

## **Information about DANAK accreditation for**

- **Certification of products, persons, management systems**
- **Environmental verification**
- **Inspection**

### **The accreditation process - Step by step**

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### **Information about the process for accreditation to**

- Certification of management systems for quality control, energy, environment, working environment and HACCP
- Certification of products and persons
- Environmental verification
- Inspection

### **About DANAK**

**DANAK**, is the acronym for Danish Accreditation which is carried out by the national accreditation body; The Danish Accreditation and Metrology Fund. DANAK accreditation is granted to companies for certification and inspection and to laboratories performing testing and calibration. In addition, The Danish Accreditation and Metrology Fund undertakes a number of tasks on behalf of Danish authorities such as approval of occupational health services and notification of bodies in accordance with the Construction Products Directive.

Many private firms and public authorities have a need for impartial and reliable documentation proving that their products or services comply with specific requirements and legislative provisions. This documentation may be obtained by using accredited services.

An accreditation is a recognition of the applicant's technical competence, organisational structure and impartiality in relation to the requirements in international standards and serves as a guarantee that an accreditation body has verified that the company's quality system is documented and fully implemented.

### **About accreditation**

The basis for assessing companies comprises international standards together with the application guidelines pertaining to the field in question, Danish statutory orders and the technical regulations and guidelines issued by DANAK. The regulations indicate how the standards should be interpreted and how to ensure compliance with the accreditation requirements.

A total list of the above mentioned documentation can be found on DANAK's website [www.danak.dk](http://www.danak.dk) via the link 'Standards, legal basis and EA guidelines'.

### **The accreditation process**

An accreditation process moves through a series of phases. The following sections describe the content of the individual phases, and the diagram on the last page of this document presents an overview of the entire process.

## **The individual phases in the accreditation process**

### **Before applying**

Before sending in the application, the applicant may obtain information about accreditation from DANAK. The information material provides general information about accreditation and describes specific conditions applying to the future accreditation field. Furthermore, DANAK offers a free briefing meeting - so that the applicant may be enabled to go through all the requirements and interpretation documents and to evaluate whether the established quality system will fulfil all the accreditation requirements.

In connection with the application for accreditation, DANAK's application forms should be used. They can be obtained from DANAK's website.

The applicant should as far as possible incorporate the accreditation requirements in their daily routines as early as possible in order to demonstrate that the procedures describe the daily routines and reporting of services comply with all the requirements for accreditation at the time of the initial assessment.

### **Initial phase**

An application will always be treated confidentially and impartially by all persons involved in the accreditation process.

When the application is received by DANAK, a lead assessor (case officer) will be appointed to be responsible for the accreditation process - including the selection of other members for the assessment team

The team will consist of the lead assessor and one or more 'experts' selected by the lead assessor.

An 'expert' is a person who possesses broad technical expertise and insight in the technical field concerned. Experts are called in from educational institutions, public authorities or private firms. The applicant is always informed about the experts DANAK has appointed with sufficient notice to appeal so that any objections concerning e.g. impartiality or any possible conflict of interests can be considered before final decision on the composition of the team is taken.

### **Review of the application and documentation material**

In connection with assessment of the application DANAK reviews the applicant's quality manual and other documentation submitted in order to assess whether the technical and organisational conditions for complying with the requirements of the relevant standards are met. The applicant will be informed about any deficiencies or lack of precision, and the applicant may then submit new or supplementary material before an audit visit to the company is agreed.

### Audit at the applicant's premises – 'Office visit'

During the visit, which is carried out in the main office as well as in branch offices, if any, relevant administrative routines, the quality system, staff qualifications, etc., will be reviewed. DANAK will, if possible, check those aspects of the applicant's work that will be comprised by the future accreditation for the purpose of forming an impression of the suitability of the quality system.

The findings of the visit will be concluded in a report. The report will give a brief resumé of the team's assessment. If deficiencies or nonconformities regarding practice compared to the documentation or accreditation rules are revealed, so-called 'nonconformity reports' will be drawn up for the individual situations.

A nonconformity report is a description of the conditions found not in accordance with the company's own documentation, requirements in standards or accreditation rules.

At the end of the visit a deadline will be agreed for submission by the applicant of proposals for so-called 'corrective actions' - that is proposals for correcting and for preventing repeated occurrence of the nonconformities found.

### Assessment of the applicant in practice - 'Field visits'

A field visit is an assessment of the applicant's performance in practice of certification/inspection or environmental verification including the suitability of the applicant's quality system and procedures. Depending on the field of accreditation applied for, one or more field visits will take place to ensure a representative assessment of staff competence. The findings of the DANAK team will be given in a report, which will also include DANAK's evaluation of how the applicant is dealing with occurrences of nonconformities found during the certification. When the applicant has completed his task, DANAK will send an 'audit witness report' together with 'nonconformity reports', if any, with a deadline for the applicant to forward his proposals for corrective actions.

### **Closing phase**

During this phase of the accreditation process any nonconformities will be 'closed' and a final report summarising the results from the office and the field visits. Nonconformities will be dealt with 'in two steps' - the first step is the approval of the applicant's proposal for corrective actions. A proposal for corrective action will be approved on condition that it contains a precise description of initiatives that will either remedy a deficiency or prevent occurrence of a similar situation. A declaration of intent by the applicant will not be sufficient.

The next step is the verification of the documentation for implementing the corrective action described - this may require a follow-up visit.

A 'Final report' will be submitted to the applicant for comments.

The conclusion of the final report will, among other things, contain the assessment team's recommendation of accreditation - or refusal. In some cases accreditation may be recommended conditional on the fulfilment of special terms.

## **Accreditation**

An accreditation committee will evaluate the recommendation in the final report and the applicant's comments, if any - and will determine the conditions for granting DANAK accreditation to the scope applied for. The applicant will be informed of the decision in a letter of commitment or a motivated refusal. When the applicant has accepted the letter of commitment, an accreditation document will be forwarded.

Accreditation may be granted for a period of up to 5 years for certification of management systems, product and persons as well as inspection. Accreditation for environmental verification (EMAS) is granted for 3-year periods.

## Logo

Accredited companies must display the DANAK logo on reports and certificates for accredited services to show that accreditation has been granted. In order to maintain confidence in this 'seal of approval' DANAK's technical regulations contain rules designed to ensure that the logo is used in a manner that cannot give rise to misunderstandings regarding the scope of accreditation.

## Surveillance during the accreditation period

Surveillance visits, including office visits as well as field visits, are carried out to ensure that the company continues to meet the requirements stipulated at the accreditation.

During the visits documentation will be reviewed proving that the requirements on which the accreditation was based are still being met - including that the accredited company is adhering to its quality system, which is currently updated, that the company has implemented internal audit, management review, etc.

Reviews of documentation in connection with a surveillance visit is, however, generally less comprehensive than in connection with application and renewal (re-assessment).

In connection with the surveillance, a report will state any nonconformities in the same way as when dealing with the application. The corrective actions must be carried out within an agreed time limit normally not exceeding three months.

## Voluntary Suspension

An accreditation or parts of it may be suspended for a period of up to six months - in case of e.g. organisational changes.

### Suspension or withdrawal of accreditation

Occurrences of nonconformities ascertained in connection with surveillance may on rare occasions be of such serious nature that the DANAK assessor team will inform the accredited company at the visit that it will recommend suspension or withdrawal of the accreditation, or parts thereof.

On the basis of the report from the surveillance visit and the accredited company's response to the request, DANAK's accreditation committee will decide whether the non-compliance is so serious that the accreditation shall be suspended for a period or be wholly or partly withdrawn.

### Changes in the scope of accreditation

Change/extension of a specific scope of accreditation may take place at any time during the accreditation period. The company must submit a request for extension with a description of the new area and with documentation of the company's competence in this field.

DANAK will review the material submitted and determine whether the change necessitates an assessment visit, assessment from another expert, etc.

After consideration of, among other things, the company's competence in the new field, a decision will be made regarding acceptance/refusal of the change.

### Renewal/reassessment

The procedure for a renewal in general follows the procedure for handling new applications.

In case that renewal of the accreditation is based on unchanged conditions the sole requirement is an application indicating that the company wishes to renew the accreditation.

The assessment will naturally take into account the fact that DANAK has been conducting on-going surveillance of the accredited activities.

It will therefore be possible to combine the last surveillance visit before the accreditation expires with the renewal visit.

### Payment

The Danish Accreditation and Metrology Fund is a non-profit organisation. All costs in connection with case processing, assessment activities and maintenance of the accreditation will be covered by the applicant or the accredited companies. Collection of administration fees and costs take place in accordance with the statutory order on DANAK's prices (fees) for accreditation etc.

## Accreditation Process - Step by Step

