



## **COOPERATION WITH BELAC ASSESSORS AND EXPERTS: REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURE FOR QUALIFICATION RIGHTS AND DUTIES**

**Whenever it is relevant to a particular conformity assessment activity, the general principles described in this procedure are supplemented with specific provisions in a document from the series BELAC 2-405.**

The only valid versions of the documents of the BELAC management system are those available from the website ([www.belac.be](http://www.belac.be)).

English translation for information only.

French and Dutch version remain the authoritative documents.

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## HISTORY OF THE DOCUMENT

Revision/ Date of approval	Reason for the revision	Scope of the revision
0 CC 05.06.2003	Replaces documents OBE A022, BELTEST P06 and P07, BELCERT BCT-P08, P17 and P22	Full revision following merger of documents but without significant amendment of basic principles
1 Secr 31.01.2004	Update of format and lay-out	Full document
2 CC 18.05.2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revision following implementation of the BELAC R.D                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Update of layout</li> <li>o Responsibilities for the management of assessors and experts</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Reference to experience gained as expert</li> <li>- Concept of qualification of experts</li> </ul>	<p>Full revision Point 4.3</p> <p>Point 5.3.1 Point 5.5</p>
3 CC 14.05.2009	<p>Full revision including significant amendments with respect to the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organisation of the training on the basis of modules</li> <li>- Possibility to limit the training based on the professional experience</li> <li>- Introduction of the concept of junior assessor</li> <li>- Revision of mechanisms and provisions for refreshing training</li> <li>- Clarification of confidentiality obligations</li> </ul>	<p>Full document</p> <p>Points 5.3.1, 5.3.2</p> <p>Point 5.3.1.1</p> <p>Point 5.5</p> <p>Point 5.6.1</p> <p>Points 6.1.1, 6.2.2</p>
4 Secretariat 07.02.2011	<p>Full revision without significant amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Replacement of 'certification schemes' by 'conformity assessment schemes'</li> <li>- Experience QMS</li> <li>- Deletion of the quiz</li> <li>- Evaluation period becomes 3 years instead of 2 years</li> </ul>	<p>Point 5.2.1.1</p> <p>Point 5.2.2.3</p> <p>Point 5.6.1</p> <p>Point 5.6.2</p>

<p>5 CC 12.05.2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update of the responsibilities with respect to qualification of assessors and experts.</li> <li>- Revision of the competence criteria</li> <li>- Organisation of the theoretical training</li> <li>- Specific training for the lead assessors</li> <li>- Suppression of the obligation for assessors to accept appointments for assessments except with due motivation</li> <li>- Formal acceptance of an assessment task</li> </ul>	<p>Point 4.2</p> <p>Points 5.2.1, 5.2.2</p> <p>Point 5.3.1.1</p> <p>Point 5.3.1.2</p> <p>Point 6.4</p> <p>Points 7.3.2, 7.4</p>
<p>6 Secretariat 30.01.2012</p>	<p>Competence criteria for assessors and experts for the accreditation of EMAS environmental verifiers</p>	<p>Point 5.2.2.4</p>
<p>7 Secretariat 29.10.2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reference to the existence of the documents of the series BELAC 2-405 in case of specific accreditation requirements for a specific conformity assessment activity</li> <li>- Extension of the scope of the document to the accreditation of validation and verification bodies</li> </ul>	<p>Cover page</p> <p>Point 5.2.2.2</p>

<p>8 CC 22.01.2015</p> <p>Secretariat 11.03.2015</p>	<p>Full editorial revision with the following significant amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priority recourse to assessors instead of experts</li> <li>- The requirement for 4 years of full time professional experience for assessors is cancelled</li> <li>- More detailed description of the situations where the theoretical training for assessor may not be required - attendance certificates - Evaluation after the theoretical part of the training</li> <li>- More detailed description of the functions monitoring of assessors and supervision of experts</li> <li>- Circulation of the information related to consultancy activities of assessors</li> <li>- Obligations of assessors: consideration of information provided and update of documents, attendance in training sessions</li> <li>- Competence criteria for the function of supervisor and of monitoring of experts</li> <li>- Editorial amendments</li> </ul>	<p>Full document</p> <p>Point 4.1</p> <p>Point 5.2.1.1</p> <p>Point 5.3.1.1</p> <p>Points 5.3.1.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6.2, 5.7</p> <p>Points 6.1.1 and 6.2.1</p> <p>Point 6.4</p> <p>Points 5.1.3 and 5.1.4</p> <p>Points 5.3.1.1, 5.3.1.2, 5.6, 5.7, 6.5, 7.2</p>
<p>9 CC 03.05.2016</p>	<p>Assessors and experts are not allowed to consult with bodies that they have assessed at least for 2 years after the assessment.</p>	<p>Point 6.1.1</p>
<p>10 CC 20.04.2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentation of the competence criteria applicable to assessors/experts for the accreditation of Proficiency testing Providers and Reference Materials Producers</li> <li>- New provisions with respect to the code of professional conduct of assessors and experts</li> </ul>	<p>Point 5.2.2.1</p> <p>Point 6.1</p>
<p>11 CC 20.10.2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction of the possibility for technical assessors to perform the evaluation of the management system.</li> <li>- Training as an assessor</li> <li>- Clarification conflict of interest</li> </ul>	<p>Points 4.1 and 5.2.1.3</p> <p>Point 5.3</p> <p>Point 6.2.2</p>

<p>12 CC 10.01.2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adaptation of the competence criteria for assessors and experts for the accreditation for validation and verification bodies</li> <li>- Adaptation of the competence criteria for assessors and experts for the accreditation of management systems</li> </ul>	<p>Point 5.2.2.2 and 5.2.2.6</p> <p>Point 5.2.2.3</p>
<p>0 CC 05.06.2003</p>	<p>Replaces documents OBE A022, BELTEST P06 and P07, BELCERT BCT-P08, P17 and P22</p>	<p>Full revision following merger of documents but without significant amendment of basic principles</p>
<p>13 Secretariaat 29.03.2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better description of the requirements with regard to competence, education and professional experience of technical assessors and experts in laboratories, PTPs and RMPs</li> <li>- Actualisation of references</li> <li>- Lay-out optimisation</li> </ul>	<p>Punt 5.2.2.1</p> <p>Point 5.2.2.6</p> <p>Full document</p>

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# COOPERATION WITH BELAC ASSESSORS AND EXPERTS: REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURE FOR QUALIFICATION RIGHTS AND DUTIES

## 1 OBJECTIVES AND NORMATIVE REFERENCES

This document aims to specify the requirements and procedures for qualifying the BELAC assessors and experts. It also specifies their rights and duties.

This document makes reference to and complies with the relevant sections of the standard EN ISO/IEC 17011 and the legal stipulations with regard to accreditation.

## 2 RECIPIENTS

### With follow-up of modifications:

- Members of the Coordination Commission
- Members of the Accreditation Board
- Assessors and experts
- Accreditation secretariat

### Without follow-up of modifications:

- Trainee assessors and experts on the occasion of their first appointment.
- Any external request



### 3 DEFINITIONS – REFERENCE BELAC 3-11

Definitions related to the different functions within an assessment team can be retrieved from point 1.3 of the BELAC document 3-11: “The accreditation procedure: general provision for the implementation”.

## 4 INTRODUCTION

### 4.1 General framework

This document presents:

- the procedure for the selection of assessors and experts, the formal qualification of assessors as well as ways for monitoring them with a view to ensure that the hereafter described requirements are maintained;
- rights and duties of assessors and experts, including deontological aspects.

The accreditation procedure has to be carried out according to documented instructions that requires the intervention of:

- an assessor to evaluate the management system (termed lead assessor);
- one or more assessors to evaluate the technical aspects (termed technical assessors); and/or
- one or more technical experts when necessary.

The distinction made between lead assessor and technical assessor essentially relates to their respective roles during the assessment.

The lead assessor will evaluate the management system, will lead the assessment and will coordinate the drafting the assessment report.

Technical assessors must be experts in the field for which they were appointed, but will also have a thorough grounding in the field of assessment methods and accreditation. They are therefore charged with the evaluation of the technical aspects.

The technical assessor may also be asked to evaluate the management system but without taking on the role of the lead auditor with regard to the leadership of the assessment team and the coordination of the drafting of the assessment report.

The assessment team may have to be complemented with one or more experts. When a technical assessor is available to perform the assessment, he/she will be preferred to an expert because the expert has not taken part in an assessor training.

In order to make BELAC assessments both effective and standardised, the assessors and experts working as part of the accreditation system shall meet the relevant criteria specified in this document.

## 4.2 Responsibilities

The accreditation secretariat is responsible for the daily management of qualification and monitoring of assessors and experts.

The technical managers are responsible, for their accreditation sector, of:

- the initial and periodic review of the information submitted by the assessors and experts (form BELAC 6-210) and of the assignment of the technical sectors of competence (see under 5.2.2);
- the review of the relevant information and the decision on initial qualification, maintenance of the status and monitoring (see under 5.5 and 5.6).

## 5 REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURE FOR QUALIFICATION OF ASSESSORS AND EXPERTS

### 5.1 General provisions

#### 5.1.1 Assessor

The status of BELAC assessor may be granted to all persons who:

- have the necessary professional experience to perform evaluation of conformity to accreditation criteria that are applicable to one or more types of conformity assessment bodies – see under 5.2.1);
- have received a specific training in relation with the tasks of assessor;
- have been formally qualified by BELAC for performing an assessment, according to specified requirements (see under 5.5).

BELAC recognises assessors registered by accreditation bodies who are, together with BELAC, signatories of multilateral agreements.

#### 5.1.2 Expert

The status of BELAC expert may be granted to all persons who:

- have the necessary professional experience to take part in the evaluation of conformity to accreditation criteria that are applicable – to one or more types of conformity assessment bodies - see under 5.2.1);

- have been recognised by BELAC as being apt for performing an assessment as an expert, according to specified requirements (see under 5.4).

### 5.1.3 Supervisor

The supervisor is in charge of the monitoring of assessors as part of the process of initial qualification of assessors and its maintenance. The status of supervisor may be granted to a member of the Accreditation Board or of the BELAC secretariat with relevant knowledge of the accreditation requirements as well as assessment techniques and procedures. The supervisor shall be a qualified assessor or a technical or management BELAC staff with at least one year experience, and this for the concerned accreditation field.

### 5.1.4 Assisting the expert

A person is in charge of assisting the expert during the assessment. The person assisting an expert shall be a qualified assessor or a technical or management BELAC staff with at least one year experience, and this for the concerned accreditation field.

## 5.2 **Competence criteria**

### 5.2.1 General requirements on competence, education and professional experience

#### 5.2.1.1 All assessors and experts

Assessors and experts will be able to prove that they have at least obtained a university degree or equivalent, in a discipline relating to the field covered by one of the accreditation sectors.

However, so as not to rule out certain special cases, BELAC may decide, if it supplies reasons for doing so, that the professional experience of an individual applying to be an assessor or expert is sufficient to replace education gained at a tertiary level.

Candidates may be asked to demonstrate that they have sufficient knowledge of one of the national languages to be able to express themselves clearly and fluently, both in speech and in writing.

Where relevant, BELAC takes into account the specific requirements on accreditation assessors prescribed by regulatory provisions or conformity assessment schemes.

#### 5.2.1.2 Lead assessors

Lead assessors must have gained at least two years professional experience in activities relating to management systems or accreditation.

By "experience in implementation of management systems" is meant experience in development, implementation or evaluation of management systems according accreditation or certification standards.

A general knowledge or experience in one or more technical sectors can be a plus.

They will be able to ensure the effective leadership of an assessment team and to formulate assessment conclusions.

#### 5.2.1.3 Technical assessors and experts

Technical assessors and experts must have gained at least two years' professional experience during the past 5 years in the sector of activities where they will have to assess.

In case the technical assessor is asked to take care of the evaluation of the management system, the technical assessor must also have the necessary experience with management systems.

Considering that experts are usually called for very specific assessment tasks, case to case derogations with respect to the requirements on education and type/duration of professional experience may be necessary.

### 5.2.2 Specific requirements on competence, education and professional experience

Specific requirements with regard to competence, education and professional experience of technical assessors and experts for each specific accreditation field are detailed hereafter. These requirements are complementary those documented under 5.2.1.

#### 5.2.2.1 Accreditation of laboratories, Proficiency Testing Providers and Reference Materials Producers

For the accreditation of laboratories, professional experience means the necessary experience and knowledge of:

- the operation of a laboratory, preferably in technical fields identical to those in which the assessor or expert will be assessing;

- the general principles relating to the management and technology implemented by a laboratory;
- the terminology, standards and regulations relating to the fields in question;
- metrological aspects and, in particular, in the field in which the individual is to be assessing.
- the aspects of statistics treatments of data if the type of assessment require it.

For the accreditation of proficiency testing providers and producers of reference materials, assessors and experts are expected to demonstrate competence through direct professional experience with these activities, preferably including practical experience with statistical procedures used in assessment of homogeneity and stability as well as in the characterization of PT items or (certified) reference materials.

For these activities, direct professional experience may be replaced by training on respectively ISO/IEC 17043 or EN ISO 17034 provided by BELAC (or an equivalent NAB) provided that the candidate can demonstrate at least appropriate professional experience in the laboratory sector for the technical domain in which he is asked to perform.

Knowledge of the competence requirements of testing and calibration laboratories as specified in ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO 15189 can also be considered as an asset in these sectors, given the importance of testing and/or calibration activities in supporting the preparation and determination of characteristics of PT item and the production process of (certified) reference materials.

#### 5.2.2.2 Accreditation of inspection bodies

Professional experience includes experience and appropriate knowledge of:

- the inspection activities, preferably in technical fields identical to those in which the assessor or expert will be assessing;
- the technical characteristics of the products, equipment, installations and processes that will be subjected to inspection;
- the terminology, standards and regulations relating to the fields in question.

#### 5.2.2.3 Accreditation of management systems certification bodies

A certification auditor who works for a certification body may be accepted as accreditation assessor or expert. In such cases, the applicant body will be notified that the proposed assessor is a certification auditor.

Technical assessors and experts will have to demonstrate experience and appropriate knowledge within the concerned accreditation program (ISO/IEC 17021-1) This

includes knowledge of and ability to apply assessment principles, practices and techniques.

In relation to the concerned management certification scheme (e.g. ISO 9001, ISO 22000,...), the technical assessor or expert will have knowledge and experience in at least one technical sector/activity. This includes:

- the technical characteristics of the products and processes;
- the processes and practices pertinent to the sector;
- The legal framework or regulations.

Additionally environmental assessors and experts will have experience or an appropriate knowledge of the environmental sector. This will include

- the terminology specific to the sector;
- environmental legislation in force in the sector;
- environmental aspects of products including their impact;
- critical environmental aspects linked to products and processes;
- recent environmental technologies dealing with pollution prevention.

The ability of a technical assessor or expert to perform an office and/or witness assessment in a different technical sector/activity will be reviewed by BELAC.

The assessor/expert fills in the CV form (BELAC 6-210) with justification for the indicated sectors of competence ( e.g. IAF sectors).

Complementary to this and considering the required level of competence, the BELAC document 6-311 identifies clusters of activities relevant for the performance of either office or witness assessments.

An assessor/expert with demonstrated competence for at least one element of a cluster can be appointed for an assessment (office or witnessing) for all the activities covered by the concerned cluster.

#### 5.2.2.4 Accreditation of EMAS environmental verifiers

Supplementary to the criteria for EMS (see point 5.2.2.3) assessors and experts will have knowledge of the EMAS regulation and knowledge or professional experience of EMAS verification.

#### 5.2.2.5 Accreditation of certification bodies for products and personnel

A certification auditor who works for a certification body may be accepted as accreditation assessor or expert. In such cases, the applicant body will be notified that the proposed assessor is a certification auditor.

Technical assessors and experts will have appropriate knowledge of:

- technical characteristics of products and processes;
- processes and practices specific to the sector;
- standards applicable to the concerned products and field;
- technologies involved in product certification such as sampling, testing and inspection;
- and/or the organisation of examinations in case of certification of personnel

#### 5.2.2.6 Accreditation of validation and verification bodies (EU ETS)

Technical assessors and experts will have appropriate knowledge of:

- the principles and process of validation and/or verification;
- Greenhouse Gas program (GHG) and regulatory requirements

and will comply in particular with the requirements of Article 59 of the EU No 2018/2067 (AVR) regulation.

The technical assessor or expert will have knowledge and experience in at least one activity group as defined in Annex 1 of EU No 2018/2067 Regulation. The ability of a technical assessor or expert to perform an office and/or witness assessment in a different activity group will be reviewed by BELAC.

### 5.3 Training as an assessor

#### 5.3.1 General provisions

Training will aim at all assessors having adequate knowledge of the following items:

- the objectives of accreditation and the functioning of BELAC, with specific attention for the provisions of the accreditation process (module A – common to all accreditation fields);
- the assessment methodology (module B – common to all accreditation fields);
- the accreditation criteria (module C – specific to each type of conformity assessment body). The module C relates to all accreditation requirements that apply to the type of conformity assessment concerned.

##### 5.3.1.1 Formal training through participation in a training course

The formal training will cover at least modules A and B and one module C. Extensions to other C modules are possible.

Candidates may be excused from the training course if they can show that they have attended an equivalent seminar organised by an accreditation body which is a member

of a multilateral agreement where BELAC is also signatory and that they have acquired a thorough knowledge of the BELAC accreditation criteria and procedures. Before their first participation in an assessment, the BELAC secretariat provides them with information on the BELAC specific procedures for the performance of the assessments, in particular with respect to the following aspects: specific accreditation requirements for the relevant fields, the classification and handling of non-conformities and the provisions for the presentation of the assessment reports.

Candidates may also be excused from part of the training course if

- their professional experience includes knowledge of elements of one or several modules;
- they have gained the necessary expertise following active participation in at least 5 full appointments as expert with positive evaluation.

A documented analysis of the extent of the derogation is performed on a case by case basis, with identification of the elements that need to be the subject of a formal training.

Training courses are organised under the responsibility of BELAC; co-operation with external persons or organisations may be sought.

The formal training is organised according to one of the following options:

- a full training focused on a specific accreditation field (modules A, B and C for the relevant field);
- a group or individual training for a specific module;
- a group of individual training in order to complement the experience gained through the practice as expert.

The participants receive an attendance certificate with mention of the modules covered by the training course.

After the theoretical training, each participant is the subject of an evaluation.

#### 5.3.1.2 Practical training

A plan for the practical part of the training is designed based on, amongst others, the results of the theoretical training and the personal experience of the candidate.

Practical training will be gained through the participation in an accreditation assessment in one of the following functions, depending on the stage of the training process:

- observer without personal involvement in the assessment: this stage allows the candidate to get acquainted with the work of an assessment team ; the candidate is presented as trainee to the evaluated body;



- assistant assessor with performance of limited assessment tasks performed under the supervision and responsibility of a qualified assessor; the candidate is presented as trainee assessor to the evaluated body and his work is not subject to invoicing;
- junior assessor with full responsibility for the performance of the assessment but supervision by a specifically appointed supervisor; the junior assessor is presented as assessor to the evaluated body and his work is subject to invoicing.

The practical training will be repeated for each type of conformity assessment.

### 5.3.2 Specific training to the function of lead assessor

Candidates need to have specific experience with respect to the conduct of an assessment team and the drafting of the assessment report.

This specific experience may be gained:

- either in the form of a complete training programme for one accreditation standard (modules A,B,C) followed by practical field training as a lead assessor;
- either, for the technical assessors who are already qualified for one accreditation standard, by the participation in at least one assessment as a trainee lead assessor before being allowed to perform as junior assessor;
- either, for the lead assessors who are already qualified for one accreditation standard, in the form of an additional training (module C) for one or more other accreditation standards and participation in at least one assessment as a trainee lead assessor for this accreditation standard before being allowed to perform as junior assessor.

### 5.4 **Specific training for the function of expert**

Experts may join assessment teams with a view to provide the team with specific competence and experience.

The experts are not allowed to perform under their own responsibility but they have to report to the assessment team. The training is limited to a focused information provided by a competent member of the secretariat before the assessment; direct supervision takes place during the assessment. During the assessment, the expert is supported by a person specially appointed to assist him (see point 5.1.4) and who is also responsible to provide a report on the performance of the expert.

## **5.5 Formal qualification of assessors**

Unless adequate reasons are presented, candidates shall have acquired practical experience before they assume full responsibilities of an assessor. This experience will be gained through participation as junior assessor in at least two assessments.

Their performance will be recorded in an evaluation report written by the supervisor who attends the assessment. Knowledge of the candidate with regard to objectives, procedure, methodology of assessment and accreditation requirements is evaluated, as well as their technical background.

Moreover, the quality of reporting is evaluated by the supervisor and by the reviewers as part of the decision-making process on the accreditation case.

At least one positive evaluation, regarding both the performance during the assessment and the level of reporting is required before a candidate can be qualified as assessor. BELAC takes all available information in consideration.

## **5.6 Keeping assessors and experts up-to-date**

The following mechanisms contribute to the continuous training of assessors and experts:

- a systematic information of assessors and experts in case of revision of the accreditation requirements and/or procedures and instructions they are interested in. In case of significant modifications, an information seminar will be organised in order to ensure that assessors are kept up-to-date;
- the organisation of information meetings;
- the possibility for the assessors and experts to take part in meetings of the sector committees;
- regular contacts with the BELAC secretariat, the file manager and the coordinator during assessments.

## **5.7 Monitoring of assessors**

Monitoring the performance of assessors is based on an evaluation during assessments and the examination of assessment reports.

Monitoring on-site is under the responsibility of the supervisor and is done at least once every 3 years and for each accreditation standard for which the auditor is qualified.

The evaluation covers knowledge with regard to objectives, procedure and methodology of assessment, accreditation requirements and technical experience as well the ability to write the report.

During examination of assessment reports, reviewers are also asked to comment on the content of reports; remarks on the level of performance of an assessor or expert are recorded.

The secretariat will review the qualification of each assessor at least once every 3 year based on:

- the monitoring reports;
- complaints and observations related to the personal attitude of an assessor where considered relevant;
- comments of the reviewers.

In case of positive evaluation, the qualification is maintained.

In case of negative evaluation, a contact with the concerned person will be established by the secretariat and discussions based on available information will take place.

In case of repeated problems, BELAC will decide on maintaining or not co-operation with the concerned person. The decision may lead to withdrawal from the list of assessors.

## **5.8 Records of data of assessors and experts**

### **5.8.1 Individual files.**

The secretariat is responsible for maintaining a file for each assessor or expert (on paper or electronic file) that will contain at least:

- a curriculum vitae compiled on a standard form, with systematic update at least once upon 5 years. Moreover, assessors will keep the secretariat informed of any modifications which might occur;
- information relating to all training courses and information seminars attended by the assessor;
- a record of the decision stating that the assessor complies with the criteria for acceptance as a technical or lead assessor or as expert;
- a summary of assignments carried out for BELAC;
- any evaluation reports on the assessor's or expert's work drafted by the supervisor or the person assisting the expert and any actions resulting from them.

#### 5.8.1.1 Lists of assessors and experts

The secretariat keeps current lists of registered assessors and experts.

#### 5.8.2 List of technical sectors for qualification

The secretariat keeps current lists of technical fields (keywords) that form the basis for the qualification of assessors and experts.

## 6 RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF ASSESSORS AND EXPERTS

### 6.1 Code of professional conduct for assessors and experts

Assessors and experts are required:

- a) To behave at any time with the required level of impartiality, objectivity, honesty, openness and integrity;
- b) To avoid any situation that may lead (or may be perceived as) to conflicts of interests that may cast doubts about their impartiality (see under § 6.2)
- c) To refuse any kind of gratification, present, invitation in cash or in kind;
- d) To limit to reasonable amounts the travel and subsistence costs that will be invoiced to the accredited body;
- e) Not to disclose to any third-party findings or information gained as part of an assessment appointment (see also § 6.3);
- f) To behave with tact and respect with the persons met during assessments and to avoid any kind of intimidation, criticism or aggressiveness
- g) To be listening to the positions expressed by the assessed party and to avoid their personal views, positions or personal experience to influence their findings;
- h) To avoid any behaviour that may harm the reputation or interests of BELAC and of the assessed body;
- i) To refrain, when participating in other events than those organised by BELAC, to give the impression to express themselves on behalf of BELAC;
- j) To accept only those appointments as assessor/expert when they feel to have the necessary competence and be able to make relevant judgments;
- k) To prepare thoroughly for the assessments they have been appointed to;
- l) To perform the assessments without a priori and in compliance with the BELAC procedures valid at the moment of the assessment;
- m) To report their findings in a detailed and objective manner and to relate systematically their statements of conformity to the accreditation criteria and factual evidence.

## 6.2 Impartiality

### 6.2.1 Consultancy

Any assessor or expert who also acts as a consultant for third parties and offers personal collaboration with a view to obtaining accreditation, certification or agreement, must inform BELAC. To this effect, the assessor will send to the secretariat, on each request, a list of bodies that make use of his/her services as a consultant. The transfer of information is strictly forbidden; the confidentiality obligations as stated under point 6.3 shall be strictly respected.

Each body being the subject of a BELAC assessment is allowed to ask the secretariat whether a proposed assessor also provides consultancy services. On request, the assessor or expert shall send the organisation a list of persons or companies for whom he/she has worked as a consultant.

Assessors and experts are not allowed to consult with bodies that they have assessed, at least for 2 years after the assessment.

### 6.2.2 Conflicts of interest

In order to select the members of an assessment team, BELAC will mainly consider the ability of an assessor or expert to carry out the evaluation to which he/she would be assigned. The selection will be based on the data listed in the assessor's or expert's personal file and on whether the person is acceptable to the organisation to be assessed.

However, it is the responsibility of the assessor or expert to whom an assignment has been proposed to inform BELAC of any facts that might cause prejudice to the required impartiality. Failure to respect this obligation may lead to the assessor or expert being removed from the list of assessors or experts.

Particular examples of circumstances which might lead to withdraw a proposed assignment from an assessor or expert might be the following:

- The assessor or expert has some moral, financial or commercial interest in the organisation to be evaluated;
- he/she was employed by or worked on behalf of the organisation during the last 10 years;
- he/she has acted as a consultant for the organisation to be evaluated in the last 10 years.

## 6.3 Confidentiality

### 6.3.1 Duties of BELAC

With the exception of the identity of the assessor and the names and addresses of employers past and present as well as the fact that the assessor also provides consultancy services, the data contained in an assessor's or expert's curriculum vitae and, more generally, in a personal file may not be sent to third parties without the written consent of the concerned person.

### 6.3.2 Duties of assessors and experts

Assessors and experts are required to maintain the strictest confidentiality with regard to any data accessed during the evaluation to which they are assigned. This clause even relates to information regarding the fact that an organisation has submitted an application for accreditation, because BELAC may not release any information of this nature unless an accreditation certificate has actually been granted.

Assessors and experts may, in principle, only release information covered by the confidentiality clause to the BELAC secretariat and to the BELAC Accreditation Board as the sole body entitled to make decisions in function of the received information.

In case of critical situation, to be evaluated by the assessor or the expert, he/she is allowed to deviate from the above mentioned provision in case of identification of

- a major breach to regulatory requirements of technical character related to the accredited activities;
- a situation that represents an actual and immediate risk for the safety of persons, animals, plants and the environment.

In such cases, the assessor/expert is allowed to communicate the necessary information to the relevant regulatory authorities provided BELAC is duly informed.

Assessors and experts are thus required to take all necessary practical steps to ensure that the assignment remains confidential, in particular, with regard to any relationship with an employer including the way that any post addressed to them is received. Copying and/or sending, in whole or in part, of documents relating to an evaluation (e.g. reports) or to the way in which an organisation under evaluation operates (e.g. quality manual, procedures etc) for personal use, or for that of third parties is strictly forbidden.

Assessors and experts remain bound to their obligation of confidentiality, even after the official conclusion of their assignment or in case they are no longer active as BELAC assessor or expert.

## **6.4 Remarks and observations concerning BELAC**

Assessors and experts must ensure that the status and reputation of BELAC amongst third parties is maintained at all times.

Assessors and experts are nevertheless invited to:

- inform BELAC directly or via the coordinator or lead assessor, of any fact which might compromise the reputation of BELAC;
- send any remarks or suggestions which might help to improve the way in which BELAC operates.

## **6.5 Maintenance of status as assessor**

A positive evaluation during monitoring of an assessor's performance is necessary to maintain the status (see under 5.7).

Maintaining the status of a BELAC assessor implies also that the individual is required to:

- Respect the obligations with deontological character as described under points 6.1, 6.2, 6.3;
- inform BELAC of any changes to the data recorded on the assessor's identification form or to the assessor's technical expertise;
- take good notice and implement the amendments to accreditation requirements and procedures/instructions communicated to him (see 6.7.1);
- attend the training or information seminars specially organised for assessors, Participation in training sessions for which the assessor has received an invitation is mandatory unless derogation based on motivated ground.

In case these provisions are not complied with, withdrawal of the assessor status may be decided.

No withdrawals from a list of assessors may be made without prior notification, including reasons for doing so, or without proposing to meet with the person concerned. On this occasion, the assessor will have access to his personal file and will be informed of the possibility of submitting an appeal.

Any assessor may request to be removed from a list (or lists) of assessors on which he is included, at any time.

## **6.6 Reference to the BELAC assessor status or to the BELAC expert status**

Since each official assignment as an assessor or expert is strictly limited to the period of the evaluation, all references to assessor or expert status must be limited to this period and reserved for communication with the organisation to be evaluated.

Each assessor is authorised to state in his/her curriculum vitae his/her participation in the training courses organised by BELAC and the fact that he/she is officially registered on one or more of the assessor lists.

In the event of public speaking or mention in publications, any reference to assessor status which might give the impression that the presented position can be interpreted as the official opinion of BELAC, must be subject to the prior approval of this body.

Reference to BELAC assessor status for commercial ends is prohibited.

## **6.7 Information of assessors and experts**

### **6.7.1 Access to documentation of BELAC**

Assessors and experts have access, via the web-site, to every available document connected with the management system. These documents may also be sent to them upon request.

Furthermore, assessors will receive personal notice of revision of documents that relate specifically to:

- the accreditation criteria, including those documents which fall within the sector which relates to their particular technical skills;
- the implementation of accreditation procedures;
- the criteria for qualifying as an assessor and instructions for collaboration with BELAC.

Experts are notified by each assignment on documents that are relevant for the assessment they are commissioned for.

### **6.7.2 Sector committees**

Assessors with the relevant technical expertise will be invited to join in the work of the sector committee. However, for reasons of efficiency, participation may be limited to 5 persons.



## **7 COLLABORATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN BELAC AND ITS ASSESSORS AND EXPERTS**

### **7.1 Status of assessors and experts**

Assessors and experts operate under their own responsibility or within the framework of an appointment given by their employer.

### **7.2 Scope and duration of the appointment**

Any evaluation assigned to an assessor or expert will consist of carrying out either all or some of the operations required to evaluate whether a conformity assessment body complies with the accreditation criteria. Such duties will be limited to the duration of the assessment, which means from the acceptance of the appointment as assessor until notification of the decision made by BELAC secretariat or Accreditation Board.

### **7.3 Acceptance by the assessor or expert**

#### **7.3.1 Proposal**

The assignment proposal is submitted to the assessor or expert by means of a document that includes:

- the name of the organisation that submitted the accreditation application or is subject to assessment with a view to maintain the accreditation;
- the type of evaluation concerned;
- the duty to be undertaken (lead assessor, technical assessor or expert);
- the duration of the assignment (including preparation phase, assessment visit and, where appropriate, drafting of report) and the quotation relating to it;
- the names of the other evaluation team members.

#### **7.3.2 Commitment**

Assessors and experts will be invited to either formally accept or reject the assignment by returning the enclosed standard form to the secretariat. Through this acceptance they agree to:

- accept the proposed assignment including the financial arrangements;
- have appropriate knowledge of the accreditation requirements as defined in the R.D. of 31.01.2006 setting up BELAC;
- carry out the evaluation in accordance with the accreditation criteria and the BELAC procedures;
- exhibit the utmost objectivity in all circumstances;

- treat any information supplied during the assignment with the strictest confidence and act, at all times, according to the professional code of conduct, as defined by BELAC;
- declare that they have no moral, financial or commercial ties with the organisation to be evaluated and that they are under no influence that might prejudice an objective evaluation.

If a technical assessor/expert considers that he/she does not have the professional expertise required in relation to the scope of the accreditation applied for, he/she will inform BELAC, which, if appropriate, will elect a replacement. Failure to respect this obligation may result in the assessor in question being removed from the list of assessors or experts.

#### **7.4 Documents sent in relation to an assignment.**

In view of an assignment, each assessor or expert will receive:

- the application form submitted by the organisation applying for accreditation;
- the latest version of the quality manual;
- the previous assessment report and of related documents, when relevant;
- all other necessary specific information.

By accepting the assessment task, the assessor or expert commits himself to respect the confidentiality rules for the documents he had been provided with. At the end of the evaluation, he is responsible to ensure proper destruction of the paper or electronic documents or to make sure that consultation by third parties is not possible.

BELAC will, nevertheless, reserve the right to insist, at any time during the procedures, that the documents relating to a case be returned.

#### **7.5 Remuneration**

Remuneration of assessors and experts will be calculated on the basis of:

- the number of hours listed in the assignment proposal or actually worked if it was possible to complete the assignment more quickly;
- the hourly rate set by legal stipulations which fix the fees payable within BELAC assignments;

Following the evaluation, the secretariat will send the assessor or expert a summary of all work carried out which will form the basis of the invoice or expenses claim submitted by the concerned person.

Any travel expenses incurred by assessors and experts will be paid in full as fixed by the legal stipulations, on the basis of a standard expenses claim form that is sent to the secretariat.

## **7.6 Insurance - public and employers' liability**

It is presumed that assessors and experts whose fees are invoiced by an employer, are covered by the insurance of the latter.

Assessors working in their own right may, if desired, take out their own insurance policy.

Neither BELAC nor the FPS Economy can be considered as liable in case of accident.

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