



**TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON MACHINE READABLE  
TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (TAG-MRTD)**

**NINETEENTH MEETING**

**Montréal, 7 to 9 December 2009**

**Agenda Item 3: Activities of the ICBWG**

**Agenda Item 3.4: Guide for Assessing Security of Handling and Issuance of Travel Documents**

**GUIDE FOR ASSESSING SECURITY OF HANDLING AND ISSUANCE OF  
TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

(Presented by the Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group  
(ICBWG))

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this Working Paper is to inform the TAG about the Guide for Assessing Security of Handling and Issuance of Travel Documents (the Guide), related products, and future work.

1.2 At TAG-MRTD/17 held in Montréal from 20 to 22 March 2007, the TAG recognized the importance of increasing the security of travel document issuance and handling, and approved the New Technologies Working Group (NTWG) proposal to develop guidelines for assessing security and implementing best practices in these fields as proposed in WP/19.

1.3 At TAG-MRTD/18 held in Montréal from 5 to 8 May 2008, WP/4 informed the TAG about the progress on the project. The TAG approved the continuation of the Guide while advising that it should not be too large and should contain relevant references where additional information could be obtained.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 Following the ICAO Secretariat proposal to create an Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG) in WP/15 at TAG-MRTD/18 and approval of same by the TAG, this project was moved from the New Technologies Working Group to the newly created ICBWG.

2.2 With this move there has been an increased focus on the use of the Guide, notably Part 2, the assessment portion of the guide, by qualified assessors in capacity building initiatives. The original intent of the Guide however, that is for use for self-assessment, has been preserved.

### 3. **PROGRESS TO DATE**

3.1 An ICBWG Sub-Group met on two occasions, in The Hague, The Netherlands and in Praia, Cape Verde to finalize the Guide.

3.2 A significant change in the Guide is in the title. The word “standards” has been deleted from previous versions as the Guide presents best practices rather than standards.

3.3 The Guide has been updated since the last version presented to the TAG. Part 1, which contains the best practices, has been revised to include a chapter on Information Technology Security. The application and entitlement processes have been split so that a chapter is dedicated to each. Additional references to appropriate information sources have also been included.

3.4 Part 2, which is the assessment part of the Guide, contains questions which refer to the best practices in Part 1. Assessors will use Part 2 to determine to what extent the travel document issuing authority (TDIA) meets the recommended practice. In the comments section for each question the assessor indicates the gaps and mitigating measures where they exist. The assessor then determines the level of risk to the organization. This Part also contains a scoring tool which highlights the TDIA’s most problematic areas. Upon completion of the assessment the TDIA should focus on making improvements to the areas which were identified as high risk.

3.5 An “Executive Overview” was created to explain the Guide and the assessment process. It can be used by ICBWG to promote the program or by government officials to introduce the program to senior officials within their own government.

3.6 Three additional tools were also prepared. They are an “Assessment Methodology” checklist to help assessors prepare for an assessment; a “Letter of Understanding” for government officials of the country being assessed setting out expectations regarding funding, access to facilities, etc. and its accompanying letter of response back from the government to indicate agreement with the expectations; and lastly, a PowerPoint presentation to be used to explain the assessment process to government officials during the first in-county meeting when a state is being assessed by qualified assessors. These tools will be housed on the ICBWG website where they will be accessible to ICBWG participants and qualified assessors.

3.7 The ICBWG has approved the Guide and the supporting documents as final and ready for presentation to the TAG.

### 4. **NEXT STEPS FOR ICBWG**

4.1 The next steps are:

- a) promoting the Guide;

- b) collecting feedback through the use of the Guide and also via the ICBWG e-mail address which has been provided in the Guide in preparation for future revisions. The ICBWG has agreed that the Guide should be reviewed every two years.

5. **ACTION BY THE TAG/MRTD**

5.1 The ICBWG invites the TAG/MRTD:

- a) to approve the Guide and supporting documents;
  - b) to approve commencement of necessary steps for official publication of the Guide and once published, to make it freely available on the ICAO website;
  - c) to approve the next steps including promoting the guide and reviewing the guide in two years.
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## APPENDIX A

### Executive Overview

#### ICAO Guide for Assessing Security of Handling and Issuance of Travel Documents

This executive overview explains why an assessment is important and gives a brief description of:

1. Why and for whom,
2. Identity infrastructure,
3. The method and its issues,
4. Assessment Methodology and Objectives,
5. Results,
6. Conditions for assessment,
7. Confidentiality,
8. Contact.

#### 1. **Why and for whom**

It is the task and responsibility of Governments to provide their citizens with reliable, secure and internationally accepted travel documents. As travel documents themselves are becoming more secure the next step is that increased emphasis is being placed on the security of the handling and issuance process to help prevent the issuance of legitimate documents under false identity. Appropriate international standards for Secure Travel documents are set by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)<sup>1</sup>. Strengths, weaknesses and potential risks will be detected through an assessment for Handling and Issuance of Travel Document.

The Assessment helps:

- a. states in evaluating their own travel document issuance and handling processes;
- b. in capacity building efforts to assess a state's handling and issuance processes;
- c. in assessing the handling and issuance processes of states under consideration for visa-waiver eligibility.

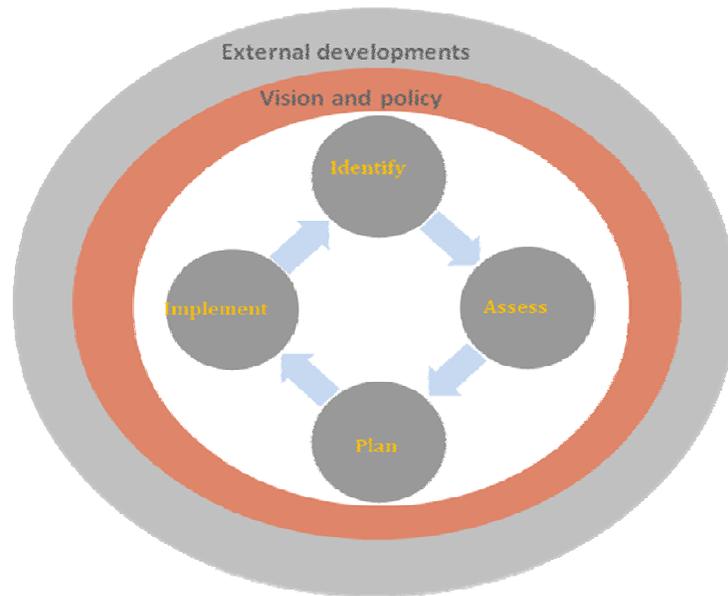
The following scheme shows that executing an assessment is one of the four steps of the continuous process Governments should pay attention to.

This methodical analytical approach also enables the detection and anticipation of possible bottlenecks and treats and creates opportunities for improvement.

Based on the outcome of the assessment, the requesting Government can then decide which recommendations (if any) that it will implement.

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<sup>1</sup> International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), an agency of the [United Nations](#)



**2. Identity infrastructure**

Establishing a citizen’s identity to an appropriate level can only be successful if all components of the identity infrastructure are considered. The identity infrastructure exists of four main components, namely registration, documents, processes and instruments. The identity infrastructure is the fundament of the life cycle of citizens, starting with the origin of the identity, the use of identity details, the control (for example border crossing) and the end of an identity. The assessment will cover all components of the identity infrastructure to some extend, with the primary focus on travel documents and ICAO compliancy<sup>2</sup>.

	Origin Identity	Use of Identity	Control Identity	End Identity
Registration				
Documents				
Processes				
Instruments				

*Image of an identity infrastructure*

**3. The method and its issues**

The ICAO Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG) was tasked to set up an assessment guide to support Governments with the execution of an assessment of their travel document issuance program.

<sup>2</sup> ICAO compliancy is conditional for cross border interoperability.

The Assessment Guide has been developed by an international group of independent experts who have experience across all relevant aspects of the travel document continuum. This Guide includes establishing the identity of applicants, the travel document application process, workflow and security within the travel document issuance area, personnel issues, printing and dispatch of documents.

The scope and complexity of issues related to secure document issuance requires the use of qualified independent assessors who are familiar with the ICAO Assessment Guide and how to use it. Assessors conduct an objective and comprehensive in-country analysis of a nation's travel document handling and issuance program. The assessors will then generate a confidential report for the requesting Government.

#### 4. **Assessment Methodology and Objectives**

Once the necessity of an assessment is identified and the necessary arrangements are made and conditions are met, the actual assessment will be done to gather all relevant information. This includes:

- Assessment of the current situation ('As Is') contains the following steps:
  - ❖ (Fraud) risk analysis
  - ❖ Conclusions regarding necessary improvements
  - ❖ Gap analysis
  - ❖ Migration from 'As Is' to 'To Be'
  - ❖ Determine necessary and desired changes

The assessment is focussing on the following issues:

- Travel Document Issuing Authority - Organizational Structure, Internal Security and General Security Practices
- Application Processes
- Entitlement Processes
- Treatment of Materials and Blank Books
- Personalization and Delivery
- Document Security
- Facility Security
- Information Technology Security
- Personnel and Internal Integrity
- Lost and Stolen Travel Documents
- Overseas Issuance
- National and International Stakeholders

#### 5. **Results**

Following completion of the assessment a report will be prepared by the independent assessors indicating the findings and prioritising them in relation to how serious they are. The requesting Government is owner of the report which can be used as the basis for further work to improve the application and issuance processes.

**Appendix A****6. Conditions for assessment**

Before an assessment can be conducted, there are several requisite elements that must be defined and agreed upon. To achieve maximum benefit, the assessors will require access to all parts of the application and issuance process. They will also need to be able to speak with relevant staff involved in each of the processes. If for example access is unable to be provided, the assessment may not be as comprehensive as it could be.

A letter of understanding, as signed between the requesting Government and ICAO will clearly define the role and responsibilities of stakeholders during the assessment. The letter of understanding contains details, like;

- Ownership final report
- Participation
- Access facilitation
- Administrative services and accommodations
- Security and travel
- Advance materials
- Code of ethics and confidentiality.

**7. Confidentiality**

The results of the assessment and the content of the report is confidential and only known by the requesting Government and the assessor.

**8. Contact**

For more information about an assessment, the Assessment Guide or other questions related to the work of the Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG), please send an email to: [icbwg@icao.int](mailto:icbwg@icao.int)

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## APPENDIX B

### ICAO Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group Assessment Methodology

#### *1. Preparing for an Assessment*

- What is the goal of the assessment?
- Does the donor state have any requirements? Does the assessed government have a specific requirement it wants addressing?
- Collect as much information as possible about the recipient country from other ICBWG participants.
- Do an environmental scan of the state to get information about border control, etc.
- Ensure you are familiar with the Assessment Guide Parts I and II, including interpretation of the scoring methodology.

#### *2. Establishing Country Contact*

- Approach other people/organizations to ask about who the proper in-country contacts are.
- It is important to know who holds the decision-making power in order to agree to terms and for the purpose of setting up meetings.
- Request information in advance (i.e. application forms, policies, legislation etc.)

#### *3. Terms of Reference and Letter of Understanding*

- Statement of Ethics guidelines – Does the organization you represent have a non disclosure interest? i.e. IOM may show parts of report, with state's permission, to other states to obtain funding.
- Send a “Letter of Understanding “ (draft available from ICBWG) including but not limited to the following:
  - that assessment results will be kept confidential,
  - what to expect,
  - what the assessor will need to look at, areas to which access will be required, i.e. issuing sites,
  - people that will need to be interviewed,
  - expectation that a government liaison, a senior official will accompany the assessor(s),
  - include assessor commitments i.e. date report will be delivered, recommendations will be provided,
  - advice that recipient state will have an opportunity to comment on the report in case of misinterpretation.

- costs and responsibility for arranging
  - – translation, if required
  - transportation
  - security
- The “Letter of Understanding” will include a letter back from the state indicating that they agree with the terms of reference.
- If the assessed government uses an external contractor to deliver any part of the program, obtain a letter from Minister advising the contractors that that they are at liberty to talk to you as if they were talking to a Minister’s representative.
- Consider acquiring a letter of invitation to facilitate entry into and movement around the country. (IOM always has a letter from the recipient state authorizing access and stating the visit is at their request.)
- Send Part I of the Assessment Guide in advance.

#### ***4. Design an itinerary***

- One option is to design the itinerary around a contact for each chapter of the Assessment Guide, following the application, entitlement and issuance processes at central and remote sites, if applicable.
- This is more complicated if there are no contacts on the ground.
- Must have minimum of information in advance: ensure research is done and that a “Letter of Understanding” is provided ahead of the visit to secure key documents outlined therein.

#### ***5. Meetings***

- The first and last meetings should be with the minister (or senior official).
- Ensure a local government representative is present who will also attend all the meetings to confirm that ‘yes’ the minister has given the delegation permission to visit all sites, speak with staff, etc. Ideally this person will open all subsequent meetings.
- The minister should invite whomever he chooses to attend this meeting. If border and issuance are not integrated, inviting other stakeholders is at the discretion of the state.
- Do a brief presentation (template presentation available from ICBWG) on the purpose of the assessment and provide the opportunity to ask questions. Ask if they have read part 1, and whether they have any comments/questions.
- Discuss specific issues the Minister is aware of or the donor state is aware of.
- Try to have one common meeting with all country officials to give them the opportunity to ask questions. This way all participants will see who else is involved i.e. officials from other departments. Tell the group why you are there in case they don’t know.
- At each bilateral meeting, explain why you are there, once again give them the opportunity to ask questions, and clarify that the findings (results of the assessment) remain within the country i.e. not for external sharing unless otherwise agreed by the assessed government.

- It must be made clear that staff must be able to speak freely. The government representative will be able to confirm this during meetings. At the beginning of each meeting the representative should state that the minister said they could speak freely – and provide access to secure areas.
- At initial assessments ask for feedback on the guide in order to improve it.

## ***6. The Assessment***

- Ask to be shown the processes.
- Ask to see all the necessary documents i.e. applications, policies, legislation
- Ask lots of questions of different levels. Ask why and how things are done.
- Take lots of photographs – ask for permission ahead of time. Don't take pictures of people who don't want to be photographed.
- Take time to write notes.
- May ask specific questions from the checklist but most of the information will be acquired from discussions and observation. Do not complete the checklist during meetings.
- Complete the checklist at the hotel. Take note of information that was not clear or processes you did not see and ask further questions the following day.
- A lot of questions will be answered based on seeing the process.
- We will NOT advise if the passport is ICAO compliant.

## ***7. End of visit and Report***

- On the last day meet separately with the Minister (senior official) with whom you met on the first day to enable a discreet conversation providing an overview of key findings.
- Report should be delivered by a certain date.
- What is the report?
  - Overview of the current situation – based on discussions and observations
  - Recommendations - Bullets versus Text
    - Bullets are just the facts. Too much text increases opportunity for misunderstanding.
    - Put recommendations at the beginning of each chapter. Then if possible, go into detail about how the conclusion was decided.
  - Assessment against the guide
- After the report is delivered, recipient country should have time to comment in case there were misinterpretations during discussions. Someone should also discuss the recipient's views of the report.
- Ideally, someone should go back to the country for feedback and to talk about next steps - - How they can get funding, where to get help to implement recommendations.
- In some cases, someone from the Embassy/IOM on the ground in the state has the expertise to discuss the report.
- In some cases, the assessor may wish to participate in meetings with vendor(s) following the assessment to ensure a common approach.

**APPENDIX C**

**ICAO ICBWG TEMPLATE “LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING”**

*May 5, 2010*

*Mr. John Doe  
Director General  
Passports and Citizenship Identity  
Ministry of the Interior  
Government of Utopia*

**Re: General Agreement on the Conduct of a Passport Issuance Assessment Project**

Dear *Mr. Doe*;

As you know, you and your ministry/country are about to embark on an assessment exercise regarding your overall passport issuance procedures, processes, and policies. This is being carried out by *the sponsoring group such as IOM or country etc* (the “Sponsor”) at your request/with your approval, using a team of industry experts contracted by us, and by our direct representatives, along with members of your own government. The primary assessment work is planned to take place in Utopia during the period *May 31 – June 4, 2010*, with reporting thereafter expected within (2/3) weeks.

This is an important exercise for your country and the assessment is being carried out specifically for you and your country. The results will be disclosed only to yourself and your nominated government representatives.

We will assess your country practices against a detailed set of internationally recommended best practices developed by the member countries of the ICAO Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG). The results and recommendations of the assessment will help guide you in ensuring that your passports continue to enjoy international recognition through being issued in compliance with international best practice. We therefore look forward to successful cooperation with you in this work.

To prepare for this project I would like to explain to you what you should expect for the conduct of this work, the timing of it and the feedback from the work, and what we need and expect from your country to make it a success. These are listed below.

## Appendix C

1. **Project Ownership.** It is strongly recommended that you, or a senior official you appoint, assume direct ownership and responsibility for the conduct of this work. In this way the team will report to you as well as seek your or your appointee's assistance in ensuring that the team has the proper access it requires to staff, sites, and other information it may request, and the cooperation of all.
2. **Project Participation.** It is also recommended that you appoint one or more individuals as participants in the project team's work and as the primary facilitators of all access required.
3. **Access.** As implied above, the team will require access to various sites and staff members, contracts and documents, and to other information of a diverse nature, during the conduct of the work. These may be in addition to the information provided in advance, and you or your appointee can be consulted in this regard in each case if you desire. All access will be escorted as you see fit and all information and discussions resulting will be kept confidential.
4. **Access Facilitation.** If necessary, you or your appointee may be required to directly facilitate desired access should the team find this to be difficult to arrange for any reason.
5. **Team Administrative Services and Accommodations.** It is necessary that administrative services be made available to the project team, including translation services if necessary, basic office services such as photocopying and fax, high-speed Internet, intra-country cell phone service, meeting rooms, and other services that will be necessary for project success. In particular the team will require accommodations at a single hotel, if possible, with facilities for daily recap and planning meetings of the team, and for breakfast and evening dining.
6. **Team Security and Travel.** It is also necessary that the country assure the security of the team at its hotel, and at all times during its investigations at all field and office sites, at restaurants, and other facilities, and for secure transportation there and back in all cases and at all times of the day or evening as required.
7. **List of Advance Materials.** Attached in Annex "A" is a list of basic information and documentation that will be required as part of this work. It is recommended that this information be provided to the team as much in advance as possible.
8. **Code of Ethics and Confidentiality.** You are assured that each external member of the team is a professional expert who is completely neutral in regards to any commercial interest or venture, except as these may be noted in advance and specifically exempted by you, and that all information of any sort received from your country, and the results of the project work itself, shall be held in the strictest of confidence by all members of the team and by *Sponsor* except as you may specifically permit for certain purposes. (OPTIONAL: In further assurance of this, each member of the team has signed a Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement under the aegis of the Sponsor as a condition of his or her involvement in the project.)

With your kind cooperation and consideration, we trust that this project will be successful and provide many benefits to you and your country, as well as to the international security to the benefit of all nations.

In furtherance of this, I request that you sign and return a simple **Letter of Agreement** of the form suggested in Annex “B” to this letter.

Thank you very much for your interest and involvement in this project.

Signed: *Sponsor*, per:

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*Ms. Jane Roe*  
*Title*

## ATTACHMENT A

### List of Advance Requirements – Utopia Passport Issuance Assessment Project

The following is a basic list of documents and information required for the Assessment Project, that is recommended be provided in advance if possible. It does not represent a complete list of such requirements that may be requested before and during the conduct of the assessment work.

1. Passport application forms and instructions
2. Other passport issuance forms – batch control forms, transmission documents, other
3. Passport application locations and passport delivery practices
4. Application turnaround times and pricing
5. Passport process flow description and diagrams, if available
6. Passport validity periods, lost and stolen practices, emergency passport practices, other practices
7. Overseas issuance
8. Passport IT systems documentation and architecture/network design
9. Passport types and specimens (dummy data or blank)
10. Passport book description, including publicized security features
11. Passport issuance entitlement practices, including blacklists, database checks, other practices
12. Passport issuance volumes and seasonality statistics
13. Passport storage and book control practices – in country and overseas.
14. E-passport practices or plans, including PKI, biometrics, other features.
15. Security practices, including IT security, and documentation if available.
16. Passport legislation and policies
17. Ministry and passport issuance organizational structure
18. Key staff names and designation of those assigned to the project
19. Details and contracts of all out-sourced services, including IT management and support
20. More....

**ATTACHMENT B**

**Letter of Agreement – Utopia Passport Issuance Assessment Project**

The following form of letter is requested from Utopia in recognition of the recommendations and general conditions contained herein.

*Date*

*Ms. Jane Roe*  
*Sponsor Organization*

Dear *Ms. Roe*;

I have read and your letter of \_\_\_\_\_ and I hereby signify my full agreement with the conditions and requirements set out therein. You can be assured that you will have the full cooperation of myself and my staff, and of our country in general, in the conduct of this important assessment project being carried out for us.

Sincerely;

*Mr. John Doe*  
*Senior Official*  
*Utopia*

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# TEMPLATE PRESENTATION



{insert appropriate logo/flags}

## {doc type} Issuance Assessment

{Insert Requesting Government and  
NGO/sponsor names}

{Insert date}

{Insert location}

# Issuance Assessment

- Introduction to the Assessment Team
- Defining the Assessment
- Methodology
- Questions & Answers

# Participants

- Assessment Team
  - {Name, Organization, Expertise, Role}
  - {Name, Organization, Expertise, Role}
  - {Name, Organization, Expertise, Role}
- Government Participant
  - {Name, role in assessment}
  - {Name, role in assessment}

# Defining the Assessment

- **What is an 'assessment'?**
  - Onsite determination of qualitative & quantitative processes, facilities, in context of international best practices, related to the handling and issuance of the {doc type} document{s}
  - The assessment is conducted through a mutual agreement between {insert stakeholders}
  - Assessment criteria, based on international best practices, was developed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). ICAO sets the international standards for passports, visas and other official travel documents

# Defining the Assessment

- **What are the benefits for the nation?**
  - The government will receive an objective and unbiased report
  - New perspective: Areas for improvement (process, operational, security) may be identified, which may have previously been unexplored or unknown.
  - The government can implement the recommendations it believes are best align with its policies and operations.
  - The results of the assessment can assist in guiding the nation's identity document 'road map' and strategic planning

# Defining the Assessment

- **Scope of the ‘assessment’?**
  - The scope of the assessment includes, but is not limited to:
    - Entitlement process
    - Application process
    - Treatment of materials and blank documents
    - Personalization and delivery
    - Document, facilities, Information Technology and General Security Practices
    - Best practices: Human resources and procedures

# Defining the Assessment

- **'Assessment' reporting**
  - Following the assessment, a detailed report will be presented to the government, which highlights the current situation, and recommendations for improvement.
  - In turn, the government can comment on the assessment, and implement the recommendations as it deems appropriate

# Defining the Assessment

- **Why is an assessment being conducted?**
  - This assessment has been requested by the government.
  - It provides an objective and unbiased view of the current situation and its risks, by a team of international experts.
  - Vulnerabilities and potential areas for improvement will be identified
  - The assessors are neutral and may recommend selected 'best practices' which have been observed in other nations

# Defining the Assessment

- **Who is conducting the assessment?**
  - Members of this team are:
    - Experts in the field of secure identity management
    - Knowledgeable of the operations in other nations, and international best practices.
    - Knowledge in the international standards related to travel document, as defined by ICAO

# Methodology

- **How will the assessment be conducted?**
  - The assessment will be conducted over the next {insert days}
  - The scope of the assessment will include:
    - {insert which specific documents/operations being examined}
  - The assessment team will visit the following locations:
    - {insert locations, dates}
  - Assessors will examine the entire process, starting with the processing of an application, through personalization and final issuance.

# Methodology

- **How will the assessment be conducted?**
  - Assessors will, with the government consent:
    - Ask managers, supervisors, and staff a diverse range of questions
    - Take photographs (if permitted) at different points of the process.
    - Request copies or samples of select documents (e.g. application forms, etc).
  - Assessors are not authorized to:
    - Collect personal information about individual applicants
    - Enter restricted areas or locations (unless pre-arranged)
    - Capture photographs that include staff without permission.

# Questions and Answers

{insert email, address/tel.no of experts  
conducting assessment}

- END -