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Nordic Innovation Centre

POSITION PAPER

NORDTEST VIEWS ON SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION

Position paper 1
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The position paper describes the views of NORDTEST on the way the scope of accreditation should be defined to ensure an optimal operation of testing laboratories:

1. Different ways to present the scope should be accepted. The scope ought to be rigidly defined for laboratories performing only routine testing. For more advanced testing laboratories flexibility in defining the scope is needed.
2. The testing laboratory shall have the right to define the scope of accreditation in a way suitable for the laboratory. It is the task of the accreditation body to verify that the laboratory is capable and competent to operate within the defined scope. In order to achieve this, a revision of present quality standards (EN 45000, ISO 9000, ISO 25 and ANSI) preferably towards a single quality standard is needed. This should be done in cooperation between testing laboratories and their customers as well as accreditation, certification and standardization bodies.
3. For laboratories performing only routine testing the quality assurance is mainly focusing on following the requirements in the technical standards. For advanced and diversified testing purposes the quality assurance activities should focus the laboratory's internal verification of test methods.
4. The way the quality assurance system is built up depends on the way the scope is defined. Consequently no uniform and harmonized quality assurance requirements can be defined.
5. The scope can be defined from different views: method by method, technology, technical area (field), product, material etc. or combination of these.
6. The scope must be limited by the available equipment and technical expertise in the testing laboratory.
7. The customer (especially SMEs) to testing laboratories are not always aware of testing finesses. The testing laboratory has first to choose the appropriate test method. For this purpose laboratories with a broad scope are much better suitable than laboratories accredited for a few test methods.
8. Flexibility in enlarging the scope of accreditation is needed. As long as the laboratory stays within its competence area (points 5 and 6) information to the accreditation body should be given but verification can be done in the annual supervision. If the enlargement exceeds the competence area, the accreditation body must rapidly respond to the request from the laboratory. If an evaluation is considered necessary it must be done without delays.
9. The assessment of the scope by the accreditation bodies should be carried out in a harmonized way paying most attention to the technical competence of the laboratory. The procedure of assessment can contain harmonized elements but a large degree of freedom must be left to the assessors.
10. The accreditation process and a broad definition of scope favour large testing organizations being centrally situated in Europe. This is due to the fact that the infrastructural costs can be supported by a larger testing volume.



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NORDTEST is a Nordic Innovation Centre brand offering competence and expertise in the field of harmonizing of norms and methods, a large Nordic net-work of experts, more than 650 recommended Nordic testing methods and 550 published technical reports.

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Nordic Innovation Centre

The Nordic Innovation Centre initiates and finances activities that enhance innovation collaboration and develop and maintain a smoothly functioning market in the Nordic region.

The Centre works primarily with small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in the Nordic countries. Other important partners are those most closely involved with innovation and market surveillance, such as industrial organisations and interest groups, research institutions and public authorities.

The Nordic Innovation Centre is an institution under the Nordic Council of Ministers. Its secretariat is in Oslo.

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