

# NAF Empanelment Notice and Assessor Competence Handbook: A Strategic Call for Quality Infrastructure Experts (Reference: NAF/EOI/2026/01)

## Executive Summary: The Architectonics of Trust in Nepal's Quality Ecosystem

The Nepal Accreditation Foundation (NAF) operates at the apex of the quality hierarchy, functioning as the custodian of trust for Nepal's developing economy. In an era where global trade, public health safety, and infrastructure resilience are predicated on verifiable quality, the role of accreditation has transcended mere regulatory compliance to become a cornerstone of national competitiveness. The accreditation granted by NAF to Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs)—encompassing testing and calibration laboratories, medical diagnostic centers, inspection agencies, and certification bodies—serves as a passport for Nepalese products and services in the international market. When a Nepalese exporter ships honey to Europe or pashmina to America, the acceptance of their quality certificates abroad depends entirely on the rigorous, impartial, and internationally recognized accreditation mechanisms established by NAF.

However, the efficacy of this entire system rests upon a single critical variable: the human capital conducting the assessments. Accreditation is an intellectual exercise; it is the audit of competence by the competent. It requires a profound synthesis of technical expertise, regulatory acumen, and ethical fortitude. NAF does not merely require "auditors" who can tick checklists; it requires "assessors" who can evaluate the scientific validity of a test method, the statistical soundness of an uncertainty budget, and the systemic integrity of a management system.

This document, therefore, serves a dual and comprehensive purpose. Primarily, it constitutes the formal **Notice for Empanelment**, inviting the nation's most qualified technical professionals to apply for the roles of Lead Assessors, Technical Assessors, and Technical Experts. Secondly, but equally importantly, it functions as an exhaustive **Assessor Candidate Handbook**. It delineates the complex landscape of the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI), the precise competence frameworks mandated by ISO/IEC 17011:2017, and the operational rigor expected of those who will wear the NAF badge.

The recruitment drive described herein is strategic. NAF is preparing for an expanded scope of Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MRA) with the Asia Pacific Accreditation

Cooperation (APAC) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC). This expansion necessitates a robust pool of assessors capable of operating not just at a national level, but at a standard that withstands international peer evaluation. The professionals selected through this process will be the guardians of Nepal’s technical reputation. They will be tasked with the grave responsibility of distinguishing between compliant and non-compliant entities, a distinction that directly impacts the safety of bridges, the accuracy of cancer diagnoses, and the purity of food on Nepalese tables.

## NAF Assessor Ecosystem: The Architecture of Trust

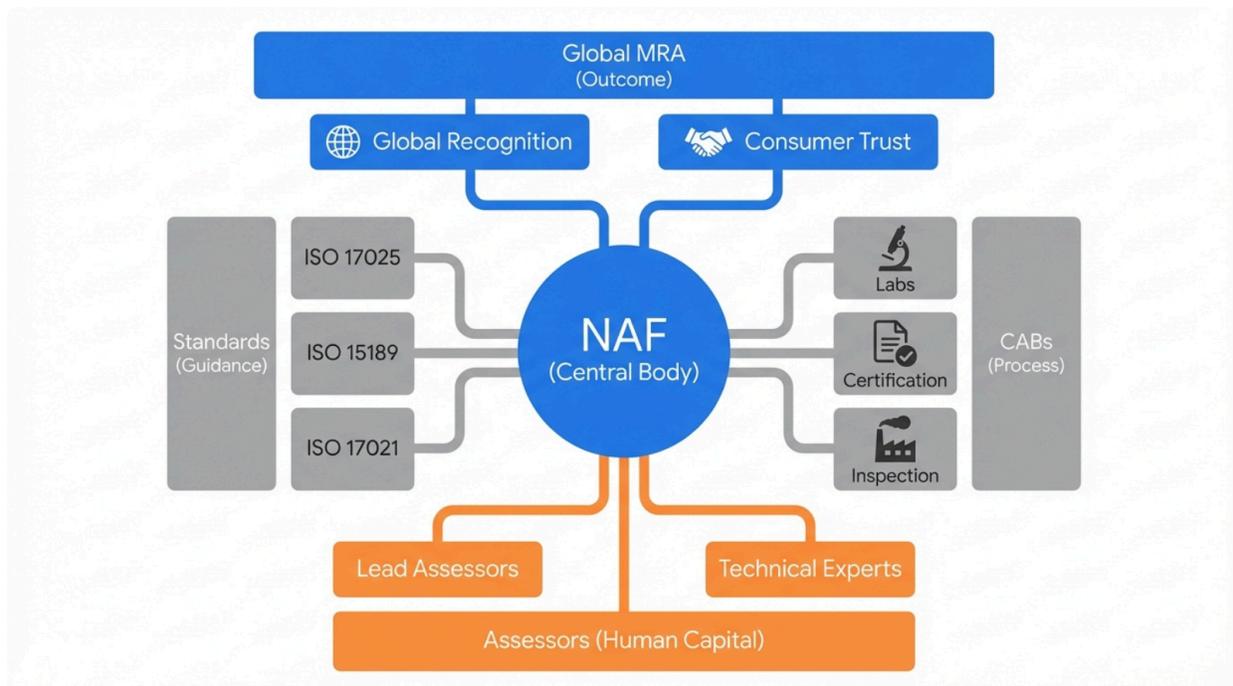


Figure 1: The strategic positioning of NAF Assessors as the bridge between international standards (ISO/IEC 17011) and national conformity assessment reliability.

## 1. Formal Notice: Call for Expression of Interest (EOI)

NEPAL ACCREDITATION FOUNDATION (NAF)

An Autonomous Authority for Accreditation

Email: [ceo@nepalaccreditationfoundation.org.np](mailto:ceo@nepalaccreditationfoundation.org.np) | Website:

[www.nepalaccreditationfoundation.org.np](http://www.nepalaccreditationfoundation.org.np)

## NOTICE FOR EMPANELMENT OF ASSESSORS AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS

(Reference No: NAF/EMP/2026/01)

Date of Issue: January 19, 2026

Application Status: Open / Rolling Basis

The Nepal Accreditation Foundation (NAF), adhering to the highest tenets of impartiality and competence as defined in **ISO/IEC 17011:2017**, invites applications from distinguished professionals, scientists, engineers, and industry experts for empanelment in its Assessor Pool.

NAF is the sole national authority responsible for recognizing the technical competence of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs). Our accreditation schemes are aligned with international standards and the requirements of the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA). We seek individuals who can contribute to the integrity of this system as **Lead Assessors, Technical Assessors, and Technical Experts**.

### 1.1 Objective of the Empanelment

The primary objective is to augment NAF's resource pool with qualified personnel capable of conducting third-party assessments of CABs. This empanelment is not an offer of permanent employment but an invitation to enter a contract for service, where assessors are engaged on an assignment basis to conduct assessments of laboratories, inspection bodies, and certification bodies across Nepal and potentially abroad.

### 1.2 Scope of Technical Domains

Applications are solicited from experts possessing specialized knowledge and practical experience in the following accreditation schemes and technical fields:

Accreditation Scheme	Applicable Standard	Priority Technical Fields for 2026
Testing Laboratories	ISO/IEC 17025:2017	<b>Chemical:</b> Food residues, Water quality, Pharmaceuticals, Toxicology. <b>Biological:</b> Microbiology, DNA analysis, Sterility testing. <b>Mechanical:</b> Building

		<p>materials (Concrete, Steel, Bitumen), Textiles, Polymers.</p> <p><b>Electrical:</b> Domestic appliances, Cables, Energy efficiency testing.</p>
<b>Calibration Laboratories</b>	ISO/IEC 17025:2017	<p><b>Thermal &amp; Optical:</b> Thermometers, Pyrometers, Lux meters.</p> <p><b>Mechanical:</b> Mass (Weights/Balances), Dimension, Pressure, Force, Torque.</p> <p><b>Electro-Technical:</b> Multi-meters, Power sources, Time &amp; Frequency.</p>
<b>Medical Laboratories</b>	ISO 15189:2012 / 2022	<p><b>Pathology:</b> Clinical Biochemistry, Haematology, Microbiology/Serology, Histopathology, Cytopathology, Cytogenetics, Molecular Diagnostics.</p>
<b>Inspection Bodies</b>	ISO/IEC 17020:2012	<p><b>Engineering:</b> Boilers, Pressure Vessels, Lifts/Escalators, Cranes.</p> <p><b>Trade:</b> Pre-shipment inspection, Cargo verification.</p> <p><b>Building Safety:</b> Structural integrity, Fire safety audits.</p>
<b>Certification Bodies</b>	ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015	<p><b>Management Systems:</b></p>

		QMS (ISO 9001), EMS (ISO 14001), OHSMS (ISO 45001), FSMS (ISO 22000), ISMS (ISO 27001).
<b>Product Certification</b>	ISO/IEC 17065:2012	<b>Sectors:</b> Cement, Steel bars, PVC pipes, Bottled water, Organic farming certification.
<b>Validation/Verification</b>	ISO/IEC 17029:2019	<b>Sustainability:</b> Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Assertion validation, Carbon footprint verification.

### 1.3 Essential Eligibility Criteria

Candidates must rigorously satisfy the criteria outlined in **NAF-MGT-HR-02: Personnel Competence Management Procedure** :

1. **Academic Qualification:**
  - **Science/Engineering:** A minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in Engineering, Technology, or a Master’s degree in Science in a relevant discipline.
  - **Medical:** For medical scopes, a postgraduate degree (MD/Pathology) or MSc/PhD in Medical Microbiology/Biochemistry is required.
2. **Professional Experience:**
  - Minimum **10 years** of total professional experience in the relevant field.
  - At least **5 years** in a technical management or supervisory capacity within a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) or relevant industry.
  - Demonstrated practical experience in the specific scope applied for (e.g., a candidate for "Microbiology" must have hands-on experience with microbiological testing, not just general lab management).
3. **Training & Certification:**
  - Successful completion of a **40-hour Lead Assessor Course** (for Management Systems) or a **4-day Laboratory Quality Management System & Internal Audit Course** (based on ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO 15189).
  - Training should be from a recognized training provider.
4. **Age Limit:**
  - Preferably between **35 to 55 years** of age at the time of empanelment, to ensure maturity and physical fitness for travel and on-site auditing.

### 1.4 Application Submission Procedure

Interested candidates who meet the above criteria are requested to submit their application via email to [admin@nepalaccreditationfoundation.org.np](mailto:admin@nepalaccreditationfoundation.org.np) with the subject line: "EOI for Assessor Empanelment -".

#### **Required Documentation:**

1. **Cover Letter:** Briefly outlining the candidate's expertise and motivation.
2. **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** Detailed CV focusing on technical competence, specific tests/calibrations performed, and standards mastered.
3. **Qualification Certificates:** Scanned copies of academic degrees.
4. **Training Certificates:** Evidence of Assessor/Lead Assessor training.
5. **Experience Logs:** If available, a log of previous 2nd party or 3rd party audits conducted.
6. **Personnel Competence Evaluation Form (NAF-FORM-MGT-HR-XX):** Candidates are encouraged to request this form from the Secretariat to structure their self-assessment.

**Deadline:** This is a rolling advertisement. Applications are reviewed quarterly. The first batch for the 2026 cycle will be reviewed after **February 1, 2026**.

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## **2. Strategic Context: The Role of Accreditation in the National Economy**

To fully appreciate the gravity of the Assessor's role, one must understand the ecosystem in which NAF operates. The National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) is the institutional framework that establishes and implements standardization, including conformity assessment services, metrology, and accreditation. NAF is the "checker of the checkers" within this framework.

### **2.1 The Global Chain of Trust**

Accreditation is not a local phenomenon; it is a global system of mutual recognition.

- **The ILAC/IAF MRA:** The ultimate goal of NAF is to maintain signatory status in the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) of APAC and ILAC/IAF. This status means that a test report issued by an NAF-accredited lab in Kathmandu is technically equivalent to one issued by a lab accredited by A2LA in the USA or NABL in India.
- **The Assessor's Responsibility:** An assessor is not just verifying compliance for NAF; they are verifying compliance for the global market. If an assessor fails to identify a critical flaw in a testing method, and that lab issues an erroneous certificate for exported goods, those goods may be rejected at foreign borders. This results in financial loss and reputational damage to "Brand Nepal." Thus, the assessor acts as the gatekeeper of the nation's export potential.

### **2.2 Legislative and Regulatory Basis**

NAF operates under a mandate to support government regulators.

- **Regulator Reliance:** Bodies like the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC) or the Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology (NBSM) rely on accredited labs to enforce regulations. An assessor validating a food testing lab is directly contributing to national food safety enforcement.
- **Policy on National Standards:** As referenced in **NAF-GOV-18**, assessors must understand the role of ABs within the national regulatory framework. They must verify that CABs are not only meeting ISO standards but also complying with local legal requirements, such as environmental clearance for lab waste disposal or radiation safety licenses for X-ray facilities.

## 2.3 The "Competence" Imperative

ISO/IEC 17011:2017, the standard that governs NAF, places "Competence" at the center of its requirements. Clause 6.1.2 mandates that NAF shall have a process to determine the competence criteria for all personnel involved in the accreditation process. This is not a static requirement. As technology evolves—from wet chemistry to mass spectrometry, from manual inspection to drone-based verification—the competence of the assessor pool must evolve. This EOI is part of NAF's continuous effort to refresh and upgrade its intellectual capital to match the technological advancements in the CABs it regulates.

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# 3. Comprehensive Competence Framework

The NAF competence framework is rigorously defined in **NAF-MGT-HR-02: Personnel Competence Management Procedure** and further specialized in **NAF-PEP-02** for peer evaluation roles. It is a tripartite model consisting of Knowledge, Skills, and Personal Attributes. Candidates must demonstrate proficiency across all three dimensions.

## 3.1 Dimension 1: Knowledge (Technical and Normative)

This dimension encompasses the "What" that an assessor must know. It is divided into general and specific knowledge.

### 3.1.1 General Accreditation Knowledge

Every assessor, regardless of their technical scope, must master the "Language of Accreditation."

- **ISO/IEC 17011:2017:** While this is the standard for NAF, assessors must understand it to appreciate *why* NAF asks for certain reports or procedures.
- **The MRA Structure:** Understanding the difference between Level 3 scopes (e.g., ISO/IEC 17025) and Level 4/5 sub-scopes. Assessors must know how their specific assignment fits into the broader MRA scope.
- **NAF Policies:** Familiarity with NAF's specific rules is crucial. This includes the *Policy on*

*Metrological Traceability* (referencing how measurements must trace back to the SI units), the *Policy on Proficiency Testing* (how often a lab must participate in PT), and the *Policy on Use of Accreditation Symbol* (how labs can market their accreditation).

### 3.1.2 Specific Technical Knowledge

This is the deep, vertical expertise required for specific schemes.

- **For Testing Labs (ISO/IEC 17025):**
  - *Method Validation:* Ability to review validation data for modified standard methods or laboratory-developed methods. Does the data support the claimed Limit of Detection (LOD) and Limit of Quantitation (LOQ)?
  - *Uncertainty of Measurement:* A profound understanding of the GUM (Guide to the Expression of Uncertainty in Measurement) approach. Assessors must be able to spot if a lab has underestimated its uncertainty components, which could lead to false conformities.
  - *Decision Rules:* Understanding how measurement uncertainty is applied when stating pass/fail against a specification (ILAC G8 guidelines).
- **For Medical Labs (ISO 15189):**
  - *Pre-analytical & Post-analytical:* Unlike general testing, medical labs have complex pre-analytical (patient prep, sample transport) and post-analytical (reporting to clinicians, turnaround time) phases. Assessors must evaluate the entire clinical workflow.
  - *Risk Management:* The 2022 version of ISO 15189 places heavy emphasis on risk management for patient safety. Assessors must be able to evaluate the lab's risk assessment matrices.
- **For Inspection Bodies (ISO/IEC 17020):**
  - *Independence Criteria:* Understanding the nuances between Type A (strictly third-party), Type B (in-house but separate), and Type C (in-house) inspection bodies.
  - *Sampling:* Inspection often relies heavily on sampling. The assessor must evaluate the statistical validity of the sampling plans used.

## 3.2 Dimension 2: Skills (Operational and Analytical)

These are the functional tools an assessor uses to conduct the assessment.

- **Investigative Interviewing:** The ability to ask open-ended questions that encourage CAB staff to explain their processes, rather than leading questions that prompt a "yes/no" answer. The goal is to verify understanding, not just documentation.
- **Vertical vs. Horizontal Auditing:**
  - *Vertical Audit:* Tracking a single sample from receipt -> testing -> reporting. This tests the cohesion of the system.
  - *Horizontal Audit:* Checking a single aspect (e.g., training records) across all departments. Assessors must be skilled in mixing these techniques to get a complete

picture.

- **Analysis of Evidence:** The ability to look at raw data (chromatograms, calibration curves, worksheets) and identify anomalies that the summarized report might hide.
- **Writing Non-Conformities (NCs):** This is a critical skill. An NC statement must be clear, factual, and traceable. It must state *what* was found, *why* it is a problem (referencing the specific clause), and *where* the evidence lies. Vague NCs like "The lab is not clean" are unacceptable; "The microbiology plating area showed visible dust accumulation on the laminar flow hood, contravening Clause 6.3 of ISO/IEC 17025" is precise.
- **Digital Literacy:** With **NAF-PEP-06** permitting remote evaluations, assessors must be proficient with ICT tools. This involves conducting secure video audits, reviewing electronic documents on shared drives without compromising security, and troubleshooting connectivity issues during an audit.

### 3.3 Dimension 3: Personal Attributes (Behavioral)

NAF adopts the principles of **ISO 19011** regarding auditor behavior.

- **Ethical:** Fair, truthful, sincere, honest, and discreet.
- **Open-minded:** Willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view. A lab might use a different method than the assessor is used to; the assessor must judge it on its technical merit, not personal preference.
- **Diplomatic:** Tactful in dealing with people. Assessments can be stressful for the auditee; the assessor must maintain a calm, professional demeanor even when uncovering major failures.
- **Perceptive:** Instinctively aware of and able to understand situations. An assessor must be able to "read the room"—sensing when staff are hesitant or when answers feel rehearsed.
- **Resilient:** Acting with fortitude. Assessors often face pushback from CAB management when raising non-conformities. They must stand their ground based on evidence while remaining polite.

## Competence Profile by Assessor Role

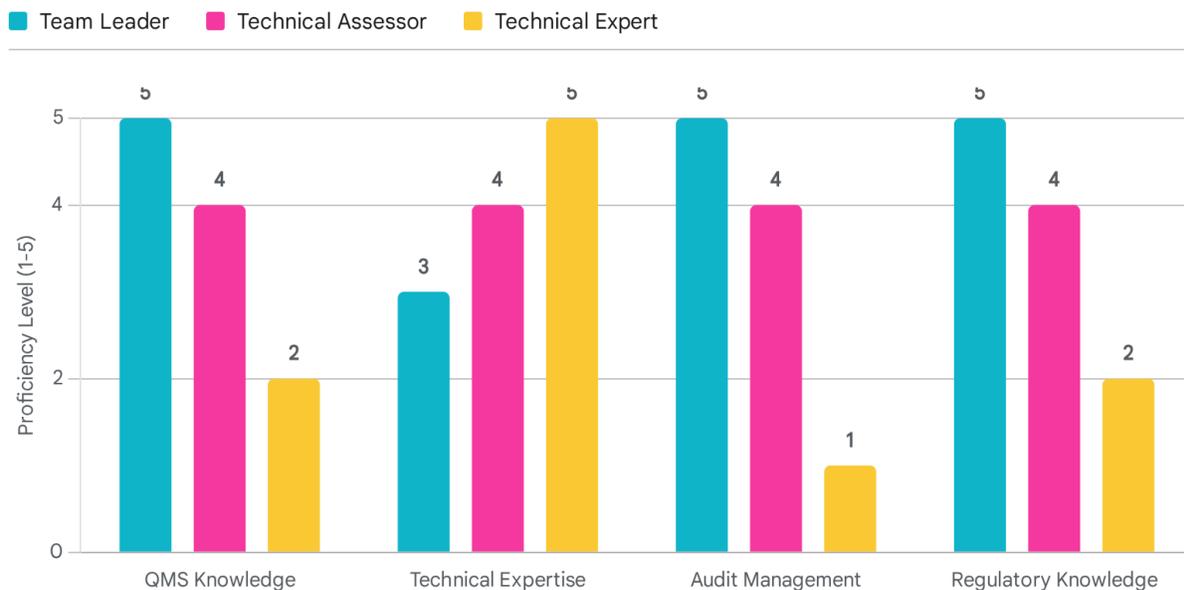


Figure 2: Relative emphasis on competence domains for Team Leaders, Technical Assessors, and Technical Experts. Note the inverse relationship between Assessment Management skills and deep Technical expertise.

Data sources: [NAF Competence Criteria](#), [NAF HR Procedure](#)

## 4. Roles, Responsibilities, and Career Progression

The NAF assessor pool is structured hierarchically. Applicants are evaluated and placed into specific roles based on their demonstrated competence.

### 4.1 Team Leader (Lead Assessor)

The Team Leader (TL) is the strategic manager of the assessment.

- **Primary Duty:** To ensure the assessment is conducted in accordance with NAF procedures and ISO/IEC 17011 requirements.
- **Tasks:**
  - Reviewing the CAB's Quality Manual and Application for adequacy before the site visit.
  - Selecting the assessment team members to ensure all technical scopes are covered.
  - Creating the Assessment Plan (timetable).
  - Chairing the Opening and Closing Meetings.

- Resolving disputes between the assessment team and the CAB.
- Submitting the final recommendation to NAF.
- **Requirement:** High proficiency in QMS standards (Option A/B of 17025, or 17021 management systems) and exceptional leadership skills.

## 4.2 Technical Assessor (TA)

The Technical Assessor is the operational auditor.

- **Primary Duty:** To verify technical competence in specific fields.
- **Tasks:**
  - Witnessing testing/calibration activities.
  - Interviewing technical staff.
  - Verifying equipment calibration and maintenance records.
  - Checking environmental conditions (temperature, humidity logs).
  - Reviewing Proficiency Testing (PT) performance.
- **Requirement:** Current, in-depth technical knowledge. A TA must be able to perform the test they are assessing or have managed it recently.

## 4.3 Technical Expert (TE)

The Technical Expert is a specialized advisor.

- **Primary Duty:** To provide specific knowledge that the Team Leader or Technical Assessor might lack.
- **Constraint:** A TE does **not** audit independently. They must always be accompanied by an assessor. They do not cite NCs directly but advise the assessor, who then validates the finding against the standard.
- **Use Case:** A TE might be a statistician needed to verify a complex sampling model, or a software engineer needed to validate a LIMS (Laboratory Information Management System) algorithm.

## 4.4 Career Path: From Trainee to International Peer Evaluator

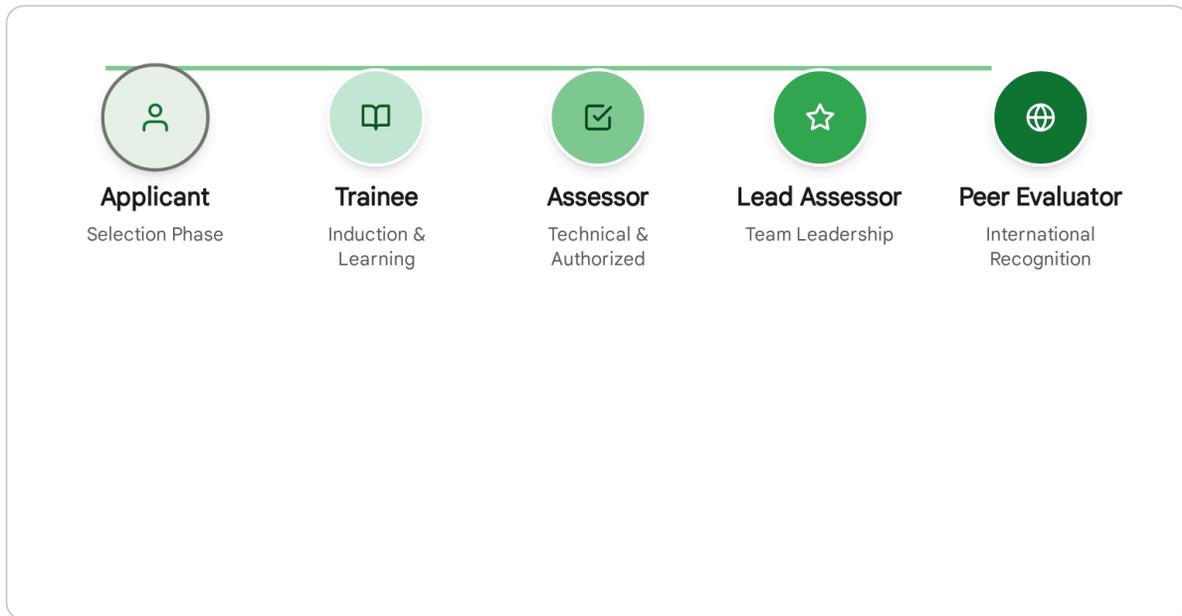
Empanelment at NAF offers a prestigious career trajectory.

1. **Trainee/Observer:** New entrants start here. They observe assessments to learn the process without interfering.
2. **Provisional Assessor:** They conduct assessments under the supervision of a Senior Lead Assessor (Witnessing).
3. **Empanelled Assessor:** Fully authorized to conduct assessments in their authorized scope.
4. **Lead Assessor:** Promoted after demonstrating leadership skills and deep understanding of NAF procedures.
5. **NAF Peer Evaluator:** The pinnacle of the career path. Senior NAF personnel/assessors may be nominated to represent NAF in APAC/ILAC peer evaluations, auditing other

Accreditation Bodies globally. This role requires the highest level of competence as defined in **NAF-PEP-02**, including knowledge of international MRA documents (IAF/ILAC A-series).

## Assessor Career Progression Path

Growth Milestones



 **Applicant: Selection Phase**

*Entry point into the NAF assessor pool.*

**REQUIREMENTS & COMPETENCE CRITERIA**

- Review of CV & Qualifications
- Educational Background Check
- Professional Experience Verification

Figure 4: The professional development trajectory for NAF assessors, culminating in international recognition options.

Data sources: [NAF PEP 02](#), [NAF MGT HR 02](#)

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## 5. Application, Evaluation, and Onboarding Process

NAF employs a structured "Gate Review" system for empanelment, ensuring transparency and meritocracy.

### 5.1 Step 1: Document Submission and Screening

Candidates submit their applications using the format specified in Section 1.4. The NAF Secretariat screens these for:

- Completeness of documentation.
- Fulfillment of minimum criteria (Education + Experience).
- Correctness of the Personnel Competence Evaluation Form.  
Applications failing this initial check are rejected, and candidates are informed.

### 5.2 Step 2: Technical Review and Interview

Shortlisted candidates undergo a rigorous evaluation.

- **Technical Panel:** A panel comprising the Quality Manager, Technical Manager, and relevant Sector Experts reviews the CV to map the candidate's expertise against NAF's specific scope taxonomy (e.g., mapping "Civil Engineering" degree to "Concrete Testing" scope).
- **Interview:** Candidates face an interview panel. The interview tests:
  - Understanding of the relevant standard (17025/15189/17020).
  - Ability to handle audit scenarios (e.g., "What would you do if a Quality Manager refuses to accept a valid non-conformity?").
  - Ethical standing and impartiality.
- **Examination:** For critical scopes, a written test may be administered to verify specific technical knowledge (e.g., calculation of z-scores in PT).

### 5.3 Step 3: Induction and Pre-Service Training

Successful candidates must attend the **NAF Assessor Induction Program**. This covers:

- NAF's Quality Management System (NAF-GOV-01).
- Use of NAF's IT systems for reporting.
- Specific NAF policies (Traceability, Proficiency Testing, Cross-frontier accreditation).
- Soft skills workshop (audit psychology).

### 5.4 Step 4: Witnessing and Authorization

This is the final hurdle.

- The candidate is assigned to a real assessment team as a "Trainee."

- They perform assessment tasks under the watchful eye of a designated **Monitor** (usually a Senior Lead Assessor).
- The Monitor evaluates the trainee using a structured **Witness Monitoring Report**, scoring them on technical knowledge, questioning skills, and conduct.
- Only upon a positive recommendation from the Monitor is the candidate formally **Authorized** and their name added to the NAF Database of Assessors.

# NAF Assessor Empanelment Workflow

□ Process Step    ◆ Decision Gate

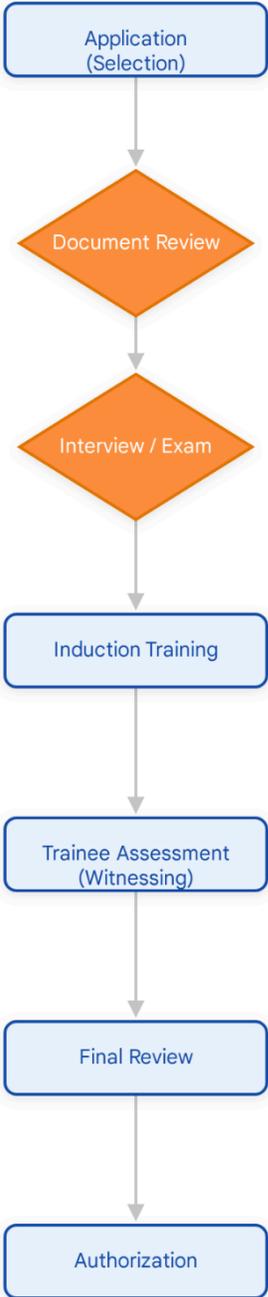


Figure 3: The stage-gate process for NAF Assessor Empanelment. Note that 'Authorization' (Step 6) is scope-specific and requires successful performance witnessing.

Data sources: [Personnel Competence Management Procedure](#)

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## 6. Terms of Engagement: Ethics, Logistics, and Governance

The role of an NAF Assessor is one of high responsibility. To maintain the integrity of the accreditation process, NAF enforces strict terms of engagement.

### 6.1 Impartiality and Conflict of Interest (COI) Management

NAF's existence depends on its impartiality. **NAF-GOV-03: Impartiality Policy** is the governing document.

- **The "Two-Year Rule":** Assessors are strictly prohibited from assessing a CAB if they have provided consultancy services to that CAB within the last two years. "Consultancy" includes internal auditing, preparing manuals, or training staff on specific procedures.
- **Declaration:** Before every assignment, assessors receive a list of the assessment team and the CAB. They must sign a declaration confirming they have no commercial, financial, or familial links to the CAB.
- **Recusal:** If a conflict exists (e.g., the assessor's sibling works at the CAB, or the assessor owns shares in the CAB's parent company), they must proactively recuse themselves. Failure to do so is grounds for immediate de-panels and potential blacklisting.

### 6.2 Confidentiality and Information Security

Assessors are privy to the trade secrets of the nation's industries.

- **Binding Agreement:** All empanelled assessors must sign a legally binding **Confidentiality Agreement (NAF-FORM-GEN-XX)**.
- **Scope:** This covers all information viewed during the assessment—from patient records in a medical lab to proprietary manufacturing formulas in a factory.
- **Data Hygiene:** In line with **NAF-MGT-IT-01**, assessors must ensure that any digital data (reports, photos of evidence) are stored on secure, password-protected devices. Public Wi-Fi should not be used for transmitting assessment reports. Upon completion of the assignment, all temporary data related to the CAB must be securely deleted from the assessor's personal devices.

### 6.3 Code of Conduct

Assessors represent NAF. Their behavior reflects on the entire organization. **NAF-GOV-02: Code of Conduct** mandates:

- **Professionalism:** Assessors must dress and behave professionally.
- **Integrity:** They must not accept gifts, hospitality, or favors from the CAB that could be construed as bribery. A working lunch provided during the audit is generally acceptable,

but expensive dinners or gifts are strictly prohibited.

- **Due Care:** Assessors must exercise "due professional care" in their work. This means being diligent, thorough, and applying good judgment in all situations.

## 6.4 Remuneration and Logistics

While this is a service contract, NAF ensures fair compensation.

- **Honorarium:** Assessors are paid a standard daily honorarium for days spent on document review, on-site assessment, and report writing. The rates are fixed by the NAF Board and reviewed periodically.
- **Travel and Accommodation:** For on-site assessments, all travel (flight/vehicle) and accommodation expenses are arranged or reimbursed in accordance with NAF's financial rules. The principle is that the assessor should not incur any out-of-pocket expenses.

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## 7. Operational Guidelines for Specific Schemes

To guide potential applicants, the following sections detail the specific operational nuances of the key schemes for 2026.

### 7.1 Laboratory Accreditation (ISO/IEC 17025)

This is the largest sector for NAF. The 2017 version of the standard introduced "Option A" and "Option B" for management systems and a focus on "Risk-based thinking."

- **Operational Focus:** Assessors must move away from checklist auditing. Instead of asking "Do you have a procedure?"; they should ask "How do you manage the risks associated with this test method?"
- **Metrological Traceability:** A key focus area. Assessors must verify that the lab's equipment is calibrated by a lab that is itself accredited (e.g., by NAF or an ILAC signatory). This ensures the "chain of traceability" back to the SI units.
- **Decision Rules:** Labs now must document the decision rule used when stating conformity (Pass/Fail). Assessors must verify that the lab has agreed on this rule with the customer and that the risk of false acceptance/rejection is managed.

### 7.2 Medical Laboratory Accreditation (ISO 15189)

With the transition to **ISO 15189:2022**, the landscape for medical assessors is changing.

- **Patient Focus:** The new standard explicitly focuses on "welfare of patients." Assessors must evaluate how the lab ensures patient safety, not just test accuracy.
- **POCT:** Point-of-Care Testing (testing done at the bedside) is now under the umbrella of 15189. NAF needs assessors who understand the unique challenges of POCT (managing non-lab staff, remote QC).
- **Consultatory Role:** The standard emphasizes the lab's advisory role to clinicians.

Assessors must check if the lab provides appropriate interpretation of results to doctors.

### 7.3 Inspection Body Accreditation (ISO/IEC 17020)

This scheme is critical for Nepal's infrastructure development.

- **Independence:** The most common non-conformity in inspection is independence. Assessors must rigorously check the organizational chart to ensure the inspection body is not pressured by production or installation divisions (especially for Type A bodies).
- **Safety:** Inspection often involves hazardous environments (construction sites, boiler rooms). Assessors must prioritize their own safety and verify the safety protocols of the inspection body.

### 7.4 Management System Certification (ISO/IEC 17021-1)

NAF accredits the certifiers.

- **Audit Duration:** A key check is whether the Certification Body (CB) is spending enough time on audits. Assessors must verify audit duration calculations against **IAF MD 5**.
- **Competence of CB Auditors:** NAF assessors evaluate the competence of the CB's own auditors. This is a "witness of a witness." The NAF assessor watches the CB auditor auditing a company. This requires high-level observational skills.

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## 8. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Performance Monitoring

Empanelment is not a lifetime achievement; it is a status that must be maintained through continuous learning and performance.

### 8.1 Ongoing Monitoring

In accordance with ISO/IEC 17011, NAF monitors its assessors.

- **Frequency:** Every assessor is monitored at least once every three years.
- **Feedback:** NAF collects feedback from the CABs after every assessment. Did the assessor act professionally? Were they thorough? This feedback is used for performance review.
- **Review:** The NAF Quality Manager reviews the logs of all assessors annually. Inactive assessors (those who haven't done an audit in 2 years) may be moved to a "Reserve" list or required to undergo refresher training.

### 8.2 Training and Calibration

- **Annual Conclave:** NAF organizes an Annual Assessor Conclave. This is a mandatory event where assessors gather to discuss common interpretation issues, new policies, and

share experiences. This ensures "calibration" among assessors—so that Assessor A and Assessor B interpret the standard in the same way.

- **Standard Updates:** When a standard changes (e.g., the new ISO 15189), NAF provides transition training. Assessors must pass this training to retain their empanelment for the new version.

### 8.3 Maintaining Technical Edge

Assessors are expected to maintain their technical expertise. A chemical assessor who moves into a purely administrative role in their day job may lose the "sharpness" required to audit a lab. NAF encourages assessors to remain active in their technical fields, publish papers, and participate in technical committees.

## Conclusion

The Nepal Accreditation Foundation invites the nation's technical elite to join us in this mission. The role of an NAF Assessor is demanding, requiring a rare blend of scientific rigour, procedural discipline, and ethical strength. However, it is also deeply rewarding. As an NAF Assessor, you do not just earn a credential; you become a custodian of the national quality infrastructure. You play a direct role in ensuring that the medicines used by our families are safe, that the buildings we live in are secure, and that the products we export are respected globally.

We look forward to receiving your expression of interest and welcoming you to the NAF family.

Er. Abishek Adhikari  
Chief Executive Officer  
Nepal Accreditation Foundation

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