



International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

01 October 2021

Re: Important Update on IAF Database Model and Principles

Dear IAF Members,

In recent years, the IAF General Assembly has been updated on the ongoing challenges of the IAF CertSearch database which has resulted in IAF CertSearch containing only 34% of the total global management systems certificates. IAF Certsearch is a project of enormous importance for all IAF Members and stakeholders of accredited certification globally, but despite several urgent appeals by certification body trade associations, accreditation user groups and regulators, a solution has not been achieved to date. This was demonstrated during the pandemic, with Governments, policy makers and healthcare workers frustrated by the persistence of fake certification for PPE and Medical devices, which could have been disregarded through simple validation via the IAF CertSearch Database.

The fundamental challenges for IAF Certsearch originate from the commercial business model which was approved by IAF members to fund the development and maintenance of IAF CertSearch. The Database Management Committee (DMC) has therefore undertaken a detailed reassessment of the options available, within the constraints of the current IAF funding model. The most viable option is a mandatory database, with a new voluntary "user pays" funding model and a contractual link between CB's and IAF, as well as an updated contract between Quality Trade and IAF Database LLC. This will create a sustainable funding position, tackle the concerns of CBs (regarding data ownership and security), and address the issue of an under populated database. The IAF Board and IAF Executive Committee consider this to be the most viable and desirable option.

IAF Certsearch is a strategic imperative and a collective endeavour of ABs, CBs and users of accredited certification. As a consequence, changing to this recommended model requires the involvement, support and commitment of all IAF members. Realising this level of engagement will take several more months. Nonetheless, in April 2022, after an extensive series of consultation and feedback activities, it is anticipated that the DMC will be in a position to present a final proposal on the amendment of the funding model and the IAF database principles to IAF members at a meeting(s) followed by a vote on the most desirable option.

The IAF Executive Committee and DMC strongly believe that the success of this project depends on the awareness of the IAF members about the choices we are making. This is a project of the whole of IAF, and for this reason we want it to be developed through a shared process that guarantees listening to all opinions and investigating all options.

We understand that you will be keen for IAF to make faster progress on this urgent matter, but openness and involvement are critical. As such, an update paper will be provided to IAF Members within the IAF GA papers, which will be followed by a series of consultation events. We thank you in advance for your understanding and active engagement in the next stages.

Yours Sincerely



Xiao Jianhua
IAF Chair



Matt Gantley
IAF DMC Chair