DRAFT SCHEME DOCUMENT

Accreditation Scheme
for
Ground Water Consultant Organizations

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Foreword

Quality Council of India (QCI) was set up jointly by the Government and the Indian Industry represented by CII, FICCI and ASSOCHAM as an autonomous not-for-profit body, registered under the Societies Registration Act, as per the decision of the Cabinet, vide Cabinet Secretariat's letter No 6/CM/96(i) dated 14th February, 1996.

Department of Industrial Policy and Planning (DIPP) is the nodal Ministry of Government for matters related to QCI. The objectives of QCI include establishing and operating national accreditation structure and promoting quality through National Quality Campaign. There are four constituent Boards of QCI and the National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET) is one of them. The Boards of QCI are working with various ministries and operating many accreditation schemes supporting national initiatives, in the field of Hospitals and Healthcare services, Vocational training, Food Safety, Panchayats, Schools, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, etc.

The Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) was constituted under sub-section (3) of section 3 read with section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for the purpose of Regulation and Control of Ground Water Management and development. Central Ground Water Authority hereby notifies time to time guidelines for grant of NOC for users withdrawing/or proposing to withdraw groundwater. The authority is to regulate groundwater over-exploitation and conservation of groundwater resources in the country as per the Schedule.

In exercise of powers conferred upon it, the Authority regulates ground water development through various means including grant of No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for abstraction of ground water and issuing advisories, directions, notifications etc. as and when necessary. The Authority has been granting NOCs for withdrawal of groundwater by new industries and those under expansion/ infrastructure/ mining projects since 1999.

The latest Notification by Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation no. S.O. 6140(E) dated 12th Dec 2018, with effective from 01.06.2019 (website – www.cgwb.gov.in) and Central Ground Water Authority has to exercise the following power and regulatory measures:

(i) Exercise of powers under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for issuing directions and taking such measures in respect of all the matters referred to in sub-section (2) of section 3 of the said Act.

(ii) To resort to the penal provisions contained in sections 15 to 21 of the said Act.

(iii) To regulate and control, management and development of ground water in the country and to issue necessary regulatory directions for this purpose.

(iv) Exercise of powers under Section 4 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, for appointment of officers.

(v) Regulatory measures:

a. The Central Ground Water Authority is regulating withdrawal of ground water by industries/ projects in 802 Over-exploited and 169 Critical Assessment Units. List of these critical areas has been circulated to the State Pollution Control Boards and Ministry of Environment & Forests which refer the new industries/ projects to CGWA for obtaining permission.

b. CGWA has notified 162 critical/ overexploited areas in parts of NCT Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, MP, Gujarat, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, UT of Puducherry and UT of Diu for control and regulation of development of ground water resources. For enforcement of the regulatory measures in these areas, concerned Deputy Commissioners/ District Magistrates have been directed under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to regulate ground water development in these notified areas.

c. Construction of new ground water structures is prohibited in the notified areas. Permission of drilling tubewells is being granted only to the Govt. agencies responsible for drinking water supply.

SCHEME FOR ACCREDITATION OF GROUND WATER CONSULTANT ORGANIZATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION:

India is a vast country with varied hydrogeological situations resulting from diversified geological, climatological and topographic setups. The rock formations, ranging in age from Archaean to Recent, which control occurrence and movement of ground water, widely vary in composition and structure. Physiography varies from rugged mountainous terrains of Himalayas, Eastern and Western Ghats and Deccan plateau to the flat alluvial plains of the river valleys and coastal tracts, and the Aeolian deserts in western part. Similarly rainfall pattern also shows region-wise variations.

India is the world's largest user of groundwater and, since the 1980s, groundwater levels have been dropping across the country. The severity of the problem is particularly acute in the northwest, where levels have plunged from 8m below ground to 16m, so that water needs to be pumped from even greater depths. Worse yet, much of this groundwater is non-renewable since recharge rates are significantly less than extraction rates and replenishing this resource can take thousands of years. In some areas that experience projected increases in monsoon rainfall, the expansion of irrigated agriculture will lead to more non-renewable groundwater extractions. This means that groundwater levels will likely continue to drop over the next thirty years in these areas. In extreme cases, a complete loss of non-renewable groundwater irrigation can reduce national annual crop production by as much as 25 percent. Thus, responsible use of particularly non-replenishable groundwater is imperative to ensure sustained availability of groundwater in the future.

Out of 4272 blocks in the country (except Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra where ground water resource assessment has been carried out on the basis of mandals, talukas and watersheds respectively), 231 blocks have been categorized as "Over-exploited" where the stage of ground water development exceeds the annual replenishable limit and 107 blocks are "Dark" where the stage of ground water development is more than 85%. Besides, 6 mandals have been categorized as "Over-exploited" and 24 as 'Dark' out of 1104 mandals in Andhra Pradesh. Similarly out of 184 talukas in Gujarat, 12 are "Over-exploited" and 14 are 'Dark' and out of 1503 watersheds in Maharashtra, 34 are 'Dark'.

The 'National Water Policy' adopted by the Government of India in 1987 regards water as one of the most crucial elements in developmental planning. It emphasizes that the efforts to develop, conserve, utilize and manage this resource have to be guided by national perspective. Water is a scarce and precious national resource to be planned, developed and conserved as such and on an integrated and environmentally sound basis.

The National Water Policy enunciates the following guidelines for ground water.

- There should be a periodic reassessment on scientific basis of the ground water potential, taking into consideration the quality of the water available and economic viability.
- Exploitation of ground water resources should be so regulated as not to exceed the recharge possibilities, as also to ensure social equity. Ground water recharge projects should be developed and implemented for augmenting the available supplies.
- Integrated and coordinated development of surface water and ground water and their conjunctive use should be envisaged right from the project planning stage and should form an essential part of the project.
- Over-exploitation of ground water should be avoided near the coast to prevent ingress of sea water into fresh water aquifers.

1.1. Objective of Scheme

Hydrogeology (*hydro*- meaning water, and -*geology* meaning the study of the Earth) that deals with the distribution and movement of groundwater in the soil and rocks of the Earth's crust (commonly in aquifers). The terms **Groundwater hydrology**, **Geohydrology**, and **hydrogeology** are often used interchangeably.

Groundwater is the most preferred source of water on account of its easy accessibility, dependability and low capital cost. The increasing dependence on ground water as a reliable source of water has resulted in indiscriminate extraction of these resources in various parts of the country without due regard to long term impact on the aquifers and environment.

Builders, Developers and Miners increasingly rely on Groundwater reports and application forms filled by 3rd party consultants. This is true for both the infrastructure development projects like industries, residential township projects and mining projects in the urban areas as well as in agricultural areas. Regulators are increasingly relying on **independent third party declarations of compliance** to support their enforcement and monitoring activities as they demonstrate compliance against defined CGWA guidelines.

Given that the degree of responsible use, ownership and distribution of groundwater is directly related to its availability as a sustainable source in the future, an accurate groundwater report in line with the CGWA guidelines is very critical. Not only this, the effective implementation of the guidelines post the grant of NOC to the concerned applicant is also crucial. These activities, mandatory towards the sustenance of groundwater levels by the Developers/Builders/Miners is also done in the guidance of an expert or a consultant.

Hydrogeological report has been made mandatory by regulatory bodies, government departments and research & educational institutions to assess the situation of ground water availability in the area. The reports prepared in our country, more often do not measure up to the desired quality.

Some of the reasons for this are:

- Competence (relevant education, training and experience) of Consultants
- Quality of data used by Consultants
- Tendency of Consultants to follow the “cut and paste” method, using old data etc.
- Generally GW consultants work for and on behalf of the project proponents (Conflict of Interest)

Therefore, there is necessity of robust Accreditation Scheme which defines the requirements for a consultant organization to have resources, competent personnel, system oriented approach, capability to assess the water situation to prepare a good quality hydrogeological report.

The scheme will provide a readily available list of competent and resourceful GW consultant organization in the country and will protect the groundwater condition from any adverse impact.

The list of Accredited Consultant Organizations (ACOs) will be available on website of QCI-NABET and CGWB for all the stakeholders. Project proponent may engage ACOs from the list as per their choice.

Further Government departments, private company individuals may also use these ACO for proposals of

hydrogeological report, Rain Water Harvesting (RWH), Installation of digital water flow meter (conforming to BIS standard) with telemetry in the observation well, Construction of purpose-built observation wells (piezometers) for monthly ground water level monitoring, Installation of Digital Water Level Recorders (DWLR) in the observation well and necessary reports. ACOs can also be used for submission of compliance reports as well as third party inspection.

1.2. Requirement of Hydrogeological report for NOC for Ground Water Extraction:

The conditions which require reports by NABET accredited consultants are mentioned below:

1.2.1 Industries

For users drawing/proposing to draw ground water to the tune of 2000 m3/day or more in safe assessment units, 1500 m3/day or more in semi critical and critical assessment units and 1000 m3/day or more in over-exploited assessment units. Installation of digital water flow meter (conforming to BIS standard) in the abstraction structure(s) shall be mandatory and intimation of the same shall be communicated to the CGWA through the web portal within 30 days of grant of NOC.

1.2.2 Mining projects

Comprehensive report prepared by NABET accredited consultant on ground water conditions in both core and buffer zones of the mine, depth wise and year wise mine seepage calculations, impact assessment of mining and dewatering, details of recycling, reuse and recharge, reduction of pumping with use of technology for mining and water management to minimize and mitigate the adverse impact on ground water, based on local conditions.

1.2.3 Infrastructure projects requiring dewatering or use of ground water for construction

In cases where dewatering of more than 100 m3/ day is required, hydrogeological report prepared by NABET accredited consultant on the ground water situation in the area giving detailed plan of pumping, proposed usage of pumped water and comprehensive impact assessment of the same on the ground water regime. The report should highlight environmental risks and proposed management strategies to overcome any significant environmental issues.

1.2.4 Abstraction of Saline / contaminated ground water

Abstraction of saline / contaminated ground water for use by industries/ infrastructure/ mining projects including those located in over-exploited areas would be encouraged. The list of such assessment units having saline ground water at all depths as per the latest assessment of dynamic ground water resources will be made available by the Authority in the web based application system. Packaged drinking water units shall be encouraged to be set up in quality affected areas. However, due care should be taken in respect of disposal of effluents by the units so as to protect the water bodies and the aquifers from pollution. Proposals pertaining to such cases, extracting more than 100 m3 / day, must include a detailed project report by a NABET accredited consultant elucidating the mechanism of handling the saline /contaminated/ effluent water and its various uses.

In areas having saline ground water aquifers underlain/ overlain by fresh water aquifers, the application would be considered for NOC only after submission of detailed hydrogeological report including mathematical modelling study prepared by a NABET accredited consultant indicating the long term impact of ground water extraction on the ambient ground water regime of the overlying/ underlying fresh water aquifers. This condition would be applicable to proponents withdrawing more than 100 m3/day of saline ground water.

1.3. Outline of Hydrogeological Report for obtaining NOC (Guideline - Annexure VIII)

1. Brief about the proposed project giving location details, coordinates, google/ toposheet maps, etc. demarcating the project area.
2. Ground water situation in and around the project area including water level and quality data and maps along with quality issues, if any. In case of mines, ground water conditions in both core and buffer zone should be described.
3. Details of the tube wells/ bore wells proposed to be constructed. This includes the drilling depth, diameter, tentative lithological log, details of pump to be lowered, H.P. of pump, tentative discharge of tube wells/ bore wells, etc.
4. Locations to be marked on the site plan/ map. Location of proposed piezometers.
5. Details of Geophysical studies carried out in and around the project area. Ground water resources computation of the block in which the project falls.
6. Approved Mine plan and detailed dewatering plan in case of mines.
7. Proposed usage of pumped water in case of mining/ infrastructure dewatering projects.
8. Comprehensive assessment of the impact on the ground water regime in and around the project area highlighting the risks and proposed management strategies proposed to overcome any significant environmental issues.
9. Proposed measures for disposal of waste water by industries drawing saline water.
10. Measures to be adopted for water conservation which include recycling, reuse, treatment, etc. This includes the water balance chart being adopted by the firm along with details of water conservation methods to be adopted.
    a. Brief write up along with capacity and flow chart of STP/ ETP/ CETP existing/ proposed within the project.
    b. Details of water conservation measures to be adopted to reduce/ save the ground water.
    c. Total water balance chart showing the usage of water for various processes.
11. Any other details pertaining to the project.

2. ABOUT QCI & NABET:

Formation of **Quality Council of India (QCI)** was initiated through the Cabinet Secretariat in which decision of Cabinet was on the basis of recommendation of *Inter-Ministerial Task Force (IMTF)* of Department of Industrial Development (DID) now known as *Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP)* under *Ministry of Commerce & Industry*. QCI was formed in 1997 with its own Memorandum of Association (rules & regulations), as an autonomous body registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act. At the inception QCI was mandated to have in its fold:

a) National Accreditation Board for Products and Quality Systems Certification
b) National Accreditation Board for Quality Management Personnel and Training Organizations

The three Accreditation Boards and the National Quality Campaign were to be an integral part of QCI. The Cabinet Note also mentions that as a matter of policy all procurement in Central government would be done in a manner that encourages establishment of quality assurance systems based on ISO standards. **The Government would, amongst other things, increasingly depend on certification bodies accredited by the National Accreditation Boards under QCI and all business and industrial enterprises would be encouraged to adopt ISO Standards in their operations by providing amongst others, appropriate benefits.**

In the year 1999, **NABET** began its' journey as the National Accreditation Board for Auditors and Training (NABAT), which was set up in response to the emerging challenges in the conformity assessment arena with the mandate to establish and monitor training and auditors registration process. National Accreditation Board for Auditors and Training (NABAT) started working as registrar for auditors and training courses operating in the conformity assessment area such as QMS and EMS. In 2004, NABAT was renamed as National Registration Board for Personnel and Training (NRBPT). NRBPT became a registration body for personnel (Consultants and Consultant Organizations) and training courses in conformity assessment areas such as QMS, EMS and FSMS.

In the year 2009 QCI Council took a decision to rechristen NRBPT as National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET) to fulfil its national mandate of creating an accreditation mechanism in the domain of skills, training and education. NABET has developed its systems, competencies and trained its staff and experts in line with these standards for Accreditation of Certification/Assessment Bodies and vocational training institutes/Learning Service Providers in the non-formal education/skill acquisition sector as well as formal education like schools.

In 2010, NABET has worked with Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) with an aim to promote and facilitate the development of skills, standards and accreditation systems. Also, a MoU was signed with ASQ focusing on enhancing capacities for deployment of quality based education institutions (across all levels) in 2012.

National Accreditation Board for Education & Training (NABET), a constituent board of the QCI has developed an Accreditation Scheme with inputs from various stakeholders including experts in the field, regulatory agencies, consultants etc.

3. ACCREDITATION:

Accreditation is a process of verification of competency of an organization in delivering good quality service/product in the chosen field, in this case Hydrogeological Reports. Accreditation is awarded, after carrying out structured assessment of compliance to the accreditation guidelines. It helps organizations to adopt a holistic approach for preparing desired reports and to build in system to achieve continual improvement through a transparent and credible mechanism.

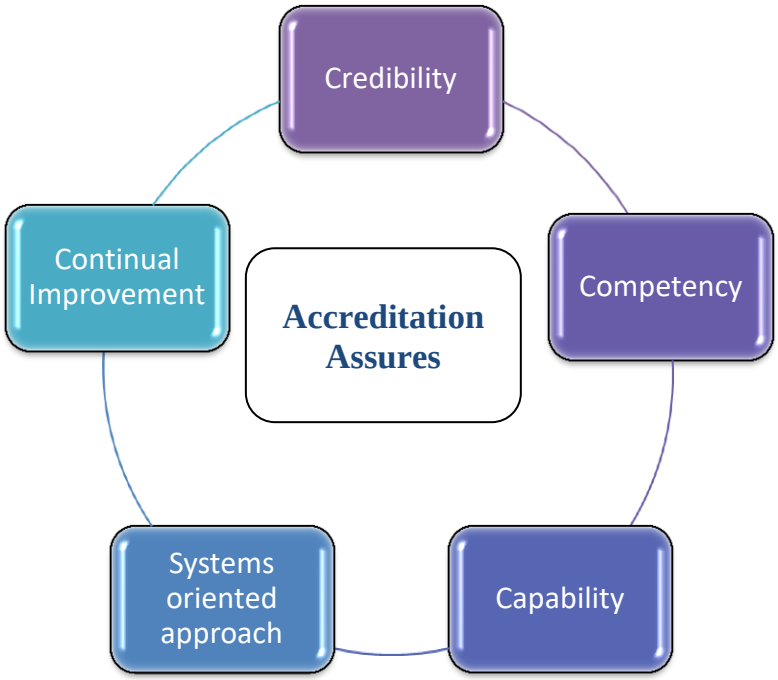

Fig 1: Benefits of Accreditation

3.1. Benefits of accreditation

a. For consultant organizations

i. Use of QCI- NABET logo - a mark of quality
ii. Recognition of competence and capability
iii. Periodic assessment by NABET paving the way for continual improvement
iv. Publicity through QCI & CGWA websites and publications
v. Growth in business through reputational benefits.
vi. Competitive edge.

b. For stakeholders

i. Availability of a list of capability verified consultants for different sectors.
ii. Checks on performance of the consultants through NABET website.
iii. Reduced risks on investments by project proponents choosing capable GW consultants.
iv. Enhanced acceptability of developmental projects by all stakeholders.

4. ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR GROUND WATER CONSULTANT ORGANIZATIONS (GWCO):

NABET, a constituent Board of the QCI, developed an Accreditation Scheme for Ground Water Consultant Organizations (hereinafter called 'the Scheme') with inputs from various stakeholders including experts in the field, regulatory agencies and consultants.

The Notification by Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation no. S.O. 6140(E) dated 12th Dec 2018 mandated QCI-NABET that Hydrogeological report prepared by NABET accredited consultant shall be mandatory.

The 'Scheme for the Accreditation of Ground Water Consultant Organizations (GWCO) identifies the following basic requirements of the GW Consultant Organization:

a) Qualification, experience and competence of Groundwater ECs and FAEs

b) Field investigations and Laboratory arrangement (NABL accredited) to ensure the quality of GW sample data.

c) Quality management systems (ISO9001: 2008 or updated ISO9001: 2015)

d) Infrastructure and other enabling factors to be provided by an organization

For the implementation of the Scheme across the country, NABET will be guided by a group of eminent professionals in the field of Ground Water development and management and allied subjects structured into four groups as follows:

a) **Technical Committee** – comprising 5 -7 members experienced professionals with proven track record. They will be guiding NABET in developing/implementing the Scheme as well as the assessment process.

b) **Accreditation Committee** – comprising 5 -7 members experienced professionals in the field of GW & EIA (Environment). The committee will approve and accord accreditation. They will also issues clarifications on the Scheme from time to time.

c) **NABET Assessors** – are group of very senior and experienced professionals with relevant experience. They will be assigned for technical assessment of the applications and office assessment at their premises and interact with experts and head of organization.

d) **NABET Secretariat** – it comprises a mix of senior professionals in certification, accreditation field and young technical staff which coordinates the entire process of assessment and accreditation.

One complete cycle of Accreditation covering 3 year period comprising Initial Accreditation, Surveillance Assessment and Re-accreditation process.

4.1. Eligibility for accreditation:

Only organizations meeting the eligibility criteria of this Scheme are considered for accreditation.

These government bodies, public sectors undertakings and private organizations which could be proprietorship firms, partnership firms or companies (Pvt. & Public Limited), bodies registered under Society Acts, under Section 25 of Companies Act, Research Institutes and the like. All requirements of the Scheme as mentioned in this document are to be complied with for an organization to get accredited. A sole proprietorship owned by an individual or in personal name can also apply provided it fulfills all other requirements of the Scheme.

Universities including IITs, CSIR labs, other labs and/or research based organizations conducting hydrogeology studies can also apply for accreditation.

4.2. Scope of the Scheme

It has become mandatory that only NABET accredited consultant organization shall prepare hydrogeological report required by regulatory bodies for obtaining NOC for user drawing/proposing to draw groundwater (GW) for Industries/Mining projects/Infrastructure projects/ abstraction of saline/contaminated groundwater. Till now, the artificial recharge and rain water harvesting projects are also being implemented by drillers and other agencies, all of which may not be competent and may have impact on ground water quality. In the coming time some of the other advantages may be for accredited GW consultants –

a) A system of yearly assessment by highly experienced NABET assessors providing valuable input.

b) Listing at QCI-NABET and CGWB websites, which will be an important database for prospective clients and stakeholders.

c) Use of the QCI-NABET logo, a mark of quality in stationery, to improve the brand image of the organization.

d) Recognition in the international arena through the QCI-NABET being member of International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

e) Third party assessment will help to improve the competency, capability, credibility, system oriented approach, continual improvement, visibility, acceptability, sustainability in operations etc.

f) Possibly efficient and fast processing of for issuance of NOC / regulatory directions of CGWA/SGWA.

The scope of the scheme specifically covers hydrogeological reports required to be prepared for NOC requirement for all projects covered by the above Notifications

4.3. Coverage of the Scheme:

The Scheme will cover all conditions listed in the guidelines of CGWA and other regulatory authorities for the ground water development, management and regulation.

This comprehensive document describes the Scheme's requirements of human resource, Quality Management Systems and procedures to be followed, integrity of primary data, the assessment process, the accreditation criteria and other relevant requirements of the Scheme.

4.4. Updation of the Scheme:

QCI/NABET reserves all rights to amend its accreditation scheme, procedures and fees etc., as it may deem fit. Applicants are requested to refer to the updated scheme on the QCI/NABET website (https://nabet.qci.org.in/) before applying for their accreditation/surveillance/re-accreditation.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION:

The accreditation requirements have been developed for Ground Water Consultant Organizations (GWCO) with a view to have system based approach for preparing hydrogeological report

The scheme specifies the following six essential requirements for accreditation:

i. Human resource
ii. Field investigation and laboratory arrangement
iii. Quality Management System (QMS)
iv. Quality of Hydrogeological reports
v. Compliance to conditions of accreditation

5.1. Human Resources involved in Preparing Hydrological report:

Hydrogeological reports are essentially multi-disciplinary activities where inputs are required from specialists having knowledge of the industry/zones for which studies are to be carried out as well as in functional areas like groundwater flow to Geology/Hydrogeology (Geo/HG), surface runoff to *geomorphology.* Hydrology is the science that treats the waters of the Earth, their occurrence, circulation and distribution, their chemical and biological properties and their reaction with their environment, including their relation to living things. Infiltration is concerned to *Soil science*, precipitation and evaporation requires knowledge of *climatology and meteorology* Land use Land cover (LULC), stream flow, the flow of water, understanding the transport of constituents' to *fluid mechanics*. Chemical engineer for water quality etc.

Engineering hydrology, however, includes those segments of hydrology that are important for the design and operation of engineering projects responsible for the control and use of water. It has concerned with groundwater movement and design of wells, pumps, and drains. The main concerns in groundwater engineering include groundwater contamination, water conservation and budgeting, Rain water harvesting, water quality and water pollution control.

Ground water consultants increasingly rely on concept of watershed/block/taluka /mandal or other smaller unit to estimate groundwater recharge from precipitation on a regional scale. The parameters are various climatic, hydrological and physical characteristics of a watershed or stream basin. Prior knowledge of the watershed/block/ taluka/mandal or other smaller unit as applicable will help Groundwater Consultant focus on compiling the most relevant data in studies of regional ground-water scenario.

The key person in developing report is the Co-ordinator, who should have broad knowledge about the project, as well as the related areas which are likely to be affected by the activities related to the project in its construction, operation and the closure phases. The role of the co-ordinator will include but not be limited to setting-up the team, planning the study, visiting the site with the team, draw up the scope/ terms of hydrogeological report as per the requirements and various manuals developed by CGWA/CGWB/ BIS/ Govt. Environmental Agencies. The co-ordinator should organize various activities to meet the requirements of reports, verifying the reliable data and appropriately utilised for assessment, mitigation and monitoring.

The other experts may be called as Functional Area Experts (FAEs) who will give required input for users of Industries/mining projects/Infra projects etc. in their respective areas of expertise to the GW Coordinator. Experts to be involved in preparing reports their educational qualification and experience are mentioned below.

5.1.1. Ground Water Coordinator (GWC)

As mentioned earlier, GW study is a multi-disciplinary activity where the central figure is the Ground water Coordinator (GWC) who should have following –

a) Clarity in the concept of the GW system.

b) Knowledge of the applicable standards, Acts, Rules and regulations.

c) Domain knowledge and understanding of the organization, industry, categories for which Hydrogeological report are to be prepared

d) Leadership quality in planning, selecting and guiding the GW team

Thus, for GW Coordinator (GWC) emphasis is given on experience and maturity.

a. Minimum Educational Qualification for GWC:

i. Master's (post-graduate) degree in Hydrogeology, Geology, Applied Geology, and Hydrology from a UGC/AICTE recognized University/ Institution or equivalent.

OR,

ii. B.E./B.Tech./M.Tech. or higher degree in technical subjects such as Civil, Geophysics, Drilling Engineer, Water Resource Engineering, Engineering hydrology and the like from a UGC /AICTE recognized University/ Institution or equivalent.

b. Minimum Experience of GWC:

i. Minimum 7 years overall work experience related to hydrogeological report and RWH / piezometer / DWLR / DWFM / installations.

ii. Officers retired/served for minimum 5 years in Central/ State Ground Water Organizations/ Research Institutes/ universities/ IIT as Hydrogeologist, Hydrologist, Geologist and Geophysicist will be considered to fulfill the minimum experience of GWC along with condition mentioned above in (i) and (ii).

5.1.2. Functional Area Experts (FAE):

Hydrogeological study is more of an applied science which requires multidisciplinary approach. FAEs are expected to provide inputs in their respective areas of specialization. They should have sufficient knowledge and expertise in their following respective discipline.

- Hydrogeology
- Geology/Applied Geology
- Geophysics
- Hydrology
- Geomatics (Remote Sensing, GIS and GNSS/GPS)with knowledge Ground Water Modeling
- RWH structure / Water Well Construction

Moreover, the FAE should have an in-depth knowledge in their respective areas of specialization with understanding of the Ground Water system. Ground Water study and report

will require inputs from above mentioned disciplines/domains depending on the type and magnitude of the projects impacting ground water regime. The following areas of expertise are required –

i.	**Hydrogeology / Hydrology**	**HG**
ii.	**Geology/Applied Geology**	**Geo**
iii.	**Water Pollution, Prevention & Control**	**WP**
iv.	**Geophysics**	**GP**
v.	**Geomatics (Remote Sensing, GIS & GNSS/GPS/GWM)**	**RS/GIS/GWM**
vi.	**Water Well Drilling & Well Construction**	**WWD**
vii.	**Land use and Land Cover**	**LULC**

A. Minimum Educational Qualification for FAE–GW:

i. Master's (post-graduate) degree in Hydrogeology, Geology, Applied Geology, Hydrology and Geophysics from a UGC/AICTE recognized University/ Institution or equivalent.

OR,

ii. B.E./B.Tech./M.Tech. degree or higher in technical subjects such as Civil, Geophysics, Drilling Engineer, Water Resource Engineering, Engineering hydrology and the like from a UGC /AICTE recognized University/ Institution or equivalent.

B. Minimum Experience for FAE-GW:

a) Minimum 3 years of experience in the concerned functional area(s) in making hydrogeological reports, GW installations (Piezometers, Flow-meter, DWLR and monitoring of GW level) and Field tests like River water depth (Echo/Sonar Sounding) and velocity test, Drawdown test, Slug test, Pump test and related other tests.
b) To encourage the entry of fresh graduates/post graduates (as applicable), they would be permitted to work as Functional Area Associate (FAA) for two years under the guidance of an approved FAE-GW for performing different test and installations

5.1.3. General conditions for experts

a) Any organization seeking accreditation shall have at least one ***In-house*** approved GWC. The In-house GWC is also eligible to be considered as a FAE-GW in those functional areas for which she/he fulfills the requirements of qualification and experience. If GWC is civil engineer then one In-house FAE-GW in hydrogeology is must.

b) Any organization to be accredited must have at least ***one In-house GWC*** and ***two In-house FAE-GW (excluding GWC as FAE)*** with required qualification and experience to cover functional areas of hydrogeological report.

c) An expert meeting the requirements of the Scheme may apply for both, GWC and FAE-GW. However, to do justice to the role of a GWC and a FAE as envisaged in the Scheme, a FAE-GW may opt for maximum 3 functional areas.

d) Organization must cover hydrogeology/hydrology and three other functional areas for

provisional approval.

- **In-house (IH) expert** - pertains to full time employee working on the pay rolls of the GW consultant organization on regular basis and gets appropriately paid as per his/ her qualification and experience. All payments to an In-house expert should be made through bank and are subject to TDS, as applicable.
- An expert working full time (as per the above definition) in an organization and not working in any capacity, part time or full time, in any other organization, may opt for a designation as 'Functional Area Expert'. Such cases will be accepted as 'In-house experts' only after necessary due diligence by NABET Assessors during office assessment.

e) If organization/s making many Ground Water (GW) reports then GWC and FAE-GWs should be proportionate to workload.

f) Submission of any false or misleading information in any of the above aspects, shall lead to cancellation of approval of such experts and/or accreditation for the organization.

5.2. Field and Test data and Laboratory Arrangement –

a. Field and test data:

Collection of field and test data is of crucial importance for preparing hydrogeological reports. To evaluate Groundwater data: Depth to water level & Water Quality data has to be collected through primary and secondary source. GWC and FAE-GW must visit the site for ground truth verification, sample collection site and field tests. Data to be collected should include following parameters.

i. Field data: Water level, Soil type, Well inventory, current and expected water requirements over the study area (core zone and buffer zone) to record the aquifer type, storativity, status of water table/Piezometric head etc.

ii. Pumping test data: to evaluate the aquifer properties (Drawdown, permeability of aquifer material, area of influence, yield, Specific Capacity etc.)

iii. Surface and/or Sub-surface Resistivity survey report

iv. High Resolution Satellite image of study area

v. Mapping and modeling of Rainfall, River and Water bodies, Geomorphology, Drainage pattern, Drainage density, Flood model, Morphometric analysis, DRASTIC model, Groundwater flow, elevation, slope and aspect maps

vi. Secondary data: CGWB – GW Zones, NBSS - Soil, GSI & State Geology department - Geological information such as borehole lithology from local sources, Peizometric, GW level, Meteorology data - Rainfall (intensity, annual average etc.)

vii. Collection of water samples at minimum 6 locations including project site or its nearby area (surface & groundwater) to know the quality. Field measurement of few parameters (pH, conductivity or as specified by CPCB/CGWA/BIS procedures/ standard for recharge) should be preferred.

viii. Land use / Cropping pattern data

Having a detailed 'feel' of the visit to proposed site of the project is of utmost importance for developing the scope of study followed by the planning for collecting the data through secondary source.

b. Laboratory arrangement:

The Ground Water Consultant Organizations (GWCO) must have an arrangement with a NABL accredited laboratory for water sample data generation. For NABL accredited laboratories must mention the scope of accreditation and the validity period. If the GWCO is not having their own NABL accredited laboratory then may have MoU with NABL accredited lab for the scope coverage and validity period. The responsibility of all data due diligence, authentication etc. will be of applicant organization.

5.3. Quality Management System

The applicant organization must maintain a documented (soft/hard copy) Quality Management Systems (QMS) for the organization. The QMS should be based on ISO 9001:2008 or ISO 9001: 2015 standards. It is, however, not mandatory that the organization should be ISO 9001: 2008 or ISO 9001: 2015 certified. The QMS should address the requirements of the Scheme. The content of the Quality Manual should reflect the following:

I. Quality Policy
II. Control of records and documents
III. Performance Measurement and Review
IV. Actions taken to address Non-Conformance
V. Complaints and appeal handling mechanism
VI. Identification, retention and assessment of performance of experts
VII. Collection of primary & secondary data, Collation, synthesis and interpretation
VIII. Procedure for work outsourced
IX. Laboratory work including sample collection, calibration of equipment etc.

Items I to V related to ISO-9001: 2008 and items VI to X address the requirements of the Scheme. The essential issues to be addressed in the Quality Management System Manual

5.4. Quality of hydrogeology reports

One of the important objectives of the Scheme is to assess the quality of reports prepared by Ground Water Consultant Organizations, give feedback to them on areas of improvement so that over a period of time report quality improves. The assessment criteria include accuracy of site description, quality of data, analysis and interpretation of the data and assessments.

5.4.1. Organizational commitment

The objective of the Scheme is to identify credible Ground Water consultant organizations who should contribute towards improving the quality of hydrogeological reports in the country. This will be possible when there is a commitment from the accredited consultants towards continual improvement. This has been factored in the Scheme and for Re-accreditation assessment improvements achieved by the accredited consultant since receiving accreditation is also taken into account

6. ACCREDTTATION CYCLE:

Accreditation Cycle in this Scheme is for 3 years and comprises 3 types of assessments:

6.1 Initial Accreditation (IA):

In the IA, the potential of the applicant organization is assessed and based on that accreditation is granted. On successful completion of the initial assessment, an applicant organization is given accreditation for 3 years, subject to a surveillance assessment after 18 months.

6.2 Surveillance Assessments (SA):

The basic objective is to judge to what extent the performance along with compliance to the conditions of accreditation has been met. The surveillance assessment will be carried out after 18 months of Initial Accreditation (IA). SA will done with emphasis on the use of competence, compliances to conditions, performance of the experts and ACO. An accredited organization needs to score a minimum of 40% marks in Stage III of SA for the accreditation to continue.

6.3 Re-Accreditation (RA):

On completion of three years from initial accreditation, the organization is re-assessed broadly as per the process followed for Initial Assessment with emphasis on improvements achieved.

Following the principle of 'continual improvement', in RA the emphasis is laid on the improvement achieved by the GWCO during the period of accreditation. Since, the ultimate objective of the Scheme is to improve the quality of Hydrogeological Reports being prepared in our country, weightage accorded to it gradually increases from IA to SA to RA.

7. ACCREDITATION PROCESS:

The accreditation procedure for IA, SA and RA includes three processes:

a. Application assessment process
b. Office assessment process
c. Decision making process

7.1 **Application assessment process**

There are separate application forms for IA, SA, RA and supplementary assessment for replacing approved experts who may have left the organization.

Applicants are advised to go through the accreditation scheme carefully prior to preparing/submitting their application. Applications are to be submitted through online only. In case, NABET requires hard copy of a document, the same is intimated to the AO/ACO.

Application for SA must be submitted three months prior to the when SA is due i.e. on completion of 16 months after date of office assessment for IA. Similarly, RA application should be submitted three months prior to expiry of accreditation period i.e., on completion of 33 months after date of office assessment for IA.

There will be online application process through NABET web portal. The procedure to be adopted for applying on-line will be posted on the QCI/NABET website.

i. **Important points to be considered while applying –**

a) Experts proposed must meet the requirements of the Scheme both in respect of qualification and experience (for GWC: overall GW related experience; for FAE overall in functional area/s and GW related).

b) FAE may be proposed for a maximum of 3 functional areas.

c) An expert may be proposed both as a GWC and FAE-GW, provided s/he meets the Scheme's requirements.

d) The application must have at least 3 In-house experts - one eligible GW Coordinator (GWC) and two eligible FAE-GW.

e) CVs of experts must be submitted in Formats developed by NABET There should be at least 1 GWC and 2 FAE-GW as functional areas expert in the application.

f) It is not mandatory for a Consultant Organization to be certified to ISO 9001 but it should have a Quality Management System for guiding the activities of the organization. The application must be accompanied by the Quality Management System manual of the Organization.

g) The Consultant Organization must have an arrangement with a NABL accredited Laboratory for ground water related test and data generation. It can be an In-house or External laboratory. For NABL accredited laboratories the scope of accreditation and validity must be submitted. For external laboratory arrangement MoU with laboratory with scope to cove water related tests.

h) For external laboratory, copy of the agreement, scope of accreditation and Validity period must be submitted with the application.

ii. Changes in Experts -

In respect of experts proposed, changes may be considered under the following conditions

a) In response to Non-conformances/Observations (NCs/Obs) raised by NABET on the original application during Stage I and Stage II of Initial Assessment process.

b) In case of non-availability expert/s due to a genuine and unavoidable reason (Accreditation Committee's decision in regard to genuineness of the reason shall be final).

c) Intimation of any such change must be submitted to NABET prior to the Office Assessment. The applicant organization may either redistribute GWC/functional areas within the experts proposed in the original application

iii. Assessment of the applications is carried out in 3 stages:

<u>Stage I– Checking completeness of the application by NABET secretariat</u>

Applications submitted by an AO/ACO must be complete in all respects and is inclusive of all supporting documents mentioned in the checklist of Application Form (for IA, SA, RA) of this Scheme.

NABET secretariat checks if the -

(a) Application is complete in all respects,

(b) Information submitted is in relevant formats and

(c) Online application fee submission.

In case an application is grossly incomplete in respect of candidates/experts, laboratory arrangement etc., NABET secretariat informs the AO/ACO of the inadequacies. Such applications are processed further once the inadequacies are addressed. For other applications, the NABET secretariat forwards the application to the principal assessor (see below) with its observations for technical scrutiny. The AO/ACO is advised to carefully study the requirements before filling in the application.

Stage II - Technical review of documents

Assessors with vast experience in the relevant fields conduct technical review of documents of the applications submitted to NABET. For each application two assessors are assigned. The Principal Assessor (PA) carries out the Stage II assessment supported by the NABET staff. The PA is joined by a Co-Assessor (CA) for the office assessment (see below). After Stage II assessment the PA may raise Non-Conformances (NCs) and/or Observations (Obs.) pointing out the areas where the application does not meet the requirements of the Scheme. After the NCs and Obs. are successfully closed by the AO/ACO, further processing of the application i.e. the office assessment is taken up.

Stage III - Office assessment

The assessment of an application on the following five aspects:

a) Quality and performance of personnel
b) Field investigations and laboratory systems to ensure data integrity
c) Quality Management System
d) Quality of Hydrogeological reports
e) Compliance to condition of accreditation

Marks allocated for the above aspects in the Office Assessment are mentioned in **Table 7**:

Table 7: Weightage of marks

Sl. No.	Aspects	Marks Allotted		
		IA	SA	RA
1	Quality and performance of personnel			
	GW Coordinators(GWC)	20	20	20
	FAE-GW	20	20	20
2	Field investigations and laboratory Arrangement	20	20	20
4	Quality of Hydrogeological Reports	10	20	30
2	Quality Management System	30	10	10
6	Compliance to condition of accreditation	0	10	0
Total		**100**	**100**	**100**

The assessment process is primarily evidence based and objective in nature. Issues to be assessed for various aspects in office assessment. After obtaining accreditation, an ACO is expected to strictly abide by the conditions of accreditation and make efforts to improve its performance. Efforts towards capacity building and commitment to quality work are given due weightage in SA and RA.

Normally, 10 days prior notice is given to the AO/ACO for office assessment. However, NABET reserves the right to visit the office/site un-announced, if it is deemed necessary.

7.2 Decision making process

On completion of office assessment process, a joint report is prepared by the PA and CA (or CAs) and sent to the NABET secretariat for further processing. The PA is responsible for the final report. NABET secretariat after checking the completeness of the report, obtains clarifications/additional information, if required, from the AO/ACO/Assessors. The case is then put before the accreditation committee by the NABET secretariat for its consideration, review and decision on accreditation. The final outcome is thereafter uploaded on QCI/NABET website https://nabet.qci.org.in/ accreditation becomes effective from the last date of the office assessment.

7.3 Time frame for application and accreditation processes

Completion of application, assessment and accreditation processes depends on the following:

a. Receipt of complete information at NABET for Stage I and II assessments along with necessary documents and closure action of NCs/Obs., as applicable, for IA, SA and RA applications.

b. Timely submissions of such information by AO/ACO within the time frame stipulated by NABET vide section ____ for SA and RA. For initial accreditation AOs are requested to submit the required details as early as possible.

c. Timely raising of queries by NABET within 15 days for Stage I and 1 month for Stage II.

Subject to the above, all efforts are made by NABET to complete the process of granting accreditation within 3 months of submission of complete information by AO/ACO.

7.4 Accreditation process outcome:

The salient outcomes from accreditation process are as follows:

a. **Accredited** – in case the applicant clears the assessment and accreditation processes successfully, the result is posted on the QCI/NABET website and the AO/ACO is also informed separately,

b. **Not approved** – if the AO/ACO fails to obtain 40% marks in the office assessment or does not fulfill any other requirements of the Scheme, the application is not approved and accreditation is not granted,

c. **Cancellation** - in case an ACO does not fulfill conditions of accreditation or does not submit complete application for SA or RA in time, a reminder is given to do the same in the next 15 days. If complete application is not submitted even after 15 days, a final notice is served for responding giving another 15 days' time.

   In the event of non-compliance after the final notice as well, the accreditation granted to the ACO is cancelled and its' name is removed from the list of accredited consultants. In case it wishes to get considered again under the Scheme, it is required to submit a fresh application with requisite fee. Fresh assessment is then carried out as per IA norms

d. **Incomplete applications** – If an AO submits an incomplete application in which requisite details are not provided or it does not meet the requirements of the Scheme in respect of eligible candidates for EC and FAEs, QMS, Laboratory details etc., the same is put in the 'incomplete applications' list. NABET intimates the AO of the deficiencies in the application. If it is an application for IA, the same is processed further once all requirements are fulfilled.

e. Cancelled/ Debarred/Suspended applications – see Section 9.3 below.

8. ACCREDITATION FEE:

QCI/NABET does not get any financial assistance from any agency for operation of this Scheme. Hence, to offset the costs involved in the implementation of the Scheme by NABET, fees are charged for organizing the assessment and accreditation processes and annual fees for updating and maintaining the Scheme.

Timely payment of dues to NABET by the AO/ACO is crucial to the Scheme. Processes of IA, SA and RA can proceed to the next stage only if all pending bills to NABET are cleared by the AO/ACO. All invoices raised by NABET are to be paid online or within one month of date of dispatch/mailing of the invoices.

In case of delay in payment of applicable fees at any stage beyond one month from the date of issuance of NABET's invoice, penalty @1.5% per month of delay is applicable.

Failure to pay the applicable dues by the deadline given in invoices may result in withdrawal of accreditation of ACO.

9. GRANT OF ACCREDITATION:

Results of the accreditation committee meeting are uploaded on the QCI/NABET website within a month of the AC meeting in which the relevant case is discussed. A formal letter from NABET is sent within one month from the date of approval by the accreditation committee mentioning conditions of accreditation and NCs & Obs., if any. NABET's certificate of accreditation is issued on successful closure of all NCs and Obs.

9.1. Maintaining accreditation

Accreditation of GW consultant organization is subject to compliance to the requirements of the QCI – NABET Scheme. These include, but are not limited to:

a. Implementation of systems/procedures documented in the QMS manual of the ACO including the corrective and preventive actions for the NCs and Obs. of IA, SA, RA, as applicable.

b. ACOs are encouraged to prepare their own 'Hydrogeological report preparation manual' detailing the procedures followed right from the time of placing quotes to completion of the project.

c. Timely replacement of experts - in case any approved GWC or FAE-GW leaves the ACO, s/he needs to be replaced with in a specific time

d. Intimation of changes – in case of any change in the organization related to systems, procedures, laboratory and other facilities, the same is to be intimated to NABET in the within one month.

e. Payment of fees, as applicable, to NABET as per the terms of accreditation

f. At the beginning of the hydrogeological reports prepared by the ACO a declaration is to be given by the ACO mentioning the names of the EC and FAEs involved. This form must be duly signed by them and countersigned by the Head/authorized signatory/CEO of the organization.

All GWCs and FAE-GWs, and team members involved in the project should maintain a field logbook as proof. NABET's assessors may verify these during the office assessment. It is worthwhile to maintain other documentations on the expert's site visits viz., expert's report, and authorization of tours, travel documents etc.

i. The ACO is to strictly avoid practices/actions mentioned in Section 9.3 to ensure that accreditation granted to it is not cancelled.

ii. The ACO is to maintain the following records (in soft or hard format)
    a. A register of attendance of employees involved in GW assignments.
    b. Names of the experts involved in various projects handled by the consultant organization.
    c. All documents related to laboratory work and implementation of QMS

9.2. Suspension/cancellation/debarment of accreditation

NABET may suspend or cancel an accreditation or even debar an organization on account of any or more grounds during accreditation process or after, but not limited, to the following:

a. Non-compliance or violation of the NABET's requirements and conditions of accreditation and deviation from facts as stated in application and enclosures

b. In case an approved expert leaves the organization, the ACO is required to inform NABET of the same within one month and get a replacement approved within the next two months, if s/he was the only expert in that sector or functional area. In case of EC, if the replacement expert fails to get approved, accreditation to specific sector/sectors is cancelled.

c. Submission of false or misleading information in the application or in subsequent submissions

d. Improper use of NABET's accreditation mark, letter of accreditation from NABET or the QCI/NABET logo

e. Failure to report any major legal (mandatory compliance) changes and evident conflict of interest

f. Using fraudulent practices by the ACO in respect of its submission/interaction with NABET which include, but not limited to, deliberate concealment and/or submission of false plagiarized or misleading information, suppression of information, falsification of records or data, unauthorized use of accreditation, and non-reporting of completed report to NABET.

g. Non- payment of applicable fees.

h. Violation of the Code of Conduct for the consultant organizations Any other condition deemed appropriate by NABET.

The decision for the suspension/cancellation/debarment is taken by the NABET accreditation committee.

9.3. Actions for misconduct/fraudulent activities

Submission of false or misleading information or use of fraudulent practices, an AO/ACO may be disqualified for up to one year, to be decided by the accreditation committee depending on the seriousness of the action. Such AO/ACO will be able to re-apply only after expiry of the disqualification period. The application is to be accompanied with an undertaking from the CEO of the organization that, if such practices are repeated, it will render the organization ineligible to participate in the NABET accreditation scheme any further. The same approach is applicable for individual experts (GWCs and FAE-GWs) as well.

9.4. Confidentiality

All information, documents and reports submitted by an AO/ACO to NABET are utilized by the NABET, assessors, members of accreditation and technical committees for the purpose of assessment and accreditation. These may also be used for research purpose or shared with CGWA Govt. of India and other members of the International Personnel Certification Association. However, the identity of the NABET accredited consultant organizations would be masked for sensitive information related to business whenever it is called for/appropriate. In case an AO/ACO wants the information to be kept confidential, a communication must be sent to NABET citing reasons for the same. NABET reserves the right to take appropriate decision in this regard. NABET also reserves the right of taking appropriate action against an ACO for deliberate breach of confidentiality.

The ACO is required to have adequate arrangements consistent with applicable laws to safeguard confidentiality of all information provided by its clients. These arrangements are extended to include organizations or individuals acting on its behalf and as its representatives.

10. GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM

There are two methodologies available under the Scheme for addressing the grievances:

a. Review of Decisions
b. Appeal

10.1. Review of decisions

In case an AO/ACO wishes for review/reconsideration of any decision taken by NABET, they may send a request for same to NABET.

The following procedure is applicable:

a. Request received from AO/ACO by NABET is recorded in the same serial as date of receipt
b. Request must mention specific complaints (not generic in nature) and supported by documentary evidence.
c. Anonymous/ pseudonymous requests are not be entertained.

d. Each request must be accompanied with an ECS/ Demand Draft of Rs. 25,000/ plus GST and other relevant cess as applicable, payable in favor of "Quality Council of India" to partially offset the cost of hearing of such requests.

e. Only substantial errors/mistakes on procedural matters are taken up for consideration. Re-assessment of any aspect of assessment or request for deviation from the Scheme cannot be considered.

f. Such 'Reviews' are taken up for consideration in a meeting of the relevant Accreditation Committee as early as possible.

g. Agenda of such meetings is intimated to the AO/ACO.

h. AOs/ACOs making the request may present their case in person to the AC, if they so desire.

i. Decision of the AC is intimated to the concerned organizations as well as posted on QCI website.

10.2. Appeal

An AO/ ACO may apply for Appeal in case it is not satisfied with the 'Review' decision. An 'Appeal' must include the specific issues on which the appellant is filing the appeal accompanied by supporting documents, fees for appeal. The following information is to be provided while submitting the appeal -

S.No	Specific issue/s submitted in Review	Supporting documents submitted in Review	Decision of Review Committee	Additional/ new issues submitted in Appeal now	New supporting documents added now
1	-	-	-	-	-

The following procedure is applicable:

a. Formation of 3-member Appeals Committee by NABET, chaired by a member of NABET Board and comprising one more member from NABET Board and one subject specialist.

b. The Appeals Committee proposed is approved by the Chairman, NABET Board.

c. The documents received from the appellant are submitted to the members of the Appeals committee by NABET Secretariat.

d. Process of hearing by the committee - the committee fixes a date for the hearing which is intimated to the appellant by NABET secretariat. A reasonable notice period is given for the appellant to appear in the hearing. The committee gives due opportunity to the appellant and the NABET secretariat to present their cases. The committee gives its decision after hearing both the sides and based on deliberation within it.

e. The decision of the Appeals committee is intimated to the appellant by NABET Secretariat.

f. Each request for appeal must be accompanied with an ECS/ Demand Draft of Rs. 25,000/ plus Services Tax and other relevant cess as applicable, payable in favor of "Quality Council of India" to partially offset the cost of hearing of such appeals.

11. CODE OF CONDUCT

All ACOs are obliged to improve the standing of the consultancy profession by rigorously observing the Code of Conduct. Failure to do so may result in the suspension or cancellation of accreditation.

11.1. Use of QCI and NABET logo

The QCI and NABET accreditation logo is the property of NABET and its use is controlled. Compliance to the guidelines and conditions is required for using NABET Accreditation Mark.

a. Whenever a Ground Water Consultant Organization is accredited, NABET shall inform the relevant entity about the conditions of the use of accreditation mark.

b. Accreditation mark can be used by NABET accredited Ground Water Consultant Organization only.

A. Guidelines and conditions of use of accreditation mark

i. Accreditation mark as appears on NABET Accreditation certificates can be printed as colored image or black and white

ii. Accreditation mark shall not be used to suggest any approval or sponsorship of NABET other than the organization accredited.

iii. Accreditation mark shall not be used in any way that misleads the reader about the accreditation status of the consultant organization

iv. Accreditation mark is not transferable and is to be used only by the accredited consultant organization as described in its application.

v. Accredited consultant organization upon suspension or withdrawal or expiry of its accreditation (however determined), shall discontinue the use of NABET accreditation mark on all media of communications by the organization including promotional material, letter head, newsletters, brochures, annual reports, business cards, websites and advertisements etc.

vi. NABET reserves the right to change the conditions as and when considered necessary and the same shall be communicated to consultant organization.

vii. Use of accreditation mark is applicable for consultant organizations only and not for individual expert/s.

B. Verification

i. NABET may, at its discretion, carry out verification of proper use of the accreditation Mark.

ii. If any misuse of the accreditation is noticed, NABET initiates actions as per procedure for suspension and/or cancellation of its accreditation.

11.2. Undertaking by consultant organization

The consultant organization undertakes to:

a. Act professionally, accurately and in an unbiased manner.

b. Be truthful, accurate and fair to the assigned work, without any fear or favor.

c. Judiciously use the information provided by or acquired and to maintain the confidentiality of information received or acquired in connection with the assignment.

d. Use the expertise of only approved experts.

e. Avoid and/or declare any conflict of interest that may affect the work to be carried out.

f. Not accept any favour from the clients, or their representatives.

Not act in a manner detrimental to the reputation of any of the stakeholders including NABET and the client.

g. Co-operate fully in any formal enquiry procedure of NABET.

Prior to accreditation, the AO signs the "Code of Conduct for Ground Water Consultant Organizations" and sends it to the NABET secretariat.

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Detailed final version of the scheme will be uploaded shortly.