



Transition Requirements for Inspection Bodies to ISO/IEC 17020:2026

NF49

Introduction:

Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI) published ISO/IEC 17020:2026, the revised standard for the competence of inspection bodies, on 30th March 2026. This notification outlines the expectations of the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) regarding the transition timeline, required actions, and preparation steps for accredited inspection bodies.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all INAB-accredited inspection bodies understand the transition requirements and begin preparations to maintain conformance and accreditation. All new inspection body applications for accreditation must be to ISO/IEC 17020:2026.

Key Timescale:

March 2026: Publication of ISO/IEC 17020:2026
2026: Inspection body preparation for transition
January 2027: Begin submitting ETS applications
Jan-June 2027: Optional assessment for transition with annual surveillance
July-Dec 2027: Transition assessment with annual surveillance
2028: Any remaining assessments and decisions submitted to and approved by INAB management
2028: Upon positive decision, scope and certificate of accreditation will be updated and inspections begin under the new standard
March 2029: Final deadline for transition

Non-exhaustive summary of changes:

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 is not a minor update - it is a structural and conceptual revision.

Some of the main changes for inspection bodies are:

1. Independence model change (Type A / non-A)
2. Mandatory documented risk-based analysis for risks and opportunities
3. Formal data, IT, and software control requirements
4. Stronger focus on personnel competence management
5. Changes to externally provided products and services

6. Validation of non-standard methods
7. Changes to complaints and appeals
8. Stronger management system alignment with other ISO standards

INAB Assessment Approach

Phase 1: Planning and Preparation (2026-2027)

Inspection bodies must:

- Review the new standard in full
- Conduct a gap analysis
- Develop a documented transition plan
- Update management systems and procedures
- Train staff on new requirements
- Submit an application for this transition to be assessed
- Submit documented evidence of the above

Phase 2: Demonstration of Conformity (2027-2028)

INAB will:

- Assess conformity during routine surveillance or reassessment visits, additional time will be added to all surveillance assessments
- Assessment to the new standard is optional for any inspection bodies whose annual assessment (surveillance or reassessment) is scheduled from January – June 2027
- Record, classify, and manage any nonconformities through the normal INAB processes
- Issue a revised accreditation certificate and scope of accreditation following a successful assessment and after a positive decision by INAB management

If the inspection body has not successfully completed their transition to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 before 30th March 2029, then the existing accreditation for ISO/IEC 17020:2012 will be withdrawn on this date. Inspection bodies that have not transitioned to the 2026 version by this date will no longer be able to claim accreditation for their activities.

Note: Inspection bodies should contact their INAB Assessment Manager with any further questions.