



### MP 18 - 02

## REMOTE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

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### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline how NiNAS uses remote assessment in its accreditation processes to provide the best assessment experience for the accredited organisations, while maintaining the integrity of NiNAS accreditation.

### 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all the accreditation schemes managed by NiNAS.

### 3. Definitions

Definitions related to this procedure are given in A01-01, *Definitions and Abbreviations used in NiNAS management system documentation*.

### 4. Reference Documents

- ISO/IEC 17011:2017 *Conformity assessment - Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies*
- QM 1.0 NiNAS Quality Manual
- NiNAS MP 06
- IAF ID 12

### 5. Procedure

#### 5.1 General

Unforeseen circumstances may result in situations where it may not be possible to conduct on-site assessment. Such circumstances are a part of the extraordinary events that can halt or negatively impact NiNAS accreditation activities and affect the accreditation status of accredited organisations.

In such situations, NiNAS may decide to conduct assessments remotely without compromising the integrity of its accreditation. There may also be situations where



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specific extension to existing scopes of accreditation may be accomplished through a ‘desk top review’.

5.1.1 On site assessment activity of an accredited organisation is critical in the accreditation process of NiNAS. ISO/IEC 17011:2017 provides for the replacement of on-site assessment with other assessment techniques where an on-site assessment is not applicable or may not be possible. In general, remote assessments may be considered for use when:

- a) Travel to a CAB or specific location is not reasonable (i.e. for safety reasons, travel restrictions, etc.).
- b) The CAB has systematic implementation of its management system where records, data, etc. can be reviewed at any site, despite where the work is being performed.
- c) The assessment is for a minor extension to scope of accreditation.
- d) The risk level of the assessment is of low concern to the AB.
- e) An activity or activities planned for the on-site assessment could not be completed and extending the on-site assessment is not the best resolution.
- f) The AB has an assessor (or team of assessors) already familiar with the Management System and its practices and who have visited the CAB’s headquarters.

5.1.2 NiNAS will not consider remote assessments:

- a) During initial assessment of a new CBA facility, scope or significant change.
- b) When no on-site assessment has taken place for an extended period of time.
- c) When the CAB has a history of nonconformance at the location being assessed.

NiNAS may also resort to the use of remote assessment when it determines that an on-site assessment is not possible due to extraordinary events.

Initial assessments do not qualify for remote assessment, unless they are performed in coordination with a physical on-site assessment.

## 5.2 Requirements for conduct of remote assessment

Certain requirements must be in place in order to use remote assessment:



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- a) Where possible, a suitable private room where the assessment team can all be present. Where this is not possible, the assessors must be able to remain in regular contact with the Team Leader;
  - b) Access to fast and reliable internet connection for both the assessors and the conformity assessment body;
  - c) Availability of a suitable video conferencing or communication software such as Skype, Zoom Meeting or Go To Meeting. The communication software and associated computer network should enable communication with the CAB as necessary, including opening and closing meetings;
  - d) Confirmation of confidentiality of information that will be accessed via the internet shall be obtained before the remote assessment may be scheduled;
  - e) Where necessary, a separate computer system to run the communication channel, especially where the assessors are using their own personal computers to access records and complete NiNAS assessment forms;
  - f) If online connectivity is not possible, then the assessment will be carried out using telephone conferencing and the emailing/file sharing of documentation;

### 5.3 What the CABs need to make available for remote assessment

#### 5.3.1 Personnel

- a) Key personnel who normally support NiNAS' on-site assessment need to be available for web conferences and answering ad-hoc queries from the assessment team as the assessment progresses;
- b) Personnel with specific technical or administrative responsibilities will need to be available for their relevant parts of the assessment;
- c) Top management and members of the leadership team will need to be available for relevant parts of the assessment as well as the opening and closing meetings.

#### 5.3.2 Documentation

- a) The assessment team will review as much of the management system as possible remotely. This can be done via screen share or by sending the documented information to NiNAS in advance via email/file sharing;
- b) Preferably, the assessment team may request the documentation to be sent in advance of the assessment so they can review before hand;
- c) Typical documents to be submitted include:



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- i. internal audit programme and supporting records or reports;
  - ii. minutes of management system review not older than 12 months;
  - iii. reports of complaints and non-conforming work;
  - iv. training records of new staff;
  - v. details of changes affecting the organisation;
  - vi. where relevant, proficiency testing data (including PT Requirements Checklist, PT Participation Plan, evidence of corrective actions taken for PT/ILC unsatisfactory results);
  - vii. quality control data (where relevant);
  - viii. a copy of management system quality manual (including policies, procedures, methods and work instructions);
  - ix. a list of non-conformities and corrective actions taken;
  - x. samples or a list, as applicable, of request forms, test reports or certificates issued by the accredited organisation since the last assessment;
  - xi. from the samples or list submitted above, the assessors would select a number of request forms, test reports or certificates issued by the CAB from which to conduct vertical assessments.

5.3.3 The assessment team shall notify the CAB about which selected certificates and/or reports and records (and client files where applicable) that they are required to submit, to be used for the vertical assessment(s).

The list of certificates, records, etc. to be submitted by the CAB includes but are not limited to:

- a) a copy of the reports or certificates to be evaluated. These shall be in the same format as that sent to the CAB's client to enable full evaluation;
- b) a copy of raw data generated during the performance of the activity;
- c) a copy of the procedure, method or work instruction used in the performance of the activity;
- d) personnel records of all staff involved in the preparation of the certificate(s)/report(s). These records shall include:
  - i. a copy of their job description;
  - ii. a CV (if applicable)
  - iii. a copy of the competence evaluation records; and



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- iv. a copy of the record of authorization for the individual to perform a specific task.
  - e) evidence of the calibration status of the equipment used to perform the test/calibration/inspection, etc.
  - f) identification of all the equipment used to monitor the environmental conditions, together with the relevant calibration certificates and records (where applicable);

5.3.4 The assessment team may require an activity, or part thereof, to be recorded with a video camera and the clip shared with the assessment team. Thereafter the technical assessor may complete the relevant sections of the NiNAS witnessing of an activity form. NiNAS may make available body worn cameras to the staff of the CAB for use in the recording of an activity. NiNAS Policy on the use of body worn cameras (PL 002-01) shall apply.

### 5.4. Conducting the Remote Assessment

The following shall be considered in the conduct of the remote assessment:

- confidentiality;
- conflict of interest declaration;
- opening meeting;
- remote assessment; and
- closing meeting.

#### 5.4.1 Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

The assessment team members must observe the NiNAS confidentiality policy relating to assessment of conformity assessment bodies. Team members shall complete and sign the Confidentiality Form (F 443) and the Conflict of Interest form (F 444) respectively. On completion of assessment, assessors should confirm the deletion of any confidential documents, images, recordings from personal computers where used.

#### 5.4.2 Opening Meeting

5.4.2.1 Suitable electronic communication channel such as Skype, Zoom Meeting, Teleconferencing etc.) shall be used to facilitate the opening meeting.



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5.4.2.2 The opening meeting will be presided over by the Team Leader (Lead Assessor) and shall proceed in accordance with the normal assessment plan.

5.4.2.3 The assessment team shall complete and sign the attendance register; staff of the CAB will also complete and sign the attendance register which will be forwarded to the assessment team via email.

### 5.4.3 Conducting the Assessment

5.4.3.1 The remote assessment will be conducted using a combination of review of documents and records, interview of the CAB staff to obtain additional information and clarification, etc.

5.4.3.2 Both parties should make their best effort to confirm what was heard, stated and read throughout the assessment.

5.4.3.3 If in the course of the assessment nonconformities are identified, these must be discussed and verified with the representatives of the CAB to ensure the correctness of information.

5.4.3.4 All findings must be submitted to the Team Leader for review, and if necessary seek clarifications from the team members.

5.4.3.5 All remote assessments should be concluded with a summary, review of the day(s)'s events, issues of concern, clarification of issues, nonconformances and expectations.

### 5.5 Closing Meeting

5.5.1 The closing shall be conducted in accordance with the normal assessment plan and agenda.

5.5.2 The Team Leader will communicate the recommendations of the assessment team to the CAB, as well as a summary of the findings (as contained in the assessment report). The team's recommendation will indicate if an on-site visit will be required or not.

5.5.3 Copies of any Corrective Action Request (CAR) forms will be signed by the Team Leader and sent to the CAB by email. The CAB representative will in turn sign on the forms and send back to the Team Leader by email.





### 5.6 Post Assessment Activities

5.6.1 Communication between the assessors and the CAB for sending documents or clarification on issues and corrective action management shall be pre-defined and communicated.

5.6.2 The assessors should confirm deletion of any confidential documents, images, recordings, etc.

5.6.3 The treatment of nonconformities, renewing/continuing approval of accreditation should follow the same processes that are utilised for on-site assessments.

### 6.0 Forms

Form Number	Title
F443	Confidentiality, Impartiality and Non-disclosure Agreement
F444	Conflict of Interest



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### 7.0 Document History

Modification No/Date	Proposed by	Page No.	Summary of Modification
Issue 1	-	-	-
23/06/2024	Quality Manager	All	Updated to align with the new documentation structure of NiNAS procedures