



**INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION IEC SYSTEM
FOR CERTIFICATION TO STANDARDS RELATING TO EQUIPMENT
FOR USE IN EXPLOSIVE ATMOSPHERES (IECEX SYSTEM)**

**Title: Report from Dr Jim Munro the Convener of ExAG – *IECEX
Assessment Group***

To: Members of the IECEX Management Committee, ExMC

INTRODUCTION

This document contains a report from the ExAG Convener, Dr Jim Munro, to the 2019 ExMC Dubai meeting.

Recommendation 1:

That ExMC approves the composition of ExAG as shown in Annex A of this report.

Recommendation 2:

That ExMC approves the implementation of a formal voting system for acceptance of assessor applications by ExAG members.

Recommendation 3:

That ExMC approves that no changes to IECEX06 (formerly EXMC/1376/DV) be recommended to CAB at this time.

Recommendation 4:

That ExMC provides initial feedback on the proposal to provide further guidance on the use of witnessed assessments for Schemes IECEX02 and 03.

Recommendation 5:

That ExMC provides initial feedback and in principle support on the proposed implementation of an initial one-off one-year surveillance from date of acceptance for newly accepted ExCBs/ExTLs holding national accreditation, noting the final proposal will come to ExMC for approval as a revision to OD 003-2.

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INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION SYSTEM FOR
CERTIFICATION TO STANDARDS RELATING TO EQUIPMENT FOR USE IN
EXPLOSIVE ATMOSPHERES (IECEX System)

MEETING REPORT

Held at IEC Asia – Pacific Regional Centre Singapore
on Thursday 9th May 2019 (commencing at 9:00 a.m)

Attendance:

Dr. Jim Munro - Convenor	JMIC
Ms. Katy Holdredge – Deputy Convenor	UL LLC
Mr. Chris Agius	IECEX Executive Secretary
Mr. Bernard Piquette	INERIS
Mr. Julien Gauthier	LCIE
Mr. Mike Roy	IECEX Secretariat
Prof. Jianping Xu	NEPSI
Mr. Uli Jacobs - Observer	TUV SUD PS GmbH

Report of ExAG – IECEx Assessment Group

1 Scope

This report is from the initial (half-day) meeting of the IECEx Assessment Group (ExAG) held in Singapore and includes recommendations to ExMC arising from that meeting.

2 Background to the establishment of ExAG

At the ExMC meeting in Cannes, France 2018, the following decision was taken:

Decision 2018/22 (ExMC/1436/DL)

The Meeting approved the proposed (via ExMC/1376/DV) transformation of WG4 to the new ExAG (IECEX Assessment Group) and the appointment of its Officers as proposed and with the addition of details in Recommendation #1 in ExMC/1407/R. Meeting also requested ExAG to consider suggested improvements to ExMC/1376/DV as further work.

After the meeting, ExMC/1376/DV was used to create a new rules document, IECEx06. The following are extracts from that document.

Terms of Reference:

To act as the dedicated IECEx maintenance and consultative group for matters relating to the IECEx Assessment of ExCBs and ExTLs across all IECEx Schemes.

Responsibilities:

Responsibilities as directed by the ExMC include but are not limited to the following:



- Ensure on-going alignment with the Peer Assessment fundamentals of CAB (reference is CAB Policy documents, eg IEC CAB-P02)
- Develop and maintain criteria for the qualification of Assessors and Lead Assessors in consultation with the IECEx Scheme Committees
- Review and approval of assessor applications for all schemes, with newly appointed assessors to be reported to ExMC for noting
- Periodic review of existing pool of assessors for all IECEx Schemes
- Maintenance of Assessment Procedures for all IECEx Schemes.
- Maintenance of report forms and records used in assessments
- Maintenance of IECEx Assessors' Guide(s)
- Development and delivery of assessor training
- Provide a consultative forum for recommendations on issues found during assessments
- Development of common interpretations, for example for ISO/IEC 17025
- Maintenance of checklists such as those for ISO/IEC 17024, 17025 and 17065.

The proposal for establishment of the ExAG was considered and approved by CAB, together with the rules document IECEx06. This occurred just before the meeting of ExAG in Singapore. The following officers were appointed for an initial term of three years:

Convenor: Dr Jim Munro

Deputy Convenor: Ms Katy Holdredge

3 First meeting of ExAG

The first meeting of ExAG took place in Singapore on Thursday, 9 May 2019. Eight people attended the meeting with six of those potential members of the ExAG. Both the Convenor and Deputy Convenor were present. Apologies were received from a further nine potential members, some of whom were committed to an ExPCC meeting taking place at the same time.

Before the meeting, all former members of ExMC WG4 were invited to indicate their interest in becoming members of ExAG, and to attend the meeting if feasible.

The meeting agreed on the following regarding the membership:

- That ExAG should accept all former members who expressed interest, and one additional member proposed by member body RU (three former members for WG4 did not express an interest in becoming members for ExAG and so they have not been added to the proposed membership).
- That there was no need to seek additional members, given the current membership of lead assessors and some former members of ExMC WG4.
- That the current proposed membership, as shown in Annex A of this report, would meet the requirement of IECEx06 "that a balance of interest across all IECEx Schemes is maintained".
- That ExMC should be asked to ratify/approve the proposed membership.



Based on the above, the recommended composition of ExAG at this time is shown in Annex A and ExMC is asked to approve this membership.

Recommendation 1:

That ExMC approves the composition of ExAG as shown in Annex A of this report.

4 Suggested improvements to ExMC/1376/DV (now IECEx06)

As requested by ExMC, the meeting considered the content of IECEx06, which is essentially the same as ExMC/1376/DV with minor editorial changes.

Some discussions were had on the specific responsibilities of the ExAG as follows.

- Review and approval of assessor applications for all schemes, with newly appointed assessors to be reported to ExMC for noting.

The meeting agreed that the way for voting on assessors should be a formal system for ExAG members to vote, similar to the system used for member countries to vote on ExMC documents. The IECEx Secretariat indicated that the implementation of a formal voting system should be feasible. ExMC is asked to approve this approach.

Recommendation 2:

That ExMC approves the implementation of a formal voting system for acceptance of assessor applications by ExAG members.

- Maintenance of IECEx Assessors' Guide(s)

The meeting agreed that OD 032 *Guidelines and Information for IECEx Assessments* should be expanded to include all IECEx schemes.

- Maintenance of checklists such as those for ISO/IEC 17024, 17025 and 17065

The meeting discussed whether this group could form a point of contact with accreditation bodies, for example to facilitate joint assessments.

It was agreed that the 'responsibilities' is not intended to be limiting on the actions that ExAG might take on. It was discussed that something along the following lines could be added:

Other actions or roles as agreed by the ExMC

However, the introduction to the responsibilities includes the words "as directed by the ExMC include but are not limited to". This expression should provide sufficient flexibility for additional tasks not expressly covered by the bullet points in IECEx06 under "Responsibilities" at this time.

The meeting noted that IECEx06 had been approved by CAB and hence any revision would need to go back to CAB.

No other potential changes to the document were identified at the meeting, other than possible minor editorial changes.

Hence ExAG is recommending no changes should be made to IECEx06 at this time, but a future revision may be recommended, as desirable core responsibilities become clearer.

Recommendation 3:

That ExMC approves that no changes to IECEx06 (formerly EXMC/1376/DV) be recommended to CAB at this time.

5 Other actions and potential actions arising from last meeting of ExMC agenda item 7.3 ExMC WG4 Technical Reference Group for Assessment of ExCBs and ExTLs

Extract from ExMC report:

“The Chair then called on the meeting to consider the draft new OD 032 as prepared by the WG4 also noting the document from CN, ExMC/1434/CD with CN advising that they wish to see OD 032 updated to make it clear that the Secretary has a role in approving of the cost estimates and itinerary of assessments, noting that the Secretary does have an oversight role but the OD 032 does not make this clear.”

Decision 2018/24 (ExMC/1436/DL)

The Meeting agreed to request ExAG to consider the inclusion of the proposals in ExMC/1434/CD in a revision of IECEx OD 003 and perhaps a further revision of IECEx OD 032.

See also Items 6 and 7 below.

“UK noted the reference to inclusion of witness assessments of ExCBs while they are conducting on-site audits of manufacturers and noted the challenges that this may present, including issues of timing.”

ExAG were advised of a couple of instances where witnessed assessments had been done in the past. The meeting saw merit in the proposal for Schemes IECEx02 and 03, in particular where a body does not hold local accreditation. The option of using a local assessor to help with scheduling and language was also discussed. Appropriate wording will be included in the next editions of OD 003, assessment report F003 and guide OD 032.

Recommendation 4:

That ExMC provides initial feedback on the proposal to provide further guidance on the use of witnessed assessments for Schemes IECEx02 and 03.

“AU did question in terms of how this new ExAG will be shown on the IECEx website, with the Secretary reminding the meeting of past discussions that we see this group as a permanent group that sits between a WG and a Committee, so the Secretary proposed and the meeting agreed to leave it to the Secretary to determine the best location and allow the ExMC to review (sic) this at the next meeting”

Provision for the ExAG has been included on the IECEx website and the convenors have been added to the section of the website that shows the Executive.

“RU sought clarification over the term “Top 10 Bodies” in the phrase “Chris Agius to approach top 10 of IECEx bodies to request they put forward at least one assessor candidate (if they are not already providing an assessor) of the Report ExMC/1407/R with the Secretary and Dr Munro clarifying this is meant as the top 10 certificate issuing bodies by number of certificates issued, given their activity in the scheme.”



Chris Agius said this is ongoing with bodies often being requested. The approach could be considered by this group at a later date, coupling the need to supply assessors with the ability to reject assessors without competence.

ExMC agenda item 18.2 Proposal from BR concerning planning of annual IECEx meetings, Optimization of the Training Sections:

Decision 2018/79 (ExMC/1436/DL)

The Meeting

- Regarding Proposal 2 the Meeting tasks the ExAG to facilitate greater participation including use of video conferencing and recording.

Note: Annex A of the minutes of ExMC tasks the Secretary with this responsibility (Item 58)

Chris Agius said this is being considered for Dubai. But not the issue of splitting the meeting because this was not accepted by the ExMC. See also Item 9 below.

6 Other tasks which ExMC WG4 identified for ExAG

The last ExMC WG4 report identified a number of tasks that could be considered by the new IAG. These included:

- a) For next edition of OD 003-2 - consider including a section on pre-assessment
- b) That OD 003-1 Annex A.2 d) to be clarified in the next edition of OD 003-1 regarding the meaning of "... at least five years' practical experience in the scope of the relevant IECEx scheme(s)"
- c) To provide a consistent F-003 form for all schemes
- d) To consider the impact of the data protection regulations for Europe and Switzerland, for example in releasing personal information of assessor applicants
- e) To consider the possible need to witness manufacturing assessments when doing assessments of ExCBs

The ExAG meeting has prepared an action plan for the above documents and other documents under the responsibility of ExAG, for delegated members to prepare drafts for consideration of the group. This included relevant documents from other Schemes.

Other matters arising from the discussion included:

- ExAG is requesting other schemes to include an agenda item in their next meeting to consider recommendations to ExAG, for example on assessment procedures and assessment reports.
- The IECEx Secretariat is to consider ways for showing documents to be addressed by ExAG on the IECEx website.
- The assessors' page "Procedures for the appointment of experts as IECEx Approved Assessors" will need revision to reflect the use of ExAG and revised process for approval of assessors.

7 Costing of assessments

To consider whether a revised approach regarding costing of assessments could be considered taking into account:



- Proposal from China (see Item 5 above)
- Recent proposal from Australia (regarding equity in cost of assessments)

Chris Agius will prepare a guideline on preparation of assessment estimates when revising OD 032. Cost estimates will be required to be first sent to Chris Agius for agreement, possibly at same time as when advising of agreed assessment dates.

Chris Agius mentioned that there may be scope in the future for the IECEx financial reserve to assist with costs of assessments.

8 Additional Test Facilities (ATFs)

In relation to ATFs, the meeting discussed the possible need to revise documents managed by ExAG, such as OD 003-2 and OD 032. These revisions will be considered initially by those in ExAG tasked with the action for the initial draft revision of those documents.

9 Training

The ExAG discussed some potential training topics for the meeting in Dubai for consideration by the Secretariat.

It was agreed that training sessions would be recorded and those attending would be encouraged to take the recording back for their staff.

Methods for delivering training to assessors will be an ongoing topic for ExAG.

10 Providing clarity on assessing complex ExCB and ExTL relationships

The meeting discussed the need to establish clear measures for assessing an ExCB or ExTL when the two are not integrated, especially when they are not part of the same quality system. The meeting noted that multiple relationships can further complicate things.

It was decided to make appropriate revisions to OD 003-2 and OD 032.

11 Proficiency testing program

The meeting discussed ways to enhance the use of results from the proficiency testing program when doing assessments. Additional guidance will be added to report form F-003. Revision of OD 202 for proficiency testing may also be desirable.

12 Monitoring of newly accepted ExCBs/ExTLs

The meeting agreed that five years seems a long time between the initial assessment and first re-assessment of new IECEx ExCB/ExTL body that holds national accreditation. It was agreed that an appropriate step for such a body would be to implement an initial one-off one-year surveillance from date of acceptance. However, the actual time could be negotiable if no IECEx work has been done after one year. This approach will be included in the revision of OD 003-2. The meeting also suggested that consideration be given to appointing mentors for new bodies from the existing assessor pool.

Recommendation 5

That ExMC provides initial feedback and in principle support on the proposed implementation of an initial one-off one-year surveillance from date of acceptance for newly accepted ExCBs/ExTLs holding national accreditation, noting the final proposal will come to ExMC for approval as a revision to OD 003-2.

13 Work carried out by ExMC WG4 since last meeting of ExMC

Since the last meeting of ExMC, the only work for ExMC WG4 was the review of two assessor applications that were then forwarded for approval by ExMC. At the time of writing this report these applications were out for voting. WG4 effectively became disbanded once ExAG was established.

14 Next Meeting of ExAG

The next meeting of ExAG is proposed to be part of operational IECEx meetings in China (Shanghai) next year. A full day meeting not clashing with any committee meetings has been requested and including in preliminary planning. It has been recommended that other schemes hold meetings first, with an agenda item to identify actions for ExAG.

Before the above meeting there will be ongoing discussion regarding revision of documents with a WebEx meeting if needed.

15 Conclusion

The first meeting of ExAG focussed on the target outcomes of:

- Addressing actions from last ExMC
- Clarifying how the ExAG will work
- Finalising the composition of ExAG
- Formulating a plan for future work
- Providing some recommendations for the EXMC meeting in Dubai

The above outcomes were achieved in the time available to the group. For this, I thank the active participation of the deputy convenor of the group, Katy Holdredge, and those who attended the meeting or sent comments for consideration.



Dr Jim Munro
Convenor of ExAG
Convenor of ExMC WG4 (now disbanded)

2 June 2019



Annex A

Proposed membership of ExAG

A.1 Membership of ExAG as defined by IECEx06

The ExAG shall comprise Lead Assessors plus up to fifteen (15) experts nominated by IECEx Member Bodies and appointed by the ExMC. The ExMC shall ensure that a balance of interest across all IECEx Schemes is maintained.

As start up for the Group, members of previous ExMC WG4 that fit this criteria and wish to continue shall comprise part of the membership.

A.2 Proposed membership of ExAG for approval by ExMC

A.2.1 Convenors:

Dr Jim Munro (Convenor)

Ms Katy Holdredge (Deputy Convenor)

A.2.2 Secretariat:

Mr Chris Agius

A.2.3 Lead assessors (in addition to those above who are all lead assessors):

Mr Ajay Maira

Mr Ralph Wigg

Mr Heinz Berger

Prof Xu Jianping

Mr Thierry Houeix

Mr Bernard Piquette

Mr Ronald Webb

A.2.4 Other members:

Dr Alexander Zalogin – ExMCWG4

Mr Michel Brénon - ExMCWG4

Mr Klauspeter Graffi - ExMCWG4

Mr John Allen – ExMCWG4

Mr Julien Gauthier – ExMCWG4

Ms Yulia Tikhonenko – proposed by RU as a member

TOTAL: 16