Dear Auditors,

Recently, PRI Registrar received a nonconformance from ANAB at a witness audit at a multisite facility. The NCR was regarding the review of previous NCRs throughout the multisite. Part of our corrective action is to ensure that all auditors are aware of the requirements surrounding this review when auditing a multisite.

Per IAF MD 1:2018:

“When nonconformities, as defined in ISO/IEC 17021-1, are found at any individual site, either through the organization’s internal auditing or from auditing by the Certification Body, investigation shall take place to determine whether the other sites may be affected. Therefore, the Certification Body shall require the organization to review the nonconformities to determine whether or not they indicate an overall system deficiency applicable to other sites. If they are found to do so, corrective action shall be performed and verified both at the central function and at the individual affected sites. If they are found not to do so, the organization shall be able to demonstrate to the Certification Body the justification for limiting its follow-up corrective action.”

Coordination will be required amongst any audit teams to ensure that all team members are aware of relevant nonconformances, and that a review for effectiveness is conducted at all affected sites. The review of the client’s internal corrective action system will need to include the same considerations.

Going forward, auditors shall ensure that if a client designates an NCR at a multisite as site-specific, the root cause also includes the justification for why other sites are not affected.

In part prompted by our ANAB NCR, we are currently working on a comprehensive documentation of auditor requirements (particularly master lead auditor) for auditing multisite organizations. Training on these requirements will be covered in greater detail when available. Keep an eye out!