GUIDE 39

General requirements for the
acceptance of inspection bodies

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) together form a system for worldwide standardization as a whole. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

This second edition of Guide 39 was drawn up by the ISO Committee on conformity assessment, ISO/CASCO. It was approved by the IEC Council in August 1988 and by the ISO Council in September 1988.

The documents produced by CASCO are issued as Guides and follow the general rules for development and promulgation of ISO and IEC standards except that they are the result of a consensus reached within a Council committee, endorsed by the ISO Council and the IEC Council.

The work of ISO/CASCO in preparing Guides relating to certification, assessment and testing, uses as a basis the principles established in ISO/IEC Guide 16, *Code of principles on third party certification systems and related standards*.

Guide 16 recognizes that third party certification systems should, to the extent possible, be based on internationally agreed standards and procedures. While recognizing the major role of manufacturers' declaration of conformity through normal manufacturer/customer relationship, Council resolutions have emphasized the preparation of guidance documents on third party certification and assessment procedures in order that national systems may be compatible with one another so as to facilitate bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Whilst these documents are intended to provide guidance, it is hoped that any changes from the documents made in introducing systems nationally would be minimal. In recognizing that some countries may choose to adopt the Guides directly, they are written to enable this to be done by including words such as "shall" to indicate those aspects which desirably would be mandatory. The overriding basis that the document is intended to provide guidance holds good.

While this emphasis on creating the infrastructure for mutual recognition covers most of the work of ISO/CASCO, notice has to be taken that a further objective is to create the basis for an international certification system in due course, if found to be required. Some ISO/CASCO documents relate to the development of rules for such a system.

It is recognized that there are already well established certification systems, e.g. in the electrotechnical field, which have been developed with the aim of facilitating trade and which are functioning satisfactorily in the spirit of relevant ISO/IEC Guides.

Introduction

Inspection is an important component, associated with other activities, including certification, that assists in national and international trade. Considerations of competence, impartiality and integrity are fundamental to the acceptability of the inspection process. Users of the inspection service must be guided by this fact in making the choice of inspection bodies that they employ. This judgement must be seen to be exercised in an acceptable manner.

General requirements for the acceptance of inspection bodies

1 Scope

This Guide sets out general criteria, the observance of which is intended to provide that the services of inspection bodies are conducted with technical competence, impartiality, confidentiality and thoroughness, careful observation and accurate reporting by competent qualified staff, and to serve the needs of individual users, national government, local government, certification, accreditation and other bodies, as they relate to certification and related activities.

NOTES

1   The inspection body or the functions it performs could be an integral part of a certification or other body, or it could be a separate entity.

2   Where an inspection body carries out its function on behalf of a certification body, it is normally required to work to the specific instructions of the certification body.

2   References

ISO/IEC Guide 2 : 1986, *General terms and their definitions concerning standardization and related activities.*

ISO 8402 : 1986, *Quality — Vocabulary.*