



MAURITAS

A26

Procedure for Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances

Mauritius Accreditation Service

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Foreword

The MAURITIUS ACCREDITATION SERVICE (MAURITAS) is a governmental body established in 1998 to provide a national, unified service for the accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) such as calibration/testing laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies Organizations that comply with the MAURITAS requirements are granted accreditation by MAURITAS.

About MAURITAS publications

MAURITAS publications are categorized as follows:

- R series Publications containing general policy and requirements related to MAURITAS accreditation.
- G series Publications providing guidance on MAURITAS requirements.
- A series Publications related to assessment procedures.
- P series MAURITAS quality system procedures
- F series MAURITAS Forms
- Directories Classified listing of accredited organizations.

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Procedure for Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances

1. Purpose

1.1 This procedure shall consider the process that needs to be implemented to handle Certification Bodies in extraordinary events or circumstances.

2. Scope and Responsibilities

2.1 This MAURITAS document defines the actions to be taken by Applicant or Accredited Certification Bodies based on IAF documents, in the event of any emergency situation that prevents temporary access to certified client premises for carrying out planned activities, such as surveillance, extension in non-mandatory scopes or recertification visits that cannot take place during that period. It is the responsibility of all MAURITAS staff to adhere to this procedure in the event of any emergency situation.

3. Reference

3.1 **ISO/IEC 17021-1** : Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

3.2 **MAURITAS A9** : Procedure for preliminary visit, initial assessment and re-assessment of Certification Bodies

3.3 **MAURITAS A18** : Procedure for assessment and extension of scope of accredited Certification Bodies

3.4 **MAURITAS A22** : Procedure on classification of scope sectors for planning of witnessing in the area of Certification Body accreditation

3.5 **MAURITAS P12** : Variation permit procedure

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

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

3.8 **IAF FAQs 5, 6, 17, 31, 33, 34**

4. Definition

4.1 **Extraordinary event or circumstance** : It is a situation beyond the control of the organization commonly referred to as “Force Majeure” or “act of God”. Examples are war, strike, riot, political instability, geopolitical tension, terrorism, crime, pandemic, flooding, earthquake, malicious computer hacking, other natural or man-made disasters.

5. Requirements for Certification Bodies (CB)

5.1 The CB shall 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. The CB shall define alternate potential short-term methods, acceptable to MAURITAS, of auditing certified organisations to verify continuing effectiveness of their management systems such as remote auditing. The CB should seek approval from MAURITAS before implementing the alternate methods.

5.2 If a CB is unable to complete surveillance audits because of the state of the organization or travel restrictions, the CB may give flexibility in audit dates. While managing required surveillance audits, CBs must follow their own processes, which may include suspension, as per accreditation standard, ISO/IEC 17021-1. 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 three months from the due date or as announced by MAURITAS considering the specific extraordinary event or circumstance. The subsequent surveillance activities shall continue in line with the original programme.

5.3 If a recertification audit or other recertification requirements cannot be completed prior to the expiration of accredited certification, the CBs shall be allowed to extend the certification up to six months from the date of the expiration of the certification.

5.4 If the CB is unable to gain confidence in the system for which the extension of the certification would be granted, the CB must follow its own process, including suspension, if appropriate.

5.5 When the CB successfully completes the recertification activity, the expiration of the renewed certification shall be based on the immediate previous certification/recertification cycle.

5.6 The CB shall evaluate its clients and/or its resources that is/will be seriously affected and shall document the justification for having audits exceeding the due date for each client.

5.7 MAURITAS shall request CBs to provide relevant information as a result of the extraordinary events or circumstances as per IAF documents. Consequently, CBs shall request certified clients to provide appropriate information.

5.8 Where a standard or scheme provides no flexibility with respect to extraordinary events or circumstances, guidance and an agreed way ahead may be sought from MAURITAS, as applicable.

6. Records

6.1 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 MAURITAS to review upon request.

6.2 The CB shall maintain the overall plan and shall follow same in managing clients affected by the extraordinary event or circumstance.

6.3 The CB shall maintain a list of MAURITAS accredited certifications affected whereby the audit is being postponed and/or the certificate is being extended, including the following:

- Client name, address, 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.).

- Specific to Information Security Management Systems (ISMS), this also shall include ISO/IEC 27001 certifications where ICT activity goes above 30% and the list shall include the certificate number, audit type, % use of ICT activity, and reason for ICT activity.

7. MAURITAS Actions

7.1 At the next office assessment, MAURITAS assessment team shall also assess the CB to evaluate how it managed the extraordinary situations or circumstances 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.

7.2 MAURITAS shall also manage its accreditation granted to CBs by considering alternative methods as mentioned in IAF ID 3, IAF MD 4 to cope with the extraordinary events and circumstances, as applicable.

7.3 For accredited CBs, in case of exceptional circumstances, MAURITAS may consider extending the validity of the current accreditation in case of renewal and postponing the planned/due on-site assessments as applicable. The Variation Permit Procedure, **MAURITAS P12**, will be followed.

8. Related Forms

8.1 Variation Permit, **F 2.12**

Appendix A: Amendment Table

SN	Section	Amendment