

Information IAF CertSearch – online information sessions June 2024

What is IAF CertSearch and what is its value?

CertSearch is an international database, initiated by IAF in 2019. It contains information about certificates of management systems issued under accreditation. The database is initiated to be able to verify the international supply chain. IAF uses this verification to enforce the reliability and the value of certification under accreditation, and to act against fraud.

Important is that the added value for registration for all certificates under accreditation, for example ISO 9001, especially focusses on international standards and schemes. Until now a central database doesn't exist. IAF CertSearch is an addition to the options to publish information about issued certificates.

What is the RvA's position on mandatory participation in CertSearch by CBs?

As previously published in an article on the RvA website, RvA supports voluntary participation. The database has added value for strengthening international trade and can increase the value of certificates issued under accreditation.

The compulsory nature towards certification bodies to share data about issued certificates is not supported by RvA. The RvA has no legal basis for this as a national accreditation body.

The RvA policy is as follows:

CBs may choose whether and for which standards and schemes they have on their 17021-scope for accreditation, they participate in IAF CertSearch. When a CB chooses to participate in CertSearch for a standard or scheme, the requirements in the IAF MD 28 apply for uploading and managing information about certificates issued for this standard/scheme.

IAF MD 28, what do the requirements entail?

The Mandatory Document 28 (MD 28) is effective on October 26th 2024. It indicates that the scope of IAF CertSearch covers all standards and schemes under ISO/IEC 17021-1, both international and national. For schemes that are IAF endorsed or want to be IAF endorsed, IAF may include a clause in the conditions of endorsement that makes participation in CertSearch mandatory. Even when RvA does not require it.

- Requirements for the CB are about maintaining and uploading information on issued certificates monthly: Certified entity
- Registered address (where the legal entity is registered)
- Geographic location (city and country where the company is located, or in case of multi-site the headquarters and other locations)
- Certification number
- Scope (scope description on the certificate, standard or scheme, sector codes when applicable)
- Status of the certificate
- Issue date of the certificate¹
- Expiration date of the certificate
- Identification number²

The MD is leading in what information on a certificate should be uploaded, not the previously issued principles in the document IAF PL 5. For a certificate issued in multiple languages, one language can be chosen for entry in the database. IAF CertSearch has built-in translation software.

¹ If a visitor of the database wants to verify a certificate, they cannot see an issue or expiration date of the certificate. IAF decided to do this because of concerns that this would encourage competition.

² This can be the same number as the certificate number, if that is a unique number. If not, a different number can be chosen. Goal is to give each certificate in the database a unique identifier.

Requirements for the accreditation body to upload 17021 accreditation information monthly:

- CB name
- Scope for accreditation
- Accreditation status

In addition, accreditation bodies have the task to verify that a CB uploads timely and accurate information about issued certificates.

How does the RvA implement IAF MD 28?

- Providing information by news releases, information letter via email, information meetings.
- Call for information of CBs. CBs received an email about this from their PCA (project coordinator), asking them to clarify to RvA whether and for which standards and schemes the CB is participating in IAF CertSearch.
 - o Deadline is July 22, 2024 for submitting the information.
 - o Participation does not include additional costs from IAF or RvA.
- Filling the RvA account with data within IAF CertSearch. The RvA uploads the required information as described in the IAF MD 28. This enables CBs to participate voluntarily.
- Updated version of the SAP-C000 (basic SAP for management system certification) and the VR003 (regulation for use of the accreditation mark) are adapted and updated version will be published.
 - o SAP-C000 with information about CertSearch and methods of RvA
 - o VR003 with information about how to use the IAF CertSearch logo (an alternative red variant of the IAF logo, to be used only as an online button).
- From October 27, 2024, the RvA will include participation in CertSearch in the assessments, if your CB has indicated that it participates.

How does RvA assess participation in CertSearch?

Initially, the Lead Assessor assesses the implementation. Later on, the Technical Assessor may also include it in the assessment. The Lead Assessors assess the CB for the standards and schemes for which the CB participates. For example, if you only participate with ISO 9001 and ISO 45001, then RvA only assesses implementation for these two standards. If the CB participates for the entire 17021 scope, RvA assesses the implementation of all the CB's accredited standards and schemes.

Component of the assessment is whether the CB implements correctly and completely:

- Timely monthly uploads
- Response to notifications
- Check if a system is set up for this purpose and random checks for its functionality.

The CB get a non-conformity if, for a standard or scheme in which the CB participates, the CB does not meet the requirements in IAF MD 28 or if the IAF CertSearch logo is not used properly (according to IAF PL 9). A non-conformity is drawn up against 8.1.2.b and 8.1.2.c of ISO/IEC 17021. These articles are about making certificate information publicly available (upon request). IAF MD 28 indicates that participation in IAF CertSearch provides an opportunity to address these articles.

Corrective actions by the CB in the event of a non-conformity, describe how to restore compliance with IAF MD 28 for the standards and schemes in which the CB participates. If the CB chooses to no longer participate in CertSearch, the RvA wants to see how the CB will comply with 8.1.2.b and 8.1.2.c of ISO/IEC 17021-1.