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Accreditation Auditing Practices Group
Guidance on:

Possible indicators of CAB performance

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper provides a set of key performance indicators which may serve Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) in the analysis of their own performance, including the performance of their auditors and other personnel involved in certification activities. Some of these indicators could provide an insight into the effectiveness of a CAB's processes.

It aims at establishing good practice for performance evaluation by outlining the key performance indicators that are most applicable to the certification process.

2. INDICATORS

An indicator refers to a trend or a fact that indicates the state or a level of certification activities.

CABs may gather and analyse any data on the performance of their activities. The nature and amount of such data depends on a lot of factors, including organizational culture, external requirements, level of IT capability. It is important to ensure that these data are comprehensive, reliable, appropriately analysed and acted upon.

The sustainable success of a CAB depends on its abilities to satisfy the needs and expectations of all its stakeholders (including clients, end-users of its products, regulators, ABs, the CAB's personnel, investors or owners of the CAB, suppliers to the CAB, the public) in a balanced way. Therefore it is important that their performance indicators are constantly measured and monitored.

The following indicators could be considered as relevant to any CAB:

2.1 Client feedback

There are a lot of methods for obtaining client feedback. CABs should refer to the following ISO standards:

– ISO 10001 *Customer satisfaction - Guidelines for codes of conduct for organizations* provides guidance to an organization in determining if its customer satisfaction provisions meet customer needs and expectations. Its use can enhance customer confidence in an organization and improve customer understanding of what to expect from an organization, thereby reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and complaints.

– ISO 10002 *Customer satisfaction - Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations* provides guidance on the process of handling complaints by recognizing and addressing the needs and expectations of complainants and resolving any complaints received. It provides an open, effective and easy-to-use complaints process including personnel training. It also provides guidance for small businesses.

– ISO 10003 *Customer satisfaction - Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations* provides guidance for effective and efficient external dispute resolution for product-related complaints. Dispute resolution gives an avenue of redress when organizations do not remedy a complaint internally. Most complaints can be resolved successfully within the organization, without adversarial procedures.

– ISO 10004 *Customer satisfaction - Guidelines for monitoring and measuring* provides guidelines for actions to enhance customer satisfaction and to identify opportunities for improvement of products, processes and attributes that are valued by customers. Such actions can strengthen customer loyalty and help retain customers.

2.2 Complaints

The volume, frequency, location and types of complaints received in a given time period give valuable insight into the client experience. The proportion of open complaints and the adequacy of planned corrective actions may be analysed in conjunction with trend and root cause analysis of all complaints. The goal of such analyses is to provide a course of action which turns knowledge about client needs and preferences into value-added service characteristics and simultaneously improves internal processes. CABs should refer to the following:

– ISO 10002 *Customer satisfaction - Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations* (as previously cited above)

– The ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group paper *Auditing Customer Complaints*

2.3 Audit findings

The objective of an audit is to provide a true reflection of a client's operations and the level of conformity against a standard; hence, the clarity, justification and classification of audit findings are especially important aspects of such a service.

Analysing audit findings (positive and negative) to identify the trends and link them

with the individual auditors, report reviewers, or certification decision makers will assist CABs in improving their services to their clients.

2.4 Auditor utilisation

As a CAB's main resource, auditors should be utilised efficiently to achieve desirable business performance. The auditors have to be provided appropriate time for pre and post audit activities. A CAB should be able to monitor the time allocated to the following activities:

– planning an audit
– preparation for an audit
– on-site auditing
– reporting
– reviewing the responses from a client
– follow-up activities
– client complaints resolution

These data may be collected and analysed.

The duration for the rotation of auditors may be established by CABs based on the analysis of their auditor performance.

2.5 Training

To deliver maximum value to clients, **personnel involved in certification** are trained and evaluated for competency in their respective area of functions. The budget allocated for training for the personnel involved in certification is one of the important indicators of a CAB's performance.

2.6 Client loss

The trends and reasons for client loss may be monitored and analysed to evaluate their impact on a CAB.

2.7 Auditor retention
The reasons for auditors leaving the employment of a CAB may be analysed to determine if there are any underlying issues or concerns that need to be addressed.

For further information on the Accreditation Auditing Practices Group, please refer to the paper: *Introduction to the Accreditation Auditing Practices Group*

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