



## **IAF Communiqué**

**FEBRUARY 2003**

### **ISO 9001 ADVISORY GROUP (IAG)**

Following an exploratory workshop held in Denver in May 2002 with delegates from the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), ISO/TC176 the ISO committee for Quality Management Systems (QMS) and ISO-CASCO, the ISO Conformity Assessment committee to consider the credibility of ISO 9001 and its certification, a decision was made that a mutually representative group, to be known as the ISO 9001 Advisory Group (IAG), should be formed. It was further agreed by the ISO Central Secretariat, ISO/TC176 and CASCO that coordination should be under the auspices of IAF.

The terms of reference of the IAG were agreed as follows:

- monitor the credibility of the ISO 9001 Standard in its role for certification, and provide feedback for each of the component members of the group, as appropriate;
- provide a forum for discussion of user satisfaction, and to action component members of the group, as necessary, when complaints or indications of concern are identified;
- identify issues that indicate the need for official ISO/TC176 Interpretations to ISO 9001:2000, or specific IAF Guidance;
- provide feedback to ISO/TC176 on the acceptance of its standards and provide inputs for eventual future revisions, and
- provide a catalyst for ISO Member Bodies and Accreditation Body members of IAF to stimulate similar "shadow" committees on a local or regional basis.

At the second IAG meeting held in Berlin last September one of the principal gaps identified was a lack of understanding of the "process approach" to auditing. Although ISO/TC176 is currently initiating a revision of the Guidance on the Process Approach, it was felt that there is a need for specific guidance on "Best Practices for Auditing to ISO 9001:2000".

As a result the IAF Plenary approved a resolution that, in conjunction with other stakeholders, the IAG should develop consensus on best auditing practices for auditing of management systems, recognizing the need for innovation following the introduction of ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 19011:2002.

The IAG held its third meeting in Sydney on 20 February and considered detailed causes and effects covering the actual and potential threats to the credibility of ISO 9001. Topics addressed included:

- a review of the factors affecting ISO 9001 credibility;
- compilation of the relevant initiatives currently underway by each of the component members of the IAG;
- initiation of a gap analysis to identify problems that are not currently being addressed by the component members, and
- progress of transition to ISO 9001:2000.

The IAG meeting confirmed that the joint initiative was productive and provided an interactive forum for dealing with matters of mutual concern and a mechanism for undertaking any proposed initiatives.

As there is significant interest in the work of the IAG it was agreed to formalise the composition of the group to ensure a balance of interests from Industry, Accreditation and Certification Bodies, Auditing Practitioners as well as ISO/TC 176 and CASCO.

The IAG identified a number of issues relating to certification that were recommended for address by ISO CASCO WG 21, which is charged with developing the new ISO standard for management system certification bodies. These include:

- the extent to which certification bodies can provide added value to their customers without compromising their independence;
- investigating making the complaints system to certification bodies more useful;
- better liaison between certification bodies and the users of the products of the certified organisations (maximising the benefits of the feed-back loop), and
- the profile of certification in respect of products made under certified QMS.

The first meeting of a new group called the Good Auditing Practice (GAP) group also took place and it was agreed to develop practical guidelines on effective means of auditing against ISO 9001:2000 for third party registrar auditors of quality management systems. This is intended to be a “how to” document with practical examples, forms, and other tools which will address what are perceived to be past “poor practices” and recommend “good practices”. The framework for the audit guidelines was agreed on with the specific topics to be addressed first being identified.

This will parallel work already underway in IAF to encourage a competence based approach to the accreditation audits of certification bodies. The overall direction in both groups is towards maximising the effectiveness of results based auditing.

The next meeting of the GAP group will be held in conjunction with the ISO/CASCO meetings in June in Geneva.

Further information about IAF may be obtained from the IAF web site at <<http://www.iaf.nu>>, or by contacting the Secretariat at email <[secretary@accreditationforum.com](mailto:secretary@accreditationforum.com)>.