

- 1- The purpose of this document is to define the NACI policy regarding actions to be taken by Conformity Bodies, which are accredited or applicant with NACI, in the event of any emergency situation that prevents access to certified clients, such that planned activities, such as surveillance or recertification visits, cannot take place at that time.
- 2- Reference Documents
  - IAF ID 3 - Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CBs and Certified Organizations
  - IAF MD 4 – The Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing / Assessment purposes
  - NACI Policy on Conducting Remote Assessment
- 3- Definition - Extraordinary event or circumstance: A circumstance beyond the control of the organization commonly referred to as “Force Majeure”. Examples are war, strike, riot, political instability, geopolitical tension, terrorism, crime, pandemic, flooding, and earthquake, malicious computer hacking, other natural or man-made disasters.
- 4- Requirements
  - 4-1 The CB should assess the risks of continuing certification and establish a documented policy and process, outlining the steps it will take in the event a certified organization is affected by an extraordinary event.
  - 4-2 If a CB is unable to complete surveillance audits because of the state of the organization or travel restrictions, CB may give flexibility in audit dates. While managing required surveillance audits, CBs must follow their own processes, which may include suspension, and as per respective accreditation standards like ISO/IEC 17021-1 etc. Surveillance activities must be completed as early as possible once the current emergency status has been lifted and as soon as travel to restricted areas is possible and businesses are operational, but in no case exceeding six months from the due date or as announced by NACI considering the specific extraordinary event or circumstance. The subsequent surveillance activities shall continue in line with the original programme.
  - 4-3 If a recertification audit or other recertification requirements cannot be completed prior to the expiration of accredited certification, NACI is allowing CBs to extend the certification up to six months from the date of the expiration of the certification.
    - If the CB is unable to gain confidence in the system for which the extension would be granted, the CB must follow its own process, including suspension if appropriate.
    - When the CB successfully completes the recertification activity, the expiration of the renewed certification should be based on the original recertification cycle. This means not providing the

organization an additional six months of certification. When the organization is recertified, it will not be for three years from the recertification decision, but three years from the previous expiration date

Note: Provisions in IAF ID 3 and IAF MD 4 may be considered CB for conducting remote assessment as they relate to alternative ways to audit an organization if appropriate.

4-4 In case of an Extraordinary event or circumstance, the CB shall evaluate that its client and/or its resources is / will be seriously affected and the extent of it, and shall document the justification for having audits exceeding the due date.

4-5 Both NACI and CB shall inform CBs and certified clients respectively of any on-going developments and any changes to the policy or processes implemented.

4-6 Where a standard or scheme provides no flexibility with respect to extraordinary events or circumstances that has occurred, guidance and an agreed way ahead shall always be sought from the NACI, and/or the scheme owner as applicable.

4-7 The CB shall maintain complete records of actions taken, together with the rationale behind decisions on actions taken. These records shall be made available for NACI to review upon demand

4-8 The CB shall maintain the overall process and/or plan it shall follow in managing clients affected by the extraordinary event or circumstance.

4-9 The CB shall maintain a list of NACI accredited certifications affected whereby the audit is being postponed and/or the certificate is being extended, including the following: Client name, city/state/province/country, standard(s), (normal) certification expiration, status (e.g., delayed audit, extended certification) and specific reason for the exception (e.g., organization shutdown, travel restrictions for audit team etc.).

4-10 At the next office assessment, the NACI assessment team shall also focus to assess the CB for it managed the extraordinary situation or circumstance appropriately in accordance with the CB's documented process and considered the response to each client on an individual basis considering the unique set of circumstances

4-11 NACI shall also manage its accreditation assessments by considering alternative methods as mentioned in IAF ID 3, IAF MD 4 and NACI Policy on Conducting Remote Assessment, to continue oversight on accreditations granted.

4-12 For accredited conformity assessment bodies, in case of exceptional scenario, where the provision of remote assessments as defined above is not possible, NACI may consider extending the validity of accreditation in case of re-accreditation and postponing the planned/due on-site surveillance assessments as applicable.