KENAS Delivering Trust | KENYA ACCREDITATION SERVICE

**Our Ref: KENAS/CEO/26** **28th July 2026**

**CIRCULAR NO. 01/2026**

TO ALL OUR ACCREDITED INSPECTION BODIES, APPLICANTS AND ASSOCIATED ASSESSMENT PERSONNEL

**CIRCULAR NO. 01 OF 2026 – TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS AND GUIDANCE ON ISO/IEC 17020:2026 FOR INSPECTION BODIES**

## 1 Background

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 *Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies performing inspection*, was published on 27th March 2026 and replaces ISO/IEC 17020:2012. The revised edition introduces updates including alignment with CASCO common elements, risk-based thinking, governance strengthening, and explicit requirements governing the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in inspection processes.

In accordance with international accreditation cooperation practice (Global ACI) and KENAS Policy PL-33 on transition of normative and mandatory documents, KENAS establishes this Transition Policy to manage an orderly and harmonized transition to ISO/IEC 17020:2026.

## 2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define KENAS requirements, timelines, and transitional arrangements for accredited and applicant Inspection Bodies to transfer from ISO/IEC 17020:2012 to ISO/IEC 17020:2026.

## 3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All KENAS-accredited Inspection Bodies
- All applicant Inspection Bodies seeking accreditation under ISO/IEC 17020
- KENAS assessment and decision-making processes related to Inspection Bodies

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## 4 Transition Period

In line with international practice (ILAC Resolution GA 26.08), the agreed transition period is three (3) years from the date of publication of ISO/IEC 17020:2026, ending on 26th March 2029.

This means that all KENAS-accredited Inspection Bodies must have successfully transferred to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 within three years of the publication date. Accreditation granted against ISO/IEC 17020:2012 will not be valid after 26th March 2029.

It is important that Inspection Bodies purchase a copy of the new edition and understand the changes that have been made, at the earliest opportunity.

## 5 Effective Date of this Policy

KENAS-accredited and applicant Inspection Bodies are required to comply with the requirements of this policy commencing 28th July 2026.

## 6 Transition Timeline and Arrangements

The following arrangements apply for the transition from ISO/IEC 17020:2012 to ISO/IEC 17020:2026:

| No. | Date | Activity/Milestone |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | 27th March 2026 | Publication of the ISO/IEC 17020:2026 standard |
| 2. | April 2026 to August 2026 | KENAS training and Documentation |
| 3. | 1st September 2026 | KENAS to start receiving applications to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 |
| 4. | 1st September 2026 to 26th September 2028 | **OPTIONAL STAGE**: Inspection Bodies can choose to be assessed to the 2026 version or 2012 version - reports may highlight any major deviations from the new standard |
| 5. | 31st December 2026 onwards | All applications to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 only. |
| 6. | 1st June 2027 onwards | All initial assessments will be to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 |
| 7. | 26th September 2028 onwards | All assessments will be to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 |
| 8. | 26th March 2029 | Accreditations to ISO/IEC 17020:2012 cease to be valid - Inspection Bodies that would not have transitioned to the 2026 edition to cease claiming accreditation. |



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## 7 Requirements for Inspection Bodies

An Inspection Body that fails to demonstrate compliance with ISO/IEC 17020:2026 by 26th September 2028 shall have its accreditation placed under suspension for a maximum of six (6) months.

KENAS accredited Inspection bodies shall demonstrate full implementation of ISO/IEC 17020: 2026 by 26th March 2029. An Inspection Body that fails to comply with ISO/IEC 17020:2026 by 26th March 2029 shall have its accreditation withdrawn.

For further information or clarification on the transition process, don't hesitate to contact:

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