

## Code of conduct for INAB assessment visits

PS8

### 1) **Definitions**

Conformity assessment body:-

A conformity assessment body (CAB) is body that performs conformity assessment services and that can be the object of accreditation, for example, laboratory, inspection body, certification body, reference materials producer (ISO/IEC 17011 refers).

*Each applicant and accredited CAB is considered an INAB client.*

INAB assessment team:

An INAB assessment team comprises a combination of a lead assessor/assessment manager, technical assessor(s) and technical expert(s), who perform an assessment of a CAB in order to evaluate the competence of the CAB for a specific scope of accreditation.

The requirements of this document apply as appropriate to other INAB personnel who are not directly involved in the assessment process.

### 2) **Policy**

*It is INAB policy to consistently provide its client organisations with a professional and effective accreditation service.*

*In order to deliver this high level of service it is essential that assessment teams display an appropriate level of professionalism, integrity and respect toward the INAB client at all times during the conduct of each on-site assessment/surveillance/reassessment.*

#### **(i) Assessment team members**

Assessors are required to adhere to the specific points highlighted in the code of conduct below when carrying out visits to INAB clients. Please be aware that you are representing INAB and where you require clarification of INAB policy or procedures, please seek this clarification in private with INAB.

- ▶ Communicate with the organisation staff in a controlled, friendly and professional manner;
- ▶ Remain open-minded at all times and remember to both question and listen carefully;
- ▶ Present your findings in a calm, factual and tactful manner;
- ▶ In the event of a dispute, endeavour to resolve the issue in a calm, courteous manner at the visit and always provide factual evidence to support your position. Should satisfactory resolution not be achieved, document your findings and explain INAB's right of reply and appeal mechanisms to the client;
- ▶ Remember that while general non-prescriptive advice may be given to the client, such advice must not cross the line into consultancy;
- ▶ Ensure that potentially sensitive information is handled in a private setting, wherever possible;

- ▶ Be cognisant of the possibility that if a guide is assigned to an assessor for a whole day, the guide may not be appropriately qualified to be involved in the review of certain sensitive information;
- ▶ Pay attention to the time schedule shown on the visit plan and to time management by ensuring that you focus at all times on the work in hand and that time-wasting techniques are not employed by the client. If it is discovered during the visit that additional time is required to complete the job then this should be provided for in a formal rather than in an ad hoc manner;
- ▶ Remember that the purpose of the visit is to assess the competence of the client to carry out a specific range of activities. The visit must not be used to demonstrate the assessment team's own knowledge;
- ▶ Ensure mobile phones are switched off during visits (messages may be checked at lunchtime and after the closing meeting);
- ▶ Ensure there is no planned direct contact with the client at any time other than during the visit without prior approval from INAB. Do not therefore provide the conformity assessment body with your contact details or business card;
- ▶ Ensure that you review responses to nonconformities submitted by the client conformity assessment body in a timely fashion and within 15 working days from receipt of responses to nonconformities;
- ▶ Please ensure that any documentation submitted by INAB applicant or accredited CABs is secure at all times and for electronic data, forms, etc. please ensure the storage device (laptop, memory stick, other) is appropriately and securely encrypted;
- ▶ Please remember to notify INAB of any existing, prior or foreseeable relationships which may compromise impartiality.

**(ii) INAB client**

INAB client personnel are expected to adhere to the specific points highlighted below when undergoing an INAB on-site visit:

- ▶ Communicate with the assessment team members in a calm and professional manner;
- ▶ Ensure that requested records or relevant documentation is presented to the team members in a timely manner;
- ▶ If applicable, please make suitable arrangements for review of sensitive documentation, whether that be provision of suitable accommodation or personnel, and ensure that any guides provided by the laboratory are aware of their limitations in this regard;
- ▶ Ensure that relevant client personnel with sufficient authority to accept findings are presented for discussions and confirmation of factual content of any findings presented;
- ▶ Where the client requires clarification of INAB policy or procedures seek this clarification from the assessment manager at the time of the visit where possible;
- ▶ In the event of a dispute, endeavour to resolve the issue in a calm, courteous manner at the visit and always provide factual evidence to support your position;
- ▶ Should satisfactory resolution not be achieved with the assessment team at the visit ensure that you document a summary of your objections on the AF119 form at the visit;
- ▶ Remember that while general non-prescriptive advice may be given to the client by the assessment team at the visit, the client must not use the visit as an opportunity to avail of consultancy;
- ▶ As per INAB terms and conditions (TC) requirements clause 9.1, "The Organisation warrants and represents that the information it provides to INAB will not infringe any

intellectual property, publicity or privacy right of any other party or any other law or regulation including Data Protection Legislation.”

**(iii) Conduct at site visits**

- ▶ Conduct at site visits shall be courteous and respectful.
- ▶ In the event that this requirement of good conduct is not observed by one party, the other party will be entitled to discontinue the site visit;
- ▶ Where the visit is discontinued by the assessment team due to the conduct of the client, the client shall be liable for the full cost of the site visit and any assessments scheduled for that visit;
- ▶ Where the visit is discontinued by representatives of the client due to the conduct of the assessors, INAB shall document a summary account of the visit outcome and submit this to INAB management for consideration.

**(iv) Conduct of assessment teams when interacting with members of the public during on site assessments (examples include hospital settings)**

- ▶ Should the INAB assessment team wish to witness activity involving a member of the public/in public areas, they shall first inform the INAB client contact/designated contact on the day of the assessment, who will make the necessary arrangements;
- ▶ It is usual that an INAB assessor will be ‘assigned’ to a named representative of the client for the duration of their visit;
- ▶ The INAB assessor shall stay with the assigned representative while witnessing any activity throughout the assessment;
- ▶ The assessment team shall ensure it does not disrupt or delay any client business activities, if at all possible;
- ▶ The INAB assessment team shall ask permission from their assigned client representatives before addressing/asking questions of a member of the public;
- ▶ Where the audit process involves a member of the public, it is best practice that the client or agent of the client introduces the person to the assessor and explains the purpose of their visit;
- ▶ The use of any devices to take photographs/record/film on the client premises is prohibited, unless by prior agreement with the INAB client.