future transitions.

The ISO 9001:2015 transition is under way with the early adopters and UKAS is working with others. Although there are differences in approach from accreditation bodies others, such as ANAB, are following the document developed at the IAF Technical Committee meeting in April. It has been suggested that future IAF transition documents should be mandatory rather than informative. UKAS has held a webinar on ISO 9001:2015 which Matt Gantley thought was excellent. He asked if there would be a similar webinar for ISO 14001:2015 and Kevin Belson replied that there would not as it is too late. It is, however, the intention to hold webinars for all future transitions. The ISO 14001:20215 transition is in a similar position but slightly behind ISO 9001:2015. Certification bodies are reminded that if they perform an assessment against the FDIS they must verify the validity of the assessment against the published version.

A webinar on ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 is planned and details of the transition arrangements have been circulated. UKAS is, however, not pushing for assessments due to the other transitions and the need to check the compliance of schemes with the revised standard.

UKAS has submitted two discussion papers to the EACC. The first relates to whether it is acceptable to omit details of certain sites from certificates due to significant security risks. Jeremy Hodge commented that, if it was agreed, the criteria would need to be clearly defined to prevent abuse. The second relates to the relationship between certification bodies and consultants.

The UKAS restructure is on target to be completed by February 2016 and all staff know their new positions. Most customers have been allocated internally. Approximately 30% (800) are classified as smaller customers and will not have a dedicated Assessment Manager. Complex customers will have a dedicated Assessment Manager who will be the focal point for all accreditations. Max Linnemann asked if there is a definition of complex customer. Nigel Overton replied that it is generally one with more than one standard or multiple sites, but size may also play a part as could overseas sites. Only around 15 certification bodies are classified as small customers and most are laboratories.

Jeremy Hodge asked when customers would be informed of any changes in their Assessment Managers and Kevin Belson replied that this be later in the year commencing in October. Assessment activity would continue as normal as the new structure settles down.

Changes to the technical team have been announced and a technical support team is being established to provide a technical focus with individuals looking after sectors and technologies. Jeremy Hodge asked if there would be any changes to resourcing levels in

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administration and decision making. Nigel Overton replied that decision making is based in the technical sections and would be spread more widely.

Carolyn Harris asked if UKAS could provide a structure overview at the next meeting. Nigel Overton replied that this could be possible but if not if would be available for the following meeting. He added that it may be necessary to review attendance at this meeting as it may be appropriate for the technical focus for certification to attend.

9.2   Other UKAS Matters

With the expected publication of ISO 45001 in 2016, Matt Gantley asked about the transition arrangements. Trevor Nash replied that a Task Force under the IAF Technical Committee is looking at this. There is debate about the arrangements as ISO 45001 is a new standard and the term migration is being used rather than transition. One possibility due to it being a new standard is that to migrate existing OHSAS 18001 certified clients to accredited ISO 45001 certification may require a stage one and stage two assessment.

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