

1 AIM & SCOPE

The aim of this procedure is to explain how to deal with and implement the issues regarding the principles of remote assessment, without compromising the inclusiveness of routine assessment techniques, which are essential to assess the integrity and competence, during the implementation of NBE accreditation activities.

Along with the developing technology tools, the effects of technology on the work and processes of accredited bodies are noticeable. Numerous operations on paper can now be carried out faster and more efficiently using electronic media. In parallel with these developments, NBE has also carried an important part of its accreditation processes to the electronic environment and tries to make use of technology as much as possible.

The conditions at which the principles of remote assessment can be applied are given in this document.

2 DEFINITIONS

The terms and definitions given in PR-7-01 is also valid for this procedure.

Assessment

The process executed by NBE, to assess the competency of a CAB, within a specific accreditation scope, in accordance with the certain standards and/or normative documents.

Note: The assessment of CAB`s competency covers the evaluation of its competence within its whole range of activities, including the personnel competence, suitability of the conformity assessment methodology and the accuracy of the conformity assessment results.

Location

Addresses where conformity assessment and related activities are carried out (branches, adressess where important activities are carried out, mobile facility, travelling facility, virtual site, location where remote personnel work, representation office, liaison office etc.)

Virtual Site

The site that enables the management of processes in Internet or in various communication environments, e.g Cloud Environment

Witness Assessment

A type of assessment, where the conformity assessment activities executed by the CAB within its scope of accreditation, is observed by NBE.

Remote Assessment

Assessment of the virtual or physical sites of a conformity assessment body by electronic means (web-based seminar, web meetings, teleconferences, online audio and video services, remote access to the organization's data processing activity, management system and database)

3 RELATED DOCUMENTS

3.1. PR-7-01 Procedure for the Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies

3.2. PR-5-07 Procedure for the Complaints and Appeals

3.3. FR-7-05-1 Remote Assessment Information Declaration and Commitment Form

3.4. IAF ID 3: Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations

3.5. IAF MD 4: IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes

3.6. IAF ID 12: Principles on Remote Assessment

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Remote assessment techniques cannot provide the outcomes of routine on-site assessments, in any case. Therefore, NBE's primary approach is to carry out the assessments on-site. The time period between the subsequent on-site assessments cannot exceed 24 months. (ISO / IEC 17011, Article 7.9.3) However, if NBE decides that on-site assessment is not feasible, the remote assessment technique can be used to achieve the same purpose as on-site assessment.

The applicability of remote assessment techniques can be determined according to the structure of the organization, the level of cooperation with NBE, the risk of the activities performed, accreditation experience, complaints and appeals handled, and routine assessment outcomes.

Additionally, force majeure (natural disasters, epidemics/pandemics, security concerns etc.) may require remote assessments to be performed.

Remote assessment techniques cannot be applied in the first accreditation assessments, but can be used as part of the first accreditation assessment, if required.

If deemed necessary, surveillance assessments can be carried out using remote assessment techniques. However, it may not be appropriate to use the remote assessment technique in the surveillance assessment in relation to the outcomes of the first accreditation assessment performed on-site, relocation of the organization, request for scope extension, complaints and appeals etc.

The remote assessment option is examined and evaluated separately on case by case basis and the decision for the applicability is given by NBE.

The assessment of the bodies that perform calibration, testing, medical testing, certification, greenhouse gas verification, inspection, reference material production, proficiency testing or similar activities require routine on-site assessment techniques. However, the remote assessment technique can support on-site assessment techniques or can be considered as part of the on-site assessment.

Remote assessment is carried out using software deemed suitable by NBE. The assessment process (video and sound) can be recorded with the consent of the CAB and relevant parties, if any. NBE destroys these records at the end of the period defined in its procedures. The assessment team and CAB are not allowed to take the record of the remote assessment (video and audio). However, assessment team can take a screenshot of some records (calibration certificate, appointment letter, device image, etc.) in order to include them into the assessment report. When the assessment process is completed, the documents/records should be deleted.

Information about the infrastructure to be used in the assessment is shared by NBE with the CAB and the assessment team and confirmations regarding its usability is taken from both parties before the execution of the remote assessment.

CAB, which will be assessed by means of Remote Assessment Technique, must sign the Remote Assessment Information Declaration and Commitment Form (FR-7-05-1) and send it to the NBE e-mail.

The assessment team, CAB participants and the case manager must have access to the relevant link web page throughout the whole assessment, including the opening meeting and closing meeting. When deemed necessary, the assessment team may disable CAB's access and conduct assessment team interim meetings. Each assessment team member and CAB's responsible staff shall send the relevant records of the assessment (eg: participant list, etc.) to the NBE e-mail.

Case manager should make a trial connection before the assessment to confirm the access and usability of the link web page by the CAB and the assessment team and the suitability of the connection conditions.

Before, during and after the assessment, the documents and records that the assessment team should review in the assessment shall be sent into the relevant field by the CAB or shall be sent to the assessment team electronically.

4.1. Special Requirements for the Remote Assessment

- a) It should be ensured that the connection quality (live view, sound etc. transmission) is sufficient for performing remote assessment. Sufficient bandwidth internet access, remote access to the database and management system, sufficient number of computers, equipment to be used in the audio and video transmission, etc. are considered within this infrastructure. (Headset with microphone to prevent echo formation etc.) The CAB should ensure that all competent personnel, including logistics and technical aspects, are accessible when requested by the assessment team.

- b) CAB is obliged to cover all expenses that remote assessment may require. This obligation may include meeting room rental, transportation and accommodation expenses etc., which might be necessary for providing a suitable working environment to the assessment team and also includes CAB's expenses for its own connection.
- c) In order to verify the suitability to execute the demanded remote assessment, CAB should provide information / evidence to NBE staff and the assessment team in advance, upon the request of NBE. This may include the verification of the internet bandwidth, the presence of available acceptable technology, the access to information management systems, the access to web conferencing tools, etc.
- d) The CAB should make possible arrangements to sustain the objective evidences to the assessment team during the remote assessment. These arrangements should also include providing the necessary profile definitions for the use of the assessment team, when applicable.
- e) During the execution of the remote assessment, if the CAB cannot succeed to continue with the remote assessment or if the assessment team cannot perform the remote assessment sufficiently, the remote assessment can be repeated depending on the decision of NBE and a new remote assessment or an on-site assessment can be performed for the missing parts.
- f) During the implementation of the remote assessment, the organization and the assessment team should take all necessary measures to ensure the confidentiality of the assessment. Within this framework, the entrances to the environments where the connection is done (working environments of the assessment team and displayed sites of the CAB) should be limited to the assessment team members and the assessment participants from the CAB.
- g) The draft of the findings is forwarded to the CAB by the assessment team before the closing meeting, and either the CAB's confirmation regarding the findings or their feedback, if any, are received. After receiving the feedback from the CAB, the assessment team finalizes the findings and conducts the closing meeting. At the closing meeting, CAB signs the findings, sends them to NBE e-mail and / or sends confirmation to the assessment team that the findings are accepted by them. In case that the CAB has any objection to the findings, CAB could apply to NBE in accordance with the Procedure for Complaints and Appeal (PR-5-07).