











Sicherheit in Technik und Chemie

2022

Digitalization in Conformity Assessment in Singapore

A QI-FoKuS study

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A study conducted within the framework of the QI-FoKuS initiative



Basic statistical population for the survey	535 accredited conformity assessment bodies (CABs) in Singapore	QI-FoKuS Research on Conformity Assessment and Safety
Data collection method	Online survey	Digitalization in
Survey period	May 29, 2022 June 30, 2022	Conformity Assessment Online Survey
Sample	122 fully completed questionnaires (= 23% response rate)	









Supported by



The Study - An Overview



The digital transformation of the economy as well as increasingly networked and complex products and applications are bringing digitalization into the focus of conformity assessment bodies (CABs). Innovations, new technologies and processes depend on corresponding conformity assessment services. This poses new challenges for testing and calibration laboratories, inspection and certification bodies, and other CABs. At the same time, however, digitalization also offers new opportunities. Our QI-FoKuS study explores "Digitalization in Conformity Assessment" based on data from an online survey of accredited CABs in Singapore.

Major topic areas covered

Digital Maturity Level

 Assessment of digital readiness and status of digital transformation in CABs based on a tailored digital maturity model

Drivers, Benefits and Barriers

 Drivers and motives for digital transformation, the benefits and impacts realized, and barriers faced by CABs towards digital transformation

Technology Trends

 Assessment of the digital technologies and processes currently in use (now and in a 5-year perspective)



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The Sample

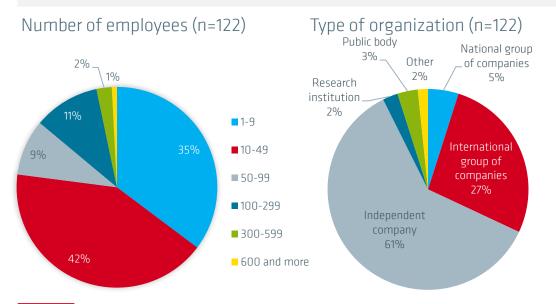
General information about the participating Conformity Assessment Bodies

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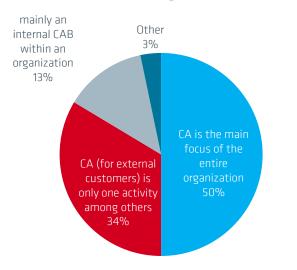
122 conformity assessment bodies (CABs) in Singapore participated in the survey



- 77% of the participating CABs are **small businesses** with less than 50 employees.
- 61% are independent companies, 27% belong to an international group and only 3% are public bodies.
- For 50%, Conformity Assessment (CA) is the main economic **focus of activity** and for 34% it is **one activity among others.**

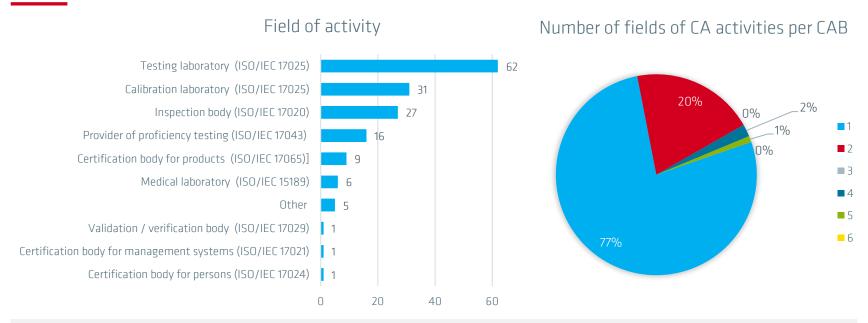


Role of CA for the organization (n=122)



The 122 participating CABs cover a broad range of activities

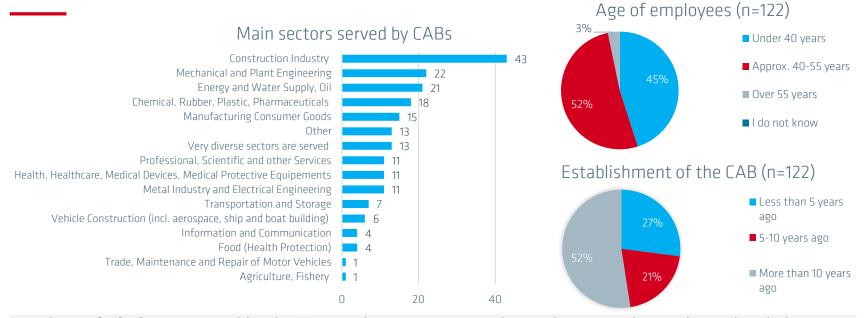




- Testing laboratories represent the largest group of participants, followed by calibration laboratories and inspection bodies.
- 77% of CABs are **specialized** in a single field of conformity assessment activity; 20% cover two activities and only a few cover a broader range of activities (up to 5).

The CABs serve a broad spectrum of sectors, mainly manufacturing





- The **main industry** served by the CABs is the construction industry, however, the mechanical and plan engineering and the energy and water supply, oil industries are also important.
- In 52% of the CABs the **average age of the employees** is 40-55 years. A share of 45% has staff under 40 years on average.
- Every second CAB was **established** more than 10 years ago; 27% of the CABs are younger than 5 years.





Digitalization in Singaporean CABs A General Overview

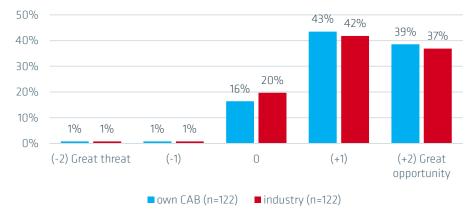
This section sheds light on how the participating CABs perceive digitalization for their organization (now and in perspective) and how they self-evaluate their current state of digital transformation.

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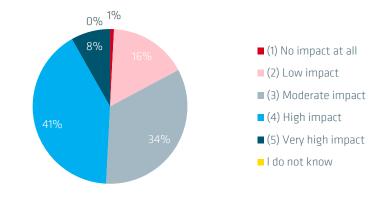
Digitalization more of an opportunity rather than a threat // Major influence expected







Expected impact of digitalization in the next 5-10 years (n=122)

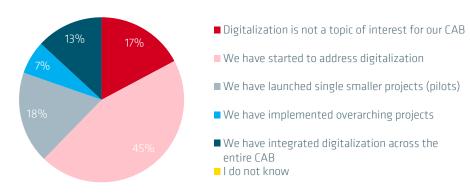


- In general, CABs have a **positive perception** of digitalization: 82% of the surveyed CABs recognize digitalization as an **opportunity or even a great opportunity** rather than a threat for their own organization, and 81% with regard to the whole CA industry.
- Only 49% of the participants expect digitalization to have a great or even very great impact on CA activities in Singaporean CABs in the next 5-10 years. 34% expects a moderate impact.

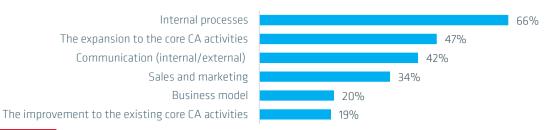
Majority of CABs just started to address digitalization//Focus mainly on internal processes



Status and extent of digitalization in the CABs (n=122)



Areas targeted by digitalization (multiple answers possible, n=122)

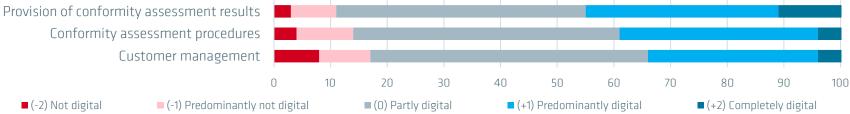


- The status of digitalization is quite divers among the CABs in Singapore: While the majority of the CABs (45%) have just started to address this topic, 18% have launched single smaller projects and 7% have already implemented overarching projects. 13% state that they have integrated digitalization throughout the whole organization. However, for 17% digitalization is not a topic of interest.
- Most digitalization activities concern internal processes.
 Yet the expansion of the core CA activities is also a relevant area. However, digitalization is currently rarely used to adopt new business models or to improve CA services.

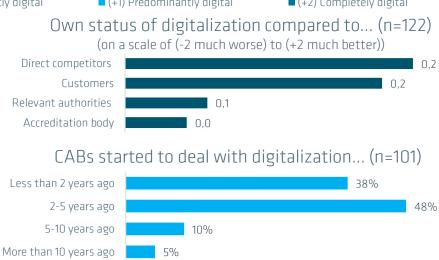
Positive self-assessment on digitalization in core areas - and in comparison with stakeholders



Self-evaluation of the CABs' status of digitalization in different areas (n=101)



- The CA results are provided partly, predominantly or completely digitally by the majority of CABs.
 Customer management is less frequently digitalized.
- Compared to other organizations that are direct stakeholders, CABs rate their digital status on average as at least as good or slightly better, especially with regard to direct competitors and customers.
- Digitalization has not been a topic for long: the majority of CABs (86%) has only started to deal with it during the last 5 years. Only 4% of the CABs has done so at least 10 years ago.







Digital Maturity of CABs

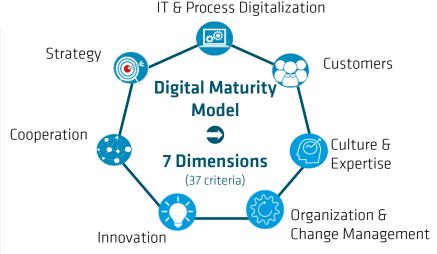
The "digital maturity" of an organization describes its status in the digital transformation. Digital maturity models use predefined dimensions and criteria to assess the ability of organizations to cope with the digital transformation. The following chapter presents the results for CABs in Singapore based on a model developed specifically for this study.

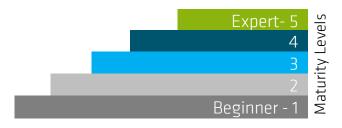
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The digital maturity model for the conformity assessment industry



- The digital maturity level reflects the status of digital transformation of an organization and includes technical as well as organizational and strategic aspects.
- Becoming a digitally mature organization requires efforts, capabilities and resources across many areas.
- These are mapped in a maturity model using various dimensions and criteria:
 - Our specially developed model takes into account 7 dimensions that are essential for the digital transformation of CABs: from technological to strategic and organizational to cultural aspects.
 - Each dimension is operationalized by 4 to 6 criteria describing basic success factors in terms of capabilities, capacities, and resources.
- By means of a self-assessment of the participating CABs along these criteria, an individual digital maturity level is calculated - from level 1 ("beginner") to level 5 ("expert").





Different maturity of dimensions: Culture and Innovation advanced, Organization at a lesser extent





^{*} The CABs were asked to self-evaluate their maturity/performance along statements in 7 topic areas (dimensions) on a scale from 1 (I do not agree at all) to 5 (I fully agree). These statements and dimensions are displayed in detail in the annex.

The participants were then asked to rate the importance of each dimension with regard to a successful digital transformation on a scale from -2 (not important at all) to +2 (very important).

- The results of the maturity model show that the status of the CAB slightly differs in the various dimensions:
 - The CABs consider themselves to be most advanced in the area of "Culture and Expertise" and "Innovation".
 - The greatest need to catch up is in the area of "Organization and Change Management".
- Respondents are aware of the high relevance of the Innovation and Information Technology dimension, and of the Customers as well.

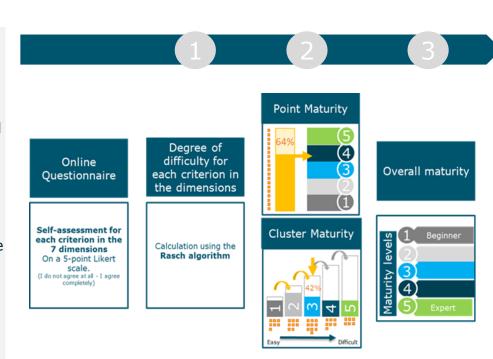
Details on the composition and partial results in the individual dimensions can be found in the appendix.

Background information: Calculation of the digital maturity level



In the questionnaire, participants indicate the extent to which each of the criteria of the 7 dimensions applies to their CAB. In a **multi-stage process**, digital maturity is determined on the basis of these assessments:

- For each criterion, the Rasch algorithm is first used to calculate how difficult it is to achieve a good result for it (degree of difficulty). If, on average, a large number of participants state that they can meet this criterion, it is classified as easy to achieve.
- 2. Based on this, 2 types of maturity levels are determined: Cluster analysis is used to divide the indicators into 5 sequential maturity clusters (1 = easiest indicators; 5 = most difficult). To reach a higher maturity, the thresholds of the lower maturity levels have to be met first. In addition, the point maturity is calculated: Here, the points achieved count in comparison to the possible total points.
- 3. The **overall digital maturity score** is the average of the cluster and point maturity scores.

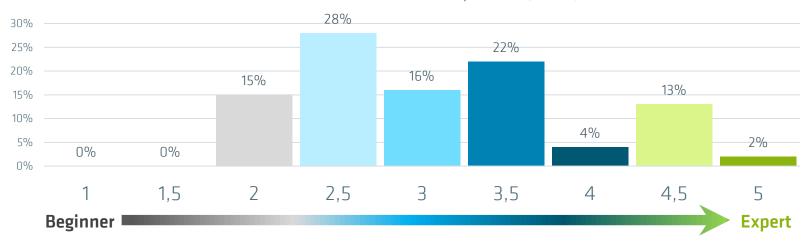


The calculation is based on the method of the St. Gallen Maturity Model. See Back & Berghaus (2016). Digital Maturity & Transformation Study; Berghaus & Back (2016). Stages in Digital Business Transformation; and Friedel & Back (2012). Determination of enterprise 2.0 development levels with a maturity model.

Overall Digital Maturity Scores of the Singaporean CA industry







Statistically, the **digital maturity levels** achieved by the 122 participating CABs in Singapore follow a right-skewed *normal distribution*:

- 38% of the CABs have reached medium level (i.e. 3 and 3,5). 19% of CABs have already reached a higher level of maturity. However a high share of CABs (43%) is still in an earlier stage of transformation, but there are no CABs at the beginner levels 1 and 1.5.
- So far, only 2% of the CABs have reached expert level 5.

The 5 Digital Maturity stages in Singapore CABs









and compliance





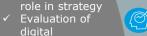






- Clearly defined responsibilities for implementing goals
- ✓ Digital Roadmap





digital technologies with regard to potential

Digitalized

customer

interactions



Digital activities integrated into core

Risk of failure accepted

Targeted training of our



- Digital innovations are systematically and
- advantages generated



- Automated routine
- Networked processes
- ✓ Most important technologies are known
- ✓ Investment in digital technologies
- ✓ Use of digital technologies

External experts

Collaboration supported



- Integrated, digitalized customer care
- Analysis of customer data



- decision-making processes





- development of digital innovations
- ✓ Clearly defined innovation



stakeholders

















Digital solutions based on customer needs



Availability of right people and skills for successful digital transformation



- Defined roles, responsibilities &
- ✓ Quick reaction to change



- Customers involved in
- process



Collaboration with



- Digitalization goals defined and
- Early warning system to identify relevant digital technologies and business models
- Sufficient innovation resources available



Partner network



The Digital Maturity of CABs in Singapore // Summary of the observed patterns





- Even at the **first maturity level**, digitalization is given a central place in the corporate strategy and is pursued as a driver for new value creation. CABs are open to change and evaluate digital technologies with regards to innovation potential.
- In the **second maturity stage** systematically pursued digital innovations generate competitive advantages. Target training to employees is offered and there is cross-departmental collaboration on this topic.
- Organizations at the third maturity level have a strong focus on IT, where corresponding investments are made. Collaboration is strengthened, also with external stakeholders. Customer care is digitalized and customer data is analyzed.
- CABs in the **fourth maturity stage** count with the right people and skills ensure a successful digital transformation. Responsibilities are well defined and resources are allocatee. Organizations are also increasingly involving customers in the development of digital innovations.
- In the final **fifth stage** the focus is on organizational adaptation and strategy. CABs have well defined and measurable digitalization goals and sufficient innovation resources are available.





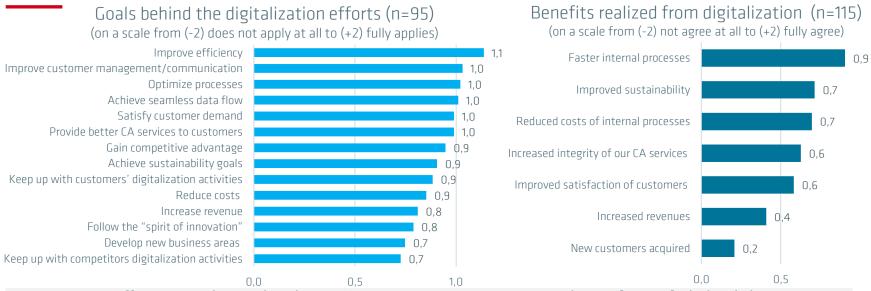
Motives, Impacts and Hurdles of Digitalization

What drives digitalization in Singaporean CABs? What effects can be achieved for the organizations? Are expectations being met? And what are the biggest hurdles to overcome in the digital transformation?

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Focus on efficiency improvements and providing better CA services



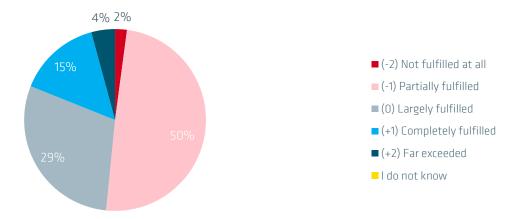


- Improving efficiency and providing better CA services to customers are the main goals behind the
 digitization efforts of CABs in Singapore. In fact, faster and more cost-effective internal processes are
 considered as the greatest realized benefits.
- Market objectives such the development of new business areas and increase revenues are no big drivers and the effects achieved on sales and new customer acquisition are correspondingly low. However, many respondents see the satisfaction of existing customers as well as the CAB's sustainability improved.

CABs' expectations in connection with digitalization are partially met



Whether the expectations behind the introduction of digital processes/technologies have been fulfilled overall so far (n=95)



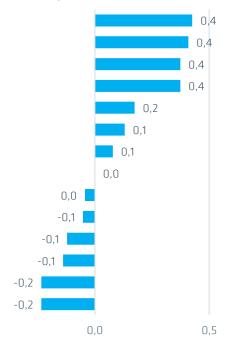
- 44% of the CABs consider their expectations behind the introduction of digital technologies to have been largely or completely fulfilled. The majority (50%) finds them only partially fulfilled.
- Only for 2% of the CABs the expectations are not fulfilled at all.

Lack of time and complexity of the topic are the biggest hurdles to digital transformation



Hurdles to digital transformation (n=115) (Scale from (-2) not at all to (+2) very much)





- Lack of time is the biggest hurdle for CABs, followed by the general complexity of digitalization processes.
- While the lack of qualified personnel and financial resources is an obstacle, a lack of openness/ readiness on the part of employees is not.
- The inability to digitalize CA services is not a hurdle for CABs.





Technologies and Trends

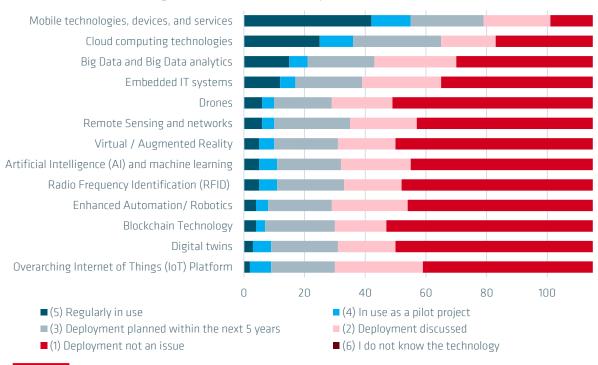
This section highlights the actual (or planned) use of concrete digital technologies and applications in the CABs. In addition, the use of remote procedures and technologies is presented.

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Latest digital technologies are not yet widely used in CABs





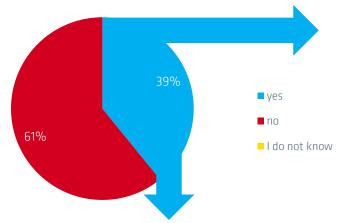


- Many of the latest digital technologies such Big Data, drones and virtual reality are used by CABs in Singapore, but not yet on a large scale.
- Among CABs, mobile technologies are widely used in many CABs, followed by cloud computing technologies.
- All the technologies listed are known by the CABs, but for some of them the deployment is still discussed.

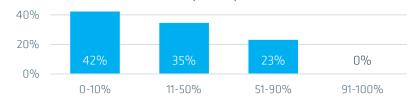
Remote methods and technologies are not largely used by most CABs



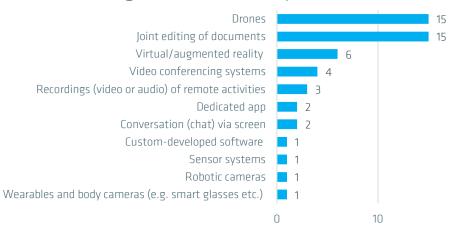




Share of CA services taking place remotely (n=26)



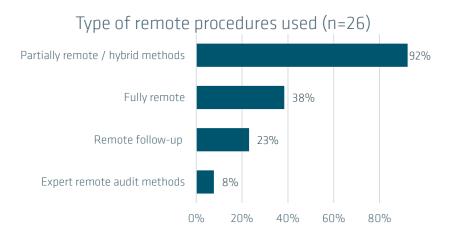
Technologies used for remote procedures (n=26)



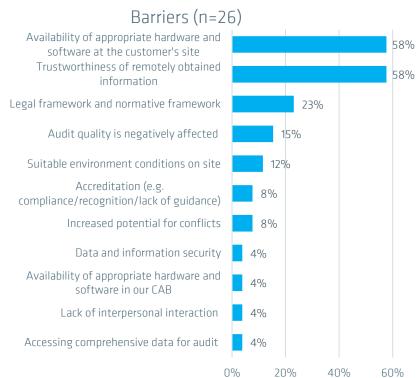
- Only 39% of the CABs use remote methods in their CA activities.
- Almost one in two CABs still performs a maximum of 10% of their activities remotely. No CAB has already switched completely.
- Drones are the most commonly used tool for remote working, while wearables and body cameras are rarely used.

Diverse approaches used and experienced hurdles in remote procedures





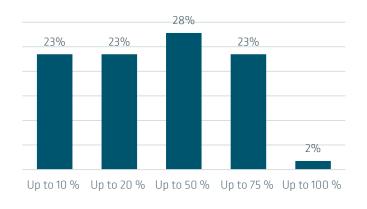
- Hybrid methods are the predominant type among remote methods used by CABs.
- The lack of appropriate hardware and software at the customer's site and the trustworthiness of remotely obtained information are seen as the biggest hurdles to using remote procedures.



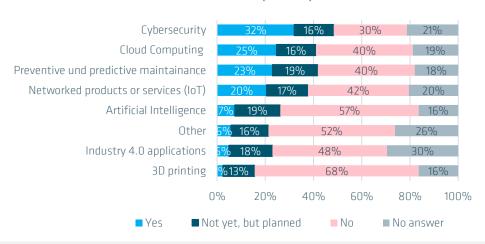
CA for advanced digital technologies is only performed by a minority of CABs so far



Share of routine processes that are digital (n=115)



Digital products and applications for which CA is conducted (n=122)



- 25% of the CABs have digitalized more than half of their **routine processes**. However, almost the same number of CABs has not even digitally converted 10% of their processes.
- 45% of the surveyed CABs conduct **conformity assessments for modern digital technologies and applications.** In focus: cybersecurity (32%) and cloud computing (25%).





The COVID-19 Pandemic and Digitalization

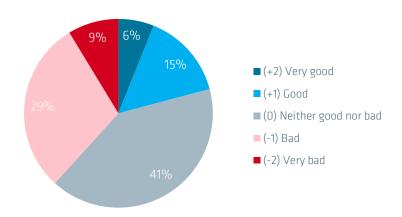
The role of digitalization in responding to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the pandemic on digitalization.

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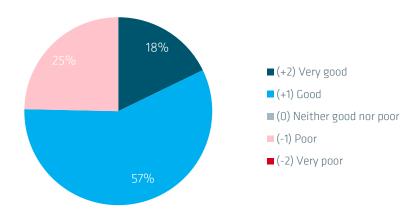
Most CABs have not coped well with the COVID-19 pandemic



CABs' order situation in 2021 compared to pre-COVID-19 times (n=115)



Response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic (n=73)

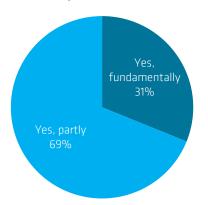


- For 41% of the CABs, the **economic situation** in terms of incoming orders in 2021 was no better or worse than before the pandemic. 38% of the CABs stated that their orders have declined, and only 21% of the CABs have actually seen their order situation improve.
- The majority of CABs (75%) reported that they had responded well or very well to the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

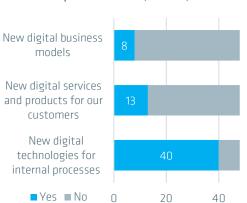
Pandemic and digitalization



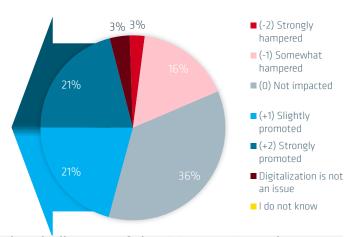
Digital technologies have helped coping with challenges of the COVID -19 pandemic (n=115)



Digital adaptation in course of the COVID-19 pandemic (n=48)



Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the digitalization of CABs (n=115)



- For all the CABs, digital technologies have helped in coping with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Yet, in 19% of CABs the pandemic has hampered digitalization, while 42% of CABs report that digital transformation has been slightly or even strongly encouraged and has led to adaptations:
 - 83% of CABs have introduced new digital technologies for internal processes, 27% new digital services and products for their customers, 17% even new digital business models.





Accreditation

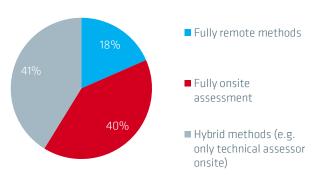
This section presents the potential role of digitalization for accreditation related services

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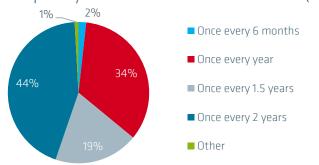
Hybrid methods still most preferred for assessing the accreditation status







Frequency of accreditation assessment (n=114)



Technologies available for remote assessments (n=114)

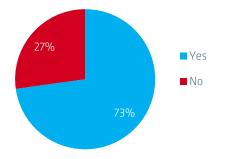


- Only 18% of the CABs prefer fully remote methods for the accreditation status; a high share of 40% still prefers fully onsite assessments.
- 61% of the used technologies for remote assessment are conversations via screen, followed by live video conferencing systems. Latest digital technologies such as virtual augmented reality are rarely used.
- 44% of CABs believe that accreditation should be conducted every 2 years; and 19% once every 18 months. However, 34% still believe that it should be conducted once a year.

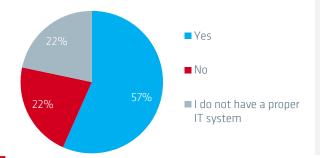
CABs in Singapore are willing to share documents for accreditation assessments



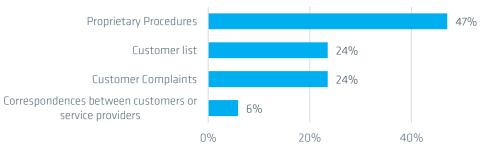
Willingness to share documents and records (n=114)



Access to CABs IT system (n=83)



Type of information that could be share to reduce frequency of assessment (n=35)



- 73% of the CABs in Singapore are willing to share their company's documents and records to reduce the frequency of their accreditation assessment.
- In particular, 47% of the CABs are willing to share proprietary procedures.
- 57% of the CABs are willing to allow the accreditation body time limited access to their IT system to view documents and records related to the accreditation activities, with the objective of reducing the frequency of the accreditation assessment.

Conclusion and Outlook



- CABs in Singapore clearly see digital transformation as an opportunity. The **level of digitalization** varies among CABs. The majority of participants has reached a medium or higher level of digital maturity.
- Even though digital transformation is an individual project for each organization, typical patterns of digital maturity in Singaporean CABs are nevertheless confirmed: An initial focus on culture, innovation, and technology is followed by holistic organizational transformation, including strategy, cooperation and change management.
- Many of the cutting-edge digital technologies such as Big Data, virtual reality and artificial intelligence are used by CABs in Singapore, but not yet on a large scale.
- With their digitalization efforts, the CABs are primarily aiming at internal process improvements. Routine processes are increasingly being digitalized and there is a switch to – mostly hybrid - remote processes.

Singapore in international comparison

How do Singaporean conformity bodies compa<u>re</u> assessment internationally? We have conducted the survey on digitalization in conformity assessment in around other countries. The individual country reports and a final comparative study will be published step by step on our website. Furthermore articles and an extensive report with further detailed analyses are planned.

⇒ <u>www.qi-fokus.de</u>



This study was developed in the context of the QI-Digital initiative. Its goal is to develop solutions for a modern digital quality infrastructure (QI) - together with stakeholders from business, politics, science, and QI. More information on the initiative and the opportunities for participation can be found at

⇒ www.gi-digtal.de

The Project and Contacts





Project partners













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Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the Singapore Accreditation Council for their support in conducting this study. Our thanks further goes to all those who were involved in the preparation and implementation of this study, e.g. who were available for expert interviews and questionnaire tests.

QI-FoKuS stands for *Qualitätsinfrastruktur - Forschung für Konformitätsbewertung und Sicherheit* ("Quality Infrastructure - Research for Conformity Assessment and Safety").

The initiative was launched jointly by BAM and TU Berlin in 2019 and is supported by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action.

We conduct studies on current and fundamental topics of conformity assessment and accreditation. The studies are based on our comprehensive surveys of companies and in particular conformity assessment bodies in Germany abroad. By publishing the results, we contribute to an improved database, scientifically sound findings and the identification of trends in quality infrastructure.

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Annexes

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Digital Maturity Model Level 1 (Beginner)



Description		Dimensions								
Level 1: Beginner		00		(255					
Digitalization has a central role in our overall strategy										
We evaluate new technologies as well as changes in customer behavior to identify potential for digital innovation										
Most of the interactions with our customers (e.g., advise, purchase conclusion and customer service) take place via digital channels										
Our CAB is open to new technologies, change and transformation										
With digitalization, we open a new source of value creation										















Digital Maturity Model Level 2



Description Level 2		Dimensions								
		60		(E					
Our employees are aware of important rules of conduct for IT Security and their compliance is regularly checked										
We accept the risk of failure in new digital activities										
We promote the development of digital expertise through targeted training of our employees at all levels										
Digital activities are integrated into the core processes of our CAB										
We drive digital innovations forward systematically and purposefully										
We generate competitive advantages through digitalization										
We work across departments and functions on the topic of digitalization										















Digital Maturity Model Level 3



		Dimensions							
Level 3		(o)	808	(2003				
We exploit the latest digital opportunities to automate our routine processes									
Our processes are already networked through IT									
We know the most important digital technologies and that they can have an impact on CA									
We invest in digital technologies throughout the CAB									
Our IT department can ensure the use of digital technologies relevant to our CAB									
The provision of services for customers, as well as customer care are digitally integrated, and personalized									
Customer data is analyzed, and relevant actions are taken accordingly									
The understanding of the importance of digital transformation is pronounced within our CAB									
We use exchanges with external experts to build up additional knowledge in the area of digitalization									
We undertake actions (e.g., workplace concepts) that support employees in collaborating effectively									





Strategy IT & Process Digitalization Customers Culture & Expertise Organization & Change Management Innovation











Digital Maturity Model Level 4



		Dimensions					
Level 4	©	00		M	2555 2555 2555 2555 2555 2555 2555 255		
Our digital strategy is well documented and communicated							
We systematically and specifically analyze customer needs in order to develop appropriate digital solutions							
We have the right people and skills for a successful digital transformation							
The digital transformation is managed on the basis of defined roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes							
We are able to react quickly to changes in the technological or market environment							
We actively involve customers in the development of new digital innovations							
We have a clearly defined innovation process for the development, evaluation, and implementation of new ideas by employees and/or customers							
We collaborate effectively with stakeholders on digital initiatives							















Digital Maturity Model Level 5 (Experts)



		Dimensions								
Level 5: Expert	©		(2)	O	£22					
We use key metrics to measure the implementation status of our digitalization strategy										
We have clearly defined the responsibilities for implementing the goals derived from the strategic consideration on digitalization										
We have defined a step-by-step implementation plan (Digital Roadmap) for achieving the goals										
The goals of the digitalization within our CAB are defined and measurable										
We have an "early warning" process to identify new, relevant digital technologies or business models for us										
We have enough resources to drive digital innovation										
In the field of digitalization, we maintain a partner network with external service providers, start-ups, or research institutions										













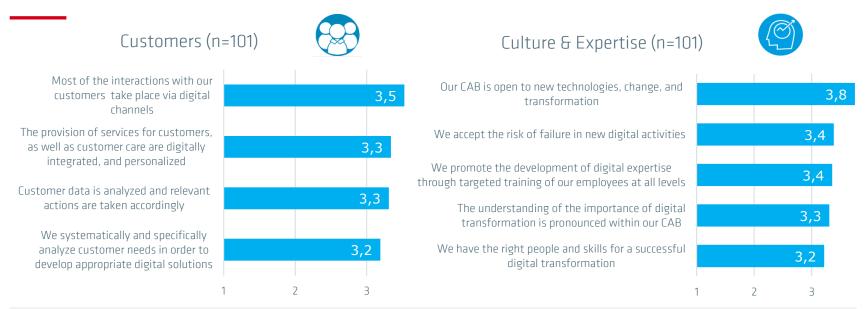






- In most CABs (72%), digitalization plays a central role in their overall strategy, with 64% having a well documented digital strategy.
- 60% have set up a Digital Roadmap and use key metrics to measure the implementation status of their digitalization strategy.
- At least 66% of CABs are aware of, invest in and are able to use digital technologies properly while complying with IT security regulations. 66% of CABs have networked their processes and automated routine procedures.





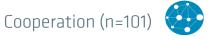
- 70% of CABs in Singapore interact with their customers via digital channels.
- 66% offer digitally integrated services to customers and only 64% of them develop appropriate digital solutions based on customer needs.
- Singaporean CABs are definitely open to new technologies, changes and transformations (76%). At least 64% of them have a strong understanding of the importance of digital transformation and have the right skills to successfully implement the change.

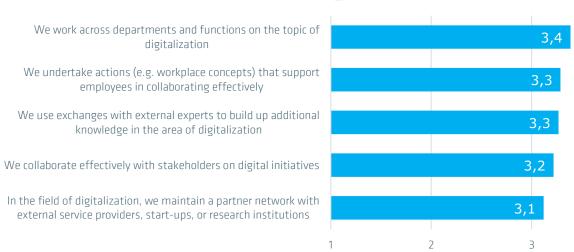




- 68% of CABs have integrated digital activities into their core processes. The clear definition of responsibilities and strategic goals is key to the implementation of digital transformation.
- For the majority of participants (74%), digitalization represents a new source of value creation.
- However, customers are hardly involved in the innovation process.







- In order to work on the topic of digitalization across departments and functions (68%), 66% of CABs build additional knowledge through external expert consultations. They also collaborate effectively with stakeholders on various digital activities.
- 62% maintain a partner network with external service providers.