WORKSHEET 4.1

# Accredited for What?

*Subchapter 4.1 · case in the book: Milan*

When a quotation for your certification carries the word “accredited”, do you know what the body is accredited for, and who confirmed it? And what do you expect from that body: a judgement on your system, or help in building it?

This worksheet turns the tools of the subchapter into a form you can fill in. The texts come from the book; the empty columns are for your own property. Adapt it before use: an unadapted checklist is exactly what the book warns against.

## Practical application: what to do in your property

| Step (from the book) | Done? | What we found / owner |
|---|---|---|
| Read the annex, not the letterhead: Every body was asked for its accreditation certificate with all annexes, and for a written statement whether ISO 20121 certification would be issued under accreditation. Body A’s annex went into the system’s records with a note: ISO 20121 not in scope, confirmed by telephone. | | |
| Separate advice from assessment: Quotation C was declined the same day. Ferri also asked bodies A and B in writing whether they had partnerships with consultants, and filed the answers. | | |
| Ask about the decision: Each body was asked who would decide on the certificate and on what basis. Any promise of an outcome before the audit became, by the hotel’s own rule, a reason to reject the offer. | | |
| Talk to the client before answering: Ferri wrote to the society’s purchasing office before engaging any body. She explained what she had found, attached body A’s annex without its name, and asked what the proof was meant to show. | | |

These steps are the book’s method, not requirements of ISO 20121. Evidence can take whatever form suits the property; a separate document is needed only where an applicable requirement, or the property’s own system, makes it necessary.

## Verification Pact: what is believed, tested against the standard

| What is commonly believed | What actually holds | Our position |
|---|---|---|
| An accredited body is accredited for every standard it offers | No. Accreditation applies to a scope, set out in the annex to the accreditation certificate | |
| A certificate without accreditation is worthless | No. It remains a third party’s statement after an audit; nobody outside has examined its basis | |

| What is commonly believed | What actually holds | Our position |
|---|---|---|
| The certification body will help us build the system | No. Under ISO/IEC 17021-1 it must not offer or provide management system consultancy | |
| The auditor decides on the certificate | No. The decision is taken by persons other than those who audited (ISO/IEC 17021-1) | |
| Audit time for ISO 20121 is set by IAF MD 5 | Only partially true. MD 5 was written for other systems; some accreditation schemes adopt it for ISO 20121 with adaptations | |
| Only a certificate shows conformity with ISO 20121 | No. Self-declaration, client confirmation or third party (clause 1; A.24 as guidance) | |
| The rules for certification bodies bind the hotel | Only partially true. They bind the body; the hotel may expect compliance and answers for its own claims | |

## Common mistakes: a self-check

| Mistake (from the book) | Present here? | Action / owner |
|---|---|---|
| Taking the letterhead for the accreditation, when only the scope in the annex counts. | | |
| Setting aside the candid quotation, which often offers the same as the silent one. | | |
| Buying advice and certificate from one hand, so that the judgement concerns the seller's own work. | | |
| Accepting a guaranteed certificate, when only persons who did not audit may decide, and only afterwards. | | |
| Meeting a client's condition with an appearance that does not survive a second look. | | |
| Speaking of a certified congress, when only the system is certified. | | |
| Accepting a bare reference to IAF MD 5 for ISO 20121 audit time, without the scheme and the calculation. | | |
| Keeping no record of the questions asked and the answers received. | | |

## Operative synthesis

- **Have we seen the annex to each body's accreditation certificate?: Accreditation applies only to the scope the annex names**
- **Do we know, in writing, whether our ISO 20121 certificate would be issued under accreditation?: The hotel must describe its certificate accurately**
- **Is it excluded that the body or a partner has advised or will advise us?: ISO/IEC 17021-1 forbids management system consultancy by the body**

- **Does the quotation say who decides on the certificate?: The decision must be taken by persons other than the auditors**
- **Do we compare costs over the whole three-year cycle?: Stages, yearly surveillance and recertification are all part of the price**
- **Have we asked the client what the proof is meant to show?: Certification is one of three routes under clause 1**
- **Act on immediately. Ask every certification body under consideration for its accreditation certificate with all annexes and a written statement on ISO 20121. Decline any offer that joins consultancy and certification.**
- **Plan for. Speak to the client before answering a tender, state the kind of certificate the hotel is pursuing, and keep the questions on independence, competence, decision and complaints on file.**
- **Monitor going forward. Check once a year whether the body's accreditation scope has changed, and make sure every statement about the certificate matches what the annex shows.**

## Action plan for our property

| Action | Owner | Due | How we will know it worked |
|---|---|---|---|
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Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 8b «The Lens», subchapter 4.1. Edizioni Effedore, 2026. Clause references are paraphrased; this sheet does not reproduce the text of ISO 20121, ISO 19011 or ISO/IEC 17021-1. It is not legal advice: the law that applies is that of the place where the property operates.