Association of British Certification Bodies

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**Minutes of the ABCB Management Committee Meeting
held on 12 July 2012 at Intertek, LSAS Building,
Imperial Park, Randalls Way, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7TS**

Members present:

Mike Lawson	Intertek, Acting Chairman
Steve Russell	The Ascertiva Group
Carolyn Harris	AFNOR UK
Bernard Anderson	Eagle Certification
Andrew Launn	BSI

In Attendance:

Trevor Nash	Chief Executive

1.0 Apologies for Absence

Trevor Nash informed the Committee that Rob Wallis had left BSI and proposed that as Chairman elect Mike Lawson should chair the meeting. This was agreed. Andrew Launn is the new BSI representative.

Apologies had been received from Ian Knott and from Emma Clancy, for whom Steve Russell deputised. Neither Lorraine Turner nor Jeff Ruddle from UKAS were able to attend.

2.0 Minutes of last meeting held on 3 April 2012

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3.0 Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda

3.1 Ex Minute 3.1 Transforming Regulatory Enforcement

Trevor Nash reported that this is being progressed through the establishment of focus groups to look at specific areas of regulation. Completed focus areas to date are the chemicals sector and small businesses in food manufacture. Active focus groups are volunteer events, coastal assets and

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developments and pubs. Information is available on
www.discuss.bis.gov.uk/focusonenforcement

UKAS has an inside track with Better Regulation and is consulted. Reviews are
not public consultation but UKAS circulate details to stakeholders as
appropriate. Individuals do, however, have the opportunity to comment
through the website.

3.3   Ex Minute 3.3   UKAS Complaints Policy

Trevor Nash reported that he had spoken with Jeff Ruddle who had confirmed
that appropriate technical expertise was involved in resolving this complaint.
In addition it has been reviewed by a second technical expert, Peter Martin,
who has confirmed the original decision. Peter Martin will also be present at
the next UKAS assessment of the CB concerned.

Bernard Anderson stated that the previous week he had spoken with Peter
Martin who claimed he had not seen the complaint. RIES has visited the
certified company in question and found they do not have planning
permission, have no policy and have no knowledge of audit and
management review. The company is also being investigated by the Scottish
Fraud Squad regarding obtaining police contracts based on their
questionable certification. Bernard Anderson agreed to follow this up with
UKAS.

Action: Bernard Anderson

Bernard Anderson informed the Committee that he is taking the lead on PAS
43 by getting certification bodies to agree a process for dealing with issues
and informing UKAS of those that do not participate or agree.

Carolyn Harris reported an incident two years ago, where UKAS had not taken
account of some documentation submitted by AFNOR UK in processing a
complaint. Bernard Anderson suggested that if a complaint was not upheld
UKAS should provide some evidence and that they should state what
documentation had been taken into account. Mike Lawson suggested ABCB
should air their concerns regarding the UKAS complaints procedure.

Action: Trevor Nash

4.0   Meetings

4.1   Joint WG on non-accredited certification bodies

Trevor Nash reported that the Joint Working Group had met on 30 May and
that a representative from the Advertising Standards Authority gave a
presentation on the activities of ASA and identified areas where action may
be initiated against organisations making false claims, especially on websites.
It was agreed that the WG would review a number of non-accredited
certification body websites to see if there are any claims that can be
challenged.

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It was noted that the BIS advice has changed from 'encouraging' accredited certification to 'recommending' it.

BSI had written to the ISO Certification Agency regarding their use of ISO in their company name and listing ten required actions along with the consequencies of not taking appropriate action. However, to date, the ISO Certification Agency website has not changed.

As most accredited certification bodies do at some time issue non-accredited certificates it is proposed to amend the ABCB Code of Practice to state that Members will operate in accordance with the appropriate accreditation standards when issuing non-accredited certificates. The proposed change this will be put to the AGM.

Action: Trevor Nash

4.2   IAF TC   27 Apr – 1 May 2012

The Decision Log is still not available on the IAF website. There was a proposal to publish it on the members' only web site and if possible include a search function. Since accredited certification bodies are required to comply with IAF TC decisions the Committee considered that the Decision Log should be more widely available and Trevor Nash agreed to raise this with the TC.

Action: Trevor Nash

WG is working on extending the MLA to include personnel certification. One issue is that there will have to be a process for endorsing schemes.

The Product Certification WG is determining whether there is a need for a MD document for the implementation of ISO/IEC 17065. The IAF TC is recommending a transition period of three years from publication for the application of ISO/IEC 17065.

The Task Force on the development of a document on the competence of accreditation body assessors has produced a document on the job analysis and validation report for Accreditation Body Assessors. It was suggested this should be publicly available on the IAF website.

A draft revision of GD3, cross frontier accreditation has been agreed by the Task Force for circulation to the TC for comment. There are some important changes which recognise that key activities are not necessarily performed at discrete locations and also that accreditation bodies have a responsibility to verify compliance of a certification body with all of the requirements of the accreditation standard not only those concerning key activities. It is considered that in many instances 'non-critical' locations may pose greater threats to credibility.

The document on the assessment of certification body competence has been agreed for circulation for ballot.

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UKAS had raised the issue of consultancy being provided under the same corporate brand as certification by some organisations and that this is a risk to impartiality and could be misleading to potential clients. The TC considered that the incidents, raised by UKAS, were based on anecdotal incidents and not supported by any factual evidence. The consensus of the TC was that, since the concerns were not established as factual, this concern should be forwarded to the WG on Enhancing the Performance of Accredited Management Systems Certification who may choose to collect further, factual, information.

There was consensus of the IAF Technical Committee to endorse a two year (from publication) transition for the implementation of all relevant newly published ISO/CASCO conformity assessment standards unless overridden by the need to produce a specific guidance document as agreed by the IAF TC. There was also discussion regarding the timely production of guidelines to accreditation standards to coincide with the publication of the standard. There was consensus of the IAF Technical Committee that this issue be passed on to the Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC) and the Users Advisory Committee (UAC) via the Executive Committee (EC) for consideration and action as a strategic issue and to provide direction to the TC.

There was consensus of the IAF Technical Committee to endorse the proposal that interpretations of IAF documents reached by local, national or regional groups should be confirmed by the relevant IAF Task Forces.

4.3   EA General Assembly

Trevor Nash attended the EA General Assembly on behalf of EFAC on 23 and 24 May.

EA's current strategic objectives are:

> Developing the internal audit programme

> Monitoring of peer evaluation process

There was a report on the EA internal audit and one of the areas for improvement identified was greater involvement of stakeholders in the development of documents. The 2012 internal audit will look at the peer evaluation process amongst other things.

There is a draft SOGS paper covering non accreditation activities of national accreditation bodies and the activities of organisations, other than national accreditation bodies that are providing accreditation. It is expected that the two topics will be separated into two separate papers.

There may be another SOGS paper regarding what is effective participation in EA by member accreditation bodies in terms of their contribution to EA.

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ATS, the Serbian national Accreditation body has become a full member of EA as Serbia is now a potential candidate member of the EU. JISMO (Jordan) and SEMAC (Morocco) have become associate members of EA.

A first draft document on the choice of standards for the accreditation of notified bodies has been produced and has been circulated for comment.

The implementation of EA 2/17 EA Guidance on the horizontal requirements for the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies for notification purposes has not worked as planned and there is a need to clarify how it should be implemented.

EA 2/13 Policy for Cross Frontier between EA Members has been out for comments; the comments have been incorporated and the document is ready to go out voting.

4.4   EFAC   28 June 2012

Trevor Nash reported on the EFAC meeting which took place in Dublin on 28 June. The meeting mostly concentrated on EFAC finances and planning for the future. The end of year accounts were agreed and showed a deficit of £5,402 over the year which resulted in a negative balance of £3,859. Included in this were bad debts including invoices payable to ABCB for expenses for attending EACC meetings and accounting and registered office costs. The current balance in the bank is approximately €3,500 but it is not known which members have paid and which have not. It was agreed that the EFAC bank account should be transferred back from Bulgaria to the UK.

It was agreed that for the remainder of 2012 EFAC would seek volunteers to attend all meetings at their own cost to ensure a satisfactory financial position going into 2013. As part of this Trevor Nash agreed to ask ABCB to write off the existing debts and this was agreed by the Committee.

Action: Trevor Nash

Trevor Nash had visited CEOC in Brussels to discuss the position regarding the Belgian company. Further legal costs of approximately €1,000 plus costs of translating the Statutes (M & Arts) are expected. It was agreed to hold the establishment of the Belgian company in abeyance whilst the Chairmanship is in the UK. EFAC would, however, get a quote from the Belgian lawyers for the costs of completing the process. It was also agreed not to proceed with the agreement with CEOC at this stage.

Trevor Nash had contacted about 130 individual certification bodies in 15 European countries regarding associate membership of EFAC and received only two replies. The next step is to use accreditation body contacts to identify national associations where they exist.

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Paul Stennett reported on the changes at Executive Director level in UKAS. It is noted that the publicly available information does not give the full story. Recruitment of replacement Divisional Directors is complete apart from the formal announcement of the successful candidates. Paul Stennett mentioned that Jeff Ruddle and Lorraine Turner would continue to be involved in ABCB meetings over the next twelve months or so and then hand over to the new Divisional Directors. However, Jeff Ruddle will be retaining direct responsibility for the certification section for the foreseeable future.

The UKAS three year strategy is nearing completion and will be submitted to the members in time for consideration at the UKAS AGM in October.

UKAS has set up a hot desk arrangement in Farnborough as part of its disaster recovery plan.

UKAS will be writing to all accredited certification bodies regarding their activities in Iran and the need to ensure compliance with FCO requirements regarding EU sanctions.

UKAS is changing its customer agreement to take account of ISO/IEC 17011 and changes at EA, IAF and ILAC. A revision has been drafted and it is hoped a final draft will be circulated to PAC in about one month. Two of the changes are inclusion of the provision for UKAS to subcontract visits to other national accreditation bodies and giving the agreement a finite life linked to the assessment cycle.

5.0   Chief Executives Report

5.1   Management Accounts – May 2012

All but three Members have paid their basic subscription and these are being chased. Members that have paid the basic subscription have been asked to provide turnover information and one has already paid. Subscription income to date is £43,500. It is estimated that the subscription income will be approximately £60,000, compared to £66,000 last year, which is consistent when the 10% reduction in fees is taken into account. The balance in the bank at the end of June was £157,000.

There are no concerns with the finances of the Association.

5.2   2011/2012 accounts

The profit for the year was £15,000. There was a significant reduction in expenditure, mainly due to there being no IAF meetings in the year, and a planned reduction in income. The accounts are for agreement at the AGM.

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6.0 UKAS

6.1 UKAS customer service

Trevor Nash reported that he had spoken with Jeff Ruddle who had informed him that UKAS performance continues to improve but is still not where they would like it. They are concentrating on external areas such as visit planning and response times and internal issues are a second priority. Members stated that generally they had seen little improvement in customer service. It was suggested that at the next meeting UKAS should be invited to share their KPI's with the Committee.

Action: Trevor Nash

A new Assessment Manager, Cary Randall with a construction industry background has been recruited from BBA and is under training.

6.2 UKAS Technical Advisory Committees

The first meeting of the UKAS Management Systems Technical Advisory Committee has been scheduled for 19 July. Trevor Nash has been asked to chair the meeting and Samantha Hicks of the British Assessment Bureau would be representing ABCB. One item on the agenda is the UKAS approach to implementing the IAF informative document on market surveillance visits and Members raised the question of how UKAS would resource such visits should they decide to implement this approach.

6.3 ISO/IEC 17021:2011 transition

Carolyn Harris reported that AFNOR UK had been assessed in November 2011 and recommended for accreditation to ISO/IEC 17021:2011 but had still not received their updated schedule. The programme for their re-accreditation assessment in May had still referred to the 2006 version of the standard. AFNOR had been informed that the reason for the delay was due to non-competition. Steve Russell and Andrew Launn stated that NQA and BSI had received assessments at around the same time and been told that the delay was due to the need for UKAS to benchmark. Steve Russell continued by stating the he had to continually chase UKAS to get NQA's new schedule. He advised Carolyn Harris to point out to UKAS that at least two organisations already have a revised schedule.

6.4 Other UKAS matters

Although the last peer evaluation of UKAS was in 2006, it was overdue and the next visit will be in week beginning 26 November 2012 to get back on schedule. The peer evaluation team will want to witness UKAS assess two examples of product, management systems and personnel certification bodies. This means that UKAS will have little flexibility in dates for these visits and have asked for certification bodies' cooperation.

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The CNAB visitor will be at UKAS from 17 September for three months. He has a product certification background and Mike Lawson would be happy for him to visit Intertek. It was also suggested that his presence would provide the ideal opportunity to revitalise the Product Certification Sector Committee.

7.0　Any Other Business

Andrew Launn requested the current list of ABCB representation on committees, which Trevor Nash agreed to circulate.

Action: Trevor Nash

Trevor Nash reminded Members that EFAC is a member of ISO CASCO and can, therefore, nominate representatives to CASCO Working Groups. Steve Russell volunteered to be nominated to WG21.

Action: Trevor Nash

7.0　Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting which will be combined with the AGM will be held on 5 September at BSI, Kitemark Court, Davy Avenue, Knowlhill, Milton Keynes, MK5 8PP.

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