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ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group **Guidance on:**

Technical Experts

The knowledge and skills of an audit team may need to be supplemented by that of technical experts (under the supervision of an auditor), in order to meet the audit objectives.

It is the responsibility of the CAB to select and appoint an audit team (including the audit team leader) with the necessary knowledge and skills needed to perform a competent audit, and to ensure the integrity, confidentiality, and freedom from conflicts of interest.

In cases where the audit team needs to be complemented by a technical expert, the following guidance should be considered.

- In selecting a technical expert significant emphasis should be placed on ensuring that there are no conflicts of interest (it is not uncommon for technical experts to come from the same industrial sector as the auditee, and they may have associations with the auditee's competitors); consequently, all technical experts should be required to sign a statement on avoiding conflicts of interest and on ensuring confidentiality before participating in the audit (see also the APG paper "Auditor Code of Conduct and Ethics")
- The time spent by technical experts should not to be included in the required audit time calculations.
- The audit team leader, in consultation with the audit team, should assign each team member responsibility for auditing specific processes, functions, sites, areas or activities. Such assignments should take into account the need for competence, and the effective and efficient use of the audit team, as well as the different roles and responsibilities of auditors and technical experts. Auditors should receive instructions on the role of the technical experts, including any limitations to their participation in the audit.

- Each technical expert should be assigned to the responsibility of a specific auditor on the audit team.
- If not otherwise agreed with the customer, the technical expert should always be accompanied by the auditor to whom they are assigned.
- If deemed necessary, the technical expert should be allowed to perform interviews under the supervision of the auditor to whom they are assigned.
- Audit comments or findings by the technical expert should only be communicated to the auditee via the auditor or audit team leader. In case the auditor needs to clarify the comments or findings made by the technical expert with the client, the auditor may allow the technical expert to directly clarify the issue with the client, under supervision by the auditor.

For further information on the ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group, please refer to the paper: *Introduction to the ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group*

Feedback from users will be used by the *ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group* to determine whether additional guidance documents should be developed, or if these current ones should be revised.

Comments on the papers or presentations can be sent to the following email address: charles.corrie@bsigroup.com.

The other ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group papers and presentations may be downloaded from the web sites:

www.iaf.nu
www.iso.org/tc176/ISO9001AuditingPracticesGroup

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