POLICY ON RECOGNITION OF CROSS-BORDER ACCREDITATION

Background

WFME regularly receives enquiries about the option of the possibility of an accreditation by an agency with WFME Recognition Status outside of their original country of operation (the agency in which the agency holds a legal seat or where the initial core of operation is).

For an agency’s operation in any country to be considered for WFME recognition, WFME needs to assess its legal standing and recognition by the local authorities. During the assessment of an agency, WFME reviews this process for the accreditation activity in the original country (or countries) of operation and not for any other country.

If an agency aims to venture outside of the originally evaluated remit, WFME needs to verify that the agency is recognised by the appropriate authorities in the new intended country of operation, that the decision made by the agency have impact in the country, and also that the agency has considered the appropriateness of the policies, procedures and standards in the context of another country.

To that end WFME has introduced criteria to address key elements of such a process.

Recognition Criteria for Cross-Border Accreditation

Context

Where the agency operates in more than one country, adequate provisions are in place to ensure that the processes are carried in a consistent and appropriate manner for the context of the target country.

- What is the geographic region in which the accrediting agency conducts accreditation activities? List the countries, states or territories. Provide the list of relevant recognising authorities in all countries and their contact information.
- What is the nature of the accreditation activities in each country or region? Include the number and types of programmes, schools or universities accredited, other activities, a brief history of activities.

Criterion 4

The agency follows policies and procedures that ensure the quality of the cross-border accreditation process outside of their main country of operation.
Guidance

Describe the policies and procedures in place that pertain to cross-border accreditation:

- Has the agency introduced any targeted policies and procedures to ensure the quality of all cross-border accreditation efforts?
- How does the agency manage the related financial and administrative resources necessary to support the cross-border accreditation efforts?

Criterion 5

The agency is recognised by a relevant local authority (see Criterion 1) and its recognition is captured in a formal manner.

Guidance

Describe the collaboration with the local authority:

- Does the agency have a written agreement with the local authority (such as a Memorandum of Understanding, a contract, or a relevant section of the target country’s legislation)? Does the agreement include a written specification of the scope of the agency's accreditation activities, mandate and the impact of the agency's decisions in the country?
- Does the agency actively explore opportunities for increasing collaboration with the local authorities to ensure continuous quality assurance and improvement?

Criterion 6

The agency has analysed and, if necessary, adjusted the appropriateness of its policies, procedures and standards to the context of the target country.

Guidance

Describe the process of ensuring that the agency’s policies and procedures are adequate for the target country:

- Does the agency consider and put in place arrangements to ensure that the agency’s processes are adequate in the local context? Describe any changes that were made to, including, but not limited to, the standards, training, form and extent of the site visit, composition of the visiting team, decision-making and subsequent monitoring.

NB if the agency operates in only one country, write ‘Not applicable’ in the answer box.
Criterion 7

Where one or more functions described in the Recognition Programme criteria No. 6-21 is not within the responsibility of the agency, there is another organisation/authority legally established within the system of the country/countries that fulfils those functions.

Guidance

Describe other mechanisms and organisations in the system that potentially supplement or complement the agency’s process and the elements described in the criteria.

- In the remit of which criteria does the agency share or defer the described function(s) to other organisations/authorities?
- What is the nature of the collaboration (if relevant), communication or use of each other’s decisions between the agency and the other organisations/authorities? Provide evidence.

NB if all the functions are within the responsibility of the agency, or they are not covered in the system at all, write 'Not applicable’ in the answer box.

Cross-Border Accreditation Recognition Status Procedure

Agency in progress

For the agency in progress (applying agency), the element of cross-border accreditation is to be considered within the standard assessment of eligibility by the WFME Office. The agency is expected to describe its activities in the other countries as described in the Criterion and the guidance, and to provide relevant documentation in support of the information provided. In addition to the documentation provided by the agency, the WFME Office will reach out to the recognising authority (authorities) in the target country (countries) to confirm the recognition in the first instance by the Eligibility Questionnaire and, if necessary, by a follow-up communication. The agency is required to facilitate the communication with the authority by indicating a responsive contact within the authority.

Furthermore, the information will be reviewed by the Recognition Team as a part of the assessment process and by the Recognition Committee in the process of the decision-making.

Recognised agency

The agency is expected to submit a formal request to extend their Recognition Status for a new country to the WFME Office. In the next steps the agency is asked to complete a Cross-Border Accreditation form and provide a responsive contact within the relevant authority to allow the WFME Office to request a completion of the Eligibility Questionnaire.

WFME Office will reach out to the recognising authority (authorities) in the target country (countries) to confirm the recognition.
The information will be reviewed by the WFME Office plus at least two members of the Executive Council resulting in a decision on the inclusion of the cross-border activity in the WFME Recognition Status.

If the Recognition Committee, based on the information provided by the WFME Office, deems it necessary, a decision on an additional site visit could be adopted. The same procedure and fees as for an additional site visit under the deferment process apply as per the WFME Recognition Programme Policies and Procedures.

Until this process is successfully completed, any accreditation activity outside of the original country of operation is not recognised by WFME.

There is a fee applicable to this request in the amount of USD 6,000 and it is non-refundable. It is invoiced at the time this application is submitted.

At any stage of the process, WFME can consult with the recognising authority about the status of the agency in relation to any other agencies operating in the country. The authority may be asked to expand on the mandates of the individual agencies and indicate whether there is any difference in the level of acceptance or impact. The authority may indicate the primary agency within the system and any other levels of mandate.

The process from the initial request to the WFME decision should not exceed 8 weeks, provided that all documentation is submitted, and meetings held timely. If there is any information pending, the process may be delayed.

This information will be made public on the WFME website to provide the information on the level of the accreditation efforts.