

FAQS on - Scheme for Accreditation of AEA Consultant Organizations

GENERAL		
1	What is accreditation?	Accreditation is a process of verifying the capability of an organization against a set of criteria to provide a service or product through third-party verification.
2	Is Accreditation by NABET for AEA Consultants Organization mandatory?	Yes. Ministry of Mines mandated QCI-NABET for accreditation of exploration agencies vide notification N. M.VI-16/15/2021-MinesVI dated 12th August, 2021.
3	What is the association between NABET and QCI?	NABET is a constituent Board of QCI
4	What is the purpose of accreditation	With the introduction of private exploration agencies in mineral sector, Government of India allows Private Sector Participation for development of exploration of mineral blocks through revenue sharing mechanism. Through this accreditation scheme QCI_NABET will create a pool of the Exploration Agencies for undertaking exploration and preparations of Geological Report (GR) in accordance with the rules/ guidelines prescribed/ specified under the MMDR Act, MEMC Rules 2015 and amendments thereafter.
5	What are the benefits of accreditation?	● Publicity through QCI-NABET ● Notification under Ministry of Mines ● Gets eligible to take up government funded exploration projects ● Private explorers can participate in auctioning of mineral blocks ● Increased opportunities for empanelment with government bodies & PSUs
6	Who can apply for NABET accreditation	Only registered organizations, such as public, private, partnership, proprietary firms, bodies registered under Society Act, Research Institutes and the. All requirements of the Scheme as mentioned in this document are to be complied with for an organization to get accredited.
7	How can a consultant organization not having earlier experience of preparing Geological report under its name enter the business and apply for accreditation?	The organization needs to have people who have adequate experience of exploration in mineral sector as defined in the Scheme, for other consultants.
8	How the Accreditation Scheme has been developed?	QCI-NABET has launched the accreditation of exploration agencies vide notification N. M.VI-16/15/2021-MinesVI dated 12th August, 2021. The Scheme undergoes routine review and revisions based on the feedback from the organizations, assessment outcome, and expert advice in specific fields.
9	Can we suggest changes in the Accreditation Scheme?	Yes. There is provision of sending suggestions to NABET secretariate.

10	How can one empanel as an assessor under the Accreditation Scheme?	The qualification and experience requirements for an assessor is mentioned on the QCI/NABET website. One can apply to CEO, NABET, if meeting such requirements.
11	What are the other schemes available with the Environment Division of NABET?	NABET also works on accreditation of – 1. Accreditation Scheme for EIA Consultant Organizations 2. Accreditation Scheme for Ground Water Consultant Organizations (GWCO) 3. Accreditation Scheme for Exploration/Prospecting and Mine Plan Preparing Agencies in Coal Sector (APA-MPPA) 4. Accreditation Scheme for Scheme for Forest Clearance Consultant Organizations (FCCO).
12	Can one give feedback on the Scheme?	The ACOs may share their feedback related to the accreditation process, its improvement and implementation or other related to the scheme. ACOs may provide their feedback through NABET website, or may send it through email also.
13	How can a complaint be lodged against NABET?	Complaints may be lodged by individuals or organizations to CEO, NABET.
14	Is there any validity of the approval of experts?	Yes An expert (IH/emp.), he /she should be given approval as per the latest assessment, if norms are not changing.
15	Is there any validity of the submitted application?	Yes The AO is required to submit all details to make the application complete as early as possible for further processing of application. If the application remains incomplete even after six months from the date of initial application, it is treated as closed and the AO needs to submit a fresh application with requisite fees, should it wish to be considered for accreditation under the Scheme.
16.	What will happen if the ACO fail to meet assessment shortfall?	if the ACO scores less than 50% in QMS, it is given 15 days' time to address the shortfalls and submit the revised QMS if the ACO scores less than 50% marks in any aspect other than QMS, it may be given an opportunity of personal hearing by the AC to explain its case before the final decision on the case. If it fails, The ACO name will be marked as non-accredited.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS		
1	How to apply for accreditation?	All the applications like IA/SA/RA, supplementary and scope expansion are to be filled through ONLINE PORTAL only, through the registered user id and password.

		FAQs and guidance are available on the AEA portal. NABET do not accept any application through email etc. The application will be submitted only when the fees is paid through the online portal. Incomplete applications/forms are not accepted and processed by NABET. All the Annexures should be filled by ACO.
2	What are the minimum strength and facilities should an organization have to apply for accreditation?	An organization should meet the following minimum requirements before applying – i. Human resource ii. Field investigation and laboratory arrangement iii. Suitable infrastructure, Plant & Machinery (P&M) and relevant Hardware & Software iv. Quality Management System (QMS) v. Coverage and Quality of Geological Reports (GR) vi. Organizational commitment vii. Compliance to accreditation condition in case of SA & RA
3	Is it necessary to have in-house laboratory to apply for accreditation?	No. May have an in-house laboratory or agreement/MOU with one or more external laboratories
4	How much time is required to get accreditation?	If all information is provided in completeness in the application, the process can be completed within 3 months.
5	What is the period of accreditation?	Accreditation is given for a period of 5 years with the provision of a surveillance assessment after 30 months of accreditation
6	What are the eligibility criteria (qualification and experience) for a Project Coordinator (PC) and can PC apply for TAE as well?	Master's (post-graduate) degree/ M. Tech in either subject- Geology/ Applied Geology/ Geophysics from a UGC/AICTE recognized University/ Institution or equivalent. A PC may apply for 1 Technical area other than Geology.
7	What are the eligibility criteria (qualification and experience) for a TAE and how many TAs can s/he apply for?	A candidate for TAE should be a bachelor in specific technical subject or a Masters in specific Science or Humanities subject, as applicable for the TA and mentioned in the scheme. S/he should have minimum overall and AEA related experience in the TA of 10 years for geology and 5 years for other TA. A candidate may apply for maximum 2 TAs.
8	Who can be proposed as an 'empanelled expert' and what are the criteria applicable?	Any person meeting the qualification and experience requirements of the scheme and not a full-time employee in any company may apply to be considered as an empanelled expert. A person academic institution or an NGO may also apply, with NOC from authorities as specified in the scheme Criteria for approval of an empanelled expert are the same as those for in-house experts. A person may be proposed by maximum 3 organizations for empanelment.
9	What is meant by IA, SA and RA?	IA - Initial Accreditation (when primarily the potential of an applicant organization is assessed) SA – Surveillance Assessment held after 30 months of IA (when the performance of the accredited organization

		and compliance to conditions of accreditation are assessed) RA – Re-accreditation held after 5 years of IA (when the performance and improvements achieved are assessed).
10	When to apply for SA and RA application.	Application for SA/RA must be submitted three months prior to when SA/RA is due i.e. on completion of 27 months after date of office assessment for IA/SA/RA as applicable / as per the ACO's accreditation cycle. In case an ACO does not fulfil 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.
11	What are NCs and Obs?	NC is the Non-Conformance with the Scheme requirement, and Obs. is the Observation as recorded by the NABET Assessors during assessment process. Organization is required to respond to the NC/s and Obs to the satisfaction of the Assessors and closure by them to proceed to the subsequent stages of assessment process.
12	What is the provision for a candidate/organization to re-apply once it is not approved on qualification/experience/knowledge/ other grounds?	An organization or an expert is considered for re-assessment after a gap of 3 months with necessary application fee once the shortcomings have been addressed.
13	How can a fresh graduate enter the Scheme?	A fresh graduate may enter the Scheme as a Team member (TM) meets the relevant qualification requirements for the TA.
14	When is assessment online and offline?	In case of IA & RA assessments are conducted physically at the organization registered office and in case of SA assessment is done online.
15	What is six monthly clauses?	To maintain the uniformity in assessment. NABET has applied this clause with the following condition: If the proposed candidate/s was assessed and approved within last six months, then s/he will not be re-assessed and will continue as per last approval, <u>however, need to be present for formal interaction</u> . Also, the following documents are required to be submitted by the concerned ACO to QCI-NABET for necessary verification: 1. Copy of MoU with the expert/s 2. Undertaking by Head of Organization 3. Copy of MoMs wherein s/he has been approved for the proposed TA

		Also, if the candidate is applying for up-gradation/ scope expansion, the candidate should be available during the assessment.
16	Who are Assessors?	Assessors are professionals with minimum 15 years overall experience of which 8 years should be Geological Report/Mining Plan preparation field as a consultant/ regulator/ client/ research worker/ teacher/ NGO. Desirable Hands-on experience in preparing Geological report/Mining Plan. They are not connected in any manner with preparation of reports by consultants.
17	How to qualify as an assessor under this Scheme	The qualification and experience requirements of an assessor are posted on the QCI/NABET website. One can apply to CEO, NABET, if meeting such requirements.
18	What are accounts details of QCI/NABET for online money transfer?	Bank details are available at NABET website: May follow the link below: https://nabet.qci.org.in/bank-details
19	How can I appeal against the decision of QCI/NABET	There is a 2 tier Complaint and Appeal mechanism – i. Review of decision by the Accreditation Committee ii. Appeal to be heard by an independent Appeals Committee formed by the NABET Board All complaints to be addressed to the CEO, NABET