

**General Operating Regulation for Conformity Assessment Activities – ISO/IEC 17020 (SERMI Scheme)**

**1. Purpose**

This regulation defines the general rules, responsibilities, and operational framework for the implementation and management of conformity assessment activities conducted under ISO/IEC 17020:2012 for the SERMI scheme. It ensures alignment with accreditation requirements set by ACCREDIA and supports transparency, impartiality, and technical integrity in inspection processes.

**2. Scope**

This regulation applies to all conformity assessment services provided by VALIDX & ICDQ Partners that fall under ISO/IEC 17020:2012 and specifically relate to the SERMI scheme (Security-related vehicle repair and maintenance information). It complements technical procedures (e.g., D.18, D.08) and specific regulations (e.g., GOR.07-1, Authorization Regulation under SERMI).

**3. Legal Framework**

VALIDX & ICDQ Partners is a legally incorporated entity, operating as a Type A Inspection Body under ISO/IEC 17020:2012, and is subject to oversight by ACCREDIA.

**4. Reference Standards & Documents**

* ISO/IEC 17020:2012 – General criteria for operation of various types of bodies performing inspection
* SERMI Scheme Rules (latest applicable version)
* D.08 – Contract and Application Review Procedure
* D.18 – SERMI Inspection Procedure
* GOR.07-1 – Impartiality Committee Regulation – SERMI
* F.79 – Inspection Report – SERMI

**5. Governing Principles**

The operation of VALIDX & ICDQ Partners under this regulation is based on the following principles:

* **Impartiality and independence** in inspection decision-making
* **Transparency** in information provided to applicants and clients
* **Confidentiality** in handling sensitive information
* **Technical competence** of assigned inspection personnel
* **Traceability** of decisions and records
* **Non-discrimination** toward any applicant or inspected organization

**6. Conformity Assessment Framework**

VALIDX & ICDQ Partners performs:

* Application acceptance and contract review (ref. D.08)
* Inspector assignment via secured platform (Bexel)
* Execution of inspections (remote/on-site)
* Review and decision-making, ensuring separation of roles
* Issuance of inspection results (F.79 – Inspection Report)
* Communication of results to the SERMI Trust Center

**Note:** No certificate is issued by VALIDX & ICDQ Partners. Authorization decisions are made by the Trust Center.

**7. Roles & Responsibilities**

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| **Role** | **Responsibility** |
| Technical Director | Oversight of technical integrity and independence |
| Inspection Manager | Process coordination and inspector oversight |
| Inspectors | Execution of inspections in compliance with D.18 |
| Reviewers | Independent review of inspection findings |
| Quality Manager | Internal audits, impartiality monitoring, and regulatory updates |
| Impartiality Committee | Monitoring impartiality (ref. GOR.07-1) |

**8. Committees**

The Impartiality Committee operates under GOR.07-1 and D.19-1. It reviews risks to impartiality, assesses conflict of interest declarations (F.11), and provides opinions on potential impartiality threats.

**9. Documentation & Records**

All inspections and decisions are documented using approved forms:

* F.40 – Inspection Request Form
* F.76 – SERMI Inspection Checklist
* F.79 – SERMI Inspection Report
* F.11 – Independence Declaration
* F.09 – Confidentiality Declaration
* F.32 – Risk Assessment & Mitigation Form

Records are maintained digitally and securely on the Bexel platform, in accordance with D.08 and ISO/IEC 17020:2012 clause 8.

**10. Revision & Review**

This regulation shall be reviewed at least once every two years, or upon:

* Changes to the SERMI scheme
* Accreditation body feedback
* Relevant changes in ISO/IEC 17020

**11. Amendments**

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| **Edition** | **Chapter** | **Cause & signs of modification** | **Drafted by** | **Approved by** | **Date** |
| v.1 -> **v.2** | Overall | Format Change and Group Structure Information Showcasing the relationship with the new entity VALIDX and the IMS Implementation | Athanasios Arvanitis (Quality Manager) | Angelos KoulouridisStergios ZarifidisSara Pellegrino | 13/05/2025 |
| v. 2 -> **v. 3** | § 12Overall | Introduction of complaints and appeals paragraphName change from VALIDX Group to VALIDX & ICDQ Partners | Athanasios Arvanitis (Quality Manager) | Angelos KoulouridisStergios ZarifidisSara Pellegrino | 25/06/2025 |

**12. Management of Complaints and Appeals**

VALIDX & ICDQ PARTNERS has issued a documented procedure describing the process of handling complaints and appeals called D.04-5 “Complaints and Appeals Handling”.

This procedure is made available to the involved stakeholders upon specific request.

VALIDX & ICDQ PARTNERS is responsible for all decision at all organizational levels involved in the handling process for complaints and appeals.

**APPEALS MANAGEMENT**

The Customer has the right to submit appeals in case of dispute in relation of the final outcome of VALIDX & ICDQ PARTNERS inspection activities, in respect of the service provided and in case of non-compliance issues of this Regulation addressed to VALIDX & ICDQ PARTNERS personnel.

These issues must be formalized by letter or e-mail to the referenced VALIDX & ICDQ PARTNERS Inspection Coordinator and accompanied by minimum set of relevant information and available supporting documentation.

If they are received by telephone, they must be subsequently formalized in writing by the reporting subject.

Notifications of anonymous reports/appeals as well as the ones reported only by telephone are not processed.

VALIDX & ICDQ PARTNERS undertakes to examine any findings and to keep Customer informed about the review progress and the final outcome of the overall appeal management.

**COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT**

All interested parties have the right to present complaints in the event of dispute of the results of the inspection activities carried out by VALIDX & ICDQ PARTNERS.

These must be formalized by e-mail to the following address: info@validx.gr or info@validx.it , accompanied by a minimum set of relevant information and available supporting documentation.

If they are received by telephone, they must subsequently be formalized in writing by the complainant.

Anonymous notifications/complaints or those reported only by telephone are not taken into consideration.

ACES GQS undertakes to examine any findings and to keep the Complainant informed on the developments of this review and on the final outcome of the management of the complaint.