

TECHNICAL CIRCULAR**Ref. DC2026SPM114****Milan, 14-09-2026**

To all accredited/accreditation-seeking Inspection Bodies

To the Associations of Conformity Assessment Bodies

To all Assessors/Experts of the DC Department

Their offices

SUBJECT: Technical Circular DC No. 32/2026 – Provisions concerning the transition of accreditation of Inspection Bodies (IBs) from the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020:2012 standard to the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020:2026 standard

On 31 March 2026, the International Standard UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020:2026 "Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies performing inspection" was published, applicable to Inspection Bodies. At the same time, the 2012 version of the standard was withdrawn; it will, however, continue to remain valid for accreditation purposes during the transition period.

Among the main new features of the 2026 edition of the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020 standard, the model for classifying the independence level of Inspection Bodies has been simplified, moving to only the categories Type A and Type Non-A (formerly Type B and Type C).

The independence requirements for the two types of Bodies are detailed in Appendix A of the standard.

At the ILAC General Assembly held in Bangkok (Thailand) on 24 October 2025, Resolution 29.22 established a transitional period of 3 years from the date of publication of the standard. At the end of the transitional period, therefore from 1 April 2029, accreditations issued against the 2012 edition of the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020 standard that have not transitioned to the new version will be withdrawn.

ACCREDIA is currently reviewing the applicable forms in order to make any updates deemed necessary.

New Accreditation applications and management of Extension applications

From 6 months after the publication of the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020:2026 standard (therefore from 1 October 2026), ACCREDIA will accept accreditation applications against the new standard, and consequently new accreditation applications (or accreditation transfer applications) against the 2012 version of the same standard will no longer be accepted.

Extension applications will be accepted against the edition of the standard for which the accreditation certificate issued to the applicant Body is currently valid, unless the latter has already requested ACCREDIA to initiate the transition process.

Where the extension application predates the initiation of the transition process in accordance with the arrangements defined in this circular, and the operational activities relating to the extension request take place after the accreditation transition has been obtained, the extension process must be updated as it proceeds and adapted to the new version of the standard.

Bodies already accredited to UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020:2012 — management of the transition

ACCREDIA will verify compliance with the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020:2026 standard as part of the surveillance and renewal activities already envisaged within the ordinary accreditation cycle.

In general terms, ACCREDIA intends to ensure that the process of transitioning to the new edition of the standard does not entail additional costs for Inspection Bodies, except in specific cases attributable to situations of persistent non-alignment with the regulatory requirements and/or to specific requests (for example, "early transition") that make it necessary to carry out supplementary or extraordinary inspection activities. Any additional costs to be borne by the IB will in any case be communicated in advance in accordance with the usual operating procedures.

All Bodies already accredited under the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020:2012 standard must prepare and formalise a transition plan, defining the actions necessary to comply with the new version of the standard.

The plan must describe in detail all the activities envisaged by the Body for the adaptation of its management system, together with the related implementation timescales, and must include at least:

- a gap analysis of the Body's management system, highlighting, for each requirement of the standard, the impact of the changes introduced, and the related system documents involved;
- the arrangements for managing any transition from one type of IB independence classification to another, highlighting any changes to the organisational structure (also applicable where the change affects only part of the scope);
- a review of the resources involved in the inspection process;
- the training activities that the Body intends to provide to personnel involved in the inspection process, whether internal or external.

The transition plan must be drawn up using the form set out in Annex 1 to this Circular, supplemented, where necessary, with any additional elements deemed necessary, and must be sent by e-mail in advance to the ACCREDIA Technical Officers responsible for the ISP scheme, in accordance with the following timeframes:

- at least 2 months before the scheduled date of the annual surveillance assessment;
- at least 4 months before the scheduled date of the renewal assessment, together with the submission of the documentation required for carrying out the documentary review.

Where the Body requests that the transition assessment be carried out separately from the ordinary surveillance/renewal assessment, ACCREDIA will carry out an office assessment at the Body's premises, lasting a minimum of 2 man-days, plus 1 man-day for reporting. For the purposes of determining the costs relating to the man-days, the rates set out in the current Pricelist will apply. In this case, the Body must submit the above-mentioned transition plan to ACCREDIA at least 2 months before the scheduled date of the planned transition assessment.

Where a change in the independence category is requested, ACCREDIA will carry out documentary review activity equal to 0.5 man-days at least one month before the transition assessment is carried out, irrespective of how the Body concerned has submitted the transition request (i.e. during surveillance/renewal or an ad hoc assessment).

Except in the case of "early transitions", all assessments conducted **from 1 July 2027** will be carried out against the new edition of the standard, unless the Body has not submitted the self-assessment plan and has consequently not indicated its availability for the transition assessment. In any case, with effect from **1 January 2028**, all surveillance and renewal assessments will be carried out by ACCREDIA exclusively against the new edition of the standard.

For Bodies accredited under the ISP scheme with scopes falling within both the regulated area and the voluntary area, the transition activities will be carried out on the occasion of the first assessment activity conducted by ACCREDIA.

The transition may only be approved upon the positive conclusion of all the assessment activities that have proved necessary.

Lastly, it should be noted that, should any Non-Conformities against the requirements of the new standard emerge during the transition assessment, these must be closed out with a positive outcome following a specific supplementary assessment aimed at verifying the implementation and effectiveness of the related corrective actions, before the accreditation transition to the new edition of the standard is granted.

New Inspection schemes

Should accreditation activities be initiated, after 1 October 2026, in new national and international inspection schemes based on the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17020 standard, unless otherwise indicated by the competent Authority or Scheme Owner, extension applications/requests to initiate accreditation activities will be accepted against the edition of the standard for which the accreditation certificate issued to the applicant Body is currently valid.

Should you require any clarification or further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

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