



Procedure for Conducting Remote Assessments

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1 Purpose

The objective of Remote Assessment is to establish the level of confidence in the conformity assessment processes of CABs and compliance to applicable accreditation requirements by direct observations carried out through an electronic medium.

2 Scope

This document is applicable for carrying out Remote Assessments by EAS in order to Complement traditional oversight techniques (On-site assessment of CABs). It establishes the minimum requirements to allow use of remote assessment techniques. The requirements as per IAF MD 4 are applicable in addition to the requirements defined in this document. This document is applicable for the office assessment of CABs for management systems, persons, product, inspection, GHG and other EAS Accreditation Schemes as established from time to time unless otherwise specified.

3 Definitions

The following definitions are taken from ISO/IEC 17011:2017 “Conformity assessment - Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies”.

3.1 Remote Assessment: An assessment of the physical location or virtual site of a conformity assessment body, using electronic means.

3.2 Virtual Site: A virtual site is an online environment allowing persons to execute processes, e.g. in a cloud environment.

NOTE 1: Examples of remote assessment include: webinars/web meetings, teleconferences, online video/audio services, remote access to organization’s data processing and management systems, databases, etc.

4 References

ISO/IEC 17011 - Conformity assessment – Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

IAF ID 12 – IAF Informative Document for Principles on Remote Assessment (guidance only)

IAF MD 4 - IAF Mandatory Document for the use of Information and communication technology for auditing/assessment purposes

IAF ID 3 - IAF Informative Document for Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations

Note - IAF Guidance, Mandatory and Informative Documents, latest updates are available on

<http://www.iaf.nu//articles/Publications/6>

EAS PM 09: EAS Policy Manual.

EAS P07.0: Accreditation Process.

EAS R04.3: Obligation of Accredited CABs.

EAS PM8.0: Obligation of EAS

EAS F-07/0Z: Remote Assessment Pre-requisite Checklist

5 Eligibility Criteria for Remote Assessment

The acceptability of and the extent of remote assessment techniques will vary from organization to organization and will depend on circumstances such as level of technology available to the organization, the organization's assessment preference, resources, etc. The use of remote assessment by EAS will be on voluntary basis, by mutual agreement, or may be initiated by the EAS as per assessment needs (initial office assessment, follow up, investigations, verifications, etc.). EAS will carry out the remote assessment after review of the need on case by case basis (see EAS F-07/32). The decision on use of remote assessment methodology would be taken by EAS Accreditation Directors/team leader based on F07/32 and on the complexities of conformity Assessment activities.

Remote assessment is permitted under one or more of the following conditions:

5.1 When EAS accredited CAB is seeking accreditation and a visit is not feasible or practical.

5.2 The number of sites to be assessed is difficult for EAS to completely fulfill within its timeframe.

- 5.3 The assessment is for a minor extension to scope of accreditation.
- 5.4 The situation requires the assessment team to come back for a follow up assessment, but another visit is not easily achievable within a short time frame.
- 5.5 Office assessment of another location of a CAB for the currently accredited scope.
- 5.6 Complaint investigation
- 5.7 Verification of corrective action implementation
- 5.8 When timing of the assessment does not support the travel logistics required to conduct the assessment on site
- 5.9 Travel to a CAB or specific location is not reasonable (i.e., for safety reasons, travel restrictions, etc.)
- 5.10 Onsite office assessment is not possible due to a circumstance beyond the control of the organization, commonly referred to as “Force Majeure” or “Act of God” as defined in IAF ID 3.
- 5.11 The CAB has a proven track record of conformance at the location of the remote assessment and EAS has determined the activity as low risk level.
- 5.12 An activity planned for the on-site assessment could not be completed and extending the on-site assessment is not the best resolution.
- 5.13 Unavoidable changes in scheduling for the assessment team/assessor or CAB (i.e., personal issues, change in business priorities, etc.)
- 5.14 EAS is confident that the assessment objectives can be achieved via remote assessment activities.
- 5.15 An on-site assessment is not required for the relevant standard or scheme.

6 Conditions under which remote assessments shall not be permitted:

- 6.1 When the CAB has a history of non-conformance that affects stability of the system.
- 6.2 During initial assessment activity of a new CAB facility, scope, or significant change when there are several open issues identified in the DRR
- 6.3 Where the scope and/or the competence of personnel is critical, and requires an on-site assessment
- 6.5 Another AB is conducting an assessment on ENAO’s behalf.

7 Qualification Criteria for Remote Assessment

7.1 The CAB qualifies the eligibility criteria for remote assessment as described above.

7.2 All the information (records, data, documents etc) of the CAB are readily available in electronic formats or document reader.

7.3 The CAB has virtual meeting capabilities, including audio (and video when used), aptitude, and resources (on-site IT, personnel, and tools).

7.4 The CAB and the assessment team are competent to navigate an online meeting, and remote personnel are competent to participate.

7.5 The CAB is able to provide a representative that is capable of communicating in the same language as the assessor.

7.6 Difference of time zone, if any, must be supportive to CAB and assessors.

7.7 The CAB is ready for any additional expenses associated with the remote assessment process such as fees for teleconference, webinar, audio/visual, etc.

7.8 Remote assessment techniques are not prohibited by the standards or scheme requirement.

8 Conduct of Remote Assessment

8.1 Once EAS accepts the request of CAB for remote assessment after review, or decides to carry out remote assessment on its own, the normal process of onsite assessment will apply as per EAS Accreditation Process. The additional time required for remote assessment for use of ICT shall be determined after review and will be informed to CAB on a case to case basis.

8.2 The specific dates & time period to perform a remote assessment shall be decided by ENAO. The duration of a remote assessment may differ from that of the CAB's onsite assessment, depending on what aspects are planned to be covered. In addition, it is also likely that the assessment may be fragmented with individual activities happening over the course of a longer period.

8.3 The mode of communication and the IT platform between the EAS Assessment team and CAB for conducting remote assessment, sending documents or clarification on issues shall be pre-defined and communicated.

8.4 The CAB should provide to EAS the names of the designated individual(s) that will facilitate, manage and coordinate arrangements for the remote assessment on behalf of the CAB.

8.5 The key personnel of CAB shall be available during remote assessment. Personnel with specific technical or administrative responsibilities will need to be available for their relevant parts of the assessment. Top management and other members of the leadership team will need to be available for relevant parts of the assessment as well as in the opening and closing meetings.

8.6 The CAB and the assessment team shall take appropriate measures to safeguard confidentiality of data in any form and impartiality during the remote assessment.

8.7 Both EAS remote Assessment team and the CAB should make their best efforts to confirm what was heard, stated and read throughout the remote assessment. In case if the remote assessment team is not able to review, in part or in full, any specific activity, a record shall be made.

8.8 If at any time during the assessment process, the CAB cannot support the remote assessment process or the assessor(s) cannot perform the assessment sufficiently using the remote assessment approach then the CAB must have an onsite assessment for those functions that could not be assessed using remote assessment.

8.9 The remote assessment team in consultation with EAS may terminate the remote assessment prior to completion due to an inability to maintain satisfactory connections or conditions during the scheduled time. This shall be recorded in the assessment report.

9 Post Remote Assessment Activities

9.1 Assessment findings (Non-conformances, Observations etc.) shall be documented by the Remote Assessment team and provided to the CAB in writing in a timely manner at the closure of Remote Assessment or just thereafter. The Remote Assessment team shall debrief the CAB on the assessment findings at the end of each day and in the Closing Meeting of the Remote Assessment.

9.2 The assessment report shall be provided by the Remote Assessment team in the prescribed

time period as per EAS accreditation procedure and shall include the details of the standards/requirements, or part thereof, for which compliance is assessed and findings, documents and records reviewed, and CAB personnel whose competence is assessed.

9.3 The treatment of Non-conformances and/or Observations, if raised, and renewing/continuing approval of accreditation shall follow the same processes that are prescribed for on-site assessments in the applicable EAS accreditation process.

9.4 The Remote Assessment team shall confirm to ENAO, the deletion of any confidential documents, records, recordings etc. of the CAB, as available with it during the Remote Assessment, on completion of the process and EAS will inform the CAB accordingly.

9.5 The remote assessment review shall be conducted according to accreditation process P07.0 and F07/11.

Revision No.	Date Approved	Revision History
1	2022-05-09	The document is revised due to the name Ethiopian National Accreditation Office (ENAO) change to Ethiopian Accreditation Service (EAS) and new logo developed.
1.1	2023-02-07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correction done on page 1 that, this document was prepared by Meseret Tessema replaced by Zewdu Ayele (new quality manager). • Former director general was resigned and replaced by Mrs. Meseret Tessema.