

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to determine the policy and operations for managing extraordinary events or conditions affecting NAC-accredited organizations and their clients.

## 2. SCOPE

This procedure covers the general principles and rules related to accreditation activities to be applied to conformity assessment bodies and their clients in case of extraordinary circumstances.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this procedure are provided in INST.001-NAC Instruction on Terms and Abbreviations Used in NAC Documentation.

**Extraordinary events or conditions:** Generally referred to as "force majeure" or "natural disasters" and are situations beyond the organization's control. Examples include war, strikes, riots, political instability, geopolitical tensions, terrorism, crime, epidemics (epidemic or pandemic), floods, earthquakes, malicious hacking, and other natural or man-made disasters. (IAF ID 3)

## 4. RELATED DOCUMENTS

PR.017-NAC Procedure for the Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies

PR.025-NAC Procedure for Remote Assessment

IAF ID 3: Informative Document for Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations

IAF MD 4: IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes

IAF ID 12: Principles on Remote Assessments

IAF MD 2: Mandatory Document for the Transfer of Accredited Certification of Management Systems

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.1 Activities to be Carried Out During Extraordinary Conditions Affecting CABs

An extraordinary event affecting conformity assessment bodies (CAB) may temporarily prevent NAC from conducting planned on-site assessments. In such situations, NAC creates an action plan to manage the accreditation activities for CABs. Possible actions include postponing planned assessments, conducting remote assessments, document and record reviews, etc. CABs should analyze the level of impact of extraordinary conditions through risk assessment. If activities (calibration, testing, analysis, certification, etc.) cannot be performed or deviations from standards and related documents occur due to various reasons (equipment failure, critical personnel shortages, inability to procure consumables, etc.), the risk assessment activities and related records should be maintained. In cases where conformity assessment activities cannot be performed temporarily or permanently, the steps outlined in Section 5.3 should be followed. The risk assessment should include at least the following:

The location of the affected conformity assessment activity and whether the activity continues

Whether there is any deviation from the accreditation standard or related documents

Evaluation of the scope of the risky processes

CAB's activity plan (how the process is managed and when the risk will be acceptable if any).

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|   |  | <b>Page No:</b>       | 2 / 4        |

### 5.1.1 Initial Accreditation and Scope Extension Assessments

In cases where routine activities and on-site assessments are not possible due to extraordinary conditions, initial accreditation and scope extension applications cannot be reviewed/evaluated, and assessments cannot be conducted until conditions normalize. However, accreditation applications for specific products or services directly related to the extraordinary condition and contributing to its resolution may be prioritized and evaluated at the request of the relevant authority/official body without waiting for conditions to normalize. Initial accreditation applications that have been accepted but not yet assessed can be postponed up to 12 months from the application date. If the extraordinary condition ends within this period, the initial accreditation assessment will be conducted. Additionally, the maximum period for uploading required documents to the NAC e-portal for previously accepted initial accreditation applications can be extended by 3 months. If the extraordinary condition continues, the accreditation application remains valid until the condition ends, and accreditation processes resume afterward. Otherwise, the application is terminated. Scope extension applications that have been accepted but not yet assessed will be assessed once the extraordinary condition ends.

### 5.1.2 Surveillance Assessments

In the event of an extraordinary condition, surveillance assessments may be postponed according to the timelines defined in PR.017-NAC Procedure for the Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies. If the extraordinary condition continues, it may be postponed following the maximum limits specified in ISO/IEC 17011 (not exceeding 24 months between two assessments). If the current situation does not change, alternative assessment techniques (remote assessment, document, and record review, etc.) may be used within a maximum of 2 months before the allowed maximum period is completed. In this case, the assessment will be conducted without considering scope extension applications of CABs. However, if conditions normalize before the specified period, the surveillance assessment will be conducted without waiting for the maximum period.

### 5.1.3 Follow-up Assessments

Follow-up assessments may be conducted with a maximum extension of 2 months to the timelines defined in PR.017-NAC Procedure for the Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies. However, if conditions normalize earlier for on-site assessments, the follow-up assessment will be conducted without waiting for the maximum period. If an on-site assessment cannot be conducted within the maximum period defined above, follow-up assessments may be conducted using alternative assessment techniques (remote assessment, document, and record review, etc.) if suitable and applicable.

### 5.1.4 Accreditation Renewal Assessments

It is essential to conduct accreditation renewal assessments within the timelines defined in PR.017-NAC Procedure for the Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies. However, if a CAB cannot be re-evaluated on time and/or an accreditation renewal decision cannot be made due to extraordinary conditions, the validity period of the CAB's accreditation can be extended from 48 months to a maximum of 60 months. The renewal assessment must be conducted and the decision made within 60 months without exceeding the maximum limits allowed by ISO/IEC 17011 (not exceeding 24 months between two assessments). If the accreditation validity period is extended due to extraordinary conditions, the additional time will be deducted from the next accreditation cycle; in other words, the next cycle's validity period will be determined by adding 48 months to the previous cycle's regular validity period. If the extraordinary condition continues and the extended

accreditation validity period has not expired, the accreditation renewal assessment should be conducted within 24 months from the last routine assessment using alternative assessment techniques (remote assessment, document, and record review, etc.). In this case, scope extension applications of conformity assessment bodies are not considered. However, if conditions normalize before the specified period, the accreditation renewal assessment will be conducted without waiting for the maximum period.

### **5.1.5 Assessments for Lifting Suspension**

In the event of an extraordinary condition, assessments for lifting suspension may be conducted with a maximum extension of 6 months to the maximum suspension period defined in PR.017-NAC Procedure for the Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies. If the extraordinary condition continues, alternative assessment techniques (remote assessment, document, and record review, etc.) may be used. However, if conditions normalize before the specified period, the assessment will be conducted without waiting for the maximum period.

### **5.1.6 Closure of Assessment Findings**

The periods specified for completing corrective actions and closing assessment findings in PR.017-NAC Procedure for the Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies can be extended by a maximum of 3 months in extraordinary conditions. If materials/equipment cannot be procured or similar situations arise due to the extraordinary condition, the assessment process can be concluded based on the corrective action plan submitted by the CAB.

## **5.2 Activities to be Carried Out During Extraordinary Conditions Affecting Certification Bodies**

Certification bodies should define the necessary processes to implement measures needed in extraordinary conditions according to IAF ID 3: "Management of Extraordinary Events or Conditions Affecting Accreditation Bodies, Conformity Assessment Bodies, and Certified Organizations". In extraordinary conditions, certification bodies can use remote assessment techniques or apply the postponement periods mentioned in the document. If information and communication technologies are used during assessments, the requirements of IAF MD 4: "Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes" must be followed. Additionally, IAF ID 12: "Principles on Remote Assessments" provides principles for remote assessments. Furthermore, if regulatory authorities and program owners have specific requirements, these should be considered.

## **5.3 Activities to be Carried Out When CABs Cannot Provide Services**

### **5.3.1 Temporary Inability to Provide Services**

If a CAB is unable to perform its activities for up to 6 months, this situation and the risk assessment activities conducted, including the measures taken, should be shared with NAC. NAC will evaluate the situation and take appropriate action following PR.017-NAC Procedure for the Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies. Before resuming operations, the CAB should perform necessary checks regarding equipment and resources and inform NAC. Temporary suspension and resumption of activities by the CAB may require additional assessments by NAC to verify continued competence.

### **5.3.2 Permanent Inability to Provide Services**

If a CAB is permanently unable to provide services due to extraordinary conditions (e.g., loss of competence, financial sustainability issues, bankruptcy), it must immediately inform NAC. NAC will take appropriate action following PR.017-NAC Procedure for the Accreditation of Conformity

Assessment Bodies. In such cases, if a certification body conducts management system certifications, NAC will collaborate with the CAB and the receiving CAB to facilitate the transfer of accredited certificates according to IAF MD 2: "Mandatory Document for the Transfer of Accredited Certification of Management Systems".

## **6. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

NAC personnel and the management of the affected CABs are responsible for implementing the requirements of this procedure.

## **7. REVISION TABLE**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Section</b> | <b>Amendment</b>                  |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 19.03.2020  | Header         | Logo is changed.                  |
| 22.03.2024  | All            | Editorial changes have been made. |